

MICAH

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to the book of Micah as we continue our study through the Word of God. The main focus of this book is God's judgment upon His people, the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Now the reason for this judgment is their rebellion against Him and their refusal to repent and return to Him.

You see, once they turned from the Lord their lifestyles deteriorated and they not only worshiped false god's, but they became covetous at any cost, oppressing people to get what they wanted. They refused to listen to the prophets of God but loved to hear the false prophets tell them what they wanted to hear, and thus, judgment was coming.

Kyle M. Yates puts the ministry of Micah like this. He wrote,

It is good to find a worthy champion of the poor who has courage and power to deliver an effective message. Knowing his fellows so intimately Micah was able to present in vivid colors the challenge to justice and consideration. His profound sympathy with the oppressed people came to life in unforgettable words. His spirit burned with righteous indignation as he saw the rampant injustice practiced upon his neighbors and friends. The poor peasants of Judah had a strong champion in this powerful young preacher from their country.

- Kyle M. Yates

Also, Micah was a contemporary with Isaiah, Hosea and Amos. His ministry was from around 740 B. C. to 687 B. C. and he prophesied during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. And like the other prophets of God, his name is interesting. His name means, “who is like Yahweh” and the idea here is that there is no one who is like the God that Micah served! What an important image for a people who had turned to other God’s and even the name of this prophet pointed them back to the One true God, **YAHWEH!**

The book itself can be divided into 3 different sections. The first section speaks of ***THE COMING JUDGMENT*** and we read of this in Micah chapters 1 through 3. The second section speaks of ***THE COMING DELIVERER*** and we read of that in Micah chapters 4 and 5. And the third section speaks of ***TRUSTING IN THE LORD*** and we will read of that in Micah chapters 6 and 7.

And that is how we will approach this book over the next few weeks, one section at a time. Tonight we will be looking at ***THE COMING JUDGMENT*** beginning in Micah chapter 1, verse 1. So with that as our introduction let’s begin reading in Micah chapter 1 beginning in verse 1 and let’s see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word!

MICAH 1

VERSE 1

1. As I have said, the name “**Micah**” is derived from a Hebrew word which means “who is like Yahweh.” And names were important in those days, not like we see today. You see, Micah is speaking to a nation who turned from the Lord and they needed to be reminded about the Lord. And his name does just that, “Who is like Yahweh?” And, of course, the answer is there is no one like our God!

2. We are also told that Micah ministered during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, which would place his ministry around 740 B. C. to 687 B. C. as I have said. And more than likely Micah’s ministry was not focused during the reign of King Hezekiah as he was bringing reform to the nation. In fact, we see them turn to the Lord during the reign of King Hezekiah!

We are told that Micah lived in the Judean town of Moresheth, which was about 25 miles southwest of Jerusalem, near the Philistine city of Gath. And his focus will be both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms as they turned from the Lord.

VERSE 2-5

1. Please understand that God does not pour out His judgment without warning people ahead of time. He gives them time to repent, to turn to Him but if they refuse, judgment will come, not might!

And yes we see God coming against Samaria or the Northern Kingdom of Israel as well as Judah or the Southern Kingdom of Judah for their sin, their transgressions! But as you look at the language here we see that God is warning all the inhabitants of the earth, that this is speaking of a future time we call the Tribulation Period.

And as you read this you see that God is the Judge who is coming to judge this earth as well as the Prosecuting Attorney who will bring forth the charges against the people of this world as well as the Jewish people!

You can read of this in Revelation chapters 6 through 19 and it is the last seven-years before the Lord returns to set up His Kingdom on this earth. But before He does that He pours out His wrath upon a Christ rejecting world.

Now in saying that, listen to this article by Jan Markel and it is taken from a Christian magazine, Christian Today. And as you listen, I guess it does reflect what Christianity is like today in many places but it is not what God has called us to be, it is not what God has said. We are told,

Those of us anticipating Christ's return have a great advantage. *We listen for a trumpet in the midst of the carnage. If we listen carefully, we think we hear the hoof beats of the four horsemen in the distance. The end is near* is not a saying on a sandwich board worn by some homeless person marching down Main Street. Rather, it is the hope of the believer. Most people call it the Rapture. *And no, it's not an escape hatch.*

But if you believe this, one Christian outfit calls us "zombie Christians." *Christian Today* magazine is not secular, it is Christian but with a Leftist bent. It has more of an ecological agenda than a spiritual agenda, and their version of the world ending is because *we're killing the planet. The apocalypse to them is climate change.* I'm quoting a few paragraphs:

“It’s easy to point a finger at the fundamentalist fringe who have been mass marketing the apocalypse through films like ‘*A Thief in the Night*’ and ‘*Left Behind*.’ These are based on weakly-constructed theology of a Rapture where believers are beamed up to Heaven to avoid catastrophes awaiting the planet.”

The magazine continues, “Their theological version is called Premillennialism. You don’t have to live in the Bible belt to be affected by this way of thinking. Many of us started our Christian journey with a version of the gospel message that emphasizes escapist eschatology. Sadly, with the best intentions, Christians have tended to deliver an altered and edited gospel that is robbed of its scale and supremacy, *producing zombie Christians that are merely souls waiting for Heaven. . . .*”

Sure. Bring it on. Heaven, that is. . . .

Noted author and co-founder of the *Rapture Ready* website, Terry James, writes in an article titled, *Pastors, Be Forewarned*, “When one gently probes one or the other of the Bible-believing/preaching pastors with the question, ‘Do you preach prophecy?’ the answers are along the same line. It’s my experience, and that of others who ask the question, that 95% of those asked say something like the following.”

- Prophecy is just too hard for people to understand.
- I just don’t know enough about the subject because we barely touched on it in seminary.
- Teaching people how to live as a Christian is more pressing.
- It scares people, so I just don’t want to worry them unnecessarily.
- People have been talking about this for years and we’re still here. We need to deal with the here and now.

[Terry James writes] “Prophecy makes up at least 27% of the Bible. Half of that 27% has been fulfilled, with half yet to be fulfilled. Anyone with spiritual ears to hear and spiritual eyes to see is capable of following the Lord’s command: *‘And when you see these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.’*” (Luke 21:28)

“Certainly, if God calls people to be pastors-shepherds of His flock - He equips them to feed the flock His whole Word, not just parts the pastor selects as important, while summarily dismissing the other parts of God’s Word.”

. . . If we are “zombies” as that magazine states, we are proud of it. We are not ashamed to say we can’t wait for Heaven.

The King is, indeed, coming. Somebody get very excited about it. Thankfully, this world is not our home.

- <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs138/1101818841456/archive/1122886127051.html>

2. As we read on we will see God come against the capital cities of Israel. First Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and then Jerusalem, the capital city of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. You see, as the nation’s leaders go, so goes the nation. They turned from God, the government became corrupt, they no longer served the people but themselves, and the people were not only oppressed, but they followed in the wicked ways of the leaders.

Make no mistake about it. We are leaders in our homes, in our work places, wherever we are not because someone has given us that title but God has called us to be leaders, to be examples. And instead of hiding our light, let it shine for all to see for our hope is in the Lord and when things fall apart, our Rock is the one who will be standing and thus, I want to be resting upon Him!

VERSES 6-8

1. Here we see God's judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel and it would be devastating, it would be complete! Samaria was going to be destroyed and it was in 722 B. C. by the Assyrians.

The Jewish people, many were killed and the rest were taken captive. And what the Assyrians would do is bring in other people from other nations to settle in the land and to intermarry with the remaining Jews, and this group of people were called the Samaritans. There is only a small group of these people left today, dying off because of intermarrying within family units.

Now you can visit Samaria today and it is nothing more than a barren wasteland. A few olive trees you will see but for the most part the valleys are filled with stones that once made up this great city! God said that this was going to happen and it did, "**Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of ruins in the field . . .**" Micah 1:6.

2. And God speaks of all the idols that they had, all these false gods that they worshiped and they would be taken by the Assyrians and melted down. And many of these idols were the results of the services that the temple prostitutes provided. They used that money to make these idols and keep in mind that these are God's people, they should have known better and they did, they just didn't care! But these false gods will be destroyed, they will not remain!

One writer put it like this in regards to these prostitutes and these idols. "Golden images, of such monetary value yet so spiritually and politically worthless, were constructed from the wages of cult prostitutes. The conquerors will break them up and use the money to repeat the same cycle. Only the heart of depraved man could worship gods like that!" (Waltke)

3. Now listen again to verse 8 and then I will expound on it. We are told, **“Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals And a mourning like the ostriches.”** Micah 1:8.

Micah has just spoken of the judgment of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and this man of God is broken. Yes they were wicked but Micah was broken over the death and destruction that would come upon them because they refused to repent and turn back to the Lord. And that should be our heart as well. We share the Gospel message and people reject it and we should be broken over their decision!

Jesus, as He saw the coming destruction of Jerusalem, listen to what He said, **“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”**

Matthew 23:37-39. You see, if a people continue down a path away from God, destruction will come, but that should not cause us to rejoice. You see, lives are at stake here, eternal lives! And I like Boice and how he expounds on this. He wrote, “Many who have rejected a Christian’s logic have been won by his tears.”

VERSE 9

1. As God now looks at the Southern Kingdom of Judah and He sees that she has come to the point of no return and judgment will eventually come upon her. She did not learn the lesson from her sister in the North. I guess it is as Proverbs 29:1 says, **“He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”**

Now we are told that the enemy came to the gates of the city of Jerusalem and this is speaking of the time that the Assyrian King, Sennacherib, after he defeated the Northern Kingdom of Israel, some twenty years later, he started picking off cities in the Southern Kingdom of Judah, some 46 of them before surrounding Jerusalem.

And the King, Hezekiah brought this situation before the Lord, as did his prayer partner Isaiah, and we read in II Kings 19:35 what took place. It says “**And it came to pass on a certain night that the angel of the LORD went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses - all dead.**”

Thus, Jerusalem was not destroyed yet. But wickedness was growing and it would continue to grow so that by 586 B. C. the Babylonians came in and leveled the city taking the people away captive. You see, judgement was coming for her wounds were incurable!

VERSES 10-14

1. Micah is listing some of the towns that will be affected by the invading armies both in the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Now the one that doesn't belong to either the Northern Kingdom of Israel or the Southern Kingdom of Judah is Gath. That city belonged to the Philistines and what Micah is saying is that the Philistines will rejoice when they see what is happening to the people of God, the Jews!

VERSES 15-16

1. God does not leave His people in the dark but gives them hope for the future. Here is a promise of the coming Messiah in verse 15, which we will see in greater detail later on in this book. So yes, there is judgment coming but Micah speaks of a hope for the future. Children will be taken captive and there will be great mourning but “**The glory of Israel shall come . . .**”

MICAH 2VERSES 1-2

1. Here we see how evil man can be. In the darkness of night, in the darkness of spirit, man comes up with ways to do evil. And then, as morning comes, those thoughts, those plans, are put into action!

Think about the choices they had. Instead of meditating on God’s Word, drawing close to God, they are coming up with evil plans to take advantage of others, oppress others! They saw what others had and they wanted it and they took it. And yet, they had the power not to do these things but they gave in and allowed these evil plans to grow and they lived them out in their lives!

What a lesson for us. Psalm 63:5-8 says, “**My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips. When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me.**”

2. As you look at verse 2 we see the sin of covetousness, wanting what others have and obtaining it at any cost. God had given the land or leased the land to His people with the stipulation that they would be obedient to Him. And even if a piece of land was sold, in the year of Jubilee all land reverted back to the original owners, preventing the rich from getting richer and the poor from getting poorer. But here they transgressed the Laws of God, took the land by violence! And they did follow the golden rule you might say, that is, “Whoever has the gold not only rules, but makes the rules!”

3. Listen to how God is going to respond to all this evil and their refusal to repent and return to the Lord.

VERSES 3-5

1. God is bringing judgment upon them not because they were good people but because they plotted violence, they coveted what others had and then took it, they were an evil people. And all the injustice they plotted at night against others, God says that He is going to bring judgment upon them. He is going to give to them what they gave to others.

You see, because you have taken the land by force, by violence from your brothers, I will take the land from you and give it to another people. They would not have to worry about borders for the land because they will no longer be in the land! And thus, it is as Proverbs 21:13 says, **“Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.”**

2. Look at our nation and once we were loved by other nations but now we are looked down upon because we are proud, because we are arrogant and we do take advantage of others, we plot evil in the night and carry it out in the day you might say! And God will judge us for our actions.

VERSES 6-9

1. We have seen this over and over again as God sent His prophets to His people and they refused to listen. They turned their back to the Word of God and they saw it as “**prattle**” or chatter! And here is the tragedy in all that. They said that they did not want to hear the prophets of God, they were not interested in the prophets of God and thus, God says, “**So they shall not prophesy to you.**” Micah 2:6.

Let me share this article with you and I want you to notice what this Emerging Church spokeswoman has to say about her salvation and notice what is missing from it. We are told,

Emergent Church spokeswoman Nanette Sawyer is an ordained Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA) minister with degrees from both Harvard and McCormick divinity schools. Her story is typical:

My explicit rejection of Christianity happened when our family minister implicitly rejected me. When I was a preteen, he visited our house, spoke with my parents, then pulled me aside, the eldest, for a chat of our own. He asked me if I was a Christian. This is a very interesting question to ask a child who has been raised in a Christian household. Being asked such a question I was, in essence, being told that I might not be a Christian. I responded that I didn't know. The conversation went downhill from there and ended with my saying that I guessed I wasn't a Christian. He told me that I had to believe [on Jesus Christ as Savior] to be a Christian and I didn't believe it.

After that, I spent a good fifteen years defining myself as not Christian. Some of the things that I had been taught in Christian contexts, both explicitly and implicitly, were unacceptable to me. I was taught, for example, that there are good people and bad people, Christian people and non-Christian people, saved people and damned people, and we know who they are.

. . . I was taught that I was inherently bad, and that I would be judged for that. I was told that the only way out of the judgment was to admit how bad I was.

Thinking back on that pivotal interaction with my childhood minister, I believe the whole conversation missed the mark in a big way. He was defining Christian identity as assent to a list of certain beliefs, and he was defining Christian community as those people who concur with those beliefs. In asking me if I was a Christian, and accepting [my] answer, he essentially told me that I wasn't part of the community. I wasn't in; I was out.

Insulted by this, *Sawyer says that she later became a “Christian” through Hindu meditation and the medieval, mystical Roman Catholic practice of “centering prayer”* - all while a student at Harvard, taking a master's degree in comparative world religions. She then tells of her experience while attending the services of a liberal Presbyterian church in Boston:

The minister there invited me into the community by serving me communion without asking if I was a Christian. He didn't ask, “Are you one of us?” He didn't say, “Do you believe?” He simply said, “Nanette, the body of Christ, given for you.”

On this basis, Sawyer says, she became a “Christian” and was subsequently ordained as a minister in the apostate PCUSA.

- <http://www.teachingtheword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=59687&view=post&blogid=5770>

Did you notice that she denies sin and thus, her salvation is based on “Hindu meditation and the medieval, mystical Roman Catholic practice of ‘centering prayer’”? How crazy is that and yet, we are seeing this more and more. *SIN* has become a four letter word and thus, it can’t be spoken in the church today.

And yet, when you look at John the Baptist, you look at Jesus, you look at the early church, it was all the same message, ***REPENT!*** In other words, the Bible says that sin has separated us from God and the only solution to that problem is to repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be Lord and Savior of your life! It is not about Hindu mediation and centering prayer given to us by the Catholic mystics!

And if you don’t think this is important I will just share the words of Jesus with you from Luke 13:3, **“I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.”** You see, if you say, “Do not prattle” or “We do not want to hear about sin any longer, we don’t want to hear about repentance, we just want to hear good things, a positive message” and in the end, God will give you what you want but you will enter eternity apart from Him!

And I think for the past 20 years I have given a positive message. If you refuse to repent of your sins and receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior you will die in your sins, I am positive about that. On the other hand, if you do repent of your sins and ask Jesus to be your Lord and Savior you will enter into eternity with Him, I am positive about that!

2. Now verse 7 is interesting because they called themselves followers of God and yet they did not do the things that God had instructed them to do. In fact, they were moving in the opposite direction! Yes, the Word of God is good to those who listen, to those who obey it. But if it falls on deaf ears, it is meaningless!

And we can easily apply that to this nation today. Look at how many people in America call themselves Christians, well over 80% of Americans, but it is in name only. There is no relationship with the Lord and that is evident by their actions. Like the people of Micah's day, they want to control what God says, edit the Words of God, and were selective in what they heard! The same in true today, we are not different.

In Matthew chapter 7 Jesus spoke some words that really don't need explanation, but they are hard to swallow. He said, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’ Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Now everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”** Matthew 7:21-27. The choice is yours!

3. And in verses 8 and 9 of Micah chapter 2 we see that they treated their own people wickedly, oppressing them, taking the clothes off their backs for their own personal gain. The enemy was not outside the nation, but among them, they were their own enemy! They foreclosed on homes, leaving people homeless!

So to some this up, the key here to their own preservation was to follow God's Word, not just know it but apply it. But, if they reject it then they will be left poor, they will be left destitute and I am not only speaking of material things, they will be poor, they will be destitute spiritually speaking!

VERSES 10-11

1. Micah is warning them that the rest that these false prophets are speaking of is false, they won't find what they are looking for listening to what these false prophets are saying! Again, the Word of God brings to us that rest, that peace that is only found in Jesus. But they were looking to wine to help them feel better, to give them the rest.

That is interesting because their world can be falling down around them and they are so intoxicated they are unaware and they think this is rest but when they awaken from their stupor they will be in captivity! That is what God will do with both the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, they both will go into captivity because of their refusal to repent and return to the Lord!

And God is basically saying that "If you want to listen to these prophets of yours, go ahead and in the end, you will be judged." You see, they liked the false prophets because they approved the sins the people were committing, ignoring what God has said. And you can get away with it for a time but eventually judgment will come and it did! Remember, guns don't kill people, false prophets do!

We see that even today and Paul warned that this was coming as he wrote in II Timothy 4:2-5, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

And we see that today where these false teachers are building up the flesh and starving the spirit. We did not learn the lesson. In Isaiah 8:20 we see what we must do, **“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”** Go to God and His Word and not to the world for your answers.

VERSES 12-13

1. In the midst of all this judgment look at the hope for the future that the Lord is giving to them. We see here that God is speaking of a future restoration for a remnant of His people, for those who will turn to Him and Israel will be restored!

Now how do I know this for sure? Because of what verse 13 says. You see, this **“one who breaks open”** is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Listen to how the King James Version puts this and it is more of a title. It reads, **“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.”**

It is the Lord who is “**the breaker**” and when the Lord returns at the end of the Tribulation Period and puts down evil and separates the sheep from the goats, He will set-up the Kingdom where He will rule for 1,000 years. And we will see that the nation of Israel will receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior, the Lord will be their head and lead them! God is not done with Israel and we see that here in verse 13 as this chapter closes.

MICAH 3

VERSES 1-3

1. The Lord is saying to the leaders in Israel, “Listen up, this is important. I want you to pay attention to this!” When God says that we need to pay attention, we need to listen to what He is saying, we need to do that!

And the point that God is making here is that these leaders in Israel loved evil, it was part of their life, and they hated the good. Thus, their actions reflected their evil heart. The justice system was corrupt. They are eating up the people by oppressing them and taking all they can from them. They talked a health, wealth and prosperity gospel you might say and not the truths of God found in the Word of God! Thus, the nation was spinning out of control and it would be only a matter of time until they destroyed themselves, unless God intervened!

Now in reading this it almost seems like they resulted into cannibalism, but that is not the case. One write put it like this. “Since the grinding poverty of the poor was leading them into an early grave, the prophet, in a sustained metaphor, depicts the magistrates responsible for creating these conditions as acting like cannibals. This grotesque figure aims to awaken the conscience of the reprobates.” (Waltke)

God was trying to get their attention and He is trying to get ours as well. We can look at the world and see this take place with people who are in power and it is understandable in the sense that they don't know the Lord and they are driven by self, by greed, their lustful desires!

The problem comes when we see this in the church. Keep in mind that people do not exist for the leaders but the leaders are there for the people. We have reversed that many times in the church today and thus, we see the abuse of the people, the fleecing of the flock of God so that the leaders can fill their pockets!

We see this spoken of in Jeremiah 5:30-31 where we are told, **“An astonishing and horrible thing Has been committed in the land: The prophets prophesy falsely, And the priests rule by their own power; And My people love to have it so. But what will you do in the end?”**

When I read those words I am reminded what we see with many of these Televangelists of today who ask for all kinds of amounts of money and they live in mansions. The people love it because they are told that as they give they will get even more in return – foolishness! If that is the reason you are giving good luck with that one, you will need it!

Listen to what Peter said in I Peter 5:2-4, **“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”**

Peter makes three points regarding leaders in the church and these can really apply to all of us. First of all, we are not doing this ***BY COMPULSION BUT WILLINGLY!*** There are all kinds of reason why people get into the ministry, maybe pressure from their parents or friends, or whatever. It is a calling from God and really, wherever we are serving, be it in the church, at home, at work we should do it with joy. And for a pastor or leader, make no mistake about it, they should serve willingly, they shouldn't feel forced or pressured to serve, but it truly is an honor to serve!

Secondly they are not to serve for ***DISHONEST GAIN BUT SERVE EAGERLY!*** If you are doing something because of the pay you will receive, to make the big bucks, that is dishonest gain or filthy lucre. Your motives are wrong. You serve because you love the people and you love the Lord and whatever the pay is, praise the Lord. That is not to say that a pastor is not to be paid, for Paul tells us in I Timothy 5:17-18, **“Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. For the Scripture says, ‘You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,’ and, ‘The laborer is worthy of his wages.’”** Sadly, many times pastors move from church to church to better themselves, to make more money, to be over a bigger flock and that is not the heart of a shepherd!

And the third point that Peter is making is that these leaders are ***NOT TO LORD OVER THEM BUT BE AN EXAMPLE TO THEM!*** Folks, the sheep don't belong to the pastor, they are entrusted to them by the Lord and thus, we don't drive the sheep, we lead them and that is done by example. I pray that as you look at my life you see a positive example, that I get down in the trenches with you doing the work. I pray that you have a hunger to know God through His Word and a passion to serve Him.

Make no mistake about it, we are living in the days of false shepherds, hirelings that are not interested in the sheep that has been entrusted to them, but to make a name for themselves, to make money or whatever. And because of that we see immorality within the church grow because we are feeding the flesh and not the spirit!

VERSE 4

1. God is speaking to these leaders, these corrupt leaders and He is telling them that because they refused to hear the cries of the people that God entrusted to them He is not going to hear them! Now that may not seem fair but don't miss the point.

I don't think this is a cry of repentance here but a cry, "Help I am in trouble!" They are coming to God because they want the judgment to stop and yet they refuse to repent and return to the Lord. They don't want to change! And it is because of that God says that He won't hear their cries!

Listen to what the Lord says in Amos 5:14-15, "**Seek good and not evil, that you may live; so the LORD God of hosts will be with you, as you have spoken. Hate evil, love good; establish justice in the gate. It may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.**" That is what God is looking for and in a heart that truly repents before Him He will forgive!

VERSES 5-7

1. God is continuing to speak against these false prophets who were speaking of peace and prosperity and now darkness has come upon the land and them. No longer will they receive prophetic revelation from God. In this time of judgment, as they seek an answer from God, God is silent. They did not want to hear from Him before and now it is too late and their hearts are far from God. They were interested in having the judgment stop not repent and return to the Lord!

And remember the peace that they were looking for and are now chanting for, it is going to elude them, they will not be able to find it. It is as Isaiah said, **“I create the fruit of the lips: Peace, peace to him who is far off and to him who is near,’ Says the Lord, ‘And I will heal him.’ But the wicked are like the troubled sea, When it cannot rest, Whose waters cast up mire and dirt. ‘There is no peace,’ Says my God, ‘for the wicked.’”** Isaiah 57:19-21.

You see, they will never find peace until they make peace with God. That is what Paul tells us in Romans 5:1-2, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”**

First you must make peace *WITH* God and then you can experience the peace *OF* God in your life. Apart from Jesus there is no true, lasting peace, not because I have said so but because the Lord has!

And as verse seven says, **“So the seers shall be ashamed, And the diviners abashed; Indeed they shall all cover their lips; For there is no answer from God.”** Now that judgment has come they are ashamed and God is silent before them. But again, it did not have to be that way, they could have repented and returned to the Lord but they didn’t and these are the results of their actions!

VERSE 8

1. We have been dealing with the false prophets of God who were interested in making a profit off the people and telling them lies to make them feel better about living in sin. And God judged them for their actions.

Now we see a picture of a true prophet of God. He does not go out in His own might but is filled with the Spirit of God, empowered by the Spirit of God to be witnesses of Jesus, to declare His truth in power!

Regarding the power of God's Spirit working upon leaders within a church, Spurgeon wrote, "We must have the Holy Spirit, and if we have him not, all our machinery will stand still; or if it goes on, it will produce no effect whatever. I heard of a Christian man whose mill-wheel was noticed to be in motion on a certain Sunday. The people going to worship greatly wondered there at; but one who went by set their minds at rest by pointing out that the wheel was only turning idly round, because the water, by accident, was allowed to flow over it. But the man said, 'It is very like our minister and his sermons. There is no work being done, but the wheel goes round, clickety click, clickety click, though it is not grinding anything.' Therein it also greatly resembles many an organization for spiritual service: the water is passing over it, glittering as it flows; but the outside motion does not join on to any human need, nor produce any practical result, and nothing comes of the click and hum."

How true that is folks and many times this is what is lacking, the power of God's Spirit at work. We have our plans, our ideas and we leave God out of the picture and that is never good. It is not by our might, not by our power but it is by the Spirit of God working in us and through us!

2. Now the message that is given many times is not an easy message to swallow and many times people don't like it. Thus, some water down the message or negate those things that are uncomfortable to teach on, and that is not good either. Some don't think we should be like Micah and the other prophets of God and expose sin. They tell us that it is different now in New Testament times as I Corinthians 14:3 tells us, **“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.”**

Thus, today a prophet of God is supposed to edify and exhort and comfort men, not expose their sin. Now there is nothing wrong in doing that but if sin is not exposed then how does someone get saved? If sin is not exposed in the believer then to me, it shows that you don't love them. Now I am not saying that you play the Holy Spirit and every little thing you jump on. But if you love someone you will correct them.

Listen again to what Paul said in II Timothy 4:2, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”** We are not only to exhort and convince people regarding the Word of God but we are to rebuke them when they are wrong! May we not lose sight of that fact or compromise our faith to allow sin to flourish!

VERSES 9-12

1. Understand what they were doing here. They were twisting, perverting the truth, the judicial system was corrupt and they used it to make a profit. They didn't care how they obtained their wealth, they only wanted more and more of it.

And why were they acting this way? For monetary gain! And they actually believed that God would protect them in their evil practices. From the judicial system, to the religious system, money was the priority, not justice or truth, not pointing people to the Lord.

And because of their actions and their refusal to repent, God was going to bring judgment upon them. For the Northern Kingdom of Israel, they will be taken away captive by the Assyrians in 722 B. C. And for the Southern Kingdom of Judah, Jerusalem would be destroyed and the nation taken captive by the Babylonians in 586 B. C. God says what He means and means what He says!

2. Now here is an amazing thing about the prophet Micah, he was listened to by the people. We see that Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Ezekiel and many of the others were ignored, but not Micah.

Why do I say that?

Because under the leadership of King Hezekiah, the Southern Kingdom of Judah did turn to the Lord. We are told in Jeremiah 26:17-19, **“Then certain of the elders of the land rose up and spoke to all the assembly of the people, saying: ‘Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and spoke to all the people of Judah, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts: ‘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.’” Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah ever put him to death? Did he not fear the Lord and seek the Lord’s favor? And the Lord relented concerning the doom which He had pronounced against them. But we are doing great evil against ourselves.’”**

Boice summed it up like this, “He was heard in the days of Hezekiah. A revival followed. Then, one hundred years later, his words were still remembered, and the memory of what happened earlier was used of God to spare the life of Jeremiah.”

3. As I close this evening remember how we divided this book up as we opened up our study. In Micah chapters 1 through 3, which we looked at this evening, we focused on ***THE COMING JUDGMENT***. But God does not leave them in judgment and that is what we will see next time as Micah chapters 4 and 5 deal with ***THE COMING DELIVERER***.

Remember what Jeremiah said in Lamentations 5:21, “**Turn us back to You, O LORD, and we will be restored; renew our days as of old.**” God will restore a remnant of the nation and the focus of our study next time will be the Kingdom Age as chapter 4 opens up with that glorious truth. Light coming from a dark time. Hope when they were hopeless. That is our God!