

Message #6

Micah 3:1-12

In the heart of Washington D.C. is the Washington National Cathedral. It is an impressive building of Gothic architecture. Construction began in September 1907 and it was totally completed in September 1990. It is a church that can seat about 4,000 people. It has over 200 stained glass windows. It has been the place of many funerals of presidents, memorial services for famous people and a place of presidential prayer services. Famous people and powerful people often attend the services. Tours are actually given of this church because it is so impressive.

I want you to envision for a moment that into this heady world comes a country boy named Micah. He is not one of the powerful elite people who knows these people; he is a humble prophet of God.

Now he makes his way to the National Cathedral and there is a big gathering of politicians and religious leaders. The religious leaders have on their religious robes and hats. The politicians are wearing their impressive suits and in walks **Micah, and he says to these religious and political leaders, if you do not change your ways right now, God will destroy you.** That is exactly what happens here.

MICAH WARNS POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS THAT IF THEY DO NOT LEAD THE PEOPLE IN RIGHT TRUE WAYS OF GOD, HE WILL RUIN THEM AND DESTROY THEM.

Leslie Allen, in his commentary said what Micah is doing here is singling out government and denouncing them (*Book of Micah*, pp. 305-306). He is targeting political and religious leadership and holding them responsible for leading the people away from the true God of the Bible.

If one is a political or religious leader, one had better think very seriously about this fact: God will hold one accountable for the direction he led the people. There is great responsibility and there will be great accountability to God.

We may observe from **verse 1** and **verse 9** that Micah says to the leaders you had better “hear” this and listen to this. This is not a call to just hear audible noise or sound. This is a very serious invitation to hear and respond.

That verb “hear” (shamah) means you better listen to this and understand this and respond and obey this (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 836). Back in Micah 1:2, Micah adds “hear” and “listen” and that word “listen” (qashav) is one that means to give attention to something by attending to it (*Ibid.*, p. 746). **When he says “hear now,” he means right now it is time for you leaders to take this very seriously.**

This is not something leaders should just consider “food for thought”; they had better very seriously listen to this truth, hear this truth and immediately respond to this truth.

There are three main warnings given in this chapter:

WARNING #1 – The warning against political leaders. **3:1-4**

In **verse 1**, Micah aims this straight at the “**heads of Jacob**” and the “**rulers of the house of Israel.**” Jacob and Israel are used here to refer to the entire nation.

The word “heads” (rosh) has in view those leaders who have judicial power and the word “rulers” (qetsine) has in view those leaders who have military power.

The word “rulers” (qetsine) is very rare. It only occurs 12 times in the Old Testament (Josh. 10:24; Judg. 11:6, 11; Prov. 6:7; Is. 1:10; 3:6-7; 22:3; Dan. 11:18; Mic. 3:1, 9). In the early days of Israel’s history, this noun referred to a military leader.

So what Micah was doing was targeting the political leader who has power over the judiciary and power over the military. It would be kind of like our President, who has similar power in our time.

The problem with these leaders is that they were totally corrupt. They were not really looking out for the people; they were looking out for themselves. Now what Micah does is describe three evil actions of these political leaders:

Evil Action #1 - They were not promoting justice. **3:1c**

Micah confronts these leaders with a rhetorical question - “Is it not for you to know justice?” “Aren’t you political leaders supposed to be doing that which is just?” Of course they were. That was their governmental responsibility.

In the Hebrew text, the noun justice means that which is just and lawful in making forensic judgments (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, pp. 519-520). There is an article “the” connected to the word “justice” so this refers to things that are just according to the word of God.

It is the responsibility of government officials to do what is just and right in connection with the word of God. These leaders were supposed to do what is right and just and promote that for the nation. They were not doing that.

If I were a government official, I would be very concerned about what I am promoting and deciding because God is watching how the power is being used and He will hold one accountable. These leaders were not promoting justice.

Evil Action #2 - They hated good and loved evil. **3:2a**

These were the political leaders of a nation of God and Micah says you hate what is good and you love what is evil. What a description of leadership. They actually hate what is right and good in the sight of God and love what is evil and perverse.

Evil Action #3 - They mistreated God's people. **3:3**

These political leaders had become so self-centered that they viewed the people as existing to profit them rather than them existing to profit the people.

What we read here against God's people is not just some mistreatment, this is savage. This is not just oppression; this is savage oppression in which God's people are being targeted and killed. These leaders were so self-centered; they did not care if they took everything away from the people as long as it profited them.

They were hurting God's people and Micah says you are about to pay for what you have done.

This will happen in the Great Tribulation to Israel. The Antichrist and the False Prophet will work as a powerful team to target God's people to kill them.

Micah says there will come a moment when the evil actions of political and religious leaders will come back on them.

In **verse 4**, God says I will sovereignly make things so bad for you that you will cry out to Me and not only will I not answer, but I will hide My face from you. You have practiced evil works with your power and I am going to destroy you. There does come a point when God says, "I will not listen to you even if you beg Me."

Political leaders had better think very seriously about this text. If you are in a position of power, you had better use that power wisely. You better seek to do what is just and right. You better seek to do what is good. You had better not mistreat people because God is watching you and how you use your power and He will hold you accountable.

WARNING #2 – The warning against religious leaders. **3:5-8**

Now God addresses the prophets. Micah is aiming this at his contemporary religious leaders. Notice how he begins "thus says the LORD." These were the religious leaders who claimed they spoke for God.

What they were specifically doing was leading God's people astray. They were responsible for leading the political leaders and the people away from God. What they were specifically proclaiming was not the truth. They were changing their message to fit their audience:

(Message #1) - When they preached to the people who gave them good support, they gave them a positive peace message. **3:5a**

False ministers always have a lying, happy, uplifting message for the right people. They will tell them what they want to hear. They made their living telling people good religious messages. Their preaching was not designed to communicate the truth of God, they were teaching for a paycheck. They were getting rich through false religion that led people astray. **They were telling the good supporters that they were at peace with God.**

(Message #2) - When they preached to the people who could not support them, they gave them a negative warning of coming war. **3:5b**

They warned people who did not support them.

I actually heard a guy do this years ago on TV. He said if people wanted the blessings of God they needed to send him money, and if they didn't they wouldn't get the blessings of God.

What is very clear about these fraud ministers is they were topical preachers, not Bible expositors. They tailored their topical messages to the audience based on what they could get out of it.

So Micah begins verse six with a "therefore." Because these phony religious leaders had done this, Micah says you will experience six negative results:

Negative Result #1 - The prophets will never receive any message from God ever. **3:6a**

It is possible for a religious leader to preach for years and never have it actually be a message of God. God will not permit His Spirit to do great things with phony ministers.

Negative Result #2 - God will make your ministry dark even without demonic divination. **3:6b**

Understand this very important point: Satan and demons can only do what God authorizes and permits them to do. God uses Satan and demons in false religions. What I understand God to be saying here is that He Himself will see to it that there is no light in the leaders' ministry and He will do it without any satanic involvement.

Negative Result #3 - The prophets will live their life in total darkness. **3:6c**

God can make truth disappear. He can make it so that all religious leaders are in the dark and not leading people to the truth light.

Negative Result #4 - The religious leaders will be ashamed. **3:7a**

There will come a day when the false religious leaders will be ashamed of what they have done.

Negative Result #5 - The religious leaders will be embarrassed. **3:7b**

Negative Result #6 - The religious leaders will never hear from God. **3:7c**

This is a very important point to see. **It is possible to go to a place of worship and NEVER hear from God.** God will not speak through a fraud minister to lead His people into a true, close relationship with Him.

In **verse 8**, Micah interjects that I am a true prophet and I do have the power of God and the Spirit of God and with courage and with justice I am pointing out Jacob's rebellion and Israel's sin.

Micah says you need to understand this; when I speak, God is in it. There is the power of the Spirit of God in it. Micah proclaimed what was just and right and courageously pointed out sin and rebellion. He did not water down a message so it would get him big offerings.

WARNING #3 – The traits of both political and religious leaders heading to judgment. **3:9-10**

Micah specifically addresses and warns the leaders.

(Trait #1) - These leaders hate justice. **3:9a**

(Trait #2) - These leaders twist everything. **3:9b**

(Trait #3) - These leaders sanction violence to promote their own causes. **3:10**

(Trait #4) - These leaders take brides for judgment. **3:11a**

(Trait #5) - These religious leaders tell people things for money. **3:11b**

They are not concerned about communicating the real truth of God.

(Trait #6) - These religious leaders tell people they are close to God. **3:11c**

(Trait #7) - These religious leaders tell people calamity will not hit them. **3:11d**

They tell them that they are the way to peace and prosperity.

So in **verse 12**, Micah says because of you God will destroy everything. He will destroy you; He will destroy your economy; He will destroy your city and your places of worship. He will plow you under like a field.