

**The LORD's First Indictment Continued:
Woe to Wealthy Oppressors
Micah 2:1-5
February 21, 2024**

As Micah set out God's first indictment against Israel and Judah it might have been easy for the first hearers of what we studied in chapter 1 to take away from Micah's words that God's judgement was in response to the national sins, or the evil, of the two kingdoms.

If the first hearers interpreted this early focus on the national sins of Israel and Judah as God's only concern, they would have been wrong.

I. The Sins of the Wealthy Oppressors (1-2)

What is woe?

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes woe as an interjection used to express grief, regret, or distress.
- In the Bible woe is great sorrow and distress that is associated with God's judgement, a curse.
- In Matthew Jesus pronounced woe upon the cities in which he did miracles, but they did not repent (**11:20-24**), he pronounced seven woes to the scribes and Pharisees in **chapter 23** for their wrong teaching and leading the people astray, and he pronounced woe upon Judas (**26:24**) who betrayed him.

Note the activity of those upon whom woe is pronounced:

- devise ("plan iniquity" - NIV) wickedness (1)
- work evil ("practice evil" – NASB, "work out evil" – NKJV, "plot evil" – NIV) – they strategize evil (1)
- they perform it (1)
- they covet (2)
- they seize (2)
- they take away (2)
- they oppress ("they exploit" – NASB, "they defraud" – NKJV) (2)

What is the key phrase in verses 1-2 where the people upon whom woe is pronounced are described? Why is this the key phrase?

Instead of using their power and influence for good, for righteousness, and for justice these landowners used their power and influence for their own gain. Isa. 5:8.

And as we further consider these verses, what do verses 1-2 tell us about the nature of sin generally and the sin of covetousness specifically?

We see an example of covetousness in 1 Kings 21 - Naboth's vineyard.

II. God's Response to the Sins of the Wealthy Oppressors (3-5)

Verse 3 begins "Therefore" - because these people behave in this manner – the LORD issues His response.

God's response begins with "Behold", another way of saying "observe" or "look at this."

And note the parallel between man's actions and God's judgement:

- Note that just as the wealthy oppressors devised their wickedness, God devises, or plans, disaster upon them. (3)
- As the poor are pressed down, or oppressed (2), the poor this disaster would be inescapable as indicated in the wealthy oppressors not being able to remove the disaster from their necks. (3)
- While the oppressors seized fields and took houses, verse 4 says that the wealthy oppressors will say, "We are utterly ruined; he changes the portion of my people, how he removes it from me! To an apostate he allots our fields."

In addition to the sins named in verses 1-2 what other sins do those against whom God will bring judgement live in according to verses 3-5?

Some might say that Micah preaches social justice in verses 1-5, do you agree or disagree and why?

How should we apply the truths of this passage to our lives?