

**Message #3****Micah 1:8-16**

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ and if you love God's word, there is no possible way that you can be happy with what you are seeing take place in the United States right now. You see lying, deceiving, killing, and immorality. You see sin flaunted and evil promoted at very high levels of political and religious power.

The news is so depressing that the vast majority of Christians don't even want to watch or listen to the news anymore. God's people are not happy about what they are seeing because what they are seeing is a corrupt world and leadership that is losing all sense of righteousness, morality, decency and sanity. If it comes down to a choice between what God wants and what the people want, God loses.

God's people are sad about that. And frankly this is the way we should be. This is the right response. We should mourn and we should be depressed. But we should also do one more thing and that is we should also warn people they are heading to the judgment of God.

That is exactly what Micah did when he saw the evil stuff. When we come to this section of Scripture, what we see is this:

**BECAUSE OF THE EVIL THAT EXISTED THAT WAS LEADING PEOPLE TO THE JUDGMENT OF GOD, THE GODLY PROPHET MICAH MOURNED AND WAS EMOTIONALLY DEPRESSED; BUT HE ALSO WARNED PEOPLE TO HUMBLE THEMSELVES TO GOD NOW AND DO WHAT WAS RIGHT.**

Micah mourned and warned. The fact is, there was nothing Micah could do or say that would change most of the people. But he kept communicating God's word. He saw that the leaders were doing wrong and he warned them that they were heading to serious judgment. That made him sad, but it did not stop him from presenting truth.

There are six facts brought out in this text:

**FACT #1** – Micah responds to the sins of the political leaders and the judgment to come. **1:8**

What Micah saw made him sick. What he saw taking place in his country broke his heart. He was not a happy man of God or joyful prophet.

Because of the rebellion of the people, and because of the idolatry and immorality and misuse of justice taking place in the capital cities by the political and religious leaders, and because God said I am going to level these places, starting with Samaria, Micah responded in three ways.

We may observe that each of the three responses begins with the words "I must" (NASV) or "I will" (NIV, KJV). This seems to be something that God specifically moved the prophet Micah to do. The emphasis on the Hebrew text is that this is specifically for Micah, not for us.

**Response #1** - Micah must lament and wail. **1:8a**

It is a sad and horrible thing when God has to bring a nation down by judgment because the leaders have led the nation far away from Him. There is no way God's people can be happy about that and certainly Micah, a prophet, was not.

The Hebrew word "lament" (saphad) means he felt he had to continually sing a mourning song. It was his responsibility to keep communicating the truth of coming judgment for people to hear.

The word "wail" refers to a very loud, screaming kind of mourning. This was a very loud emotional outburst; not come quiet behind closed doors response.

Micah was not going to just softly and quietly keep things to himself; he proclaimed the judgment of God was coming.

**Response #2** - Micah must go barefoot and naked. **1:8b**

Prophets of God for the nation Israel often were led to do physical things to illustrate the physical judgment God was going to bring upon that nation.

The idea of going barefoot was a sign of mourning and also a sign that things are happening right there in that location (II Sam. 15:30). As people would walk through the day, this indicated that they were walking under the cloud of coming judgment that would leave them crushed.

Going naked meant a sign of mourning and specifically it may be connected to a prophetic picture of one coming in judgment who would strip everything bare (Job 22:6).

The physical image this would bring to Israel was we are heading to a severe judgment that will leave us with nothing and take away all of the blessings we have had.

**Response #3** - Micah must lament and mourn. **1:8c**

He would lament like the jackals and mourn like the ostriches which means at night he would howl. These two animals live in desolate and lonely places.

The word "lament" is the same word used earlier and the word "mourn" is a Hebrew word that means to be very sad because one sees the destruction and starvation that God was going to bring upon the people.

**FACT #2** – Micah gives the reasons for his emotional response. **1:9**

The reason for Micah's emotional responses is because the sins of the people was so bad in the capital city of Jerusalem that there was no possible cure, which meant judgment was coming and could not be stopped.

**The leadership of a nation; the people of a nation need to understand this fact—it is possible to so anger God against a nation to the point that any cure for God's judgment is non-existent.**

People may move so far away from God and His word that God will not respond to their cries for help. A very graphic description of this very thing is seen in Proverbs 1:23-32.

God was going to inflict His judgment on Judah, and specifically Jerusalem, and there was not a thing they could do to stop it. Micah saw that and he proclaimed that.

The wounds were incurable. These people were spiritually sick. The great political leaders who ran things were about to be destroyed by God, both them and the people.

It is a very sad thing when God must do this to a nation. It does cause godly people to mourn. We remind us again that Hezekiah did pay attention to what Micah said (Jer. 26:18-19) and God did temporarily postpone immediate judgment. So if the political and religious leaders will seek to turn a nation back to God, even when God is about to destroy the nation, a postponement of judgment is possible.

**FACT #3** – Micah does not want judgment news shared with enemies. **1:10a**

This is a fascinating point. God did not want His pending destructive judgment shared with the heathen world.

Micah says don't tell the people in Gath about the judgment God will bring to Jerusalem. Don't tip your hand and don't weep at all. This is going to be a great embarrassment to the people of God.

God is not going to go after the heathen nations first; He is going after the Christian nations first. There is no reason for the Philistines in Gath to be happy or rejoice or join in with the enemy coming to judge.

This judgment had nothing to do with Gath or the Philistines; this was judgment aimed straight at Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem.

When Jesus was here on earth, He told His disciples to go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel, not to the Gentile world (Matt. 10:4-5).

There is important information in this statement. God is going to bring judgment first against “Christian people” and “Christian nations” who are promoting godless, idolatrous, immoral things.

For example, I truly believe God is going to punish this nation because political and religious leaders have made mockery of God and His word. Why should we proclaim that to China or Russia? They will get a good laugh at that. This is Micah’s point here.

**FACT #4** – Micah does want Judean cities that are near Jerusalem to respond. **1:10b-12**

All of these cities mentioned were located in the border areas of Judah and relatively close proximity to Jerusalem. They are towns located in what is called the “Shephelah” which is low lying country located about 15-20 miles to the south and west of Jerusalem.

Now Micah picks these cities for two reasons:

- 1) Because of their names. They have names that Micah uses to make a point.
- 2) Because of the route. God’s judgment would come through these cities.

They too would go down when this judgment would come. The judgment God would send against the political and religious leaders of the capital cities would hit them.

“Beth-le-aphrah” (**v. 10**) should humble themselves in the dust. In fact, the actual name of the city “aphrah” means dust. This place would become “Dustville.” This city was located very near Jerusalem.

The people of “Shaphir” (**11a**) needed to humble themselves in shameful nakedness. The Hebrew word “shaphir” means beautiful and lovely. Shaphir was a village in Judah. It would be humbled and shamed and no longer beautiful and lovely.

The inhabitants of “Zaanán” (**11b**) would not escape. The Hebrew word Zaanán means to go out. This was a city in Judah known as an area that abounded in flocks of sheep. They would be leaving and going out of the area via the judgment of God.

The inhabitants of Beth-ezel (**11c**) would lose their support. The name “ezel” means city near or nearby city. Its nearness and location to Jerusalem would guarantee judgment. They would not be able to stand with their allies and would lose support.

The inhabitants of “Maroth” (**12**) would become weak waiting for something good. Not sure where Maroth was located. The name means bitter, so things would become very bitter in this city.

Because God has sent judgment calamity to the gate of Jerusalem and the people would pay a very high price.

There is a very important point to glean from this—you do not want to support or in any way promote any political or religious power that is leading people away from God and His word.

The point here is this—when God judges them, He will also judge those who were supportive of them and near to them. No matter how good they look or how successful they may appear to be. They will go down with them.

**FACT #5** – Micah tells the inhabitants of Lachish to get the horses and chariots ready. **1:13**

Now Lachish was a key military and economic center located about 30 miles SW of Jerusalem. It had a large military presence and army there. Anyone who wanted to attack Jerusalem from the south had to go through Lachish (II Kings 18:17).

**Micah tells the people of Lachish to get the chariots and horses ready, but not to fight. Get them ready for flight.** Get them ready to run.

They would not be using these things to fight a good fight, but to flight a fast flight. They would be secure no more. God would see to it (Micah 5:10-15).

It is interesting that when Sennacherib of Assyria eventually took this city, he used scenes from it to decorate his palace at Nineveh. Many of these things are in a British Museum today for people to see.

Now it is said that Lachish was the beginning of sin and the beginning of the rebellious acts of Israel. This was the first area apparently to import immoral idolatry into the city of Jerusalem.

When God decides it is time to bring down the political and religious leaders and their capital cities, no military can stop it. God's judgment will come from Him and it will crush them.

**FACT #6** – Micah gives the results of her rebellion and sin. **1:14-16**

There are at least five results of their rebellion and sin:

**Result #1** - You will depart from the city and give parting gifts to those who will take it. **1:14a**

Moresheth-gath was Micah's hometown, but it would not be spared the judgment of God.

**Result #2** - The political kings of Israel will be deceived. **1:14b**

The proper noun "Achzib" means deception. The political leaders have been and are totally deceived into thinking they have nothing to worry about and they are protected and have prosperity and peace.

**Result #3** - God will bring one who will take possession of you. **1:15a**

God says “I will bring” one who will take everything away. The powerful and the rich will lose everything. “Mareshah” was a fortress city (II Chron. 11:8) that was like a “Lachish” (II Chron. 11:9).

It was one of those cities that leaders thought would always be their protection. God says you are going down and nothing can stop it. You are about to be conquered.

**Result #4** - God will remove the glory of Israel to Adullam. **1:15b**

Adullam is a place of flight and hiding. God would cause these people to go on the run and hide. Adullam was the place where David fled and hid when he was on the run from Saul.

Now Micah emphasizes “one” key person will be used by God to bring judgment against His people. In the history of things, judgment would come from:

- 1) Sennacherib the Assyrian.
- 2) Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian.
- 3) The Antichrist in the Great Tribulation.
- 4) Jesus Christ Himself at the end of the Great Tribulation.

The point of this is that God raises up one person or power to carry out His judgment against a nation or a leader.

**Result #5** - God will cause you and your children to be humiliated. **1:16**

Micah offers no hope for repentance or no challenge for any to repent. He says get ready to experience judgment. It will come on you as fast as an eagle.

**Your real enemy will not be Assyrians or the Babylonians; your real enemy is God.**

Micah says I am not telling you here to repent, but lament. You have gone too far into evil and it is too late.