

An Argument Against Corruption

Micah 3:1-3, 9-12; 6:6-8

SS Lesson for 03/22/2020

Devotional Scripture: Deut 24:17-22

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Key Verse: Micah 6:8

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

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Because of unjust judgment (Ps 82:2)

Because of violent injustice (Ps 58:2-3)

Because of being unconcerned about justice (Prov 29:7)

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Judgment for bribery in secret (Prov 17:23)

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We cannot please God with ineffective offerings (7)

Ineffective offerings because trying to serve two masters (Matt 6:24)

Ineffective offerings because choosing the wrong one to serve (Josh 24:15)

Ineffective offerings because of not following God (Matt 10:38)

Ineffective offerings because of increased wickedness (Matt 24:12-13).

GOD'S REQUIREMENTS (MICAH 6:8)

To live justly

Justification only comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22-24)

To be just is to do what is right and acceptable to God (Prov 21:3)

To be just is to live a clean life and stop doing wrong (Isa 1:16-17)

God loves the just and will not forsake them (Ps 37:28)

God guards the course of the Just (Prov 2:7-8)

To be just has the same requirements as the type of fasting that God desires (Isa 58:6-11)

To be just is to reform our ways (Jer 7:3-6)

To love mercy

- God requires mercy because it is a blessing (Matt 5:7)
- God requires mercy because it is a prerequisite of getting mercy (Matt 18:32-35)
- God requires mercy because He is merciful and wants us to be also (Luke 6:36)
- God requires mercy because it is a characteristic of His chosen people (Col 3:12)
- God requires mercy because mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)
- Mercy has as its components love, compassion, kindness and patience (Ps 103:8-14)

Walk humbly with God

- God requires humility because it is a requirement for being with Him (Isa 57:15)
- God requires humility because it shows repentance of sin (Ezek 16:63)
- God requires humility because it is a blessing (Matt 5:3)
- God requires humility because it leads to justification (Luke 18:13-14)
- God requires humility because it is a part of submission to God (James 4:7-8)
- God requires humility because it is a prerequisite of being lifted up by God (1 Peter 5:5-6)

CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM PRECEPTAUSTIN.ORG
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY
CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

Lesson Background and Key Verse

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

The prophet Micah indicted the leaders of his day for their own brand of vandalism. But Micah described how real people were being abused and mistreated by those responsible for their care. They too were guilty of having warped minds. And such minds tend to excel at hiding behind warped self-justification. The book of Micah is another of the 12 Minor Prophets. Micah's ministry took place in the second half of the eighth century BC. His times were full of turmoil and uncertainty for both Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom). The Assyrians were a formidable threat to both kingdoms. They were the instrument in God's hands to carry out His judgment against Israel when the capital city of Samaria fell in 722 BC. Micah's ministry may have overlapped with that of Amos. While the ministry of the latter is dated during the reign of Uzziah king of Judah (about 785-734 BC; Amos 1:1), Micah 1:1 describes Micah's ministry as occurring during the reigns of Jotham (Uzziah's son), Jotham's son Ahaz, and Jotham's grandson Hezekiah. Jotham's reign, however, overlapped Uzziah's. While Uzziah was confined during the latter years of his reign, Jotham ruled in his stead (2 Chronicles 26:16-23). Micah and Isaiah were contemporaries (compare the lists of kings in Isaiah 1:1 and Micah 1:1). Both ministered in Jerusalem. Micah's message included words of judgment against both Israel and Judah. His book begins with a reference to Samaria and Jerusalem, representing Israel and Judah respectively (1:1). Both are indicted for rebellion against the Lord (1:5-9).

Key Verse: Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God

Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

In Micah's first message (chaps. 1-2) he emphasized the people's sins and their failure to take seriously God's righteous demands on their lives. In only two verses (2:12-13) did Micah discuss God's future blessings on His nation. In this second message the emphasis is different. Two of the three chapters (chaps. 4-5) discuss God's blessing on Israel and Judah. (Chap. 3 details the sins of the *leaders* of Israel and Judah.) As is true throughout Scripture, God's plans for the future are given not simply to inform people of what will occur, but also—and more so—to motivate people to change their lives on the basis of God's plans for them. Certainly the promise of Israel's future blessings (chaps. 4-5) should have caused the nation—and first its leaders (chap. 3)—to turn to God in repentance and gratitude.

3:1-2a. In perverting justice the **leaders** and **rulers** (cf. v. 9) of the nation were acting like wild beasts. (On **Jacob** and **Israel** as synonyms for the 12-tribe nation, see 1:5.) They were the ones who **should... know** and carry out **justice**. But instead of practicing justice they hated **good** and loved **evil**. Of course this is the opposite of the way leaders should act (cf. Amos 5:15). Their perverse standards (cf. Micah 3:9) showed that they did not love the Lord (cf. Ps. 97:10) or fear Him ("To fear the Lord is to hate evil," Prov. 8:13).

3:2b-3. Micah likened the unjust leaders to hunters who killed and ate (i.e., took undue advantage of) God's **people**, who were supposed to be under their care. The leaders were so harsh that they were not satisfied with tearing off **the skin** and eating **the flesh**. They even chopped up **their bones** as if they were preparing a stew. By unfair legal actions, by bribery (cf. v. 11; 7:3), by theft (cf. 2:8), by oppression (cf. 3:9), and even by bloodshed (cf. v. 10; 7:2), they left the people helpless. By contrast faithful leaders protected their charges and looked out for their welfare. David, the epitome of a good leader for God, was taken from shepherding sheep (1 Sam. 17:15) to become a shepherd of the people (2 Sam. 5:2; 7:7). The people in Micah's day were being betrayed by their leaders, for if they really cared about the people, they would have turned them back to the Lord.

3:4. Because of Israel's sins a time would come when **they would cry out to the LORD but He would not answer them** (cf. v. 7). Micah was speaking of the **time** when Israel would be taken into captivity. The false prophets and leaders had refused to believe that the Lord would actually follow through and punish them for their behavior. However, when the Captivity came they would realize that God was actually punishing them. Then it would be too late for Him to deliver them. They would have to live with the consequences of their actions, enduring the punishment for their evil. Of course God listens to the prayers of His people, but sometimes He refuses to relieve them immediately from the consequences of their actions.

3:5. Rather than serving as shepherds of the nation, caring for them, and leading them properly, the false **prophets** were leading the **people astray**. These leaders were giving the people false hope by telling them they would not be punished by God, that there would be no calamity. If someone paid the false shepherds well (**if one feeds them**) they would pronounce **peace** on him. In other words they told a person what he wanted to hear for a price (cf. v. 11). On the other hand if one did **not** feed them (i.e., pay the prophets their price) they were ready to oppose him (**to wage war against him**). The prophets were concerned with their own welfare rather than the nation's welfare. Materialism was their master (cf. v. 11).

3:6-7. Because the false prophets were not leading the people correctly and were taking advantage of them materially, these leaders would be shamed and humiliated. **Night** would **come over** them, **the sun** would **set** for those **prophets**, and **darkness** would come even in the daytime. Nightfall pictures impending doom. When that devastation would come, the prophets would have no **visions** or **divination**. They had been counseling the people to go on living as they had been, thinking that God surely would not judge His own nation. But suddenly judgment would come. And when it did, the people would ask the prophets why it came, and they would be unable to explain it. **The seers** (which corresponds in Heb. to "visions" in v. 6) would be totally **ashamed** (cf. Zech. 13:4). And **the diviners** (which corresponds in Heb. to "divination" in Micah 3:6; on the Heb. word *qāsam*, "to divine," see Deut. 18:10) would be **disgraced** (cf. Micah 2:6). The prophets would **cover their faces** in humiliation, realizing they had **no answer from God** (cf. 3:4). The people would then see that the prophets were not true prophets after all. Because God would hide His face (v. 4) the false shepherds would "cover their faces"! Micah warned the people and leaders about impending judgment so that they would see the folly of their ways and turn back to God. This true prophet warned them of the coming doom in hope that they would change their ways.

3:8. In contrast with the leaders (vv. 1-4) and false prophets (vv. 5-7), who had not been speaking God's message, Micah, **filled with God's power**, spoke **with** the authority of **the Spirit of the LORD** in denouncing the people's sins and predicting judgment. Micah's words, he said, were **with justice** because God is just in carrying out His judgment against the covenant people. And Micah's words had **might** because God is totally capable of carrying out His sentence against His people. The leaders, however, dealt unjustly (cf. vv. 9-10) and their prophets had no spiritual strength. Micah declared the **transgression** and the **sin** (cf. 1:5; 6:7; 7:18) of the nation (on **Jacob** and **Israel** as synonyms; cf. 3:1, 9, for the entire nation, see 1:5). Micah could see from God's perspective what was going on in the nation. Because she was not living according to God's covenant standards, He had to punish her.

3:9-11. Because Micah was filled with the Spirit of the Lord (v. 8), he boldly confronted the leaders about their sins and the eventual outcome. He first called on the **leaders** and **rulers** (cf. v. 1) to listen to him (**hear this**). Micah did not say if the leaders listened or responded to him, but apparently they did not, for no major change is recorded about them. Micah then described what their leadership was like (vv. 9b-11). They despised (*tā'ab*, a strong word meaning "to abhor or regard as an abomination") **justice** (cf. vv. 1-3) and distorted (*āqas*, "twisted") **all that is right** (lit., "all that is straight"). Of course a ruler over God's people was supposed to be just and equitable, like God Himself. A leader was to desire righteous behavior in his own life and in the lives of his people. Instead of this, these rulers deliberately perverted uprightness. They even encouraged and took part in **bloodshed** and **wickedness** in the city of **Jerusalem**, where justice

and righteousness should have reigned. **Zion** and Jerusalem are used together in Micah as synonyms four times (3:10, 12; 4:2, 8). Micah noted that the **leaders... priests, and prophets** were always out **for money** (cf. 7:3) and yet had the audacity to say that God was still with them and that therefore the nation would not face destruction (cf. 2:6). (Tell **fortunes** translates, *qāsam*, “to divine”; cf. 3:6-7 and Deut. 18:10.) To be influenced by bribery violated God’s command in Deuteronomy 16:19.

3:12. Destruction would come on the nation **because of you**, that is, the leaders. This does not suggest that the *people* were guiltless, and that only the leaders were sinning. Probably the leaders were leading the people into wicked behavior and therefore the whole nation was guilty before God. **Zion (Jerusalem;** cf. 3:10; 4:2, 8) would **be plowed like a field**, turned over, and overthrown. It would be in ruins (**a heap of rubble;** cf. 1:6). Even **the temple hill** would be **overgrown with thickets** (weeds).

6:6. Speaking for the nation, Micah asked what he must take **before the LORD** in worship to regain His good favor. Micah asked if he should approach the Lord with **burnt offerings**. Should he go **with calves** ready to be sacrificed? By these questions the prophet was not downplaying the importance of the sacrificial system. The Lord had set up the Levitical system to provide, among other things, atonement for the people’s sin. Micah, as a righteous member of the covenant community, was no doubt involved in the sacrificial system. He knew, however, that the sacrifices were meant to be outward expressions of inner trust and dependence on God for His grace and mercy.

6:7. Micah then asked in hyperbole if **the LORD** would want **thousands of rams, or 10,000 rivers of oil**, or even his own **firstborn child (the fruit of his body)** to atone **for his transgression and sin** (cf. 1:5; 3:8; 7:18). He of course knew these would not appease God’s wrath on the nation. Nor was Micah condoning the evil practice of child sacrifice, forbidden in the Law (cf. Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5; Deut. 12:31; 18:10). He asked those rhetorical questions to suggest to Israel that nothing—not even the most extreme sacrifice—could atone for what she had done. Also this emphasized that God did not want them to “pay” Him. Instead God wanted them to change their actions and attitudes.

6:8. Micah then told the nation (**O man** means any person in Israel) exactly what God did desire from them. God did not want them to be related to Him in only a ritualistic way. God wanted them to be related inwardly—to obey Him because they desired to, not because it was a burden on them. That relationship, which **is good** (beneficial), involves three things: that individuals (a) **act justly** (be fair in their dealings with others), (b) **love mercy** (*hesed*, “loyal love”; i.e., carry through on their commitments to meet others needs), and (c) **walk humbly with... God** (fellowship with Him in modesty, without arrogance). “Humbly” translates the verb *šāna* (which occurs only here in the OT); it means to be modest. (The adjective *šānûa* occurs only once, in Prov. 11:2.) The Lord had already told them of these demands (Deut. 10:12, 18). Doing justice “is a way of loving mercy, which in turn is a manifestation of walking humbly with God” (James Luther Mays, *Micah: A Commentary*, p. 142). Many people in Micah’s day were *not* being just (Micah 2:1-2; 3:1-3; 6:11), or showing loyal love to those to whom they were supposed to be committed (2:8-9; 3:10-11; 6:12), or walking in humble fellowship with God (2:3).

Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

(Note: Lesson outline and cross-references copied from previous lesson dated 07/01/2007)

Hating Good and Loving Evil (Micah 3:1-3)

1 And I said: "Hear now, O heads of Jacob, and you rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice?
2 You who hate good and love evil; who strip the skin from My people, and the flesh from their bones;
3 Who also eat the flesh of My people, Flay their skin from them, break their bones, and chop them in pieces like meat for the pot, like flesh in the caldron."

Hating good and loving evil is not knowing true justice (1)

Because of ungodly judgment (1 Cor 6:1-6)

6:1 If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4 Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church! 5 I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6 But instead, one brother goes to law against another — and this in front of unbelievers!

Because of unjust judgment (Ps 82:2)

2 "How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked?"

Because of violent injustice (Ps 58:2-3)

2 No, in your heart you devise injustice, and your hands mete out violence on the earth. 3 Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.

Because of being unconcerned about justice (Prov 29:7)

7 The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern.

Because of oppressed justice (Eccl 5:8)

8 If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still.

Because of not persisting in justice (Luke 18:1-8)

18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' 4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!'" 6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

Hating good and loving evil through being bad examples (2-3)

Examples of disobedience (Heb 4:11)

11 Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.

Examples of immorality and perversion (Jude 1:7)

7 In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

Examples of denying God (Titus 1:16)

16 They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

Examples that keep doing evil (1 Cor 10:6)

6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.

Judgment of False Prophets (Micah 3:9-12)

9 Now hear this, You heads of the house of Jacob And rulers of the house of Israel, Who abhor justice And pervert all equity,

10 Who build up Zion with bloodshed And Jerusalem with iniquity:

11 Her heads judge for a bribe, Her priests teach for pay, And her prophets divine for money. Yet they lean on the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? No harm can come upon us."

12 Therefore because of you Zion shall be plowed like a field, Jerusalem shall become heaps of ruins, And the mountain of the temple Like the bare hills of the forest

Judgment for perversion of justice (9)

Perversion of justice by withholding justice from aliens, fatherless and widows (Deut 27:19)

19 "Cursed is the man who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

Perversion of justice by not judging uprightly (Ps 58:1-2)

1 Do you rulers indeed speak justly? Do you judge uprightly among men? 2 No, in your heart you devise injustice, and your hands mete out violence on the earth.

Perversion of justice by not pleading or defending the case of the poor (Jer 5:28)

28 Their evil deeds have no limit; they do not plead the case of the fatherless to win it, they do not defend the rights of the poor.

Judgment for bribery (10-11)

Judgment for bribery because of acquitting the guilty (Isa 5:22-23)

22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine and champions at mixing drinks, 23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe, but deny justice to the innocent.

Judgment for bribery without the fear of God (2 Chron 19:7)

7 Now let the fear of the Lord be upon you. Judge carefully, for with the Lord our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery."

Judgment for bribery in secret (Prov 17:23)

23 A wicked man accepts a bribe in secret to pervert the course of justice.

Judgment for ruining people and their cities (12)

Ruining through being complacent (Zeph 1:12-13)

12 At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, 'The Lord will do nothing, either good or bad.' 13 Their wealth will be plundered, their houses demolished. They will build houses but not live in them; they will plant vineyards but not drink the wine.

Ruining through killing those who God has sent (Luke 13:34-35)

34 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 35 Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'

Ruining through sin throughout the country (Jer 17:3)

3 My mountain in the land and your wealth and all your treasures I will give away as plunder, together with your high places, because of sin throughout your country.

Ruining through not listening to God (Jer 35:17)

17 "Therefore, this is what the Lord God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.'"

How We Can Please God (Micah 6:6-7)

6 With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

We cannot please God with ineffective worship (6)

Ineffective worship because sin hinders worship (Isaiah 1:15-17)

15 When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; 16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, 17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Insincere worship is not accepted by God (Isaiah 29:13)

The Lord says: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men.

False worship is when there is no listening to God (Eccles. 5:1)

Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

False worship is not putting lessons learned into action (Ezekiel 33:31)

My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain

We cannot please God with ineffective offerings (7)

Ineffective offerings because trying to serve two masters (Matt 6:24)

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

Ineffective offerings because choosing the wrong one to serve (Josh 24:15)

15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

Ineffective offerings because of not following God (Matt 10:38)

38 and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

Ineffective offerings because of increased wickedness (Matt 24:12-13).

12 Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, 13 but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

God's Requirements (Micah 6:8)

8 He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

To live justly

Justification only comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 3:22-24)

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

To be just is to do what is right and acceptable to God (Prov 21:3)

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

To be just is to live a clean life and stop doing wrong (Isa 1:16-17)

16 wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, 17 learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

God loves the just and will not forsake them (Ps 37:28)

For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;

God guards the course of the Just (Prov 2:7-8)

7 He holds victory in store for the upright, he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless, 8 for he guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones.

To be just has the same requirements as the type of fasting that God desires (Isa 58:6-11)

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter--when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? 8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. 9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. "If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, 10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. 11 The LORD will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

To be just is to reform our ways (Jer 7:3-6)

3 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. 4 Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!" 5 If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, 6 if you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm,

To love mercy

God requires mercy because it is a blessing (Matt 5:7)

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God requires mercy because it is a prerequisite of getting mercy (Matt 18:32-35)

32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart."

God requires mercy because He is merciful and wants us to be also (Luke 6:36)

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

God requires mercy because it is a characteristic of His chosen people (Col 3:12)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

God requires mercy because mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)

because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

Mercy has as its components love, compassion, kindness and patience (Ps 103:8-14)

8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. 9 He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; 10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; 14 for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.

Walk humbly with God

God requires humility because it is a requirement for being with Him (Isa 57:15)

For this is what the high and lofty One says--he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.

God requires humility because it shows repentance of sin (Ezek 16:63)

Then, when I make atonement for you for all you have done, you will remember and be ashamed and never again open your mouth because of your humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD."

God requires humility because it is a blessing (Matt 5:3)

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

God requires humility because it leads to justification (Luke 18:13-14)

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' 14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

God requires humility because it is a part of submission to God (James 4:7-8)

7 Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you.

God requires humility because it is a prerequisite of being lifted up by God (1 Peter 5:5-6)

5 Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Commentary Thoughts from *preceptaustin.org*

Micah 3:1

Micah Chapters 3-5 = The Second Oracle = A Message of Doom and Deliverance

Hear - "Listen!" calls for attention. (He repeats this summons in Mic 3:9) - **Shama** (08085) is an imperative (command). This recalls Judaism's basic confession of faith, the "Shema" in Dt 6:4-6 (cf Dt 4:1, Hos 4:1, Amos 3:1). It is a call to listen, to heed and respond by putting into practice what is heard. **Shama** introduces the three main sections - Mic 1:1 (Mic 1-2), Mic 3:1 (Mic 3-5), Mic 6:1 (Mic 6-7). **Shama** introduces an important message will follow. All Micah's uses of the command to **Hear** - Mic 1:2, 3:1, 9, 6:1, 2, 9.

Wiersbe - It's as though Micah had shouted, "Listen! God is speaking! This is important!" The statement reminds us of the Lord's repeated admonition, "Who has ears to hear, let him hear!" or the warning in Hebrews 12:25: "See that you do not refuse Him who speaks" (NKJV). It's a dangerous thing to turn a deaf ear to the voice of God when He speaks through His Word. "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Mic 3:7-8NKJV).

Heads...rulers- Mic 3:1-4, 9-12 address the rulers and leaders, while Mic 3:5-8 addresses the false prophets.

Is it not for you to know justice? - The leaders and rulers were supposed to know, love and practice justice, "right from wrong." (NLT) These leaders were a far cry from the qualifications Moses enumerated in Ex 18:21! **Justice** is a key word in Micah 3 (Mic 3:1, 8, 9, 6:8, 7:9 with "**injustice**" in Mic 3:10). **Justice** is the Hebrew word **mishpat** (04941) = a judgment, a legal decision rendered, justice as a state or condition of fairness in disputes. **Justice** "refers to the entire process of the administration of justice, including hearing the case, rendering a decision, pronouncing a verdict, and implementing the sentence." (Patterson)

Micah 3:2

You who hate good and love evil (**ra'** = 07451) - It is a dire situation for any nation when the leaders invert and pervert the truth for personal gain and choose to believe the lie! (Pr 14:34, Contrast God's way - Pr 8:13, Ps 97:10-note, Isa 1:17-note, Amos 5:14-15).

Who tear off their skin from them and their flesh from their bones - A striking metaphor depicting the depth of depravity of these despicable leaders--they were veritable "butchers" of their own people! Unconscionable!

Micah 3:3

Who eat the flesh of my people (etc) (cf Ps 14:4-note) - Micah continues the graphic language in an attempt to paint a picture of the extreme degree of oppression and injustice by the leaders - these rulers were "cannibalizing" their own people -- one would think Micah's imagery might stir the consciences of some of these evil men!

Micah 3:4

Then they will cry out to the LORD - When is "**then**?" When the judgment of God falls on them! (cp Dt 31:17) Note what the **earth dwellers** will "**cry out**" to God in the day when His full fury falls on them in the horrific "Bowl Judgments" in Rev 16:9, 11, 21-note. **Allen** notes that "The term **cry out** is a technical one for appeal to a judge for help against victimization. The woman of **Shunem** exercised this legal right of protest when she returned home after seven years in Philistia and found her farm taken over by others: she appealed to the king, who saw to it that justice was done (2Ki 8:1-6). No such equity had these judges shown. In return they would find their own appeals to God unavailing in their hour of need."

He will not answer them - Solomon records that "He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be answered." (Pr 21:13) and "He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination." (Pr 28:9) **See also** Isa 1:15-note, Ps 66:18-note (cf Job 27:8,9, Pr 15:8, 29, Jn 9:31)

He will hide His face from them - This idiom indicates God's wrath and temporary rejection against His covenant people. **Calvin** remarks that "Micah confronts us here with the greatest evil that could ever befall us, that is, that God rejects those who reject Him, and that God refuses to answer them, so that all their prayers are in vain and are no longer received by God." (cf the fate of all who reject God and His free gift of the **Gospel** = 2Th 1:8-9)

Micah 3:5

The prophets who lead my people astray (Lxx = **planao** in present tense = continually) - A working definition of a false prophet! Note that Micah 3:5-8 deals with the judgment of these False Prophets.

When they have something to bite with their teeth - I.e., something to eat. These greedy prophets are motivated by what they can gain (cf Mic 3:11).

Cry (Lxx = **kerusso** = preach, proclaim loudly, publicly) **peace (shalom)** (cf false prophets in Jer 6:13,14, 8:10,11) - You can see the add in the 700BC edition of the Jerusalem Post = "Prophets for hire! Our message is guaranteed to tickle your ears!" (2Ti 4:3-4-note) "Prophecy for pay!" (cf our modern ungodly "televangelists!") If the price is right they proclaim platitudes of **peace** (thus they counterfeit the true **peace** proffered by the true Prophet, Messiah in Mic 5:5, cf Eph 2:14-note).

But against him who puts nothing in their mouths, They declare holy war - A declaration of war was the false prophet's price for anyone not paying their price for prophecy! A clear case of "Holy coercion!"

Micah 3:6

Therefore (term of conclusion) **it will be night for you--without vision, and darkness for you--without divination.** - Ironically, the revelations of the false prophets will be cut off at night, the time they often received their "visions!" (cf NLT paraphrase - "Darkness will cover you, making it impossible for you to predict the future.")

The sun will go down on the prophets - As noted above "The coming of night (and darkness in the following line) symbolizes the cessation of revelation." (NET)

And the day will become dark over them (NLT = "your day will come to an end") - Darkness is a metaphor for divine judgment and even death (Job 10:21, Pr 20:20, cf Jesus' words in Mt 8:12, 22:13, 25:30)

Micah 3:7

The seers will be ashamed...embarrassed - On the day of God's wrath. Seer is the word hazah (02372) which is used of those who see visions (Isa. 1:1-note; Lam 2:14; Ezek 12:27; Hab 1:1-note; Zech 10:2).

There is no answer from God - In the day of God's wrath the prophets' mouths will be stopped because God does not speak to or through them (cp Ps 66:18-note)

Micah 3:8

On the other hand (term of contrast - what is being contrasted?) **I am filled with power** (Lxx = **ischus**) **with (by) the Spirit of the LORD**- Micah gives the credentials of a true prophet - the power and presence of the Spirit. Micah's authority was not in his self but God's Spirit! (cf Isa 48:16, 2Pe 1:20-21-note) His power was from the Spirit even as was Jesus as the God-Man (cf Jesus in Lk 4:14, Acts 10:38). Every believer today has access to this same supernatural power because of the indwelling Spirit. (Eph 5:18-note, Acts 1:8-note, Ro 15:13-note)

And with justice and courage (power, Lxx = **dunasteia** = exercise of power, the stem "duna-" has the basic sense of "being able," cf related word - **dunamis**) - These are the Spirit enabled, holy "armaments" of a prophet. The justice of the God's prophet countered and overcame the gross injustice of the leaders (Mic 3:9). His courage enabled him to fearlessly rebuke people for their sins and impending judgment. Wiersbe adds that "a true servant of God declares God's message regardless of whether the people like it or not. He'd like to be a peacemaker, but sometimes he has to be a troublemaker."

To make known to Jacob his rebellious act, even to Israel his sin - Micah's purpose was to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction" (2 Ti 4:2-note).

Micah 3:9

Hear this ("Now hear this!", Listen! - reiteration of Mic 3:1) **heads...rulers** - Mic 3:9-12 Micah switches from the false prophets to the faulty leaders..

Who abhor (Heb = **taab** - despise, detest) **justice and twist** (Heb = **aqash** - pervert, make crooked; Lxx - **diastrepho** = distort, turn different ways - as used in Php 2:15-note) **everything that is straight** - The Lxx uses an especially strong verb for **abhor** (**taab**) - **bdelusso** - which means to loathe something, to find it detestable.

Bdelusso is derived from a root (bdeo) which means to feel nauseated or sick! True justice "nauseated" these perverted leaders!

Micah 3:10

Who build Zion with bloodshed and Jerusalem with violent injustice (Heb = 'ewel - anything that deviates from right way of doing things! Lev 19:15, Dt 25:16, Pr 28:27, Dt 32:4; Lxx = adikia - unrighteousness) - Clearly a key word in Micah 3 is "**justice**" (here "injustice") (cf Mic 3:1, 8, 9)

Micah 3:11

Leaders pronounce judgment for a bribe - Bribery was condemned (cf. Ex 23:8; Dt 16:19; Pr 17:23).

Priests instruct for a price - Patterson explains this describes "money that was exchanged for priestly rulings on the Torah or law of Moses."

Prophets divine for money - Prophets were to be **watchmen** (Jer 6:17, Ezek 3:17-note) who warned of divine judgment for disobedience and called the people to repentance, and were not to be an OT version of many modern money grabbing "Televangelists!" (cf send money for miracle water)

Allen - A legal problem? Take it to the judge. A religious problem? Take it to the priest. A personal problem? Take it to the prophet. A satisfactory answer was guaranteed if money passed from hand to hand.

Yet they lean (Heb = sa'an - leaning on for support; Lxx = epanapauomai = finding comfort through confident dependence on) **on the LORD** - They don't truly lean on (trust in) Jehovah, but upon their fallacious interpretation of His promises.

Is not the LORD in our midst? - Sin deceives (Heb 3:13) and these leaders, priests and prophets asked a rhetorical question which they were sure called for an affirmative "Of course He is!" They were like many today who "profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed." (Titus 1:16-note)

Calamity will not come upon us (cf the deceived sinners in Amos 9:10) - Clearly these leaders, priests and prophets did not understand the clear warning prophecy in Micah 1:12! **Calamity** is the Hebrew word **ra'** (07451) meaning bad or evil and is a **Key Word** in Micah where it is used 7x in 6v = Micah 1:12 (calamity), Mic 2:1 (evil), Mic 2:3 (calamity), Mic 3:2 (evil), Mic 3:11 (calamity), Mic 7:3 (evil).

Micah 3:12

Therefore - Term of conclusion - Now we see the consequences God would bring about because of the corrupt leaders, priests and prophets had flouted God's law. As a country's leaders go, so goes the country! Do you hear that America? (Pr 14:34)

On account of you Zion will be plowed as a field - **Zion** is the easternmost ridge of Jerusalem, adjacent to the Kidron Valley and the Gihon Spring and here is used as a synonym for the city of Jerusalem. "Plowed as a field" implies that the site would be wiped clean, since 'an area had to be totally cleared of debris in order to be ploughed and planted.

Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins - Solomon's Temple was razed by Nebuchadnezzar some 100+ years later.

And the mountain of the temple will become high places of a forest. - NLT "A thicket will grow on the heights where the Temple now stands."

Micah 6:1 (Micah speaking) **Hear** (Listen! A command -Shama 08085 - see comments on Mic 3:1) **now what the LORD is saying** (speaking to Israel), "**Arise** (A command - Stand up! Call to action! "Court is in session!" cf Dt 29:10,15, Job 23:4-5), **plead your case** (Israel defend yourself) **before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.** - This third cycle of oracles (Mic 6:1-7:20) begins a "cosmic courtroom scene" with the prophet serving as God's advocate issuing a summons to Israel from God the "Plaintiff" in this "covenant lawsuit" (Israel has repeatedly broken the Mosaic Covenant)! Case is

Micah 6:2 (Micah still speaking) "**Listen** (Command -Shama 08085 - see comments on Mic 3:1), **you mountains** (cf Mic 1:2), **to the indictment of the LORD, and you enduring foundations of the earth, because the LORD has a case** (Heb = rib 07378 = lawsuit, litigation) **against His people** (Israel, the "chosen people"); **Even with Israel He will dispute.** - This pictures the **mountains** of Israel personified as witnesses to hear God's charges against Israel (cf Dt 4:25, 26; Is 1:2-note, Dt 31:19, 32:1)!

Micah 6:3 (God is speaking) **"My people, what have I done to you, and how have I wearied you? Answer Me.** - They have no answer to God's pithy rhetorical question! **And as an aside beloved, neither do we for He has "granted us everything pertaining to life and godliness according to a true knowledge" of Jesus.** (2Pe 1:3-note) **This begs the question - Am I "growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ?"** (2Pe 3:18-note) God has not wearied Israel. Israel has wearied God (cf Jeremiah's cry Jer 6:11! Israel as God's "wife" has pursued harlotry, while God has been the ever faithful Husband.

Micah 6:4 "Indeed, I brought you up from the land of Egypt and ransomed (Heb - padah; Lxx = lutroo - free a slave, debtor or prisoner by paying ransom price) **you from the house of slavery** - First piece of evidence of God's lovingkindness to Israel - Jehovah paid the price to ransom Israel from Egyptian bondage.

I sent before you Moses (see Mal 4:4-note, Ex 3:10), **Aaron** (see Ex 4:14-16; Ex 29:29-30), **and Miriam** (see Ex 15:20-21). - It is interesting that Micah is the only OT prophet to mention **Aaron**. God gave them wise leaders to lead them out of Egypt.

Micah 6:5 "My people, remember now what Balak ("devastator" or "one who lays waste) **king of Moab counseled and what Balaam son of Beor answered him** - Balak conspired with the leaders of Midian to hire Balaam to curse Israel. God did not allow Balaam to curse Israel, instructing Balaam that he could only bless them (Nu 23:11, 25; 24:10). For the full story of Balak and Balaam read Nu 22:1-24:25.

From Shittim to Gilgal - After 40 years of wilderness wandering Israel's last camp on the east side of the Jordan before entering the Promised Land was at Shittim and the first camp after crossing the Jordan was at Gilgal. While not stated, the mention of these two locations recalls to mind God's miraculous parting of the Jordan River to allow Israel to traverse safely from Shittim to Gilgal.

In order that you might know the righteous acts of the LORD. - God's **righteous** (He does what is "right") **acts** were to demonstrate His covenant faithfulness to Israel.

Micah 6:6 (Israel replying apparently convicted by the divine charges) **With what shall I come to the LORD and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings** (cf Lev 1:3-4, These offerings were sin offerings, entirely consumed by fire), **with yearling calves** (could be offered after one week old - Lev 9:3, 22:27 and were considered the best)? - These words are spoken by Israel, who appeals to offerings and sacrifices to "make up" for her sins in lieu of obedience (cf 1Sa 15:22; Ps 51:16-17-note). Balaam is condemned for his greedy desire to profit as a prophet! (2Pe 2:15-16-note; Jude 1:11, cf Rev 2:14-note).

Micah 6:7 Does the LORD take delight in thousands of rams (Rams were used for sin offerings - Lev 5:15, 6:6, 16:3), **in ten thousand rivers of oil of oil?** Answer? No! **Thousands...ten thousand** - These inordinately large quantities are exaggerated in order to emphasize the point of the futility of sacrifice without obedience.

Shall I present my first-born for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? This could never please God, because He prohibited child sacrifice (Dt 12:31). They were simply asking that if we could offer the most precious thing in the world would it be enough to atone for their transgressions and sins? Clearly the answer is an emphatic divine "NO!" As **Henry Morris** says "The Levitical sacrifices had been established by God. They were vitally important when offered in faith, acknowledging personal sin and trusting God's provision of forgiveness on the basis of the shed blood of the innocent substitutes. They were of no avail, of course, if offered simply as a ritual or for other unworthy motives."

Micah 6:8 (Micah replies to Israel's questions in the previous 2 passages) **He has told** (Lxx = anangelo - used in secular Gk for proclamations of kings, reports of envoys, etc) **you, O man, what is good** - Common theme in the OT = 1Sa 15:22; Is 1:11-20; Jer 7:21-23; Hos 6:6; Am 5:15. Micah says Israel had been told how to walk, so she knew the truth, but by implication refused to do the truth! Sounds familiar doesn't it! How often do we sin willfully, refusing to humble ourselves? Note that Micah is not saying what a man does will save a man. In fact, the truth is that only a saved man can do these things.

And what does the LORD require (seek with care - Lxx = ekzeteo in the present tense = continually) **of you but to do justice** (in contrast to Mic 3:2), **to love kindness, and to walk** (implies that this is one's lifestyle; Lxx - poreuo - proceed in present tense, middle voice) **humbly with your God** (cf 1Pe 5:5, Jas 4:6-note - humility paves the way for reception of God's grace)? Micah is saying that instead of sacrifices (Mic 6:6-7), God desired their obedience - justice, kindness, humility. Micah echoes Moses "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD's commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?" (Deut 10:12-13, cf Jer 7:22-23)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Micah courageously confronted the tragic lack of godly leadership for the people of God. While Micah's words in the concluding portion of our printed text apply to all God's people, they most certainly need to be exemplified in the lives of their leaders. One thinks of how Jesus looked at the masses in His day and saw them as "sheep having no shepherd" (Matthew 9:36). The same terminology could have been used to describe the people in Micah's day, given how corrupt the leadership had become. What a difference it would have made if those leaders had taken the words in Micah 6:8 to heart! Church leaders today would do well to make those words their standard of conduct. But whether Christian leaders are aligned with God's will or not, the priesthood of all believers must still bring their lives to God as sacrifices (Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5). Jesus has paid the price (Hebrews 7:27, 28). We do not worry about offering rivers of oil or thousands of animal sacrifices. Let us therefore search our hearts for strongholds that resist practicing justice and mercy. In humility, may we seek to please the Lord with our whole lives.

Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary

The Message of Micah - God sent His messenger to Samaria and Jerusalem. In his first messages, the prophecies are generally focused on God's people. However, later he pointed his finger at the leaders, the princes, prophets, and priests. Micah called on these leaders of the country to begin demonstrating right living and justice.

Lack of Justice at the Helm - The leaders of God's people are commissioned to fairly represent the people and stand for righteousness on their behalf. The job requires upholding justice, defending the innocent, and declaring punishment on the guilty. Sadly, the leaders in Micah's time acted the opposite. They cruelly mistreated and oppressed the people. They violated their rights and unmercifully used them, stripping away their resources to divide up their goods among themselves. Scripture paints a disturbing picture of a vicious predator violently destroying its prey. The arrogant leaders thought so highly of themselves that repentance never crossed their minds. They routinely carried out the Jewish religious rituals and mistakenly assumed they were fine. They walked around pretending to depend on God with no genuine heart toward Him at all. They smugly believed that God would come to their rescue if they needed Him because, after all, they were His chosen people.

The Consequences - God showed His displeasure with this kind of attitude by allowing Judah to be overtaken and Jerusalem destroyed. But those who listened to Micah's stern warning asked God what to do, what to bring to Him. Did He want more offerings, more oil, more sacrificed rams?

The Lord responded that those things were not what He wanted. What the Lord desired then, and still today, is a heartfelt, real commitment and loyalty to Him. First, be fair in your treatment of others. Do to people as you would want to be treated. Second, since the Lord loves mercy, He asks the same of His children. God's family is to be known by its benevolence, tenderness, pity, and forgiveness toward offenders. Finally, His children must walk meekly with Him, continuously acknowledging His presence.