

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

3-14-18

Micah Chapter 3

The Leaders of Israel Are Guilty of Evil - Verses 1-4

¹Then I said, "Listen, leaders of Jacob and officers of the nation of Israel! You should know what justice is. ² But you hate good and love evil. You tear the skin off the people and tear the flesh off their bones. ³ You are destroying my people. You take their skin off them and break their bones. You chop their bones up like meat to put in the pot! ⁴ Then you will pray to the LORD, but he will not answer you. No, he will hide his face from you, because what you do is evil."

3:1-12 Micah denounced the sins of the leaders, including priests and prophets—those responsible for teaching the people right from wrong. The leaders, who should have known the law and taught it to the people, had set the law aside and had become the worst of sinners. They were taking advantage of the very people they were supposed to serve and protect. All sin is bad, but the sin that leads others astray is the worst of all.

3:1 The dividing line between right and wrong often seems blurred, but spiritual leaders are supposed to help others see it. The Bible is God's guidebook to show us how to distinguish right and wrong. Spiritual leaders must understand the Bible's principles, teach them clearly, and exemplify them in their lives. While leaders cannot force people to do right, they should point them in that direction.

3:2-4 The leaders had no compassion or respect for those they were supposed to serve. They were treating the people miserably in order to satisfy their own desires; then they had the gall to ask for God's help when they found themselves in trouble. We, like the leaders, should not treat God like a light switch to be turned on only as needed. Instead, we should always rely on him.

False Prophets - Verses 5-7

⁵ Some false prophets are telling lies to the Lord's people. This is what the LORD says about them: "These prophets are led by their stomachs. They promise peace for those who give them food, but they promise war to those who do not give them food. ⁶ "This is why it is like night for you and you don't have visions. You cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to you. The sun has gone down on the prophets. They cannot see what will happen in the future, so it is like darkness to them. ⁷ The seers are ashamed. The fortunetellers are embarrassed. None of them will say anything, because God will not speak to them."

3:5-7 Micah remained true to his calling and proclaimed God's words. In contrast, the false prophets' messages were geared to the favors they received. Not all those who claim to have messages from God really do. Micah prophesied that one day the false prophets would be shamed by their actions.

Micah Is an Honest Prophet of God - Verse 8

⁸ But the LORD's Spirit has filled me with power, goodness, and strength. So I can tell Jacob about his crimes, and so I can tell Israel about his sins!

3:8 Micah attributed the power of his ministry to the Spirit of the Lord. Our power comes from the same source. Jesus told his followers they would receive power to witness about him when the Holy Spirit came on them (Acts 1:8). You can't witness effectively by relying on your own strength, because fear will keep you from speaking out for God. Only by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit can you live and witness for him.

The Leaders of Israel Are to Blame - Verses 9-11

⁹ Leaders of Jacob and rulers of Israel, listen to me! You hate the right way of living! If something is straight, then you make it crooked! ¹⁰ You build Zion by murdering people. You build Jerusalem by cheating people! ¹¹ The judges in Jerusalem accept bribes to help them decide who wins in court. The priests in Jerusalem must be paid before they will teach the people. People must pay the prophets before they will look into the future. Then those leaders expect the LORD to help them. They say, "The LORD lives here with us, so nothing bad will happen to us." ¹² Leaders, because of you, Zion will be destroyed. It will become a plowed field. Jerusalem will become a pile of rocks. Temple Mount will be an empty hill overgrown with bushes.

3:11 Micah warned the leaders, priests, and prophets of his day to avoid bribes. Pastors today accept bribes when they allow those who contribute large offerings to control the church. When fear of losing money or members influences pastors to remain silent when they should speak up for what is right, their churches are in danger. We should remember that Judah was finally destroyed because of the behavior of its religious leaders. A similar warning must be directed at those who have money—never use your resources to influence or manipulate God's ministers—that is bribery.

3:12 Jerusalem (also called Zion) would be destroyed just as Samaria had been (1:6). This happened in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian army attacked the city (2 Kings 25). Although Micah blamed the corrupt leaders, the people were not without fault. They allowed the corruption to continue without turning to God or calling for justice.

Micah Chapter 4

The Mountain of the LORD - Verses 1-5

¹ In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it. ² Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple

of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ³ He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. ⁴ Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken. ⁵ All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

4:1-13 The phrase "in the last days" describes the days when God will reign over his perfect kingdom (see 4:1-8). The "mountain of the LORD's temple" is Mount Zion. This will be an era of peace and blessing, a time when war will be forever ended. We cannot pinpoint its date, but God has promised that it will arrive (see also Isaiah 2:2; Jeremiah 16:15; Joel 3:1-21; Zechariah 14:9-11; Malachi 3:17-18; Revelation 19-22). Verses 9-13 predicted the Babylonian captivity in 586 B.C., even before Babylon became a powerful empire. Just as God promises a time of peace and prosperity, he also promises judgment and punishment for all who refuse to follow him. Both results are certain.

The LORD's Plan - Verses 6-13

⁶ "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief. ⁷ I will make the lame my remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever. ⁸ As for you, watchtower of the flock, stronghold of Daughter Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem." ⁹ Why do you now cry aloud—have you no king? Has your ruler perished, that pain seizes you like that of a woman in labor? ¹⁰ Writhe in agony, Daughter Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you must leave the city to camp in the open field. You will go to Babylon; there you will be rescued. There the LORD will redeem you out of the hand of your enemies. ¹¹ But now many nations are gathered against you. They say, "Let her be defiled, let our eyes gloat over Zion!" ¹² But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor. ¹³ "Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hooves of bronze, and you will break to pieces many nations." You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

4:9-13 Micah predicted the end of the kings. This was a drastic statement to the people of Judah who thought that their kingdom would last forever. Micah also said that Babylon would destroy the land of Judah and carry away its king, but that after a while God would help his people return to their land. This all happened just as Micah prophesied, and these events are recorded in 2 Chronicles 36:9-23 and Ezra 1-2.