

MICAH: HOPE AMID DOOM

Lesson #3 — Micah 3:1-12 Unfaithfulness Reaches to the Top

Review

Determine a way to find peace in your heart when so much seems to be going wrong in this world.

Introduction

You might not be a president, pastor, or CEO, but God gives you the opportunity to influence other people with your life. List some of the people in your life who look up to you, depend on you, or find guidance from your example:

List 2 or 3 ways God is able to use your strengths to bring his blessings and impact others.

List 2 or 3 ways you could improve on demonstrating a Christian example and Christ-like encouragement.

Shepherds Turned Cannibals

Micah 3:1

*Then I said,
"Listen, you leaders of Jacob,
you rulers of Israel.
Should you not embrace justice,*

What purpose does it serve when God makes leaders guardians of the law?

How will they be able to impact a community?

Micah 3:2-4

2 *you who hate good and love evil;
who tear the skin from my people
and the flesh from their bones;
3 who eat my people's flesh,
strip off their skin
and break their bones in pieces;
who chop them up like meat for the pan,
like flesh for the pot?"*

4 *Then they will cry out to the Lord,
but he will not answer them.
At that time he will hide his face from
them
because of the evil they have done.*

It is most likely that Micah 3:2-3 should be understood figuratively. Review Micah 2:2,8,9 to explain why God's prophet would use such grisly and gruesome imagery.

Consider what God's face means for his people by looking up Numbers 6:26.

Does it seem too harsh that God would not listen to their cries of distress? cf Isaiah 59:2

Consider what we should expect from our earthly leaders and what we should only expect from Israel's true Shepherd-King. Is it fair to judge leaders more harshly than others?

Worse Than Worthless Prophets**Micah 3:5-8**

*This is what the Lord says:
"As for the prophets
who lead my people astray,
they proclaim 'peace'
if they have something to eat,
but prepare to wage war against
anyone
who refuses to feed them.*

How had the prophets failed as moral watchdogs in Israel?

What's wrong with this picture?
"What comes out of the mouth of a prophet depends on what goes into the prophet's mouth."

Micah 3:6-8

*Therefore night will come over you,
without visions,*

and darkness, without divination.

*The sun will set for the prophets,
and the day will go dark for them.*

7 *The seers will be ashamed
and the diviners disgraced.*

*They will all cover their faces
because there is no answer from
God.”*

8 *But as for me, I am filled with
power,
with the Spirit of the Lord,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression,
to Israel his sin.*

Rate the appropriateness of God’s sentence against the false prophets.

Demonstrate how God’s judgement hits at the root cause behind their unfaithfulness.

Prove that Micah isn’t trying to boost his own reputation or ego as he addresses his audience.

2 Timothy 3:3-4. Why shouldn’t we be surprised by bad behavior of false prophets?

Matthew 7:15. What danger do we face if we are caught off guard by false prophets?

Think of a scenario in which it would be tempting for you to alter God’s uncomfortable message for the people in your life.

It is easy to grow self-righteous in pointing out the flaws in other religions, other Christians, or other churches. What dangers do we face by pointing the finger at everyone else except ourselves?

Wake Up Call

Micah 3:9-12

*Hear this, you leaders of Jacob,
you rulers of Israel,
who despise justice
and distort all that is right;
10 who build Zion with bloodshed,
and Jerusalem with wickedness.
11 Her leaders judge for a bribe,
her priests teach for a price,
and her prophets tell fortunes for
money.
Yet they look for the Lord's support and
say,
"Is not the Lord among us?
No disaster will come upon us."
12 Therefore because of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown
with thickets.*

The word here for "despise" means to have "one's sensibilities offended." How does this demonstrate the true character of these leaders?

Identify the sham beneath the economic base of Jerusalem's accomplishments.

Rulers, priests, and prophets regarded their talents as opportunities to advantage themselves. Prove that their claim to "lean" on the Lord was a fraud.

How could the fulfillment of Micah 3:12 be fulfilled in a heavily populated urban area?

Does Jeremiah 26:16-19 prove Micah's prophecy is true?

Use 1 Timothy 2:1-1 to show why God wants moral leaders.

Conclusion

You might not be an elected, called or appointed leader in your government, church or community. Give one way you could provide a positive influence in each sphere.