

Commentary by Charles Box

Questions by John C. Sewell

YOU HATE THE GOOD AND LOVE THE EVIL

Micah 3:1-12

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Commentary

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Text:

Micah 3:1-12,

1. I said, “Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the nation of Israel! You ought to know what is just,

2. yet you hate what is good, and love what is evil. You flay my people’s skin and rip the flesh from their bones.

3. You devour my people’s flesh, strip off their skin, and crush their bones. You chop them up like flesh in a pot— like meat in a kettle.

4. Someday these sinners will cry to the Lord for help, but he will not answer them. He will hide his face from them at that time, because they have done such wicked deeds.”

5. This is what the Lord says: “The prophets who mislead my people are as good as dead. If someone gives them enough to eat, they offer an oracle of peace. But if someone does not give them food, they are ready to declare war on him.

6. Therefore night will fall, and you will receive no visions; it will grow dark, and you will no longer be able to read the omens. The sun will set on these prophets, and the daylight will turn to darkness over their heads.

7. The prophets will be ashamed; the omen readers will be humiliated. All of them will cover their mouths, for they will receive no divine oracles.”

8. But I am full of the courage that the Lord’s Spirit gives, and have a strong commitment to justice. This enables me to confront Jacob with its rebellion, and Israel with its sin.

9. Listen to this, you leaders of the family of Jacob, you rulers of the nation of Israel! You hate justice and pervert all that is right.

10. You build Zion through bloody crimes, Jerusalem through unjust violence.

11. Her leaders take bribes when they decide legal cases, her priests proclaim rulings for profit, and her prophets read omens for pay. Yet they claim to trust the Lord and say, “The Lord is among us. Disaster will not overtake us!”

12. Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed up like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the Temple Mount will become a hill overgrown with brush! (NET)

Introduction:

I. God had a cause against the leaders of His people.

A. Instead of leading in a godly, way they were very violent and wicked.

1. God spoke to all the people, but leaders have both a special accountability and responsibility to God.

2. God said of the leaders, you “hate the good, and love the evil.”

3. The leaders were just pushing the people deeper and deeper into poverty, consuming them like cannibals eating the flesh of people.

B. This figure should have awakened the conscience of the people.

II. Sadly those leaders and the people remained in their sins.

A. When they cried out for help, God did not and would not hear them.

1. **Proverbs 28:9, The one who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination. (NET)**

2. **Psalm 66:18, If I had harbored sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. (NET)**

3. If you are living in sin and cry out to God for help with some difficulty, you should only expect silence.

B. The promise to the obedient is that God will make His face to shine upon His people.

1. **Numbers 6:24-26, “The LORD bless you and protect you; The LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; The LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.” (NET)**

2. Here the prophet says concerning this disobedient people, **“God will not hear them; He will even hide His face from them.”**

3. Micah expressed God’s anger against the false prophets that spoke to His people.

4. These false prophets said they brought peace and comfort to God’s people when in fact they brought neither.

5. God said, **“The sun shall go down over the prophets.”**

a. The false prophets would be carried into captivity.

b. The day of restoration that would give comfort to others would be a day of darkness and calamity to them.

C. Micah, God’s true prophet, was contrasted with those false teachers.

1. He was full of power by the Spirit of the Lord.

a. He was on God’s side.

b. He spoke of and he spoke by the power of God.

2. The Old Testament prophets had the job of exposing sin.

a. Micah was no different.

D. The warning from Micah could easily be spoken to the people of our day.

1. **“The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us?” (Micah 3:11)**
2. The leaders and the people had a false confidence.
 - a. Judgment was coming and they felt that they were right with God when that was not the case at all.
3. The people of Judah responded to the preaching of Micah.
4. A great revival came in the days of Hezekiah.

Commentary:

The Sins of the Princes

Micah 3:1-4, I said, “Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the nation of Israel! You ought to know what is just, yet you hate what is good, and love what is evil. You flay my people’s skin and rip the flesh from their bones. You devour my people’s flesh, strip off their skin, and crush their bones. You chop them up like flesh in a pot—like meat in a kettle. Someday these sinners will cry to the LORD for help, but he will not answer them. He will hide his face from them at that time, because they have done such wicked deeds.” (NET)

I. In a simple, but very sad statement, God said, “They love evil and hate good.”

A. Micah encouraged the leaders to listen to God.

1. The princes were unjust and godless people who consumed others.

a. Under such conditions, they could never expect the Lord to answer their prayers.

b. They would cry to Him, but He would not hear because of their wickedness.

c. You cannot continue to practice evil deeds and expect the Lord to answer your prayers.

2. It is a sad commentary on a nation when the leading men of that nation, whether religious men or politicians, are corrupt.

a. These men were people that should have known how to act with good judgment, but, in this case, they had taken advantage of unfortunate people for years.

II. The leaders were not righteous examples to the people.

A. They preferred to do evil instead of what was right.

1. Their mistreatment of the people caused God to say, **“You skin my people alive. You strip off their flesh.”**

a. This is the same picture as presented in Micah 2:8 in which an innocent person passed by and was robbed of his clothes and possessions.

i. Micah 2:8, **but you rise up as an enemy against my people. You steal a robe from a friend, from those who pass by peacefully as if returning from a war. (NET)**

b. These wicked rulers devoured the goods and livelihood of their brethren.

- i. The idea of breaking their bones was that of a bear or a lion attacking a defenseless lamb.
 - c. They were very greedy for themselves and did not care whom they hurt in the process.
 - i. The time would come when God would bring judgment upon those wicked people.
- B. The wicked leaders would cry in vain for mercy.
- 1. **“Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.” (Proverbs 21:13)**
 - 2. Their wickedness put them in such a horrible spiritual state that God would not hear them.

The Sins of the Prophets

Micah 3:5-8, This is what the LORD says: “The prophets who mislead my people are as good as dead. If someone gives them enough to eat, they offer an oracle of peace. But if someone does not give them food, they are ready to declare war on him. Therefore night will fall, and you will receive no visions; it will grow dark, and you will no longer be able to read the omens. The sun will set on these prophets, and the daylight will turn to darkness over their heads. The prophets will be ashamed; the omen readers will be humiliated. All of them will cover their mouths, for they will receive no divine oracles.” But I am full of the courage that the LORD’s Spirit gives, and have a strong commitment to justice. This enables me to confront Jacob with its rebellion, and Israel with its sin. (NET)

- I. The prophets declared peace when there was no peace.

A. The very ones that should have helped the people walk with God caused them to err.

1. These false prophets only served themselves.
2. They were lying prophets that promised security for anyone who gave them food, but disaster for anyone who refused to feed them.

B. God promised a time of judgment to come upon Judah and Israel.

1. It would be a time when he would take away prophetic abilities.
2. Instead of being a time of spiritual light, there would be darkness.

II. The false prophets had been selfish and abusive.

A. God promised them that the time would come when they would have no message from Him.

1. They would be in darkness.
2. Simply stated God's message to the false prophet was, **"You will live in the dark, far from the sight of the sun, with no message from me." (Micah 3:6)**
3. The false prophets would blush and cover their mouths because they had nothing to say.

B. Micah, in contrast with the false prophets, was God's faithful prophet empowered by the Holy Spirit of God.

1. It was by inspiration of God that Micah declared to Israel and to Judah their sins.

The Sins of the Leaders of Jerusalem

Micah 3:9-11, Listen to this, you leaders of the family of Jacob, you rulers of the nation of Israel! You hate justice and pervert all that is right. You build Zion through bloody crimes, Jerusalem through unjust violence. Her leaders take bribes when they decide legal cases, her priests proclaim rulings for profit, and her prophets read omens for pay. Yet they claim to trust the LORD and say, “The LORD is among us. Disaster will not overtake us!” (NET)

I. In a scathing rebuke, Micah wrote about the injustice of rulers and the love of money of prophets.

A. He said, “You leaders accept bribes for dishonest decisions. You priests and prophets teach and preach, but only for money.” Then you say, “The Lord is on our side. No harm will come to us.”

1. Micah 3:11, Her leaders take bribes when they decide legal cases, her priests proclaim rulings for profit, and her prophets read omens for pay. Yet they claim to trust the LORD and say, “The LORD is among us. Disaster will not overtake us!” (NET)

B. Micah urged the heads of Judah and Israel to heed the message of God.

1. These people had been so evil! Then they even said they would not be judged for their actions because God was with them.

II. These leaders abhorred right judgment.

A. This attitude resulted in a perversion of all fairness in dealing with others.

1. They had made “**cruelty and murder a way of life in Jerusalem.**”

2. **Jeremiah 5:30-31, “Something horrible and shocking is going on in the land of Judah: The prophets prophesy lies. The priests exercise power by their own authority. And my people love to have it this way. But they will not be able to help you when the time of judgment comes! (NET)**

3. Micah said that these prophets are false prophets who prophesied for the love of money.

4. “They even pretended to believe that the Lord would preserve them from all harm in spite of their unrepentant lives.”

Frightful Judgment Against Jerusalem

Micah 3:12, Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed up like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the Temple Mount will become a hill overgrown with brush! (NET)

I. The evils of these people had brought things to such a point that both Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed.

A. Micah 3:12, Therefore, because of you, Zion will be plowed up like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the Temple Mount will become a hill overgrown with brush! (NET)

1. God told those evil leaders, “**because of you, Jerusalem will be plowed under and left in ruins. Thorns will cover the mountain where the temple now stands.**”

2. Jeremiah 26:18, “Micah from Moresheth prophesied during the time Hezekiah was king of Judah. He told all the people of Judah, ‘The LORD who rules over all says, “Zion will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rubble. The temple mount will become a mere wooded ridge.”” (NET)

II. In those days the people repented and changed their lives, and so the execution of this threat was prevented, and did not come at **that** time.

A. It is the wickedness of those that preside (leaders) in the nation that brings them to ruin.

Conclusion:

I. Let us arise with hearts filled with repentance and serve God.

II. You must become a child of God and stand strong in the faith.

Questions

By

John C. Sewell

Micah 3:1-12

(Questions based on NIV text)

1. The leaders of _____ and rulers of the _____ of _____ did not know _____. They _____ and _____.

2. Figuratively describe how these leaders, rulers mistreated the people. (See verses 2 and 3). _____

3. Why did God not hear the prayers of these leaders, rulers? _____

4. What, according to verse 5, were the sins of the false prophets? _____

5. What punishments would God bring upon these false prophets? (See verse 6.) _____

6. "The _____ will be _____ and the _____
_____." Why was this to happen? _____

7. Micah declared, "But as for me, I am _____ with
_____, with the _____ of the _____, and
with _____ and _____, to declare to
_____ his _____, to _____ his _____."

8. Micah further said the leaders and rulers _____
_____ and _____ that is
_____, build _____ with _____ and
_____ with _____. These leaders _____
for a _____, her _____ taught for a
_____, and her _____ tell _____ for
_____.

9. In spite of all their sins and corruption, the leaders, rulers still claimed that the _____ was among them and that no _____ would come upon them.

10. What would happen to Zion and Jerusalem as a result of the wickedness of their leaders, rulers, prophets and seers? _____

11. In order for a nation to receive God's blessings, how important is it to have godly leaders? _____

12. Does God hear, answer the prayers of unrepentant sinners? _____

13. How can we identify false and true prophets, preachers, religious leaders? Speak to character, behavior, motivation and what is said by these leaders. _____

14. Compare Micah's and Jeremiah's prophecies. _____

15. Can we separate service to God from service to our fellowman? Can the first exist without the second? _____
