

Micah 3

Verses 1 - 4

And I said,

**“Hear now, you leaders of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel:**

Is it not for you to know justice?

²You who hate good and love evil,

Who tear off their skin from them

And their flesh from their bones,

³Who eat the flesh of my people,

Strip off their skin from them,

Smash their bones,

And chop *them* up as for the pot,

And as meat in a cauldron!”

⁴Then they will cry out to the Lord,

But He will not answer them.

Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time

Because they have practiced evil deeds.

Micah uses a sarcastic question to let the leaders and rules know that they have no idea what justice means. He then indicts them by saying they hate good and love evil.

Some companies use this same perverted system by treating bad employee's good and good employee's badly. If you have been lucky enough not to experience this kind of behavior, keep your job and thank God for your good fortune.

These false rulers of the people are accused of cannibalism in a metaphorical sense. The metaphor stands for robbing the people by defrauding them, and oppressing them by denying them justice. This was done through a court system that was set up to guard the public interest but it had been corrupted by bribery.

However, a time is coming when these heartless leaders and rulers will cry to the Lord for help but He will hide His face from them. These so called leaders will reap what they have sown. They have destroyed the common people without mercy, and without mercy shall their destruction come.

See proverbs 1:24 – 29

²⁴ Because I called and you refused,
I stretched out my hand and no one paid attention;

²⁵ And you neglected all my advice

And did not want my rebuke;

²⁶ I will also laugh at your disaster:

I will mock when your dread comes.

²⁷ When your dread comes like a storm

And your disaster comes like a whirlwind,

When distress and anguish come upon you.

²⁸ Then they will call on me, but I will not answer:

They will seek me diligently but will not find me.

²⁹ Because they hated knowledge

And did not choose the fear of the Lord.

Verses 5 - 7

⁵ This is what the Lord says concerning the prophets who lead my people astray:

When they have something to bite with their teeth,

They cry out, "Peace!"

But against him who puts nothing in their mouths

They declare holy war.

⁶ Therefore *it will be* night for you—without vision,

And darkness for you—without divination.

The sun will go down on the prophets,

And the day will become dark over them.

⁷ The seers will be put to shame,

And the diviners will be ashamed.

*Indeed, they will all cover *their* lips*

Because there is no answer from God.

These verses were directed against the false prophets of both kingdoms who did not know God or speak for Him. The false prophets were hired to speak whatever the king and his administration wanted the people to hear while the true prophets spoke what God wanted the people to hear.

The false prophets worked for the king and were paid by the king. Their pay included much more than being well feed but we all get the point that their loyalty was passed on them receiving compensation from the king.

Because they spoke for the king rather than the Lord, God said they would be without vision and/or divination and more importantly they would be put to shame. During the period of the kings, Ahab and Jezebel were well known for their many false prophets.

See 1 Kings 18:19

¹⁷ When Ahab saw Elijah, Ahab said to him, “Is this you, the cause of disaster to Israel?” ¹⁸ He said, “I have not brought disaster to Israel, but you and your father’s house have, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and you have followed the Baals. ¹⁹ Now then, send orders and gather to me all Israel at Mount Carmel, together with 450 prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of the Asherah, who eat at Jezebel’s table.”

These false prophets were put to shame in a very public way.

See 1 Kings 18:27 - 29

²⁷ And at noon Elijah ridiculed them and said, “Call out with a loud voice, since he is a god; undoubtedly he is attending to business, or is on the way, or is on a journey. Perhaps he is asleep, and will awaken.” ²⁸ So they cried out with a loud voice, and cut themselves according to their custom with swords and lances until blood gushed out on them. When midday was past, they raved until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice; but there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention.

Verses 8 - 10

**⁸ On the other hand, I am filled with power—
With the Spirit of the Lord—
And with justice and courage
To make known to Jacob his rebellious act,
And to Israel his sin.
⁹ Now hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob
And rulers of the house of Israel,
Who despise justice
And twist everything that is straight,
¹⁰ Who build Zion with bloodshed,
And Jerusalem with malice.**

While there were many false prophets that had no authority or power, this one true prophet of the Lord, Micah, was filled with power from the Spirit of the Lord and he spoke with justice and courage to the people concerning their sin.

In addition to the courts of Israel being perverted by the leaders and rulers of Israel as was pointed out in verses 1 thru 4, we find out here that Jerusalem was full of bloodshed and malice. During the time of the kings, "blood money" was compensation paid by a killer or injurer to the victim's family. It was a legal mechanism to settle an injury case, with compensation being determined by the victim's social status.

Verse 11

**11 Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe,
Her priests teach for pay,
And her prophets divine for money.
Yet they lean on the Lord, saying,
"Is the Lord not in our midst?
Catastrophe will not come upon us."**

Money, Money, Money!!! The false leaders, the false priests and the false prophets all served the god of money and only gave lip service to The One True God. They had come to believe that "the Lord was in their midst" but nothing farther from the truth could have been true. They believed they had the protection and blessing of God even though they had rejected the responsibility of keeping the covenant. We know that their claim of being God's people was founded on their Jewish ancestry and the presence of His temple but they misunderstood what true faith entails. Some Christians of the 1st century had the same misconception and James, the half-brother of Jesus, wrote a letter to the church explaining that people are not saved by faith alone. True faith involves following the commands of God.

See James 2:18 - 26

18 But someone may well say, "You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to acknowledge, you foolish person, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was our father Abraham not justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "And Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called a friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. ²⁵ In the same way, was Rahab the prostitute not justified by works also when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without *the* spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Verse 12

**12 Therefore on account of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins,
And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest.**

This prophesy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple could not be any clearer than what is stated here. Micah was the first prophet of the Lord to prophesy the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; and his prophecy was quoted by the prophet Jeremiah about 125 years later.

See Jeremiah 26:16 - 18

16 Then the officials and all the people said to the priests and the prophets, “No death sentence for this man! For he has spoken to us in the name of the Lord our God.” 17 Then some of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying, 18 “Micah of Moresheth used to prophesy in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, ‘This is what the Lord of armies has said:

**“Zion will be plowed like a field,
And Jerusalem will become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the house like the high places of a forest.”**

The people of Micah's day should have understood the implications of this prophesy but it is clear that many of them did not believe the message. For the Jews of that time this sounded like blasphemy because they could not conceive that God would let an enemy destroy Jerusalem or the temple. However, if they had believed what was written in Leviticus 26 and/or Deuteronomy 28 it should have made perfect sense. In addition, something very similar to the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple had taken place in 1070 BC when the city of Shiloh and the tabernacle were destroyed.

See Jeremiah 26:7 - 9

7 The priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of the Lord. 8 Yet when Jeremiah finished speaking everything that the Lord had commanded *him* to speak to all the people, *then* the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him, saying, “You must die! 9 Why have you prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, ‘This house will be like Shiloh and this city will be in ruins, without inhabitant’?” And all the people gathered to Jeremiah at the house of the Lord.