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**BIBLE STUDY**

**Refuge Church of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**

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“[Is it] not for you to know judgment?”

**Micah 3:1-12**

***Micah 3:1 "And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel; [Is it] not for you to know judgment?"***

Micah points to the sin of those in leadership. Even when the average person of the kingdom strays from practicing truth, it is expected that those in leadership will stand fast and do what is right. Micah says, Now listen, leaders of Jacob, you rulers of the house of Israel. Aren’t you supposed to know what is just? The obvious answer is yes. Micah is condemning the sins of those in authority. They should have led their people in the ways of God, instead they led them into sin. Leaders do have a great authority, but with that prestige and authority, go great responsibilities. They, above all the rest of the people, should have known better.

***Micah 3:2 "Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;"***

***Micah 3:3 "Who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron."***

Micah highlights the leaders’ spiritual and moral weakness. They hate good and love evil. It doesn’t matter what stellar competencies a leader possesses. If he hates what is good, he is disqualified. Regarding their treatment of the people, Micah compares these leaders with wild beasts or cannibals. Instead of protecting the people they are supposed to lead, they devour them! They tear off people’s skin and strip their flesh from their bones. Then they chop them up like flesh for the cooking pot. This type of injustice brings God’s wrath. This speaks of evil rulers who are out for only themselves. They are not like the good shepherd who cares for the sheep. They have skinned them at every opportunity. This is an expression used when you cheat someone in a business deal, as well. This does not mean they were practicing cannibalism. This is not to be taken literally. This just means that they treated them like animals for their own personal use, instead of like people. They had no regard for their people.

***Micah 3:4 "Then shall they cry unto the LORD, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings."***

God’s response is to hide his face from these evildoers. Therefore, when their time of trouble came (and it would ﻿come sooner than they thought), the leaders would cry out to the Lord, but he would not answer them. God’s response is to hide his face from these evildoers. They cry out to the LORD, but He has closed His ears to them. They showed no mercy, and they will receive no mercy.

***John 9:31 "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."***

***James 2:13 "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment."***

***Micah 3:5 "Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him."***

Micah also indicts the false prophets who lead [his] people astray. They are supposed to be the heralds of the kingdom of God. But, like the leaders, these prophets were looking out for themselves. That they proclaim peace when they have food to sink their teeth into but declare war against the one who puts nothing in their mouths means they could be bought. You could guarantee a good word from them by filling their stomachs or pockets. If you were poor with nothing to offer, however, the prophets only had harsh words for you. They were charlatans. The only vision they could see was one of money flowing from someone else’s pocket into their own. This state of affairs would make it hard for the poor to trust God, and it would give the rich a false sense of security. God does not overlook this sinful prophet. He will be punished. The following Scriptures that Jesus spoke are a very good explanation of this.

***Matthew 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."***

***Matthew 15:14 "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."***

***II Peter 2:1 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction."***

***Micah 3:6 "Therefore night [shall be] unto you, that ye shall not have a vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them."***

The punishment for giving false light is experiencing darkness: It will be night for you, without visions. So, because these prophets were a discredit to God, God would discredit them and halt their prostitution of the office of prophet. This is speaking of prophets who are not true prophets. They are not ambassadors to carry the Lord's Word, but their own. They prophesy for their own personal gain. They will no longer receive any messages from God. There will be a famine of the Word of God in their lives. The little light they had from God will no longer shine. Their light will go completely out.

***Zechariah 13:3 "And it shall come to pass, [that] when any shall yet prophesy, then his father and his mother that begat him shall say unto him, Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the name of the LORD: and his father and his mother that begat him shall thrust him through when he prophesieth."***

***Micah 3:7 "Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for [there is] no answer of God."***

Because they used their gifts (Micah never questions their power, just their motives) for debased purposes, God would debase them by cutting off their ability to communicate with him: There will be no answer. Those who refuse to speak God’s word will be abandoned by God. Seers, generally, could pray and ask for answers from God for the people. When their communication with God is cut off, they are no longer blessed with answers for the people. "Covering their lips" would be a sign of mourning for their inability to speak for God.

***Micah 3:8 "But truly I am full of power by the spirit of the LORD, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin."***

In contrast to these profiteering prophets, Micah asserts the weight of his credentials. He is a genuine prophet of the kingdom. What’s his proof? I ﻿am filled with power by the Spirit of the Lord, with justice and courage to proclaim to his Jewish brothers and sisters their rebellion and sin. A kingdom man relies on the Spirit’s power (not his own) and is willing to speak boldly, calling sin what it is. Micah knew that he was called by and accountable to God; therefore, God’s opinion was the only one that mattered. Micah is defending his own ability to speak for God in this. He is saying, "I am not one of those that God has cut off". Micah speaks the Words that the LORD has put into his mouth. He is actually a mouthpiece for God. These messages do not come from the heart of Micah, but from God, through Micah. Even though the declaration of Jacob's sins are coming from the mouth of Micah, they are actually coming from God.

***Micah 3:9 "Hear this, I pray you, ye heads of the house of Jacob, and princes of the house of Israel, that abhor judgment, and pervert all equity."***

Again, he speaks against the leaders of the people. This is not just to the prophets, but to the spiritual leaders of each family. They should be a standard that is lifted up for all of their people to follow, but they are not. "Pervert all equity" means they are not keeping God's laws the way they were written but are changing them to please themselves.

***Micah 3:10 "They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity."***

This is just saying that they grew by the bloodshed of others. Whether this is literal, or is speaking of injustices, I cannot say. They used Jerusalem for the promotion of their evil.

***Deuteronomy 27:25 "Cursed [be] he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen."***

***Micah 3:11 "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, [Is] not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us."***

Micah presses the issue of injustice once more, condemning all three levels of spiritual leadership: leaders, priests, and prophets. They ﻿exercised their roles in exchange for cash. This is speaking of gross abuse of their authority. Their judgment is easily bought, because they are judging for money. "The priests teach for hire" is speaking of ministers who minister to no one, but those who can pay. They are leaders for what they can get for themselves out of it. The ridiculous thing is they expect God to bless them for this. They believe they are a privileged few, who will not be judged of God. To be a spiritual leader of the people is a call of God, it is not a vocation to make a living with.

***Matthew 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves."***

***1 Timothy 6:10 “For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.”***

***Micah 3:12 "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed [as] a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest."***

The blame for the destruction of Jerusalem can actually be lain at the feet of these evil leaders. For the crimes of the priests, and prophets, and rulers, the destruction came from God. Zion is, many times, speaking of the church. There is an extensive lesson about the shepherds who lead the sheep astray in Ezekiel chapter 34. This, also, is speaking of the temple in Jerusalem which is destroyed in the Babylonian attack. The mountain of the house is speaking of the temple. God had moved out of the temple, because of their sins. The leaders were corrupt, perverting everything that is right. Nonetheless, they assumed God was on their side and concluded that no disaster would overtake [them]. They couldn’t be more misguided: Jerusalem would become ruins.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Who is this addressed to?
2. Micah is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the sins of those in authority.
3. With prestige and authority, go great \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. What is verse 2 speaking of?
5. Does verse 3 mean they were practicing cannibalism?
6. It means they treated the people like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Who does verse 5 say made the people err?
8. What happens, when the blind lead the blind?
9. Who is verse 6 speaking of?
10. They prophesy for their own \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_.
11. Why will the seers be ashamed?
12. What was "covering their lips" a sign of?
13. Who was Micah speaking of in verse 8?
14. Micah is actually a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for God.
15. Who is verse 9 speaking against?
16. What were their special sins?
17. How were they abusing their authority?
18. Who is actually to blame for the destruction of Jerusalem?
19. Where, in Ezekiel, do we read about the shepherds who lead the sheep astray?
20. What country destroyed Jerusalem?