

## The Curse of Failed Leadership

### Read Micah 3.1-12

**My apologies for the brevity of the notes for this lesson. This week has been extraordinarily preoccupied with issues and projects which have given me no extended breaks of time for my attention to be focused on quiet study or recording notes for this lesson. I have studied, read, meditated, and prayed over the text, mostly in small snatches of time ... but haven't had sufficient time or access to my computer to commit any more than these scant notes to writing. We'll fill it out much more during our lesson time...**

### INTRODUCTION

*1 / "The book of Micah is found in the middle of the Minor Prophets, and in fact it contains the middle verse of the twelve minor prophets: a prophecy of judgment on the holy city of Zion and its temple (3.12). Within the Minor Prophets, Micah is in the middle of a trio of books (Jonah, Micah, Nahum) dealing with the nation of Assyria and with Israel's and Judah's relation to this hostile power. Jonah and Nahum deal with the salvation and judgment of Assyria, respectively, while Micah deals mostly with the impending judgment on Judah at the hands of the Assyrians, as well as with the eventual judgment of Assyria itself."* Stephen G. Dempster, Expository Commentary.

**2 / Micah.** Micah's name is a short form for the longer name Micaiah, or Michaiah. That name is actually in the form of a question: *"Who is like Yahweh [The LORD]?"* [Most of the time when you see the 'ah' or 'iah' ending on a name, it is a reference to God's personal Name, Yahweh ... just like the names ending in 'el' refer to the common word for God 'El.'] Micah himself will make a play on his own name in **ch 7.18** when he extols the compassion, grace, and forgiveness of Yahweh by asking the question: *'Who is a God like you...?'*

**3 / From Moresheth.** Micah identifies himself by where he comes from [not by who his father is...as several other prophets are identified]. He is from **Moresheth**. This town is located in the foothills of Judah, sometimes called the Shephelah. It is also called Moresheth-Gath in **ch 1.14**. Moresheth was located about 25 miles SW of Jerusalem on the border of Judah and Philistia, near Gath. This was a rural, agricultural region, so Micah very likely was like Amos in that he came from a rural region, yet found himself thrust into the epicenter of national politics and religion. He probably identifies his hometown because everybody would have known him from his associations with Samaria and Jerusalem – which were the capital cities of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

**4 / During the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.** You will find these same kings of Judah named in Amos and Isaiah – especially Isaiah. Micah and Isaiah were close contemporaries, not only in time, but also in the content of what they wrote. In fact, if you read **Micah 4.1-5 and Isaiah 2.1-5**, you will find that they are almost the same message verbatim. Which has led people to question and speculate, 'Who copied whom?' Really, neither had to necessarily copy the other. If they were prophesying at the same time and delivering much the same messages [Isaiah being the longer and fuller of the two], then why couldn't and why wouldn't Yahweh have given the same message to both prophets?

**5 / Micah...prophet to Hezekiah.** This last king of Judah who is named here is Hezekiah. Micah also delivered warning messages from Yahweh to Hezekiah about the judgments that would come upon them [Jerusalem] if they did not repent and change their ways. Hezekiah listened to Micah's warnings and moved to institute many of the reforms he enacted during his reign [see **Jeremiah 26.16-19**]. **The specific message that Micah delivered to Hezekiah is quoted from Micah 3.12.**

**6 / Which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.** Samaria has fallen to the Assyrians by this time. But Yahweh is not done with the Assyrians, either. They will face their own destruction from

Yahweh in the years to come. But for now, Yahweh is warning Jerusalem and Judah [the southern kingdom] that they, too, must repent. Judah's sins are like Samaria's sins. They too must be judged – and will be. This is the prevailing theme of chapters 1-2.

**7 / Here are just a few of their specific sins Yahweh indicts them for:**

[1] idolatry, **ch 1.7; 5.12-14**

[2] seizure of property, **ch 2.2, 9**

[3] the failure of civil leadership, **ch 3.1-3, 9-10; 7.3**

[4] the failure of religious leadership, **ch 3.11**

[5] the failure of prophetic leadership, **ch 3.5-7, 11**

[6] the belief that personal sacrifice satisfies Divine justice, **ch 6.6-7**

[7] corrupt business practices and violence, **ch 6.10-12.**

**8 / The word of Yahweh that came to Micah...** So these messages that Micah will deliver from Yahweh are His evaluations and judgments against them for all their sins and injustices they were committing – both against Yahweh and against each other. HOWEVER, like in Hosea, Amos, and especially Isaiah, along with these messages of certain judgment and destruction, there are also the promises of redemption, reconciliation, and restoration that will be fulfilled **'in the latter days,'** in days yet to come. These messages of salvation are pointers and prequels to the Gospel of Jesus Christ! We are in those **'latter days'** and there are more to come!

**9 / The messages that Micah delivered from Yahweh can be broken down into three units ... each section begins with 'hear':**

[1] chapters 1-2: **"Hear, you peoples, all of you; pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord GOD be a witness against you, Yahweh from His holy temple..."**

[2] chapters 3-5: **"And I said, 'Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice? you who hate the good and love the evil..."**

[3] chapters 6-7: **"Hear what Yahweh says...Hear, you mountains, the indictment of Yahweh..."**

## II / Micah, chapter 3: The Curse of Failed Leadership

**1 / We will focus our attention for this lesson on chapter 3: The Curse of Failed Leadership.**

**2 / Chapter 3** also will break down into three shorter messages within the larger one:

[1] verses 1-4, **Yahweh's judgments against the 'rulers,' that is, the civil authorities;**

[2] verses 5-7, **Yahweh's judgments against their prophets – their religious leaders;**

*verse 8 will interject Micah's own personal testimony concerning how his ministry and message differs from the others ... He has received his authority, power, message, and boldness from Yahweh Himself: "But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of Yahweh, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."*

[3] verses 9-12, **Yahweh's judgments against all their 'heads,' leadership, rulers, prophets, and including their priests** in this section.