

## Micah 2

Verses 1 - 5

**Woe to those who devise wrongdoing,  
Who practice evil on their beds!  
When morning comes, they do it,  
Because it is in the power of their hands.**

**<sup>2</sup>They covet fields, so they seize *them*;  
And houses, so they take *them*.**

**They exploit a man and his house,  
A person and his inheritance.**

**<sup>3</sup>Therefore this is what the Lord says:**

**“Behold, I am planning against this family a catastrophe  
From which you cannot remove your necks;  
And you will not walk haughtily,  
For it will be an evil time.**

**<sup>4</sup>On that day they will take up against you a song of mocking  
and utter a song of mourning *and* say, ‘We are completely destroyed!  
He exchanges the share of my people;  
How He removes it from me! To the apostate He apportions our fields.’**

**<sup>5</sup>Therefore you will have no one applying a measuring line  
for you by lot in the assembly of the Lord.**

When the Israelites entered Canaan all of the tribes of Israel were given an inheritance of land and that land was then divided among the various families within the various tribes. To guarantee that every Israelite would always own their land God set up a law where by every jubilee all land sales and rental agreements were cancelled and all of the land reverted to its original owners or their relatives.

See Leviticus 25:13 - 17

**<sup>13</sup>‘On this year of jubilee each of you shall return to his own property.**

**<sup>14</sup>Furthermore, if you make a sale to your friend, or buy from your friend’s hand, you shall not wrong one another. <sup>15</sup>Corresponding to the number of years after the jubilee, you shall buy from your friend; he is to sell to you according to the number of years of crops. <sup>16</sup>In proportion to a greater number of years you shall increase its price, and in proportion to fewer years you shall decrease its price, because *it is* the number of crops *that* he is selling to you. <sup>17</sup>So you shall not wrong one another, but you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God.**

However, over time the wealthy in the North and the South had taken advantage of the poor by not returning their land at the Jubilee, as was dictated by the law, so God will bring a disaster upon them (both kingdoms) that they cannot escape.

The rich who violated this law may have gained some additional wealth for a period of time but when Assyria and Babylon invaded the Promised Land in 722 and 586 BC, the rich were taken into captivity while some of the poorest people remained in the Promised Land. The following is a summary of what took place.

#### 1. Assyria in 722 BC.

When Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom in 722 BC, they deported the upper class which included the elite, the leaders, and the warriors to prevent rebellions while the poor were left behind to work the land.

To replace the upper class that were deported, the Assyrian king settled foreign peoples from other parts of his empire (Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim) into the empty cities of Samaria.

See 2 Kings 17:24

**<sup>24</sup> Then the king of Assyria brought *people* from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, and settled them in the cities of Samaria in place of the sons of Israel. So they took possession of Samaria and lived in its cities.**

Over the next few generations, the remaining Israelites intermarried with these new foreign settlers and they became known as the Samaritans.

#### 2. Babylon in 586 BC

The Babylonians had a similar policy concerning the rich and the poor but they did not repopulate the Promised Land with foreigners like the Assyrians did.

See Jeremiah 39:10

**<sup>10</sup> But some of the poorest people, who had nothing, Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard left behind in the land of Judah, and gave them vineyards and fields at that time.**

Seventy years later Darius, the king of Medo Persia, allowed the Jews to return to their home land and about 50,000 people returned. Those who returned rebuilt the temple, dealt with those who had married foreign wives and restored the priesthood. All of this is covered in the Book of Ezra.

Verses 6 - 7

<sup>6</sup> **'Do not prophesy,' so they prophesy.**  
**But if they do not prophesy about these things,**  
**Insults will not be turned back.**  
<sup>7</sup> **Is it being said, house of Jacob:**  
**'Is the Spirit of the Lord impatient?**  
**Are these His works?'**  
**Do My words not do good**  
**For the one walking rightly?**

Corrupt leaders and false prophets were attempting to silence Micah by telling him not to warn them and the people of God's coming judgment. Their argument was based on a false premise that God would not destroy Israel for doing wrong. Where they got that idea is hard to say because God had warned them many times that he would bring terrible pain and suffering on them if they rejected His Law. One can only assume that the idea of a small remnant being saved out of the nation as a whole had not crossed their minds.

Telling a true prophet not to speak what God had told him to preach was nothing new in Israel.

See Amos 7:10 - 13

<sup>10</sup> **Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent word to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, "Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel; the land is unable to endure all his words."** <sup>11</sup> **For this is what Amos says: 'Jeroboam will die by the sword, and Israel will certainly go from its land into exile.'** <sup>12</sup> **Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Go, you seer, flee to the land of Judah; and eat bread there and do your prophesying there!"** <sup>13</sup> **But do not prophesy at Bethel any longer, for it is a sanctuary of the king and a royal residence."**

Micah's retort to their misguided belief that God would do them no harm was to tell them that God would reward the people "who walked uprightly."

Verse 8

<sup>8</sup> **Recently My people have arisen as an enemy—**  
**You strip the robe off the garment**  
**From unsuspecting passers-by,**  
***From those returned from war.***

God refers to the people of Israel, who were supposed to be His covenant people, acting like invading enemies against their own neighbors. Unscrupulous creditors would keep the garments pledged by the poor, thereby breaking the law that required their return before sunset.

See Exodus 22:25 - 27

**<sup>25</sup> “If you lend money to My people, to the poor among you, you are not to act as a creditor to him; you shall not charge him interest. <sup>26</sup> If you ever seize your neighbor’s cloak as a pledge, you are to return it to him before the sun sets, <sup>27</sup> for that is his only covering; it is his cloak for his body. What else is he to sleep in? And it will come about that when he cries out to Me, I will listen *to him*, for I am gracious.**

The victims of these crimes were innocent and non-threatening civilians. These acts indicated a recent shift toward cruelty and injustice that were aggressive and uncalled for because the poor were defenseless. This indicated that the impending exile and divine judgment was getting close.

Verse 9

**<sup>9</sup> You evict the women of My people,  
*Each one* from her pleasant house.  
From her children you take My splendor forever.**

The arrogance of the wealthy had reached a point where they thought nothing of abusing widows and orphans. This was a heinous violation of the law.

See Exodus 22:21-22

**<sup>21</sup> “You shall not oppress a stranger nor torment him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. <sup>22</sup> You shall not oppress any widow or orphan. <sup>23</sup> If you oppress him at all, *and* if he does cry out to Me, I will assuredly hear his cry; <sup>24</sup> and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.**

Does it bother anyone that the current administration had cut several programs for the poor, the Affordable Care Act (Obama care), Food stamps, and aid to foreign countries but then spend untold billions of dollars on an unwinnable war, a trillion dollars on tax cuts to the rich while half of the country struggle to keep their heads above water. All of this is being done by a known financial criminal, a suspected pedophile, and someone who lies like water running down a hill. History will prove all of this correct.

Verse 10

**10 Arise and go,**

**For this is no place of rest**

**Because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction,**

**A painful destruction.**

Since the text says, “arise and go,” this may have been a warning to the poor and to any righteous people living in the North, to head for a surrounding country least they be caught up in the coming destruction.

There could be no resting place in Canaan for those who had violated the terms of the covenant. Micah does not use the term deportation but the implication of what he is saying screams deportation.

Verse 11

**11 If someone walking *after* wind and falsehood**

**Had lied *and said*,**

**‘I will prophesy to you about wine and liquor,’**

**He would become a prophet to this people.**

A message of peace and prosperity that comes from a false prophet always sounds good, but when a nation takes on the role of a hardened war criminal and no longer has any concern for the poor let the buyer beware.

Verse 12

**12 “I will certainly assemble all of you, Jacob,**

**I will certainly gather the remnant of Israel.**

**I will put them together like sheep in the fold;**

**Like a flock in the midst of its pasture**

**They will be noisy with people.**

All of a sudden Micah jumps from words of condemnation and judgment to those who have forsaken the Lord to the glory that the remnant will experience who have believed in the Lord and lived a life in keeping with His law. One should not be surprised at this when reading the books of the prophets because it is earmark of authenticity rather than an exception. It is consistent with God’s judgment of mankind.

See Matthew 25:31 - 33

<sup>31</sup> **“But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. <sup>32</sup> And all the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, just as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; <sup>33</sup> and He will put the sheep on His right, but the goats on the left.”**

This restricts the promise to “spiritual Israel”, while the physical Israel will face judgment and be thrown into the lack of fire with the Devil and his angels.

See Matthew 25:41

<sup>41</sup> **“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, you accursed people, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;”**

Verse 13

<sup>13</sup> **The one who breaks through goes up before them;  
They break through, pass through the gate, and go out by it.  
So their king passes on before them,  
And the Lord at their head.”**

“The one who breaks through” may be another play on words. This term could be applied to the Assyrian army because of their ability to “break through” the great defenses of the city of Samaria. In contrast to that “breaker” Jesus will break through mankind's darkness and sin in order to save them. Jesus will be the head and the One who leads all of His followers.