

Micah speaks out

against injustice

Micah 3:1-5, 9-12

The prophet Micah observed the scales of justice in his day tipped way off-balance by the sin and corruption of his countrymen. Political and religious leaders broke the laws instead of enforcing them. Few voices denounced this injustice, and no one seemed able to stop it.

But God's justice would eventually restore balance and punish the guilty. Micah delivered God's charges against lawbreakers and warned of impending judgment.

When just about everybody cheats, the wicked fool themselves into thinking that God is on their side. However, with God on the side of justice, the unjust eventually get what's coming to them. In vivid terms, Micah described their day of reckoning when Jerusalem would be destroyed (Mic. 3:12).

Over a century later these very words were fulfilled when the Babylonian armies invaded and leveled Jerusalem.

People today continue to cheat, steal, and lie, ignoring God's standards of right. The cost of injustice has not decreased, nor has the need for God's people to fight against unfairness.

▶ Read today's text and the other verses listed below.

Then answer the questions:

▶ Micah vs. the government

- ▶ Who did Micah accuse of injustice (Mic. 3:1, 9)?
- ▶ For what crimes (Mic. 3:2-3, 9-11)?
- ▶ What laws had they broken (Exod. 20:15, 17; Deut. 16:18-20; Lev. 19:11-15)?
- ▶ How would they be punished (Mic. 3:4)?

▶ Micah vs. the religious establishment

- ▶ Who was guilty of injustice (Mic. 3:5, 11)?
- ▶ For what crimes (Mic. 3:5, 11)?
- ▶ How would God punish them (Mic. 3:6-7)?

▶ Christians vs. injustice today

- ▶ What evidence of injustice in our current government or world situation have you observed? What can you and others in your church do about it?
- ▶ What types of injustice affect you most directly? What have you done or could you do to oppose these wrongs?

Micah 3:1-5, 9-12

¹Then I said,

"Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel. Should you not embrace justice, ²you who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones; ³who eat my people's flesh, strip off their skin and break their bones in pieces; who chop them up like meat for the pan, like flesh for the pot?" Then they will cry out to the LORD, but he will not answer them. At that time he will hide his face from them because of the evil they have done.

⁴This is what the LORD says:

"As for the prophets who lead my people astray, they proclaim 'peace' if they have something to eat, but prepare to wage war against anyone who refuses to feed them.

⁵Hear this, you leaders of the house of Jacob, you rulers of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right.

⁶Who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness.

⁷Her leaders judge for a bribe, her priests teach for a price, and her prophets tell fortunes for money. Yet they look for the LORD's support and say, "Is not the LORD among us? No disaster will come upon us."

⁸Therefore because of you, Zion will be plowed like a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble, the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.

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This verse begins a passage that compares those who obey God with those who do not take Him seriously. Read through Isaiah 56, asking God to speak to you as you go through the chapter.

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When we see someone being wronged, we need to speak up. Ask God for the courage to confront injustice the next time you see it.

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Seeking justice is *not* taking the law into our own hands. When this verse speaks of God's righteousness being revealed, it's speaking about the last judgment. *All* the evil that has ever been done will

be exposed on that day. Thank God that ultimate justice rests with Him.

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Despite the bureaucracy of the court systems, many times justice is accomplished. If someone commits a crime, gets caught, and is convicted and sentenced, justice is still served—even though it may take years. So it is with God's judgment. Ask God for the patience to endure the evil of others.

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God's justice is perfect and complete. He judges fairly, always balancing justice and mercy. Thank God today for His control over that which we may not be able to do anything about.

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Trust God to attain perfect justice. Thank Him for being there to hold people accountable. Pray that you will "have confidence in the day of judgment" (1 John 4:17).

Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed."

—Isaiah 56:1

Intolerant to INJUSTICE

Micah rebuked the leaders of his nation for their injustice toward the people of Israel (Mic. 3:2-12). He used the imagery of cannibalism to show the shocking seriousness of their oppressive ways—something they had come to see as normal, even justified by God.

Opportunities for small acts of oppression present themselves to us every day. Our response to them tests our commitment to being like Christ.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

1. What causes oppression?
2. What are some of its consequences?
3. When, if ever, will oppression cease?
4. Are certain individuals or groups in your school or church treated with contempt? Why?
5. Have you ever been oppressed, or found yourself on the side of an oppressor? How?
6. How can you act as a mediator between the oppressed and those who mistreat them?