

YOU'VE GOT TO CHANGE YOUR EVIL WAYS / Sunday, July 5, 2015

Unifying Topic: **NO REST FOR THE WICKED**

Lesson Text

I. **Mocking Lament** (Micah 2:4-5)

II. **Exhausting The Patience Of The Lord** (Micah 2:6-11)

The Main Thought: O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? (Micah 2:7, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People do not want to be confronted with their social and moral abuse of others. What is the result of their failure to acknowledge their evil ways? Micah prophesied that God would give no rest to those who practice evil against God's faithful ones.

Lesson Aim: To explore Micah's depiction of people who deny they wrongdoing in the community.

Life Aim: To help believers respond appropriately to those engaged in wrongdoing in the community.

HISTORY:

The author of the Book of Micah was the prophet Micah. ¹Micah was the 6th in order of the Minor Prophets; one of 12 Minor Prophets. "*Minor*" means that these prophets wrote shorter prophecies than the 4 greater or Major Prophets. The greater ones were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel. Micah was from Moresheth, also called Moresheth-Gath, a small town in southwest Judah. Micah lived in a rural area, but often rebuked the corruption of city life in Israel and Judah.

²Micah prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah (1:1)

- Jotham: basically a good king, but he did not remove the high places of idolatry from the kingdom (see 2 Kings 15:32-35).
- Ahaz: a wicked king; it was during his reign that the captivity of the northern tribes occurred (see 2 Kings 16:2-4).
- Hezekiah: a good king who withstood the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem in 701 B.C. (see 2 Kings 18:13-19:36).

Through Micah, God convenes court (calling all the people to let them know that He, the Lord will be witness against them); the Judge arrives (the Lord comes forth out of His high place); and He names the defendants (addresses His own people), Samaria (Israel) and Jerusalem (Judah)—the two seats of government. The rulers of both kingdoms led the people in the worship of idols. For this, God's judgment must fall. The pronouncement of judgment over Samaria came first (1:2-7), then, pronouncement of judgment over Judah (1:8-16). ³The prophet said he would grieve because of Samaria's destruction (vv.8-9); then through a clever use of several word-plays he called on certain towns of Judah to mourn for Samaria and for themselves because they too would feel the brunt of an Assyrian invasion (vv.10-16).

Chapter 2:1 Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds! when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their hand. Micah pronounces "*Woe*" upon the political leaders (having power in their hand) because of their unbridled lust and quest for power and possession of the land. When they go to bed at night, they devise evil plots, and in the daylight they bring them into realization. The power that they possess enabled them to bring their evil schemes to realization for they controlled the courts and the councils at the city gates. Thus they got what they wanted. Micah declares "*Woe*" to them, meaning great sorrow, grief misery, and trouble.

2:2 And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. The leadership of Israel did not improve, for they continued to covet the fields and possession of their subjects and violently deprive their citizens of their rightful heritage; illegally evicting families. The Mosaic Law required that the land remain with the families and within the tribes. If anybody sold family

¹<http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/micah-lbw.htm>

²<http://flatwoodscoc.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/micah.pdf>

³<http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/micah-lbw.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

property, it was only until the next Year of Jubilee, at which time all land reverted to the original owners (Lev.25:13-17). In this arrangement, the rich were kept from oppressing the poor which would cause the economy to stabilize; there would be no coveting.

2:3 Therefore thus saith the Lord; Behold, against this family do I devise an evil, from which ye shall not remove your necks; neither shall ye go haughtily: for this time is evil. The first phrase proclaims the fact that as they devised evil, God devised a penalty. "...*From which ye shall not remove your necks*" means that even some may escape man's vengeance; none will escape God's; you won't be able to get out of this noose. "...*neither shall ye go haughtily*" means with head erect; not having their head up in the air. "...*For this time is evil*" refers to that which is planned for them; speaking of the coming Assyrian invasion. As a result of sin, God would allow foreign invaders to divide their land; none of them would have the inheritance apportioned to them. As the rich took from the poor, so God would take back that which He gave as judgment on the nation. Jehovah will take up their cause and will avenge the evil done upon them. God will humble the haughty nation by giving the land to another nation, and the people will be delivered as captives into that land.

LESSON:

Micah 2:4-5 Mocking Lament

2:4 In that day shall one take up a parable against you, and lament with a doleful lamentation, and say,— The tragedy will be so bitter that others will compose a taunting (*song, chant, parable*) bewailing their fate. Their enemies will take it up and use it in mockery and ridicule against them. Because of the sins of the nation, particularly those of nobility, no one will be able to divide the land, for there will be no lands to divide.

2:4b This taunting song or parable will be: ...**We be utterly spoiled: he hath changed the portion of my people: how hath he removed it from me! turning away he hath divided our fields.** The oppressors had seized property from the defenseless and now there will be no land to divide because God will confiscate the land and send them far away. All of the land will pass under the control of Assyria. The rulers who seized that which did not belong to them will in turn be evicted and homeless of that which they had seized; all will be losers and mocked.

2:5 Therefore thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord. The image underlying this verse is a reference to the days of Joshua when the land was originally apportioned to the people of Israel by lot and each section was measured off with a line. The land will now be in heathen hands not to be distributed after exile. There will be no need to cast the line by lot.

2:6 Prophecy ye not, say they to them that prophesy: they shall not prophesy to them, that they shall not take shame. Prophecy ye not was directed at Micah by the false prophets, and also by the people who took the side of the false prophets. Micah's message is understandably unpopular, even though it's true. The nation and its rulers take issue with the prophet and contend with him not to prophecy the truth. Instead, they wish to hear false prophets who will convey messages that are pleasing to them. They rejected the prophetic Word.

2:7 O thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the Lord straitened? are these his doings? do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?— God responds through Micah by pointing to "*those who are named the house of Jacob.*" First question, "*Is the Spirit of the Lord restricted?*" (Does God lose His temper?). Second question, "*Are these His doings?*" (Is this the way He acts?). And third question, "*Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly?*" (Isn't He on the side of good people?). In effect Micah is saying that when they criticize him, they are criticizing the Lord, and more so the Spirit of God. God's words toward His people will be a blessing only if they will walk uprightly and abide by His Word. His message has no danger for those who do what God wants. Only those who are in opposition of God need to fear.

Micah 2:6-11 Exhausting The Patience Of The Lord

2:8 Even of late my people is risen up as an enemy: ye pull off the robe with the garment from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. In support of the justice of God's judgment, the prophet cites current sins of the nation, particularly its leaders, which shows that the nation justly deserve the judgment of God. The indictment is impressive. They robbed the poor and innocent (who pose no threat to anyone) of their robes, the only covering that they had to shelter them from the cold of night.

2:9 The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away my glory for ever. They robbed helpless widows of the homes they had inherited from their deceased husbands which contained their precious memories. Even the helpless, orphaned children of the widows are deprived of their livelihood. The widows and orphans have always been the object of God's eye, and he who violates them brings destruction upon himself.

2:10 Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction. These heartless oppressors would be banished from their homes and land, even as they had torn others from their homes. Because of the extent of their depravity, judgment must fall upon rulers and nations; and it will mean their utter destruction. "*This is not your rest*" refers to Canaan as a resting place for Israel; their Promised Land. However, this land is about to be taken from them and given to oppressors. The reason? - It is polluted; polluted by the sins of its inhabitants. Consequently, "*it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction,*" which speaks of the land vomiting the people out.

2:11 If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people. The false prophet can always be identified by his false message; in keeping with what the people want to hear, because the false prophet is a partaker of the people's sins and cannot condemn that of which he approves, and in which he readily participates. It is always contrary to the true message of God. The people of Micah's day did not like him or his message, and they sought those false prophets who were more acceptable. People will always seek a preacher who will console them, rather than convict them of sin. So, *if a man walking in the spirit* (evil spirit)... *and prophesy* (temporal blessings, such as wine and strong drink), that's the kind of prophet people like.

NOT PART OF THE LESSON VERSES 12-13

2:12 I will surely assemble, O Jacob, all of thee; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as the sheep of Bozrah, as the flock in the midst of their fold: they shall make great noise by reason of the multitude of men. In the dark picture of judgment, a promise of restoration comes peeping through. It is assured in this verse and it becomes visual in verse 13. ⁴This is a complete change from the previous verse. This is speaking of the restoration of the remnant of people God will gather. He still calls them Jacob, which is speaking of all twelve tribes of Israel. The noise of the multitude is, possibly, the voices of so vast a number praising God. They are classified as sheep, which represent the saved in Christ.

2:13 The breaker is come up before them: they have broken up, and have passed through the gate, and are gone out by it: and their king shall pass before them, and the LORD on the head of them. This predicts a king leading his army out (they break through) from an enclosed city (pass the gate). And the king goes before them; he leads the way (back to their own land). The "*breaker*" refers to Israel's Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will break down every obstacle between the people and their God. He comes to restore them, forgive their sins, and implant within them a new heart. He will lead them to glorious restoration, and He will rule over them and be their King. No one will be able to hinder His Messianic Millennial work, for He is the Lord (Jehovah)! The purpose of this prophecy was not to predict exactly how this would occur, but that it would. However, we do know it's in the future. But, this

⁴<http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/micah/02.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

gave the people hope and helped them turn from sin.

SUMMARY:

In that day, Israel will lament and grieve their fate. Their enemies will begin to mock and ridicule them with a taunting song. Their sins, especially those of nobility, had led them to this point. They will of them say "*we are utterly destroyed...etc.*" The land the rulers had confiscated from the poor would be divided among their enemies. There wouldn't be any casting a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord. Neither the false prophets nor the people wanted to hear Micah's prophecy, so, they sought these false prophets. They wanted comfort. Those who rejected Micah didn't want truth and therefore, exposed themselves of their beliefs. They didn't think God would do them harm. What they failed to understand was that God's Words do reward the righteous, but they also rebuke those engaging in evil deeds (vv.4-7).

⁵God accuses the rulers in which Micah mentions 3 things of which the rulers are guilty of:

1. They steal the fine clothing from people's backs as though they were spoils of war (v.8).
2. The rulers force the nation's women to leave their own pleasant houses (v.9).
3. And from the children they had taken away His blessings (My glory) (v.9).

This means the rulers had robbed the people of clothing; the widows forced from their homes, and stripped their children of their God-given right. The rulers had taken the children's happiness, as well as the widows. Since the Israelites had committed such grievous sins, Canaan was no longer their resting place. God would take the land from them; their inheritance because it was now polluted and it would destroy them; would vomit them out (v.8-10). The sort of prophet the people wanted was not someone like Micah who told the truth, but who comes with lies; acting on impulse, prophesying lies and of wine and strong drink (v.11).