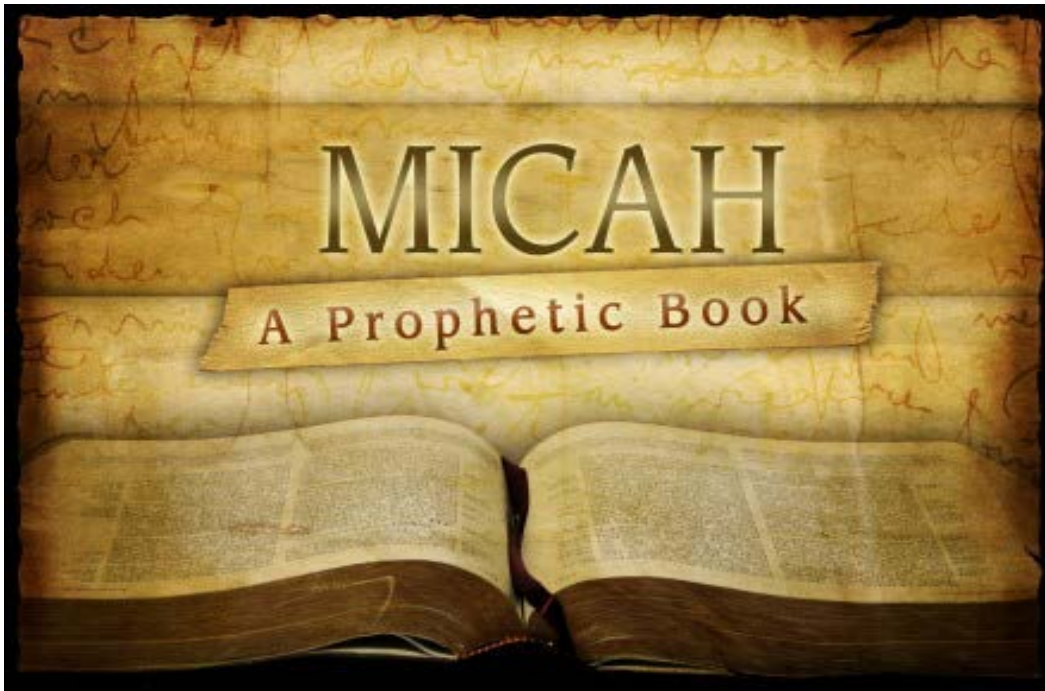


# WARNINGS TO RULERS

MICAH 3



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

Warnings to Rulers: Micah 3  
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## Micah 3: Introduction

The rulers of Israel and Judah – kings, judges, elders, priests, Levites, prophets, and household heads – had turned away from the Lord to embrace the deities and morality of their pagan neighbors. The people followed suit, until the wrath of God reached the boiling point.

God sent Micah to declare His judgment against His people, and to single out their rulers as the primary reason for His wrath. As the head goes, so goes the body. There's much to ponder here concerning our own lives, and what fills our minds and hearts.

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We hope you find this study of Ecclesiastes a challenging and stretching experience of journeying more deeply into the Word of God. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 Rulers' Remit

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 132.13-18*

For the LORD has chosen Zion;  
He has desired it for His dwelling place:  
“This is My resting place forever;  
Here I will dwell, for I have desired it.  
I will abundantly bless her provision;  
I will satisfy her poor with bread.  
I will also clothe her priests with salvation,  
And her saints shall shout aloud for joy.  
There I will make the horn of David grow;  
I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed.  
His enemies I will clothe with shame,  
But upon Himself His crown shall flourish.”

*Sing Psalm 132.13-18*

(Finlandia: *Be Still My Soul*)

God dwells among us, and He will forever, to meet our needs and clothe us with His grace.  
He has to us sent Jesus Christ, our Savior, and made us His eternal resting-place.  
His foes are banished from His Presence ever, but we shall reign with Him before His face.

*Read Micah 3.1*

*Preparation*

1. To whom is this verse addressed?
2. What were they supposed to do?

*Meditation*

The word “justice” is tossed around rather cavalierly in our day. People have invented all kinds of “justice” according to their interests and agendas – economic justice, racial justice, social justice, international justice. In the Word of God there is only one kind of justice – God’s justice. It is a gem with five facets:

*Obligatory* justice concerns what we owe others as the image-bearers of God.

*Preventive* justice shows us steps to take to avoid sinning against others.

*Retributive* justice is enacted when we have intentionally harmed someone or their property; it involves punishment and payback.

*Restorative* justice involves making wrongs right.

And *distributive* justice entails caring for the poor and needy and for those who serve the Lord.

The administration of justice, according to the teaching of God holy and righteous and just Law (Rom. 7.12), was entrusted to Israel’s rulers and prophets, as well as to the heads of households (cf. Deut. 6.4-6). Kings were required to read daily from the Law of God, to lead the way in doing justice (Deut. 17.18-20), but there is little evidence any of them did. The rulers of Israel were to “know

justice”, that is, to study and understand God’s Law so that they could administer it unto love for God and neighbors.

Rulers betray their remit when they decide they know better than God what they should do and how they should rule. Thus they fail in their calling to govern people for good (Rom.13.1-4), and they fall under the discipline of the Lord.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Hear. Now. Those of us who are followers of God. Know justice! “Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles” (Matt. 12.18; Is. 42.1).

God cares about justice for us: “He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday” (Ps. 37.6) “Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD *is* a God of justice; blessed *are* all those who wait for Him” (Is. 30.18). “For I, the LORD, love justice...” (Is. 61.8). “...His ways are justice...” (Dan. 4.37).

We must care about justice for others—all five facets of it: obligatory, preventive, retributive, restorative, and distributive.

God has been warning us since Isaiah’s time that a lack of justice would lead to the ultimate injustice – the murder of the perfect Son of Man and God: “In His humiliation His justice was taken away...His life taken from the earth” (Acts 8.33; Is. 53.7,8). “Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. So truth fails...” (Is. 59.14, 15).

As forewarned folk we hear now the words to us: “Thus says the LORD of hosts: ‘Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother’” (Zech. 7.9, 10).

First, we must hear and know justice – “to study and understand God’s Law”.  
Then we must do it – “to administer it unto love for God and neighbors”.

*Reflection*

1. According to Jesus (Matt. 24.12), what happens when we neglect the Law and lawlessness obtains? Why is this so?
2. Do you see any evidence among Christians today that our love has grown cold? Does our society indicate a need for more justice or less? What is our role as Christians in bringing more justice to our world?
3. Read Psalm 1: How does this psalm direct believers concerning justice? What does it promise if we obey?

*He delivers this address to the leaders: those entrusted with judgment trampled on justice; hence he puts it in the form of a question, Was it not you who had responsibility for judging, for punishing the guilty and letting the innocent go free without blame? How did you, then, who were entrusted with administering the laws, turn from the practice of good works and ardently support evil? Theodoret of Cyr (393-466), Commentary on Micah 3.1-4*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 132.1-12*

Thank God that He has set His King on His throne – our Lord Jesus Christ. Call on Him to lead you in the path of His Word and covenant today, and to clothe you with His righteousness.

*Psalm 132.1-12*

(Finlandia: *Be Still My Soul*)

Remember, Lord, we pray, in David's favor, the hardships he endured, the oath he swore, the vow he made to Jacob's mighty Savior: "I shall not enter through my palace door; I shall not sleep, nor slumber my eyes favor, until I make a dwelling for the Lord!"

The word throughout the chosen nation spread, to Ephrata, and in the fields of Jaar:  
"Now let us go," the faithful people said, "and worship where our Savior's dwellings are!  
Around His footstool let our worship spread; come, gather to Him, all from near and far!"

Arise, O Lord, come to Your resting place; Your holy Presence meet with us in might.  
Clothe us with righteousness in Jesus' grace, and we will shout to Your divine delight!  
For David's sake, turn not away Your face, but look upon us in Your holy light.

Remember, Lord, the oath You swore to David; do not turn back, do not deny Your Word:  
"One of your sons, with your throne I will favor, and He shall keep My cov'nant evermore,  
and walk within My testimonies ever; thus He shall ever rule as Israel's Lord."

## 2 Rulers in Rebellion

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 2.1-3*

Why do the nations rage,  
And the people plot a vain thing?  
The kings of the earth set themselves,  
And the rulers take counsel together,  
Against the LORD and against His Anointed, *saying*,  
“Let us break Their bonds in pieces  
And cast away Their cords from us.”

*Sing Psalm 2.1-3*

(Agincourt: [\*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!\*](#))

Why do the nations vainly rage, conspiring together from age to age?  
Earth’s kings and all of their counselors stand against the Lord and His Right Hand:

“Now let us cast His yoke below, His Kingdom authority overthrow!  
Throw off His Law, reject His Word; no more be governed by this Lord!”

*Read Micah 3.2-4*

*Preparation*

1. Of what were the rulers of God’s people guilty?
2. How did their sin affect the people of God?

*Meditation*

The rulers of Israel and Judah – kings, local elders, prophets and priests, heads of households – failed in their calling to rule God’s people for good because they turned their backs on God’s Law and sought only what gratified their lusts and aggrandized their power. Rather than love good, they hated it, and loved evil instead (v. 2).

To get what they wanted, they made the people pay. The images here of skinning, eating, flaying, and breaking bones are not to be taken literally (v. 3). Rather, they suggest the effects on the people of the self-centered policies of their rulers: leanness of soul and body. The people suffered and did not prosper under the evil policies of their rulers, but the rulers only cared when the leanness of the people began to mean leanness to them as well (“Then...”, v. 4).

As it became clear to the rulers that their nations were failing, they turned to the Lord. But it was too late. God had hidden His face from His people, removing His favor, bottling up His Word, withdrawing His Spirit, and leaving the people to their own choices. The evil deeds they chose would lead to evil coming upon them from without – the Assyrians on Israel, and the Babylonians on Judah.

When wicked, self-centered, ego-driven people rule, everyone suffers. God will see to it.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

The Church today screams out about losing their “religious freedoms”, and in so doing, has mistaken their enemy. When verses like these are read, we assume, that the world is doing this to us. But not so. The Church is doing this to itself. And we are all suffering for it.

In Jeremiah 11.6-11 God says to the prophet, “Proclaim all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Hear the words of this covenant and do them.’ ‘Obey My voice’”. “Yet they did not obey or incline their ear, but everyone followed the dictates of his evil heart; therefore I will bring upon them all the words of this covenant, which I commanded *them* to do, but *which* they have not done.” “A conspiracy has been found...they have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; [they] have broken My covenant...Behold, I will surely bring calamity on them which they will not be able to escape; and though they cry out to Me, I will not listen to them.” The Church in rebellion.

Jesus taught His disciples, “unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5.20). Jesus always warned us of the dangers to be found at “church”: “...*a man’s enemies will be those of his own household*” (Matt. 10.36; Mic. 7.6).

And then Peter gives us this warning: “For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pet. 4.17).

Our religious freedoms will never be taken from us as long as we understand Who is giving them; and our only fear should be of Him Who judges fairly and completely. “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes I say to you, fear Him!” (Lk.12.4, 5).

We must never be the church doing evil to the church; but we must be the people who are obeying God, and therefore loving Him and those of the household of faith. We must never be the “wicked, self-centered, ego-driven people” who displease the LORD; but must love good and hate evil, and never be rulers in rebellion!

#### *Reflection*

1. How much of church life should be governed and directed by the Word of God? Why?
2. How can we know when we are beginning to rebel against the Lord and His covenant? What should we do then?
3. What can believers do to help one another stay on the path of blessing with the Lord?

*The Prophet conveys first a general reproof, — that they not only perverted justice, but were also given to wickedness and hated good. He means then that they were openly wicked and ungodly, and also that they with a fixed purpose carried on war against every thing just and right.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Micah 3.2*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 2.4-12*

Pray for world rulers and for those who rule in the churches of the Lord, that Jesus might revive and renew them unto a great awakening of faith for His glory.

#### *Sing Psalm 2.4-12*

(Aincourt: [\*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High!\*](#))

The Lord in heaven laughs in wrath at all who embark on this cursed path. His angry Word to them is plain: “Yet shall My King in Zion reign!”

Proclaim the message far and wide, that God has exalted the Crucified!  
From heav'n He sent us His only Son, Who has for us salvation won!

To Christ the Lord be given all who humbly embrace Him and on Him call.  
Be wise, be warned: His judgment comes to break the prideful, sinful ones.

Rejoice with fear in Jesus' grace, and worship before His exalted face!  
Beware His anger and judgment grim: How blessed are all who rest in Him!

### 3 The Treachery of the Prophets

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 74.8, 9*

They said in their hearts,

“Let us destroy them altogether.”

They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.

We do not see our signs;

*There is no longer any prophet;*

*Nor is there any among us who knows how long.*

*Sing Psalm 74.8, 9*

(Rockingham: [O Lord Most High, with All My Heart](#))

Within their hearts they plot and scheme: “Now let us finally bring them down!”

Our signs and prophets all are gone; they burn our churches to the ground.

*Read Micah 3.5-7*

*Preparation*

1. How were the prophets misleading the people?

2. What would God do to judge them for this?

*Meditation*

The sin of the prophets of Israel and Judah was that they told the people what they wanted to hear, rather than what God was revealing based on His Law. Thus, they led the people astray into wickedness and sin (v. 5). They promised peace when war and destruction were about to break out against them. The prophets served the god of their bellies (cf. Phil. 3.17-19). They were eager to “chew” on the offerings people brought them, but not on the Word of God (Jer. 15.16).

So God refused to put any Word from Him “into their mouths” to feed on and proclaim (v. 5). He would withhold revelation (Hebrew: *חִזְיוֹן*, *chazon*, here translated “vision”) from them, so that they would not be able to discern His will (v. 6). The idea of the sun going down on the prophets indicates that God was removing the light of truth from them, leaving them “in the dark” about what the people should do.

So when the Assyrians came to Samaria, and the Babylonians overwhelmed Judah, the prophets would be “ashamed” and “abashed” because of their failure to proclaim the truth to God’s people. They would have nothing to say from the Lord – no counsel, guidance, word of comfort or exhortation, promise, or hope (v. 7).

God has entrusted His Word to all of us. Will we hear Him, or tell ourselves lies and feed on the scraps of treacherous prophets while the banquet of God’s truth remains untouched?

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Things that the treacherous prophets oversaw were not happening as they should: night without vision, darkness without divination, and day without light (Mic. 3.6). Things were in a mess and the people of God were suffering for it. And through poor leadership they had never been taught to seek the LORD for themselves. They were dependent upon self-serving and evil leaders.

Imagine though, if they had been shepherded properly and had been taught how to live their own

lives before the LORD in obedience and trust. God told the prophet Habakkuk that “the just shall live by his faith”. Not just the religious leaders, but any of the people could live by their faith. And what an incredible difference that made in their thinking. When things went badly, instead of despair and hopelessness, their response was this: “Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labor of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 2.4; 3.17, 18).

And for dear Mary, when she was perhaps feeling ostracized and alone and fearful, responded in kind: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior” (Lk. 1.46, 47).

Since sadly, we will always have treacherous prophets, we will do well to heed the Lord Jesus’ words to us: “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, For I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light” (Matt. 11.28-30).

“God has entrusted His Word to all of us. Will we hear Him, or tell ourselves lies and feed on the scraps of treacherous prophets while the banquet of God’s truth remains untouched?” Will we choose to starve when God is willing to fill our hearts with food and gladness? (Acts 14.17)

#### *Reflection*

1. Why were these prophets treacherous? What should they have been doing? What were they doing instead?
2. Prophets and preachers can go bad, just like the rest of us. This makes it all that much more important that every believer is feeding daily on the food of God’s Word. Explain.
3. Review your own practice of feeding on the Word. Do you see any ways you could improve in this?

*This oracle of judgment was presented against the false prophets who proclaimed peace, causing the people to be unprepared for trouble. These prophets would have neither true prophetic insight (vision), nor help from the forbidden arts of divination. Finally they would have nothing to say, for there would be no answer from God. Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Notes on Micah 3.5-7*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 74.10-23*

Pray for the leaders in your church who are charged with the ministry of the Word of God – preachers, teachers, elders, and so forth. Pray that they will hear God’s Word, take it to heart and obey it, and teach it faithfully to His people.

#### *Sing Psalm 74.10-23*

(Rockingham: [O Lord Most High, with All My Heart](#))

How long, O Lord, must they prevail and mock and spurn Your holy Name?  
Why stay Your hand? Deploy it now, and bring Your foes to lasting shame!

Our God is King from long ago, Who works deliv’rance in the land;  
He split the sea, He crushed His foes; against Him none can ever stand.

You opened the springs, fresh water flowed; to You belong both day and night.  
You bound the seasons and the earth, and gave the sun its glorious light.

Remember this, O Lord, our God: a foolish people spurns Your Name.  
Deliver not Your flock to them, nor leave Your holy ones to shame.

Your covenant recall, renew, for violence spreads throughout the earth;  
The poor and needy rescue, Lord, and we shall sing Your matchless worth!

Arise O God, and plead Your cause! See how the fools reproach Your Name.  
Their voices quell, their uproar still, who Your majestic grace defame.

## 4 The True Prophet

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 77.1-3*

I cried out to God with my voice—  
To God with my voice;  
And He gave ear to me.  
In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;  
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;  
My soul refused to be comforted.  
I remembered God, and was troubled;  
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

*Psalm 77.1-3*

(Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

My voice to God shall rise; I seek Him on His throne.  
In days and nights of trouble I seek God alone!  
When I remember Him, then am I sore distressed!  
My spirit faints and longs to find in Him its rest.

*Read Micah 3.8*

*Preparation*

1. How did Micah differ from the treacherous prophets?
2. What was his message to God's people?

*Meditation*

Micah contrasts himself with the false and treacherous prophets he exposed in verses 5-7. As a true prophet Micah is filled with power by the Spirit of the Lord. Power for what? To hear the Word of the Lord, proclaim it boldly, and stand firm in his calling, come what may. This is spiritual power at work via spiritual means for spiritual ends.

The Spirit of the Lord gives us the power to bear witness (Acts 1.8). We look to Him to lead us into all God's truth (Jn. 16.12-15). He uses the Word to convict us of our sins (Mic. 3.8; Jn. 16.8-11) and to teach and transform us into the image of Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

Thus, the true prophet does not shy away from calling out the sins of the people (Mic. 3.8). But he does not stop there; he feeds the people with the Word and promises of God, and equips them for their mission as salt, light, and leaven in the world (Mic. 4.1-8).

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

The true prophet is to obey God, and declare sin, thus the need for a Savior, and to accomplish this through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Micah was full of power, justice, and might to declare to the people their transgressions and sins

That was what he was called to do, and that is what he did. He did not shirk from his responsibility even though his job might not be described in Carnegie's book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*.

But Micah persisted because he knew Whom he served and wanted to serve Him well. He was not

afraid because, again, he knew Whom he was obeying.

We have been given this same job to do; and the same Spirit. We must do it well. And like Micah, we need not be afraid because we know Who holds the future.

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Tim. 1.7). “For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day” (2 Tim. 1.12).

Come what may, we are called to be true prophets of God’s Word. Declarers of transgressions and sins and of the Good News of Jesus. “What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?” And “in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom. 8.31, 37).

*Reflection*

1. Why do you suppose so many Christians are not embracing their calling to bear witness to Jesus?
2. What are the primary obstacles keeping us from being more consistent in fulfilling our calling?
3. How can you have the power of God’s Spirit to be a witness for Jesus in your Personal Mission Field?

*Here Micah, in a courageous spirit, stands up alone against all the false teachers even when he saw that they were a large number, and that they appealed to their number, according to their usual practice, as their shield. Hence he says, I am filled with power by the Spirit of Jehovah. This confidence is what all God's servants should possess, that they may not succumb to the empty and vain boastings of those who subvert the whole order of the Church. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Micah 3.8*

*Closing Prayer: Psalm 77.11-20*

Remember the works of the Lord. Meditate on His goodness and power. Call on Him to prepare and shepherd you as you serve Him throughout this day.

*Psalm 77.11-20*

(Leoni: [\*The God of Abraham Praise\*](#))

Now let us call to mind Your deeds and wonders, Lord,  
and meditate on all Your works and praise Your Word.  
Full holy is Your way, great God of earth and heav’n.  
To You, O God of strength and pow’r all praise be giv’n!

The waters and the deeps all tremble ‘neath Your hand.  
The clouds give forth, the sky resounds across the land.  
Your lightning flashes forth and lights the earth around;  
we feel beneath our feet the trembling of the ground.

Your way leads through the sea; Your path the water parts.  
Your footprints are to us deep mysteries in our hearts.  
As then by Moses’ hand and Aaron’s law-filled voice,  
You led Your sheep, lead us that we may all rejoice!

## 5 Sins of the Rulers

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 75.4-7*

“I said to the boastful, ‘Do not deal boastfully,’  
And to the wicked, ‘Do not lift up the horn.  
Do not lift up your horn on high;  
Do *not* speak with a stiff neck.’”  
For exaltation *comes* neither from the east  
Nor from the west nor from the south.  
But God *is* the Judge:  
He puts down one,  
And exalts another.

*Sing Psalm 75.4-7*

(Galilee: [Jesus Calls Us](#))

Warn the boastful, warn the wicked: “Do not boast or raise your horn!  
Do not raise your boastful voices; do not speak with pride and scorn!”

Neither east nor west nor desert shall exalting bring to man.  
God is Judge, He puts one down and makes another one to stand.

*Read Micah 3.9-11*

*Preparation*

1. Why did God condemn the rulers – kings, judges, priests, and prophets?
2. What was their incentive?

*Meditation*

Having spoken separately to the civic rulers and religious rulers (vv. 1-7), Micah now lumps them together as guilty before the Lord. Their crime? They hated just judgment and uprightness (v. 9) and sought pecuniary gain in the Name of the Lord (v. 11). They claimed to be the Lord’s rulers (v. 11), and they even went through many of the motions such rulers should pursue. Thus they considered themselves safe from any untoward conditions. However, by turning away from God’s Law and perverting His purposes for their rule, they invoked His judgment against them.

It is never right to do the wrong thing. Ignoring or disobeying God’s Law is *always* the wrong thing. It’s never right to do the right thing for the wrong reasons. God’s glory and the blessing of others are *always* God’s purpose; but self-seeking and self-aggrandizement are always wrong, even if outwardly we seem to be serving the Lord. It is only ever right to do the right thing in the right way, and for the right reasons.

The rulers of Israel and Judah failed in their callings. We must learn from their mistakes so that the Scripture can teach and comfort us, and we may have hope (Rom. 15.4).

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Yes, indeed, “the rulers of Israel and Judah failed in their callings.” But so do we, and “we must learn from their mistakes.” Let’s look at the list written here:

1. They abhorred justice.

2. They perverted all equity.
3. They promoted themselves through unlawful bloodshed.
4. They built themselves up with iniquity.
5. The judges took bribes.
6. The priests did their priesting only to make money.
7. The prophets did their divining for pay.
8. And worst of all, for this “good work” they grievously opened their mouths and said, “Is not the LORD among us? No harm can come upon us” (Mic. 3. 9-11).

Could this be why the world hates Christians so much?  
Are we careful to follow God’s Law with justice and equity?  
Are we guilty of murder because of hatred?  
Do we promote ourselves to the point of sin?  
Have we ever taken a bribe?  
Is making money excessively important to us?  
Why do we serve in our churches?  
Do we ever judge others without first judging ourselves?  
Are we bearing the name of Christian in vain?

The good news is this: we still may be hated by the world, but it might be for doing the right thing. We don’t have to be like the rulers, prophets, and people in Micah’s day. We have been saved unto righteousness and good works, and the Holy Spirit wants to enable us to do them.

Peter writes these words to us: “all *of you* be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing” (1 Pet. 3.8,9). “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always *be* ready to *give* a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. For *it is* better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil” (1 Pet. 3.15-17).

#### Reflection

1. How would you explain to a new believer the nature of our calling as Christians?
2. How do you work out that calling in your own walk with and work for the Lord?
3. What does it mean to sanctify the Lord God in your heart? Why is this so important?

*We now see that the word of God is not bound, but that it puts forth its power against the highest as well as the lowest; for it is the Spirit’s office to arraign the whole world, and not a part only.* John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Micah 3.9*

#### Closing Prayer: Psalm 75.1-3, 8-10

Give thanks to God for His constant Presence with us. Acknowledge His power and authority to judge the world. Ask Him to give you an opportunity to declare His Name and the Good News of Jesus today.

#### Sing Psalm 75.1-3, 8-10

(Galilee: [Jesus Calls Us](#))

We give thanks, Lord, we give thanks for Your all-glorious Name is near!

Men Your wondrous works declare, Lord; let all living creatures hear!

When you choose the time of judgment, You will judge with equity.  
Then the earth and all within it by Your hand no more shall be.

For the cup of judgment foams in Jesus' sovereign, holy hand.  
He has mixed it and will pour it out on every wicked man.

As for me, I will declare it: Evermore to God be praise!  
He abases all the wicked, but His righteous ones He saves!

## 6 Rebellion's End

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 77.1-3*

I cried out to God with my voice—  
To God with my voice;  
And He gave ear to me.  
In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;  
My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing;  
My soul refused to be comforted.  
I remembered God, and was troubled;  
I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

*Psalm 77.1-3*

(Leoni: [The God of Abraham Praise](#))

My voice to God shall rise; I seek Him on His throne.  
In days and nights of trouble I seek God alone!  
When I remember Him, then am I sore distressed!  
My spirit faints and longs to find in Him its rest.

*Read Micah 3.12*

*Preparation*

1. What are the consequences of rebellion for God's people and their city?
2. What will become of God's dwelling place?

*Meditation*

Sin, rebellion, treachery, hypocrisy. The sins of the rulers ultimately spread to all the people of Israel and Judah. Micah turns his focus to Jerusalem and the people of the southern kingdom. Boasting that they had nothing to worry about (v. 11), they would soon discover how wrong they were.

“Zion” and “Jerusalem” here stand for the nation of Judah as a whole. They would be ground under by the judgment of God, and all their strong cities reduced to rubble. Even the dwelling place of God – the temple – would be stripped of all its adornments and torn down, leaving only a heap of stones.

This is only what God warned about in Deuteronomy 28.15ff. In turning from Him and His Word, the people not only forfeited His promises, but they invoked the wrath He had threatened many times before. That wrath, in the form of the Babylonian armies, would be terrible and costly. Destruction, death, and deportation would be rebellion's end, at least for this generation.

But this would not be God's last word.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“Therefore because of you...” (Mic. 3.12).

Because of the rulers', priests', judges', prophets', and then the people's sinfulness, God plowed them all like a field and they became heaps of ruins.

Do we want that on our consciences? Do we want God to say to us, “because of you” I must judge

your family? Your friends? Your neighborhood? Your church? Your world?

“The righteous should choose his friends carefully, for the way of the wicked leads them astray” (Prov. 12.26)

“He who walks with wise *men* will be wise, but the companion of fools will be destroyed” (Prov. 13.20).

“They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (Matt. 15.14).

“Can the blind lead the blind?” (Lk. 6.39)

We do not live this life unobserved. And we never sin alone. Sin always impacts others negatively. We must be very careful to obey God’s Law always, because we love Him and want to please Him. And, because we don’t ever want to be the cause of anyone else’s downfall – “because of you”.

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus...” (Heb.12.1, 2).

#### Reflection

1. Does God still judge His people today? Why?
2. If we sense, in any way, shape or form, that we are coming under the discipline of the Lord, what should we do?
3. The great sin of God’s Old Testament people was that they refused to receive and obey God’s Word. What should this say to us?

*We here see how intolerable to God hypocrites are; for it was no ordinary proof of a dreadful vengeance, that the Lord should expose to reproach the holy city, and mount Zion, and his own temple. This revenge, then, being so severe, shows that to God there is nothing less tolerable than that false confidence with which hypocrites swell, for it brings dishonor on God himself; for they could not boast that they were God's people without aspersing him with many reproaches. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Micah 3.12*

#### Closing Prayer: Psalm 77.11-20

Praise the Lord for His sovereign might and power. Call upon Him to revive His people and turn our hearts back to Him again.

#### Psalm 77.11-20

(Leoni: [The God of Abraham Praise](#))

Now let us call to mind Your deeds and wonders, Lord,  
and meditate on all Your works and praise Your Word.  
Full holy is Your way, great God of earth and heav’n.  
To You, O God of strength and pow’r all praise be giv’n!

The waters and the deeps all tremble ‘neath Your hand.  
The clouds give forth, the sky resounds across the land.  
Your lightning flashes forth and lights the earth around;  
we feel beneath our feet the trembling of the ground.

Your way leads through the sea; Your path the water parts.

Your footprints are to us deep mysteries in our hearts.  
As then by Moses' hand and Aaron's law-filled voice,  
You led Your sheep, lead us that we may all rejoice!

## 7 Justice Scorned and Received

*Opening Prayer: Psalm 74.1-4*

O God, why have You cast *us* off forever?

*Why* does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?

Remember Your congregation, *which* You have purchased of old,

The tribe of Your inheritance, *which* You have redeemed—

This Mount Zion where You have dwelt.

Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations.

The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary.

Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place;

They set up their banners *for* signs.

*Sing Psalm 74.1-4*

(Rockingham: [\*O Lord Most High, with All My Heart\*](#))

O Lord, why have You cast us off? Why does Your anger ever burn?

Remember now Your Church, O Lord, and to us let Your grace return.

Turn now Your steps to this sad ruin; our foes have damaged all within.

They roar throughout Your meeting place and raise the banner of their sin.

*Read Micah 3; meditate on verses 1 and 8.*

*Preparation*

1. How had the rulers of God's people failed them and Him?
2. What did Micah say he was bringing against them?

*Meditation*

They who will not yield to and pursue justice will find themselves the object of it.

That's the lesson for the rulers of God's people in Micah 3. The kings, judges, elders, priests, and prophets of Israel and Judah had turned away from the plain teaching of God's Law and were incorporating into their worship, governance, and daily lives practices adopted from the surrounding pagan cultures. They still "worshiped" God, but they compromised His Law with idols, immorality, indifference, and ignorance. Their duty was to "know justice"; instead, they scorned the justice of God, preferring their own ideas about right, wrong, good, evil, justice, and mercy.

Because they scorned the justice of God, and led the people down that same path, they put themselves between the crosshairs of God's justice, as clearly revealed in His Word. Over and over God had warned His people against the kinds of compromises Micah catalogued, threatening to judge them severely if they did not repent.

The people in Micah's day had crossed a watershed with the Lord. They would not return to Him, as He commanded; therefore, He would drive them out of their land and destroy everything He had freely given them. The land, the city of Jerusalem, even the temple itself would be razed and ruined as the rulers and their people came under the justice of the holy God.

Micah 3 ends in a terrible and sad scene. But it's not the end of the story.

*Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“They who will not yield to and pursue justice will find themselves the object of it.”

Conversely, if we hear Micah’s words, and strive to know justice, we will be filled with power by the Holy Spirit, and justice and might, so that we can share the need for repentance from transgression and sin, and the forgiveness to be found because of Jesus.

But we must first be filled with the Holy Spirit Who enables us to accomplish this mighty task.

Isaiah spoke of this Spirit when he wrote these words from God, “Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One *in whom* My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles” (Is. 42.1; Matt.12.18).

Then God says to us, “I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*” (Ez. 36.27).

Then Jesus tells us how it will happen and the purpose of this gift: “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you” (Jn. 14.26).

Finally, the apostle Paul elaborates on this gift to each of us, and assures us of our security, hope, and calling now, and our eternal future with God: “Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us *is* God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee” (2 Cor. 1.21, 22).

Empowered by the Holy Spirit we will pursue love because it never fails (I Cor. 14.1; I Cor. 13.8). And within this pursued love for God and for others we will know justice, might, and power, and will truly be able to say, “Is not the LORD among us?” (Mic. 3.11)

#### *Reflection*

1. Why do we need the Holy Spirit to make us just?
2. How would you counsel a new believer to “be filled with power by the Holy Spirit”?
3. What can you do to make sure you are walking more consistently in the power of the Spirit?

*Justice is one of the key concepts of the Law (see Deut. 10:18; 32:4; 33:21). Perverting justice was strongly prohibited by God (see Deut. 16:19; 24:17). Yet this was precisely what the leaders of Judah were doing. They had used their authority to destroy justice rather than to establish it among the people. Earl Radmacher (1931-2014), NKJV Study Bible Note on Micah 3.1*

#### *Closing Prayer: Psalm 74.18-23*

Call on the Lord to restrain wickedness, remember His favor toward His Church, and revive and renew us for His glory.

#### *Sing Psalm 74.18-23*

(Rockingham: [\*O Lord Most High, with All My Heart\*](#))

Remember this, O Lord, our God: a foolish people spurns Your Name.  
Deliver not Your flock to them, nor leave Your holy ones to shame.

Your covenant recall, renew, for violence spreads throughout the earth.  
The poor and needy rescue, Lord, and we shall sing Your matchless worth!

Arise O God, and plead Your cause! See how the fools reproach Your Name.  
Their voices quell, their uproar still, who Your majestic grace defame.

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What is justice? What does it mean to “know justice”? Who should know it?
2. When the rulers of God’s people fail to keep justice, how does that affect the people?
3. Why does God refuse to hear His people when they reject His justice?
4. When it comes, God’s justice is both punishment and corrective. Explain.
5. What’s the most important lesson you have learned from Micah 3? How are you putting that lesson to work in your walk with and work for the Lord?

*For Prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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