

## Greater Central Baptist Church

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## Sunday School

March 22 Lesson 4 (KJV)

### AN ARGUMENT AGAINST CORRUPTION

**DEVOTIONAL READING:** Zechariah 7:8–10; Deuteronomy 24:17–22

**BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE:** Micah 3–6; MICAH 3:1–3, 9–12; 6:6–8

**KEY VERSE:** *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? —Micah 6:8*

### DEVOTIONAL READING

#### The Cause of Their Captivity

##### Zechariah 7:8-10 (KJV)

<sup>8</sup> And the word of the LORD came unto Zechariah, saying,

<sup>9</sup> Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

<sup>10</sup> And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor; and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart.

##### Deuteronomy 24:17-22 (KJV)

<sup>17</sup> Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, *nor* of the fatherless; nor take a widow's raiment to pledge:

<sup>18</sup> But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

<sup>19</sup> When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not

go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

<sup>20</sup> When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

<sup>21</sup> When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

<sup>22</sup> And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

## PRINTED TEXT

### MICAH 3:1–3, 9–12

<sup>1</sup> 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?

<sup>2</sup> Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> 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.

### MICAH 6:6–8

<sup>6</sup> Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

<sup>7</sup> Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

<sup>8</sup> He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

## JUSTICE AND THE PROPHETS

### Unit 1: God Requires Justice LESSONS 1–5

#### LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each learner will be able to:

1. Summarize the condition of Judean leadership of the late eighth century BC.
2. Explain why the requirements of Micah 6:8 were especially necessary for leaders of the day.
3. Write one prayer per day in the week ahead for different church leaders—that the standards of Micah 6:8 would be theirs as well.

#### LESSON OUTLINE

##### Introduction

A. Warped

B. Lesson Context

##### I. Hateful Leadership (MICAH 3:1–3)

A. Despising Principles (vv. 1, 2a)

B. Consuming People (vv. 2b, 3) Cannibalism

##### II. Hypocritical Leadership (MICAH 3:9–12)

A. Guilty Leaders (v. 9)

B. Greedy Leaders (vv. 10, 11a)

C. Declaring God's Presence (v. 11b)

D. Deserving God's Judgment (v. 12) Indulgences

##### III. Heavenly Living (MICAH 6:6–8)

A. People's Ideas (vv. 6, 7)

B. God's Ideal (v. 8)

##### Conclusion

A. Humbly in Justice and Mercy

B. Prayer

C. Thought to Remember

#### HOW TO SAY IT

Ahaz	Ay-haz.
Chaldeans	Kal-dee-unz.
Hezekiah	Hez-ih-kye-uh.
Jotham	Jo-thum.
Micah	My-kuh.
Samaria	Suh-mare-ee-uh.
Uzziah	Uh-zye-uh.

## Introduction

### A. Warped

A certain funeral home sets up a nativity scene on its front lawn each Christmas season. One year, someone vandalized the nativity set. The perpetrator stole the Christ-child figure and replaced it with a stuffed monkey. The vandal also broke off the fingers of other figures and let the live sheep, goats, and donkeys out of the fenced area.

A few days later, the vandal confessed and returned the stolen figure of the baby Jesus. Even so, one can empathize with the funeral director's frustration when he said, "Why people would come here and show such disrespect, I don't know. You have to have a warped mind to do something like this."

The prophet Micah indicted the leaders of his day for their own brand of vandalism. But Micah described how real people were being abused and mistreated by those responsible for their care. They too were guilty of having warped minds. And such minds tend to excel at hiding behind warped self-justification.

### B. Lesson Context

The book of Micah is another of the 12 Minor Prophets. Micah's ministry took place in the second half of the eighth century BC. His times were full of turmoil and uncertainty for both Israel (the northern kingdom) and Judah (the southern kingdom). The Assyrians were a formidable threat to both kingdoms. They were the instrument in God's hands to carry out His judgment against Israel when the capital city of Samaria fell in 722 BC.

Micah's ministry may have overlapped with that of Amos (see lesson 1). While the ministry of the latter is dated during the reign of Uzziah king of Judah (about 785–734 BC; Amos 1:1), Micah 1:1 describes Micah's ministry as occurring during the reigns of Jotham (Uzziah's son), Jotham's son Ahaz, and Jotham's grandson Hezekiah. Jotham's reign, however, overlapped Uzziah's. While Uzziah was confined during the latter years of his reign, Jotham ruled in his stead (2 Chronicles 26:16–23).

Micah and Isaiah were contemporaries (compare the lists of kings in Isaiah 1:1 and Micah 1:1). Both ministered in Jerusalem. Micah's message included words of judgment against both Israel and Judah. His book begins with a reference to Samaria and Jerusalem, representing Israel and Judah respectively (1:1). Both are indicted for rebellion against the Lord (1:5–9).

### I. Hateful Leadership (MICAH 3:1–3)

In Micah 3, the source of today's study, we see language reminiscent of that found in the previous study from Habakkuk 2 (see lesson 3). Habakkuk, however, was describing the conduct of the foreign Chaldeans (Babylonians). Sadly, Micah is describing the behavior of those who are part of God's covenant people and should know better.

**A. Despising Principles (vv. 1, 2a)**

*<sup>1.</sup> 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?*

The Hebrew word translated hear often introduces prophecy in the book of Micah (examples: Micah 1:2; 3:1, 9; 6:1, 2; contrast 5:15). The same word introduces Deuteronomy 6:4, 5, which Jesus will call “the first and great commandment” (Matthew 22:38). The implication of its use is not just that ears will hear but that hearts will comprehend the words and lives will change as a result (contrast Isaiah 6:9, 10).

The designations Jacob and Israel refer historically to one man who had his name changed (Genesis 32:28; 46:2). As here, the names are often paired in Hebrew poetry as parallel expressions that refer to the same thing: God’s covenant people (examples: Psalm 14:7; Isaiah 9:8). Similarly, heads and princes both refer to leaders of those people (see Numbers 1:16; Joshua 22:30).

Micah begins his address to the leaders with a rhetorical question about their knowledge of judgment. The question implies that leaders ought to know what true justice is and how to exercise it faithfully and consistently (see commentary on Micah 3:9; Amos 5:24 in lesson 1).

Judgment requires God’s people to behave according to His righteous standards (contrast Jeremiah 5:5; Matthew 23:23). Exercising judgment reflects a person’s awareness of God’s standards of right and wrong (example: Leviticus 19:15).

*<sup>2a.</sup> Who hate the good, and love the evil.*

The leaders’ hatred for the good and love for the evil makes it impossible for them to administer proper judgment. Their moral compass points in the wrong direction. Both Isaiah (in Judah) and Amos (in Israel) address this perversion of values at about the same time (Isaiah 5:20; Amos 5:14, 15). Both northern and southern kingdoms are guilty of rejecting the Lord’s standards.

What Do You Think? How would you explain to someone the difference between good and evil?

**Digging Deeper**

Considering 1 Corinthians 9:19–23, how would your explanation to Christians differ from an explanation to unbelievers, if at all? Why?

**B. Consuming People (vv. 2b, 3)**

*<sup>2b.</sup> Who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones.*

Micah uses graphic language in portraying how offensive and destructive the leaders' behavior is (compare Psalm 53:4; Ezekiel 22:27). But this is only the beginning of his shocking description.

One should understand that these gruesome actions are not happening in a literal, physical sense. There are references to and predictions of literal cannibalism in the Bible (example: 2 Kings 6:26–29), but this is not one of them. Rather, Micah uses figurative, symbolic language to illustrate the extreme degree to which these leaders hate the good and love the evil (compare Psalm 14:4; Proverbs 30:14; Zephaniah 3:3). They are so indifferent to the people they are meant to serve that they can be compared to butchers.

*<sup>3</sup> 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 continues building on the cannibalistic overtone of the previous verse. For the leaders to flay the people's skin implies excessively cruel treatment. The leaders are meant to administer judgment and uphold righteousness. Doing so would allow the people to flourish, both physically and spiritually. Instead, the leaders do the opposite by perverting judgment and thwarting righteousness. Ezekiel, whose ministry will take place more than a century later among the captives in Babylon, uses similar language (Ezekiel 11:2–7; 24:3–6).

Centuries later, Jesus will describe leaders' greediness when He speaks of how the scribes "devour widows' houses" (Luke 20:46, 47). Paul in turn warns Christians against our own type of cannibalism in Galatians 5:15.

**CANNIBALISM**

The practice of humans eating the flesh of other human beings is well documented. Chinese emperors ate human flesh as a delicacy. Christopher Columbus reported on cannibalism in the Caribbean, at least partly so that he could conquer the islands by whatever means he desired. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, some Europeans ingested human body parts for medicinal purposes. As recently as the 1960s, the Fore people of Papua, New Guinea, traditionally ate parts of the bodies of recently deceased relatives.

Micah used images of cannibalism as a shocking illustration of the unjust practices in his day. He condemned Israel's leaders for treating people as sources of nourishment instead of as creatures made in God's image. Christians today must still beware of the tendency to use people to get what they need instead of valuing them simply as God's beloved creatures. How do you resist "cannibalizing" others? —J. E.

**What Do You Think?**

What modern imagery would you use to describe corrupt leaders today? Why?

**Digging Deeper**

How do you harmonize your response with Acts 23:5; Romans 13:1, 2, 7; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; 1 Peter 2:17; and Jude 8, 9?

**II. Hypocritical Leadership (MICAH 3:9–12)**

In Micah 3:4–8 (not in today's lesson), the prophet declares the Lord's judgment on the leaders (compare Deuteronomy 1:45). Then Micah exposes false prophets (Micah 3:5–7; compare Isaiah 29:10). Micah contrasts their selfish motives with the divine authority that undergirds his own prophetic ministry (Micah 3:8). This sets the stage for further condemnation, next.

**A. Guilty Leaders (v. 9)**

*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.*

Micah again calls on the heads and princes of God's people to hear his message. But whereas in Micah 3:1 the prophet posed a rhetorical question to challenge the leaders in the matter of judgment, here he bluntly accuses them of unjust behavior. They actually abhor judgment and twist the meaning of it to suit their own selfish purposes (compare Psalm 58:1, 2; Isaiah 1:23).

**B. Greedy Leaders (vv. 10, 11a)**

*10. They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.*

The final three verses of Micah 3 clearly focus on the southern kingdom of Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem. Though Zion was originally a specific location within Jerusalem, it gradually came to refer to the entire city. The two terms are therefore used together in parallel accusations against the city. Habakkuk indicted the Babylonians for building with blood, and ... iniquity (Habakkuk 2:12; see lesson 3). Here it is not the pagans but the leaders of God's covenant people who are charged with cruelty (compare Isaiah 59:7).

The implication, like that of the butchering image before, is that the leaders are taking advantage of the people for their own gain (compare Jeremiah 22:13, 17; Micah 7:2).

*11a. The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money.*

Three crucial leadership functions are listed here along with transgressions. When the Lord established the function of judge, He made it clear that those exercising this responsibility must never accept bribes or exhibit favoritism in their decisions (see Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 16:18–20). The heads in Micah’s time blatantly ignore these standards (compare Malachi 2:9, next week’s lesson). All they are interested in is what reward, in the form of bribes, they can obtain for their services.

The priests and prophets, whose offices are especially sacred, are no better. They too are guided by financial rather than spiritual priorities. They are willing to lie in order to earn their fee (see Jeremiah 6:13; Ezekiel 13:19; 34:2). The prophets are described as those who divine for money. The practice of divination was strictly forbidden for God’s people (Deuteronomy 18:10, 14). Its practice is listed as a reason why God’s judgment fell on the northern kingdom of Israel (2 Kings 17:17, 18).

Paul will later teach that “they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” and be compensated for their work (1 Corinthians 9:14). His method and motive are very different from those condemned by Micah, however. The leaders of Micah’s day are motivated by greed, and they use a forbidden method to satisfy that greed. Neither greed nor a forbidden method applies to Paul.

### What Do You Think?

In what contexts and in what positions do (or would) you favor the idea of paying church leaders? Why?

### Digging Deeper

How do the texts of Acts 18:3; 1 Corinthians 9:3–18; 2 Corinthians 2:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:5; 1 Timothy 5:17, 18; and/or 2 Peter 2:3 inform your response?

## C. Declaring God’s Presence (v. 11b)

*11b. Yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.*

As if these disgraceful practices are not enough, these fraudulent leaders have the audacity to claim God’s presence as a cover for their detestable conduct (see also Jeremiah 7:4). The Lord had promised to place His name in Jerusalem when Solomon built his temple there. But that promise remains contingent on the people’s obedience (2 Chronicles 7:12–22). The leaders in Micah’s day are prime examples of disobedience.

**D. Deserving God's Judgment (v. 12)**

*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.*

Such arrogant, brazen behavior by the leaders of God's people cannot be tolerated. The "evil" that the leaders confidently claim will never come (Micah 3:11b) will indeed come—and its arrival will be unforgettably severe. Jerusalem, the great city of David, will be reduced to heaps of rubbish (compare Leviticus 26:31; Isaiah 6:11; Jeremiah 22:6). No longer will anyone travel to Jerusalem to worship (contrast Psalm 122:3, 4). Instead, they will go to marvel at the extensive destruction that has taken place (1 Kings 9:6–9; compare Ezekiel 5:14, 15). Zion will be treated as nothing more than a field for plowing (Lamentations 5:18). The mountain of the house, which refers to the location of the house of the Lord, will be reduced to a forested area.

Approximately 100 years after Micah's time, his prophecy of Jerusalem's demise will be quoted by some of the elders in Jerusalem as a warning not to ignore Jeremiah's message (Jeremiah 26:17, 18). They note that King Hezekiah heeded Micah's warning. Rejecting this example and ignoring Jeremiah will imperil the whole city (26:19).

**INDULGENCES**

Johann Tetzel (1465–1519) may have had as important a part in launching the Protestant Reformation as any of the great reformers had.

Tetzel's notoriety, however, derives from his negative example. Tetzel was a German Dominican friar of prominence in the Roman Catholic Church. He was known to grant indulgences on behalf of the church in exchange for money. An indulgence was claimed to allow a remission of punishment in purgatory, thereby allowing a deceased person quicker admission into Heaven. Martin Luther's strong condemnation of Tetzel's actions helped spark the Reformation. Tetzel's lack of scruples, sanctioned by others in the hierarchy of the medieval church, led to the undermining of Roman Catholicism's power in Europe. Had that hierarchy paid closer attention to Micah 3, the outcome could have been different. Indulging in wickedness instead of righteousness invites God's disapproval and judgment. How can you keep from being a negative example in that regard? —J. E.

**III. Heavenly Living (MICAH 6:6–8)**

Micah 6 opens with the prophet's final appeal to the people to hear what the Lord has to say (see commentary on Micah 3:1). Whereas the previous call was aimed primarily at Judah's leadership, this one is directed at the people (6:3). The Lord portrays them as defendants on a witness stand, facing a series of questions from Him. He proceeds to give the people a history lesson, recounting His gracious acts on their ancestors' behalf (6:4, 5).

**A. People's Ideas (vv. 6, 7)**

*6. Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?*

Micah appears to put himself in the position of the defendants who are on trial before the Lord (see Micah 6:2, 3). The questions he poses may reflect the people's genuine puzzlement (compare 6:7). More likely, they are meant to expose the people's willful ignorance (contrast Psalms 40:6–8; 51:16, 17).

Burnt offerings are foundational in the Old Testament sacrificial system (Leviticus 1). The daily requirement is two unblemished year-old lambs (Numbers 28:3). Calves of a year old are even more costly than the two lambs. The question here suggests that God asks too much of His people! At least, this is how the people seem to justify themselves for their iniquities.

*7<sup>a</sup>. Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?*

Micah continues his questions by increasing the quantity of what might be brought before the Lord. Do numbers impress God? Is He looking for thousands of rams or rivers of oil? Again, the implication is that the people cannot give enough to please the Lord. In a way, this is true: without the heart behind the sacrifice, nothing will please God (compare Isaiah 1:11; Amos 5:22).

*7<sup>b</sup>. Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*

Micah raises the stakes even higher by suggesting the sacrifice of a firstborn child. The firstborn is of special significance to the Lord (Exodus 13:2). Child sacrifice is always forbidden (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2–5; Deuteronomy 18:10), but the argument here is not about child sacrifice. Rather, the people feel that not even giving the most extravagant sacrifice they can think of will please God.

**B. God's Ideal (v. 8) 8a. He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good.**

God has not kept His desires secret; what He requires is not a mystery. God has revealed what He considers good and what He wants (see Deuteronomy 10:12, 13; Mark 12:33). It is not their gifts or offerings that God really desires. What He wants are the people themselves, given to the Lord in lives that reflect His priorities and passions (see 1 Samuel 15:22).

*8<sup>b</sup>. And what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

Doing justly should not be thought of strictly in terms of judgment. Treating people justly may be thought of as treating people just as God would treat them (examples: Isaiah 1:17; Jeremiah 22:3; Zechariah 7:9, 10). This includes extending mercy, which can be expressed as forgiveness in many ways.

The key to understanding both judgment and mercy lies in a relationship with God, which is where the challenge to walk humbly applies (see 2 Kings 22:19; Isaiah 57:15). Apart from such a walk, judgment and mercy are unattainable.

### **What Do You Think?**

What plan can you make to identify and improve the requirement in Micah 6:8 that is most lacking in your life?

### **Digging Deeper**

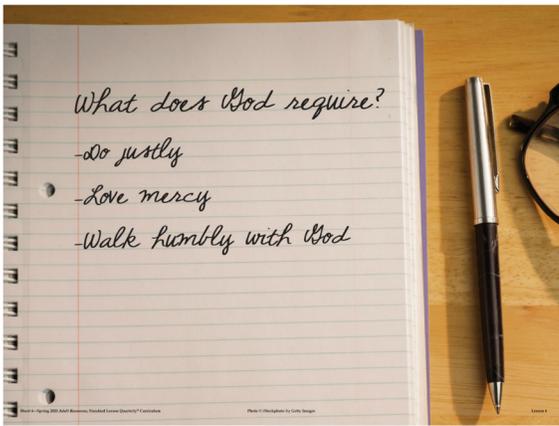
How would you expect attention to the other two requirements to influence the one most lacking?

These requirements given by Micah for coming before the Lord should not be used to justify salvation by works. Micah is not addressing the question, “What must I do to be saved?” The issue is that God’s covenant people must conduct themselves in ways pleasing to Him. Micah’s audience is wrong to think that their offerings and rituals alone will please God. Christians today who think the same about their “Sunday only” acts of worship are equally misguided.

## **Conclusion**

### **A. Humbly in Justice and Mercy**

Micah courageously confronted the tragic lack of godly leadership for the people of God. While Micah’s words in the concluding portion of our printed text apply to all God’s people, they most certainly need to be exemplified in the lives of their leaders. One thinks of how Jesus looked at the masses in His day and saw them as “sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36). The same terminology could have been used to describe the people in Micah’s day, given how corrupt the leadership had become. What a difference it would have made if those leaders had taken the words in Micah 6:8 to heart!



Visual for Lesson 4. Ask the class how adding these three items to their to-do list changes their priorities for the upcoming week. Church leaders today would do well to make those words their standard of conduct.

Church leaders today would do well to make those words their standard of conduct. But whether Christian leaders are aligned with God's will or not, the priesthood of all believers must still bring their lives to God as sacrifices (Romans 12:1; 1 Peter 2:5). Jesus has paid the price (Hebrews 7:27, 28). We do not worry about offering rivers of oil or thousands of animal sacrifices. Let us therefore search our hearts for strongholds that resist practicing justice and mercy. In humility, may we seek to please the Lord with our whole lives.

### What Do You Think?

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Which prophetic words of this lesson and the previous three challenge you most to act? Why?

### Digging Deeper

What is your plan for action?

### B. Prayer

Father, thank You for godly leaders! May the power of Your Holy Spirit help us all to seek and do Your will, even when—and especially when—our leaders stray from Your paths. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### C. Thought to Remember

God has revealed how to please Him.

# AN ARGUMENT AGAINST CORRUPTION

*Lesson 4, Micah 3:1-3, 9-12; 6:6-8, KJV*

## SCANDALOUS HISTORY

Even the best of governments must deal with scandals. Some of these scandals are well-known, others are not. Do you know enough scandalous United States history to put the following scandals in chronological order? This is difficult!

### *Group A*

- \_\_\_\_\_ A. The Whiskey Ring—Government officials embezzling whiskey taxes
- \_\_\_\_\_ B. The Blount Conspiracy—Senator expelled for aiding British.
- \_\_\_\_\_ C. Star Route Scandal—Corruption in the U.S. Postal Service
- \_\_\_\_\_ D. Petticoat Affair—Cabinet member marrying a widow of a man who committed suicide

### *Group B*

- \_\_\_\_\_ E. Watergate—Burglary of the headquarters of a rival political party
- \_\_\_\_\_ F. Teapot Dome—Bribery in the leasing of United States Navy oil reserves
- \_\_\_\_\_ G. Lewinski Affair—Lying under oath concerning a liaison with a White House intern
- \_\_\_\_\_ H. Iran-Contra Affair—Selling weapons to Iran to fund Nicaraguan rebels

## MICAH 3 & 6 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Take a few minutes to develop four interview questions for a person applying to serve on the staff of your church. Make sure that your questions have today's lesson text as a basis. Use open-ended questions only; avoid easy-to-answer questions. Here are some examples:

*Lame question:* "Would you ever use the church bank account to enrich yourself unfairly?"

*Better question:* "What would you do if you discovered that a fellow staff member was dipping into the church bank account?"

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**COMPLETE LESSON TEXT (NIV)****Micah 3:1-12 (NIV)**

- <sup>1</sup> Then I said, “Listen, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel. Should you not embrace justice,  
<sup>2</sup> you who hate good and love evil; who tear the skin from my people and the flesh from their bones;  
<sup>3</sup> who 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?”
- <sup>4</sup> 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.
- <sup>5</sup> This 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.
- <sup>6</sup> Therefore night will come over you, without visions, and darkness, without divination. The sun will set for the prophets, and the day will go dark for them.
- <sup>7</sup> The seers will be ashamed and the diviners disgraced. They will all cover their faces because there is no answer from God.”
- <sup>8</sup> But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the LORD, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin.
- <sup>9</sup> Hear this, you leaders of Jacob, you rulers of Israel, who despise justice and distort all that is right;  
<sup>10</sup> who build Zion with bloodshed, and Jerusalem with wickedness.
- <sup>11</sup> Her 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.”
- <sup>12</sup> Therefore 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.

**Micah 4:1-13 (NIV)**

- <sup>1</sup>
- In the last days the mountain of the LORD’s temple will be established as the highest of the mountains; it will be exalted above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.
- <sup>2</sup> Many nations will come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the temple of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths.” The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
- <sup>3</sup> He will judge between many peoples and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide. They will beat

their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.

<sup>4</sup> Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken.

<sup>5</sup> All the nations may walk in the name of their gods, but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

<sup>6</sup> “In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will gather the lame; I will assemble the exiles and those I have brought to grief.

<sup>7</sup> I will make the lame my remnant, those driven away a strong nation. The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion from that day and forever.

<sup>8</sup> As for you, watchtower of the flock, stronghold of Daughter Zion, the former dominion will be restored to you; kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem.”

<sup>9</sup> Why do you now cry aloud— have you no king? Has your ruler perished, that pain seizes you like that of a woman in labor?

<sup>10</sup> Writhe in agony, Daughter Zion, like a woman in labor, for now you must leave the city to camp in the open field. You will go to Babylon; there you will be rescued. There the LORD will redeem you out of the hand of your enemies.

<sup>11</sup> But now many nations are gathered against you. They say, “Let her be defiled, let our eyes gloat over Zion!”

<sup>12</sup> But they do not know the thoughts of the LORD; they do not understand his plan, that he has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.

<sup>13</sup> “Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion, for I will give you horns of iron; I will give you hooves of bronze, and you will break to pieces many nations.” You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD, their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

### **Micah 5:1-15 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Marshal your troops now, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel’s ruler on the cheek with a rod.

<sup>2</sup> “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

<sup>3</sup> Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son, and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites.

<sup>4</sup> He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his

God. And they will live securely, for then his greatness will reach to the ends of the earth.

<sup>5</sup> And he will be our peace when the Assyrians invade our land and march through our fortresses. We will raise against them seven shepherds, even eight commanders,

<sup>6</sup> who will rule the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod with drawn sword. He will deliver us from the Assyrians when they invade our land and march across our borders.

<sup>7</sup> The remnant of Jacob will be in the midst of many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which do not wait for anyone or depend on man.

<sup>8</sup> The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, like a lion among the beasts of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which mauls and mangles as it goes, and no one can rescue.

<sup>9</sup> Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over your enemies, and all your foes will be destroyed.

<sup>10</sup> “In that day,” declares the LORD, “I will destroy your horses from among you and demolish your chariots.

<sup>11</sup> I will destroy the cities of your land and tear down all your strongholds.

<sup>12</sup> I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells.

<sup>13</sup> I will destroy your idols and your sacred stones from among you; you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands.

<sup>14</sup> I will uproot from among you your Asherah poles when I demolish your cities.

<sup>15</sup> I will take vengeance in anger and wrath on the nations that have not obeyed me.”

### **Micah 6:1-16 (NIV)**

<sup>1</sup> Listen to what the LORD says: “Stand up, plead my case before the mountains; let the hills hear what you have to say.

<sup>2</sup> “Hear, you mountains, the LORD’s accusation; listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth. For the LORD has a case against his people; he is lodging a charge against Israel.

<sup>3</sup> “My people, what have I done to you? How have I burdened you? Answer me.

<sup>4</sup> I brought you up out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. I sent Moses to lead you, also Aaron and Miriam.

<sup>5</sup> My people, remember what Balak king of Moab plotted and what Balaam son of Beor answered. Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD.”

<sup>6</sup> With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?

<sup>7</sup> Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

<sup>8</sup> He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

<sup>9</sup> Listen! The LORD is calling to the city— and to fear your name is wisdom— “Heed the rod and the One who appointed it.

<sup>10</sup> Am I still to forget your ill-gotten treasures, you wicked house, and the short ephah, which is accursed?

<sup>11</sup> Shall I acquit someone with dishonest scales, with a bag of false weights?

<sup>12</sup> Your rich people are violent; your inhabitants are liars and their tongues speak deceitfully.

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, I have begun to destroy you, to ruin you because of your sins.

<sup>14</sup> You will eat but not be satisfied; your stomach will still be empty. You will store up but save nothing, because what you save I will give to the sword.

<sup>15</sup> You will plant but not harvest; you will press olives but not use the oil, you will crush grapes but not drink the wine.

<sup>16</sup> You have observed the statutes of Omri and all the practices of Ahab’s house; you have followed their traditions. Therefore I will give you over to ruin and your people to derision; you will bear the scorn of the nations.”