

**Message #4**

**Micah 2:1-5**

There is a legal government power called “Eminent Domain” that permits the government to take away the private home and property of an individual in order to convert it to public use. Typically the property is taken for roads, railroads, public utilities or government buildings.

When the government does this, they are required by law to offer a person fair compensation for the property. According to the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the Constitution, a person is not supposed to be deprived of their property without due process of law.

Now it doesn’t matter in these cases whether or not the person wants to sell or whether they think the price is fair. Eminent Domain means you are going to lose your house, your property and your land.

There have been times when powerful government officials have used this Eminent Domain to enhance their own finances and to promote private business.

In 1999, in Toledo, Ohio, a couple who owned a small auto repair shop 300 yards from a major manufacturing plant had their business condemned and taken away from them so that the land could become a landscaped green space. They were forced out by powers way bigger than they were.

In 2006, in Riviera Beach, in Florida, a city council had a closed door meeting and voted to allow the city to condemn and take away 800 acres of the city for redevelopment, one day before the governor (Jeb Bush) was to sign a law that prevented that from happening.

This kind of thing happens and it has happened for a long time.

Perhaps one of the most graphic illustrations of this in the Bible occurred about 100 years before Micah wrote this book.

In Kings 21, Ahab, the king of Samaria, saw Naboth’s vineyard and wanted it. He liked the location and the way the vineyard grew the grapes. He offered to buy it from Naboth, but Naboth said this is the inheritance that God has given to our family and I don’t want to sell it. So his wife Jezebel came up with a plan to get the land. They killed Naboth and took the land. It was the ultimate example of misuse of the Eminent Domain principle.

Now a question to ask is what does God think about this? Since God knows and sees everything, what does He think when He sees some powerful government official taking land away from some little person? How does God view it and what will He do about it?

Well Micah gives us the answer to those questions. Keep in mind that Micah is revealing “the word of the LORD.” So what he reveals is exactly what God wants communicated.

And what God wants communicated to the political leaders is a very serious message which starts off with the scary judgment word “woe.” When God uses the word “woe,” it is devastating news for the object of the woe. What God says is this:

**WOE TO POWER-CRAZED POLITICAL LEADERS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO COMMIT ECONOMIC CRIMES TO GET RICH FOR GOD NOT ONLY SEES IT, BUT HE WILL EVENTUALLY JUDGE THEM AND TAKE EVERYTHING FROM THEM AND DESTROY THEM AND BRING THEM TO NOTHING.**

Every political leader at a city level, a state level and a national level had better take a serious look at this text because it is aimed straight at them. Every individual had better take an honest look at this to see how it is they are accumulating what they have.

If a leader devises some way to get rich by hurting other people and taking advantage of their position of power, God will come after them. They will not get away with it. Oh for a while, they may seem to thrive, but God will target them and destroy them and their family.

There are four facts revealed here that Micah makes very clear:

**FACT #1** – There are people with power who plan economic iniquity and evil in order to get rich. **2:1**

Those who are in high levels of power have the potential of doing what is good in the sight of God and they have the potential in doing what is evil in the sight of God.

There are those in every level of government who are or become corrupt and their secret desire is to do whatever it takes and make any deal they can to get rich. They do not care who they hurt if it will put more in their bank account. God saw that and He had Micah address that.

**Verse 1** says much of the scheming they do is not out in the open during the working day of government. The scheming is done behind closed doors at night.

People think about all kinds of things at night in bed. Some people think about things of God. Godly people think about God just before they go to sleep and when they wake up.

But there are others who think about things perverse and evil. There are powerful people who go to bed at night, thinking about how they can do more and get more for themselves. They scheme and dream about it. They will make up lies and distort truth to get more for self.

This is not just someone who stumbles into something evil. This is not someone who was just overtaken by a sin. This is someone who schemes it and plans it.

Now their scheming is not about financial integrity, but financial iniquity and evil. That word iniquity means they think about things that are perverted and wrong and evil to get more.

These people are corrupt behind closed doors. They are affluent and they are powerful and their goal is to use their affluence and power to get rich. They dream about it and scheme about it. They don't care who they hurt and they don't care whether or not they are ethical. They are out to use their position of power for self-gain.

We have all heard of white collar crimes in which someone figures out a way to get inside information that the public doesn't have to make stock deals. We have all heard about people who get kickbacks and misuse corporate things for their own personal gain.

I am certain that behind things like the Green New Deal or not producing our own energy but getting it for other countries or promoting various quirky things like no gasoline or propane or natural gas is a hidden motive for some that is out to get rich. There are those who scheme this stuff.

Leslie Allen said, "These men must spend sleepless hours of wicked scheming, to judge by the crafty policy of evil they pursue in the daytime. They can hardly wait for the crack of dawn before they put their plans into practice" (*Micah*, p. 287).

**FACT #2** – These powerful people actually use their power to take things from people so they can have more. **2:2**

We are living in the age of the computer in which there are evil people who scheme and dream up elaborate scams to steal things from people.

The specific sin that leads to this was the sin of "coveting." This of course was commandment ten of the ten commandments—"you shall not covet" (Ex. 20:17).

Now it is one thing to covet and realize it is wrong and deal with it, but it is quite another to actually covet to the point that you will do anything to get it.

In Colossians 3:5, the Apostle Paul wrote: "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry." So this sin of coveting and greed is in the same category with immorality and it is idolatry.

What these leaders were doing was coveting things and then devising evil plans to get what they coveted away from the people who had it.

They were calling in debts and forcing people out of their homes. They did not care if that meant the people were homeless.

I don't know what motivates people to go into politics. It may be a real desire to help people. It may be a real ego power trip. It may be a desire to have the applause of people. Whatever motivates someone to go into politics can go totally wrong if one does not stay faithful to God.

Any politician with power who moves away from a relationship with God and His word can get to the point where they lie in bed at night dreaming about how they can get more for themselves. When that happens they have just put themselves and their people on a course of the judgment of God. There are four evil actions that Micah mentions:

**Evil Action #1** - They covet fields and property and figure out a way to seize it. **2:2a**

People needed their land to make a living. They grew crops for food and for business sales. Believe you me, they are plotting and planning how they might get the property.

The Hebrew word “seize” is one that means to seize by force or robbery (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 165-166).

These people were in positions of power and they could devise ways to get the property of the average person and the average person had no way to defend themselves. They were up against big government.

There is a place for taxes. But there are those who misuse this and they take taxes to support things that will make them rich. Literally there has been land taken away from people for not paying taxes and the taxes that are being paid are going to things that put more money in the pockets of those in power.

Micah says God sees that. He monitors that. He keeps records of that. He will, as you will see, do something about it.

**Evil Action #2** - They covet homes and houses and figure out a way to seize them. **2:2b**

These leaders would target people who had nice homes. There are those who want the homes other people have and they will do anything to get it.

**Evil Action #3** - They rob a man and his house. **2:2c**

What is described here is an individual targeting of someone in order to take what they have.

**Evil Action #4** - They rob a man and his inheritance. **2:2d**

This was literally being done. People in positions of power were figuring out evil ways to take away the family inheritance.

**FACT #3** – God has a specific plan to target those powerful leaders and their families with devastating judgment. **2:3-4**

Notice the first word of **verse 3**, “therefore.” This is a cause and effect conjunction. Because people in power had done these kinds of things, God says “I” will bring My justice down upon you. There are five specific justice actions that God promises here:

**Justice Act #1** - God is specifically planning what He will do against the leader and His family.  
**2:3a**

One of the motives for people in power doing evil things to get more is to set up and provide for their family. God says I will come after the family of one who does that.

**Justice Act #2** - God is specifically planning to bring calamity against the leader and his family.  
**2:3b**

When we think in terms of God bringing calamity, one must realize that Almighty God has an arsenal of weapons at His disposal that He may use. All kinds of calamities are things He promises to bring against one who has done these kinds of evils.

**Justice Act #3** - God's specific judgment will be inescapable for the leader and his family. **2:3c**

The image that one could not remove this from their necks is the idea that God would put a specific burden on them that they would not be able to lift. He would bring disaster upon them and they would not be able to escape it or get out from under it.

**Justice Act #4** - God's specific judgment will humble the haughtiness of the leader. **2:3d**

People in power tend to be very proud and haughty. God says I will knock them down and bring them down. I will humiliate them.

**Justice Act #5** - God's specific judgment will end up a bitter taunt and lamentation against the people and leader. **2:4**

Micah knew a "that day" judgment was coming from God. There would be a horrible conclusion. I think the words of Mr. Allen in his commentary are spot on regarding this; they will be crying "Lost, everything is lost" (*Ibid.*, p. 290).

The point of this is that there will be a bitter lament or proverb that will be sung and talked about in that God's people have lost everything. They will be stripped of their power and their prominence and will be seen as the frauds they really were.

I literally think a day will come when political leaders who thought themselves so high and mighty that they misused power for gain will be the laughing stock of the people of God.

The evil of these leaders caused God to take everything away from them. They took it away from God's people so God says you will see everything taken away from you and given to another.

**FACT #4** – God’s judgment will leave the powerful, corrupt leader with nothing. **2:5**

Again notice the first word of **verse 5**, “therefore.”

God will reverse everything. The ruthless political leaders will end up with nothing and there will not be one thing they will be able to do to change that reality.

They will not be permitted to have anything when the inheritance is given. They will have zero.

This is a very serious text aimed straight at those in positions of power. Really it is aimed at all of us. We must make certain that we do not take advantage of people and do not plan how we can get our hands on what they have or there will be serious consequences.

What do you dream about at night? What do you think about when you put your head on your pillow at night and when you wake up the next morning?

What we should think about at night is did I please God today?

What we should think about in the morning is will I please God today?