

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Micah 3:1-12

New American Standard Bible

International Bible Lessons

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, July 12, 2015**, is from **Micah 3:1-12**. Please Note: Some churches will only study **Micah 3:5-12**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse-by-verse *International Bible Lesson Commentary*. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses *Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further* to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. A podcast for this commentary is also available at the **[International Bible Lesson Forum](#)**.

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Micah 3:1-12

(Micah 3:1) And I said, “Hear now, heads of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel. Is it not for you to know justice?”

Since the temple of the LORD and the priests were in Jerusalem, the capital of the Kingdom of Judah, the religious and political leaders in Jerusalem should know the Law of the LORD and how to administer justice rightly in all of Israel, including Judah. Micah preached a prophetic message to the Kingdom of Judah similar to the message of Amos, who preached in the Kingdom of Israel. God expected the leaders and people of both kingdoms to execute justice according to and in obedience to the Law of the LORD. The rulers in Israel and Judah had no excuse for not knowing and administering true justice in and out of their law courts, in their business practices, and in treating others.

(Micah 3:2) “You who hate good and love evil, Who tear off their skin from them And their flesh from their bones,

Micah expressed facts of human life, of people who have turned from the true God, of people who have chosen what to believe and not to believe about God, of people who have chosen what laws of God to obey and what laws of God to disregard. Factually, some people hate the good (good people and doing good) and they love the evil (doing

evil and those that act contrary to God's law when it gives them pleasure or what they covet).

(Micah 3:3) Who eat the flesh of my people, Strip off their skin from them, Break their bones And chop them up as for the pot And as meat in a kettle.”

Through Micah, God compared those who hate good and love evil to cannibals. Perhaps cannibalism was practiced by some in the Kingdom of Judah, just as it has been in other pagan places. During the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, cannibalism was practiced in the city, and it was probably practiced in other cities that were under siege. Micah may have been predicting these times; but more probably, Micah was trying to express graphically the end result of practices that enabled the wealthy to oppress and steal from the poor and those who were economically between the rich and the poor. The poor and the less wealthy would ultimately die of starvation or the brutalities of slavery. Those who hate the good can invent many ways to destroy the good.

(Micah 3:4) Then they will cry out to the LORD, But He will not answer them. Instead, He will hide His face from them at that time Because they have practiced evil deeds.

Micah foretold a time when God's justice would come upon those who hated good and loved evil. On that day of punishment from the LORD, they would call out to the LORD for help, but the LORD would not help them because of their wickedness. The wicked needed to believe Micah's words and repent of their sins before it was too late.

(Micah 3:5) Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray; When they have something to bite with their teeth, They cry, “Peace,” But against him who puts nothing in their mouths They declare holy war.

Micah spoke out in the name of the LORD against the leaders in Jerusalem while the professional prophets or preachers kept silent. If they did preach, they would endorse the decisions of their political leaders, and they would cry “Peace” to uphold their wickedness as long as they were paid to do so. They put acquiring money first, and used God and preaching as a means to the end of material prosperity and personal security.

(Micah 3:6) Therefore it will be night for you—without vision, And darkness for you—without divination. The sun will go down on the prophets, And the day will become dark over them.

Micah foretold God's judgment on the prophets for their hating the good and loving the evil. God would not shine the light and peace of His presence upon them. He would no longer reveal His will for the future to them so they could escape the catastrophe of

judgment, but the Day of the LORD would be blackness or darkness for the prophets as well as for the politicians in Jerusalem.

(Micah 3:7) The seers will be ashamed And the diviners will be embarrassed. Indeed, they will all cover their mouths Because there is no answer from God.

Seers and diviners gave advice to individuals trying to make decisions. They often told kings whether or not to go to war or whether or not they should pay tribute or surrender to an enemy. They claimed to give advice directly from God. Micah said that those who gave advice or foresaw the future for money instead of to serve God and His people would be abandoned by God as they and the rich political leaders had abandoned God.

(Micah 3:8) On the other hand I am filled with power— With the Spirit of the LORD— And with justice and courage To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin.

[Instead of “spirit of the LORD,” as in KJV and NRSV, “Spirit of the LORD” is to be preferred.] Micah and Amos were not professional prophets, seers, or diviners. God called them to serve Him; God filled them with His power and Spirit; God told them where to preach and what to say, and they obeyed the LORD. Micah and Amos both preached what no one wanted to hear. They revealed the sins of powerful leaders who were misleading the people, and they called them to repent or receive their just punishment from God.

(Micah 3:9) Now hear this, heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And twist everything that is straight,

Though we may find it difficult to admit and understand, those who love evil abhor justice and they pervert equality or equal rights among people. Equity means fair treatment or justice in the way people are treated. The religious and political leaders throughout Israel and Judah abhorred or hated justice and loving their neighbors as themselves. They used the law of God to selfishly steal from others and fulfill their self-centered lusts.

(Micah 3:10) Who build Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with violent injustice.

Some of the kings and other leaders in Jerusalem used slave labor to build the city’s defenses and public works to their benefit. They misused and misinterpreted and twisted or ignored the Law of God for their personal enrichment, which God forbid in the law He gave Moses. The professional prophets, scribes, and priests did not call the wicked rich and powerful leaders to account for their evil behaviors or call them to obey God – they profited from the wrongs of others, which was also contrary to God’s law.

(Micah 3:11) Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe, Her priests instruct for a price And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the LORD saying, “Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us.”

In summary, those who had and paid the most money received the judgments and rulings in their favor irrespective of the Law of God. Rather than teach the Law of God and call people to love and obey the LORD, the priests served primarily for money—and the same for the prophets who were supposed to serve as the conscience of political and religious leaders and people who did wrong. Micah assured them that no matter what they thought or said that the time was coming when the LORD would no longer be with them and His punishment would fall upon them.

(Micah 3:12) Therefore, on account of you Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest.

The kingdoms of Israel and Judah had become totally corrupt from top to bottom. All of the leadership in the capitals of both kingdoms loved evil and money instead of good and God. Therefore, God called some small-town farmers and businessmen to preach His word in the capital cities of both kingdoms (neither Amos nor Micah were professional prophets). Jerusalem would be destroyed, including the temple, which happened about 125 years after Micah preached—which does reveal the patience of God; and in the time of Jeremiah, some of the elders of the people remembered the words of Micah, which they quoted in order to save Jeremiah from death for his preaching.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. When did some of the prophets cry “Peace,” and who did they declare war against?
2. What did God say His judgment would be upon these false prophets?
3. How did Micah describe himself in contrast to the false prophets?
4. What do some people abhor, and who did Micah accuse of perverting all equity?
5. Who does Micah accuse of doing all they do for money, and what do these people say about the LORD?

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.
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