

“God’s Rejection”
Micah 3
(Preached at Trinity, January 15, 2023)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 3** begins a new section. Micah now directs his attention away from the land barons of **Chapter 2**. He is now preaching God’s condemnation upon the injustice of Israel’s leaders. Micah is continuing to follow the pattern of preaching demonstrated in the first two chapters. He begins by proclaiming God’s judgment upon the wicked followed by the preaching of the Gospel of God’s grace and reconciliation. This is really the nature of all preaching.
2. In this passage Micah pronounces the most fearful of God’s judgments. Is it flood or famine? Is it disease or plague? Is it enemies consuming the land? These are bad. **Verse 12** describes such judgment.

Micah 3:12 NAU - "Therefore, on account of you Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins"

There is a worse judgement, however.

Micah 3:4 NAU - "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."

 - a. Micah is describing a forsaken people.

Verse 4 – “He will hide His face from them at that time.”
 - b. This is what will happen on the day of judgment. Fallen men will hear the terrifying words, “Depart from Me.”
3. **Chapter 3** deals with God’s charge against the leaders of Israel followed by the declaration of His judgment. In **Chapters 4-5** we’ll see God’s offer of mercy.
 - I. Indictment upon Israel’s leaders
 - A. **Verses 1-4** – Micah stands before the magistrates.
 1. It was their duty to administer justice.

Micah 3:1 NAU - "Is it not for you to know justice?"
 2. This doesn’t only mean to have a right understanding, but to know justice in the sense of embracing it, enforcing and administering it.

This described David’s reign:
1 Chronicles 18:14 NAU - "David reigned over all Israel; and he administered justice and righteousness for all his people."
 3. Instead, they enabled the oppression of the poor. They did the opposite of justice and mercy. Instead of loving good they loved evil.

Micah 3:2 NAU - "You who hate good and love evil,"
 4. They were always willing to accept a bribe in order to pervert justice. The wealthy found it easy to receive a favorable verdict while the poor suffered under the injustice.

Micah 3:11 NAU - "Her leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe"

5. Do we have high expectations for our leaders?
Too often we are willing to look the other way today. We convince ourselves that character doesn't matter. Most people think the only important thing in our leaders is that they are skillful administrators and bold speakers. So they gladly support leaders who are morally corrupt. God thinks differently. Character matters. When Moses sought men to be leaders he was looking for men of character.
Exodus 18:21 NAU - "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place *these* over them as leaders "
 6. Israel's leaders had become morally bankrupt. Is this also true of our own leaders? It should break our hearts to see Christians so energetically supporting leaders who are unrighteous.
- B. Then Micah directs his attention upon the prophets in **Verses 5-8**.
1. These were the religious spokesmen of the day. They were to provide spiritual direction. Instead, they spoke falsehood.
Micah 3:5 NAU - "Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray;"
 2. Micah condemned their greed as they insisted in receiving reward for their services. When they didn't receive it they responded in anger.
Micah 3:5 NAU - "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."
 - a. It wasn't wrong for the prophets to receive gifts for their services. The perversion was when the size of the gift determined the content of their message.
 - b. With a generous offering they would overlook the injustices all around them.
Micah 3:11 NAU - "Her priests instruct for a price And her prophets divine for money."
They had the power to denounce the perversion of justice but instead they refused to denounce it.
It's like the pastor who refuses to denounce the sin of a big tither.
- C. In the midst of their wickedness was a pretense of religion.
1. Wicked men often pretend to be religious.
Micah 3:11 NAU - "Yet they lean on the LORD saying, "Is not the LORD in our midst? Calamity will not come upon us."
 2. Micah says they bite and devour and consume the poor and at the same time pretend that God is on their side.
 3. This has been condition of men from the beginning.
Everyone believes they are in God's favor. Everyone believes they deserve to go to heaven. "Calamity will not come upon us."
The word is רָעָה – it can be translated "evil, misery, distress."
 - a. This is why people can be prochoice or support same-sex marriage and still truly believe they are in God's favor.
 - b. Many will be shocked to hear God's judgment pronounced upon them.
 4. This is why preaching must be bold and honest.

II. The boldness of Micah's preaching

- A. He stood fearlessly before the leaders.
1. He called them butchers.
"You hate good and love evil and tear the skin off your victims and eat it."
 2. They had the power of life and death and yet Micah fearlessly stood before them.
 3. In grotesque graphic form, he called them cannibals.
Micah 3:3 NAU - "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."
- B. In the face of the terrible corruption in Israel Micah preached God's judgment.
Micah 3:8 NAU - "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."
- a. While the false prophets were blinded, Micah had the clear Word of God.
 - b. While their lives were filled with corruption, Micah continued in justice and courage.
God's men must maintain both purity of life and word.
1 Timothy 4:16 NAU - "Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things, for as you do this you will ensure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you."
 - c. We find the essence of Micah's ministry and message.
Micah 3:8 NAU - "To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, Even to Israel his sin."
 - d. Micah shouts, "Now hear this . . ." – Verse 9
He denounced those who hated justice and made crooked that which was straight and who built Zion with the blood of the poor.
- B. Finally, Micah pronounces judgment:
Micah 3:12 NAU - "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."
1. The word "therefore" in **Verse 12** is devastating. Micah has spent 11 verses describing their corruption. Now he is going to describe the consequences. "On account of you and all that you have done . . ."
 2. Micah is describing utter forsakenness. Jerusalem in all of its glory and beauty is described as desolate—a heap of ruins.
 - a. Imagine what would happen if the earth was depopulated. Nature would soon reclaim everything so that in time it would almost be like we had never been here. Micah is describing Jerusalem in these terms—devastated and forsaken.
 - b. This is the ultimate devastation of hell. Utter desolation and forsakenness.
 3. Micah says they will cry out for God's help but He will not hear.
Micah 3:4 NAU - "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."

4. **Verses 6-7** – God’s judgment upon these false prophets is silence and darkness.
 “It will be night for you—without vision”
 “And darkness for you—without divination.”
 No light, no answer. Nothing but silence from God.
5. Is this aspect of judgment upon us today? While we have the Word of God in abundance, for many it might as well be empty pages. It isn’t preached. It isn’t studied. It isn’t received.
Amos 8:11-12 NAU - "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord GOD, "When I will send a famine on the land, Not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, But rather for hearing the words of the LORD. ¹² "People will stagger from sea to sea And from the north even to the east; They will go to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, But they will not find *it*."
- a. We live in a world of darkness and the wicked are consumed by the darkness. The lost wander around in darkness unaware of the corruption that had blinded their hearts.
1 John 2:11 NAU - "But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes."
 - b. They will spend eternity in darkness
Matthew 25:30 NAU - "And cast out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - c. They will increase in knowledge but continue in ignorance
Daniel 12:4 NAU - " many will go back and forth, and knowledge will increase."
2 Timothy 3:7 NAU - "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."
 - d. Dale Ralph Davis – “People know more about Britney Spears than the book of Ezekiel. Most professing Christian men know more about Southeastern Conference football than they do about the Psalms. We abuse—and then lose—the Word of God.”¹

¹ Dale Ralph Davis, *A Study Commentary on Micah*, EP Study Commentary (Darlington, England; Carlisle, PA: Evangelical Press, 2010), 64.

Conclusion:

1. Micah preached in the days of Hezekiah. It was powerful preaching announcing God's judgment upon sin. Is such preaching necessary? Is it effective? It is God's way. It is essential to the Gospel.
Micah's words were heard by Hezekiah and he led the people in a national reformation. But a hundred years later as Jeremiah preached the same message and his words were despised.
Jeremiah 26:18-19 NAU - "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, 'Thus the LORD of hosts has said, "Zion will be plowed as a field, And Jerusalem will become ruins, And the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest.'" ¹⁹
"Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him to death? Did he not fear the LORD and entreat the favor of the LORD, and the LORD changed His mind about the misfortune which He had pronounced against them? But we are committing a great evil against ourselves."
2. God's Word of repentance and of reconciliation needs to be preached today. Those who hear and turn to Christ will be saved. Those who refuse to heed God's warning of judgment will be forever lost.