

Micah 2:6-11

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Micah declared an oracle of judgment against false prophets whose teaching justified the seizing of other people's land by wealthy land barons.

The oracle begins with Micah quoting the false prophets of his day that told him *do not speak out* (v. 6). They did not want Micah to prophesy about the LORD's coming judgment. The word for *speak out* in this verse (Heb. "nāṭap") literally means "to drip" referring to words coming from the mouth. It is used to refer to prophesying (Amos 7:16). Here, the verb is plural, implying that these false teachers (also "dripping") wanted Micah and others like him to stop their prophesying because these true prophets opposed the beliefs and practices of the false prophets.

The false prophets' reasoning was that if *they* (Micah and others) *do not speak out concerning these things* (sin and judgment), then *reproaches will not be turned back*. This means that Micah et al. needed to quit their prophesying against the false prophets' because the LORD's reproach (dishonor, shame) would not be *turned back* on them (or "overtake" them). The idea was that the false prophets claimed that if their deeds were not exposed, then they could get away with it. In this respect, they were treating God as though He were like an idol, that did not know or hear without someone speaking.

Micah then reminded the people of what other things the false prophets were proclaiming. He did this in the form of a question—*Is it being said, O house of Jacob* (v. 7). The first question the false prophets asked was, *Is the Spirit of the Lord impatient?* The implied answer was "no." They taught that it was not in the LORD's nature to punish His people; instead, because of His loving nature, He would not be impatient with His covenant people. This of course is true; it is just not all that is true (Deuteronomy 7:7-8).

The second question was *Are these His doings?* Again, the implied answer was "no." The *doings* here refer to the judgments described in vv. 3 – 5. The false teachers taught that a loving God would never bring suffering, calamity, and death upon His people regardless of their sin.

One of the hallmarks of false teaching is preaching about the love of the LORD and never teaching about His judgment and anger. This results in people justifying sinful acts on the basis that they will never be judged because of God's love. True teachers of the word of God teach both His boundless love and His disciplining of His people (Hebrews 12:5; Revelation 3:19).

The LORD through Micah responded by asking *Do not My words do good To the one walking uprightly?* (vs 7). The implied answer to this question is "yes." His *words* are the precepts in the Law of Moses given in the books of Exodus (20 – 24) and Deuteronomy. Those who walk *uprightly* are those who obey the law of the LORD, resulting in *good* (peace and prosperity). Those who walk in His ways choose the path that leads to a great experience of life and prosperity (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

In contrast to those who do good, Micah described the immoral and disobedient actions of some wealthy people and especially the false prophets during his time. He described them as *recently My people have arisen as an enemy* (v. 8), an *enemy* of the Law of the LORD. To be an *enemy* implies that the person was not a follower of the LORD and His ways. In fact, they opposed the LORD and His ways.

The evidence of being the LORD's *enemy* was that they *strip the robe off the garment*. The *robe* (Heb. "ēder") was a mantle representing one's status in society that was worn over the person's other garments (Heb. "šalmāh"). Their victims were *unsuspecting passers-by* that thought they were secure. Instead of celebrating their return, the *enemy* even attacked and stole *from those returned from war*.

The idea here is that their fellow neighbors went to war to protect them and their country, and when they returned home they were abused and neglected. This illustrates an attitude of entitlement, and a spirit of exploitation. Such a spirit is the opposite of "love your neighbor as yourself." Those who live according to this spirit of exploitation are the LORD's *enemy*.

Not only do these evil people attack men, the LORD references *the women of My people you evict* (v. 9). The reference to *women* only here probably refers to widows being forced from their residences. If a powerful person wanted a particular home, they would simply evict *each one from her pleasant house* with no fear of being confronted. They were an *enemy* of God's law, because His law required that widows and the poor be given the ability to subsist during hard times, and the opportunity to improve their circumstances (Deuteronomy 15:7-9, 15:11-14, 24:12-15).

The LORD also said that their actions would affect the children as well because *from her children you take My splendor forever*. The *splendor* (Heb. "hăḏārî") probably refers to the LORD's blessings upon Israel (*her*). The taking away of *her splendor* probably means that God's blessings will go away from Israel when the people are in exile. It seems here that God is telling the wicked wealthy people that they are the ones causing Israel's blessings to be taken away, because they are the ones breaking the treaty/covenant they made with their Suzerain/ruler God (Exodus 19:8).

Because of the sinful actions of the leaders of Israelite society and the false teachers, an entire generation of the LORD's people would never experience the LORD's material blessings gained from living in the Promised Land.

Those corrupt people who forced their fellow Israelites to leave their homes were commanded by the LORD, through Micah, to *Arise and go, For this is no place of rest* (v. 10).

They did not leave on their own accord—they were forced into a 70-year exile by the Chaldeans (Babylonians) starting in 605 BC. Their *resting place* in Israel had become a place of sin, cruelty, and corruption, and it was not a good place to live. Therefore, they were evicted.

In fact, the land of Israel/Judah had been corrupted *because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction*. Not only did exile take place, but the Chaldeans destroyed much of Judah, especially

in 586 BC when they leveled Jerusalem. It was indeed going to be *a painful destruction*. This destruction was directly prescribed in the covenant/treaty Israel entered into with God, their Suzerain/ruler (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

Micah then became a bit sarcastic when talking about the extent to which the Israelites had been responding to *a man walking after wind and falsehood* (v. 11). This man, a reference to false prophets, made a lifestyle of pursuing things that lacked substance (*wind*) or credibility (*falsehood*). It was such a person that would be prone to telling *lies*. This false prophet had *said*, “*I will speak out to you concerning wine and liquor.*”

The *wine* and *liquor* represent an indulgent excessive lifestyle from those blessed with prosperity and affluence. The people during this time had an intense desire to enjoy their prosperity in a manner that indulged their fleshly appetites. The false prophets encouraged this way of thinking, teaching the people that the chief end of life is to become wealthy, and indulge their pleasures. They said the means (exploiting others) justified the ends (indulgent lifestyles). This was in direct contrast to the teachings of God’s word. God teaches that indulging in appetites makes us a slave to our desires, and is self-destructive (Romans 6:16).

But the people would believe what the false prophet said and would follow him to the point where *he would be spokesman to this people* (vs 11). The word for *spokesman* (Heb. “*matṭîṭ*”) is the same word used in v. 6 translated “speak out” and literally means “to drip.” The idea is that the false prophets were continuously dripping out what their audience wanted to hear (2 Timothy 4:3). The false prophets made a living providing a false moral justification to their audience that it was honorable to be self-serving, and exploit others. This was, in truth, destructive and worthless, especially in light of their expressed vow to keep Israel’s commitment to the LORD’s covenant (Exodus 19:8).

A true prophet, like Micah, would have a much different message. He would encourage the people to submit themselves to the Law of Moses, obeying and loving the LORD (Deuteronomy 6:1 – 5) and loving one’s neighbors (Leviticus 19:18). He would emphasize that they are choosing between life (by loving their neighbors) and death (by exploiting them) as set forth in their covenant/treaty with God (Deuteronomy 30:19). As Micah is doing here, a true prophet would elevate the truth that actions have consequences, and their wickedness is leading their nation directly to being judged, according to the terms of their covenant/treaty agreement with God (Deuteronomy 28:15-68).

The principle that we choose continually between life and death, and thus bear the consequences of our actions, is repeated in the New Testament (Matthew 7:14; Romans 1:24, 26, 28; Galatians 6:8). Like God’s people in Judah, New Testament believers will also be judged and rewarded according to their deeds (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Therefore, the principles set forth in the Old Testament are relevant to believers today, because we all reap what we sow; actions have consequences. God created cause-effect for the moral universe that is just as predictable as cause-effect for the physical universe. This is why Jesus repeated so many principles from the Old Testament, because God gave His covenant to Israel for their own good, to tell them what works in life (Deuteronomy 10:13).

That following these precepts is for our good is also why the New Testament emphasizes the core teaching of God's covenant with Israel, that the experience of life comes from loving God and loving others (Luke 10:27; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; James 2:8). Loving others is the path to our own fulfillment (Luke 9:23-24).

Biblical Text

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But if they do not speak out concerning these things,
Reproaches will not be turned back.**

**7 "Is it being said, O house of Jacob:
'Is the Spirit of the Lord impatient?
Are these His doings?'
Do not My words do good
To the one walking uprightly?**

**8 "Recently My people have arisen as an enemy—
You strip the robe off the garment
From unsuspecting passers-by,
From those returned from war.**

**9 "The women of My people you evict,
Each *one* from her pleasant house.
From her children you take My splendor forever.**

**10 "Arise and go,
For this is no place of rest
Because of the uncleanness that brings on destruction,
A painful destruction.**

**11 "If a man walking after wind and falsehood
Had told lies *and said*,
'I will speak out to you concerning wine and liquor,'
He would be spokesman to this people.**