

Micah 3:1-4:5—Cry Justice!

- **Intro:**
 - Micah is speaking into a culture where the courts (judicial), palaces (executive) and temples (legislative) WERE ALL CORRUPT AND UNJUST!
 - While there was sin in the outer areas, it was the sin, injustice and corruption among the elite and powerful that repulsed Micah and, more importantly, God.
 - **Justice = truth in action (Disraeli)**
- **God's Justice is Certain (Ch. 3)**
 - Ch. 3 = judicial indictment on Israel's unjust rulers, kings, etc and, by extension, an indictment on EVERYONE who operates unjustly.
 - Count on God's Justice! The injustice of man will be met with the justice of God!
- **3 Sections:**
 - **Injustice among the Kings (v.1-4)**
 - Micah isn't concerned that they neglect justice but that they PERVERT/DISTORT justice!
 - The courts were created to protect the innocent and punish the guilty and these leaders had turned it on its head and were rewarding the guilty while oppressing the innocent!
 - v.2-3—Micah uses the language of total destruction and cannibalism to talk about what these people are doing to the innocent—they are FEEDING on those they are called to DEFEND!
 - Instead of shepherding and leading the people, they are exploiting, oppressing and crushing them! They are treating them like animals to be butchered!
 - Exodus 18:21 —God calls judges to be “able men” who fear God, are trustworthy and hate a bribe.
 - **THE KINGS ARE BRUTAL BUTCHERS WHO BREAK APART THE PEOPLE OF GOD**
 - These kings didn't just do a poor job, they did the opposite of their calling and loved it!
 - Good thing we have moved past this and are advanced, right? WRONG!
 - Modern Day Injustices—
 - Application—don't hear this with prideful disregard, but in humble awareness that we are capable of and even do commit injustice that offends the Lord.
 - **Sentence on them—Separation from God (v.4)**
 - Irony—in v.4, they now CRY to the Lord and he does not answer them!
 - GOD'S SILENCE WILL BE THEIR SENTENCE RESULTING IN ALIENATION AND EXILE.
 - Application: are you unjust and oppressive? Repent! Are you indifferent/apathetic toward injustice, doing nothing for the orphan, widow, slave, hungry, least of these? Repent and DO JUSTICE!
 - **Injustice among the Prophets (v.5-8)**
 - Micah isn't concerned that they AREN'T SPEAKING but that they are DISTORTING the voice of God.
 - Prophesied peace when there was none and prophesied prosperity when there was destruction coming!
 - Matt. 18:6—if anyone causes one of these to sin it would be better that a millstone be tied around his neck and him be tossed into the sea.
 - These profiteering prophets did not speak God's truth but their own—for their own Good.
 - **These men are not prophets but prostitutes!**

- This isn't new—look at all the ministers in our culture that establish cult followings and sects that are largely financially motivated—SOW INTO MY MINISTRY!
- Micah prophesies against the prophets because they were prophets of God who knew the truth of God and chose to preach lies instead!
 - Their hypocrisy and pretense was a stench before God!
- Sentence on them—Silence and Shame from God (v.6-7)
 - Darkness and Disgrace will define their lives!
 - Darkness (v6) = no truth, no vision, no revelation from God. Spiritual darkness
 - Shame (v7) = disgrace. Their words will be unreliable and inaccurate
 - Irony—in v.6-7, when the day of destruction/judgment does come, they will cry out for a real word from God and only darkness and silence will come!
- Micah as the contrast (v.8)
 - Micah was a nobody from nowhere but he had the Spirit and thus all he needed to speak God's word and do his will!
 - The profiteering prophets focused on their attributes and profaned God's word
 - Micah focused on God and his Word rather than his attributes.
 - God's people, regardless of prowess, prestige, etc have these same gifts and possess the same power to speak God's word!
- Injustice among the Powerful (v.9-12)
 - Micah adds in the PRIESTS in this full, general indictment of the entire power structure.
 - Micah pronounces indictment on the political leaders for distorting "all that is right" (v.9)
 - These leaders were responsible for overseeing all the government and operations and they had abdicated this responsibility altogether!
 - Not only had they merely allowed it to happen but they had arranged the system such that they would use justice and religion for their personal gain. They used these things to serve their own ends and grew rich at the expense of the poor/vulnerable.
 - Sentence on them—Suffering and Separation from God (v.12)
 - This sentence includes the people along with the leaders.
 - The sin of the leaders would lead to the suffering of the people!
 - Suffering and separation would come to the house of the Lord because of this sin—586 Babylonians destroy the city and take the people to exile!
 - They would cry for order and peace and receive destruction, separation and chaos!
- Ch. 3—the prophets, priests and kings were rightfully indicted, judged, sentenced and convicted. Things appear bleak, destitute and hopeless.
- Ch. 4—provides for us a hope of peace and righteousness and justice!
- God's Peace is Coming (Ch. 4)
 - This verse is meant to stun us with its drastic juxtaposition with the reality of Micah. It's meant to call us and push us to a yearning for life they way it SHOULD BE!
- 5 Promises:
 - A New Jerusalem and a Mountain of the Lord will be established (1a)
 - The Lord will gather his people, the Nations (1b-2a)
 - The Lord will execute final justice (2b-3a)
 - "He shall JUDGE between many peoples, and shall DECIDE for strong nations"
 - The Lord will bring eternal peace to his people (3b-4)
 - There is no war and no fear = full and perfect REST!
 - The people of God will walk with the Lord forever (v.5)
- Believer: celebrate the certainty of this promise—there is coming a day for you of complete justice and peace, full righteousness without war or fear or want!

- Unbeliever: recognize your need for this promise. Your sins can be forgiven. You can do nothing to earn pardon/forgiveness but God offers it freely in Jesus!
- **Conclusion:**
 - Who is able to walk in this kind of righteousness and justice? Nobody!
 - We all fall short of this standard but Jesus DID NOT. He walked in perfectly humble submission to the Father and was crucified to take the deserved and just condemnation we deserved for our sin—our lack of justice, mercy, humility, etc.
 - **Jesus is the PROMISED person of peace and justice!**
 - Unlike the sinful leaders of Judah and Israel's and those of our time, Jesus, our perfect PROPHET, PRIEST and KING served his people by taking the condemnation they were due! He graciously gives the peace and mercy and life that we desperately long for but do not deserve!
 - Isaiah 9:6-7—For to us a child is born, to us a son is given ;and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from the time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.
 - Jesus died the death that we deserved that our EXILE might END and our DESTRUCTION might be cut off!
 - It is Jesus who, in the gospel, who has borne the sentencing of our injustice on our behalf! He was exiled, he was destroyed, he was disgraced, he was separated!
 - 2000 years ago an innocent man was persecuted and killed by a tyrannical and oppressive government and religious leaders that spoke of God and presumed on his favor, but did not understand or live by his Word. This man suffered, died and was buried at the hands of those who wrongly thought they were “doing justice.”
 - He was beaten, his flesh torn, his head pierced by thorns, his feet and hands driven through with spikes; He was mocked and spat upon; He was hung on a tree to suffocate to death under the pressing weight of his own body. And then to be sure He was dead, He was pierced.
 - This is what became of that baby born in Bethlehem, the promised Messiah born to a virgin girl, the one born in a manger among animals because there was no room for him with the people, the one heralded by beautiful angels and worshipped by humble shepherds. Baby Jesus grew up, and was the One who would take the punishment due his people. The Father gave his Son to suffer for the sins of the world, to take the punishment his people deserved, to die the death they should have died, so their exile might end and they inherit the eternal life and enjoy the peace they don't deserve.
 - Jesus is the truth-filled prophet, perfect great high priest and fully-just King over all creation and a coming kingdom. His judgment is perfect and certain. His merciful love is lavishly gracious and will NEVER fail. His kingdom will endure forever. And for those that love him, they will see his face, hear his voice, praise his name and enjoy his peace and joy forever.
 - Rev. 21:1-4, 22-27— Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed

away.” And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light will the nations walk, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it, and its gates will never be shut by day—and there will be no night there. They will bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but on those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.