

## Study 2 – Micah 2:1-3:12

# FITTING RESPONSE



Writing in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, theologian and reformer Martin Luther complained about the prophets, saying: “They have a queer way of talking. Like people who, instead of proceeding in an orderly manner, ramble off from one thing to the next, so that you cannot make head or tail of them or see what they are getting at.” The book of Micah is a classic example of this seeming jumble. Searching for a literary structure, is at first glance, a difficult task!

Yet if the book is accepted on its own terms, the careful and discerning reader will not only observe patterns and themes emerging, but will also come to appreciate Micah's courage and sheer conviction that God's grace always triumphs over man's sin. Ironically, it was this same conclusion that ultimately brought Martin Luther to his knees before God.

### Read 2:1-5

#### **Man's plans** (1-2)

Sum up the sort of plans that 'man' was making.

What dangers does scripture associate with seeking out material wealth and prosperity? (Job 31:24-28; Psalm 49:6-7; Luke 8:14; Revelation 3:17)

What modern-day examples can you think of regarding man's misuse of power and wealth?

#### **God's plans** (3-5)

What is God's response to those “who plan iniquity”?

What sort of warning does James give to those who oppress others? (James 5:1-6)

#### **False prophets**

Micah shows that rich oppressors had their supporters. Micah spoke as a prophet of the Lord, but there were other prophets with a very different message. In fact, the 'false prophets' wanted to silence Micah and those who agreed with him. Micah's message was too critical of those with influence, people that the false prophets depended upon for their comfortable lifestyle. Courageously, Micah says it how it is.

#### **Read 2:6-11**

From these verses list the sort of things that the false prophet gives tacit support to, or turns a blind-eye to.

How can someone who claims to be a prophet of God be tested? (Deuteronomy 13:1-5; 18:18-22; Matthew 7:15-23)

**Read 3:5-8**

Micah compares himself, his aims and what motivates him, with the false prophets. List his comparisons in the box below.

Other prophets vv5-7	Micah v8



**True prophets**

In verse 11 Micah concludes his oracle about false prophets with a sarcastic gibe, directed towards them and the gullibility of their hearers. His implication is clear. As 'supposed' prophets of God, their lives do not reflect what God wants from a true prophet. They pander to the base desires of their hearers, promising alcohol galore. And the people who listen to them get what they deserve!

**In contrast to the false prophet, verses 12 & 13 (here's one of those disorderly literary occasions) the true prophet will put God's will and the need of the people, including their safety, before his own needs. He will be like a shepherd to his sheep. Whereas false prophets are intent on deceiving, stealing and even destroying. A point that Jesus was very keen to make. Read John 10:1-16 and take a moment to ponder on Jesus' words.**

**Read 3:1-4 & 9-12**

Micah now turns his attention to the leaders of the people, those under God's appointment, who should have known better and done a better job in leading God's people.

What are the many nasty characteristics of the leaders that Micah is addressing?

What's the end result of their disgusting actions? V12

**Reflect....**

Has much changed in the motivations and/or actions of national world leaders since Micah's time to today? Read what Micah declared in verse 8. Is this just for 'prophets, or us as well'?

What would it take for you to say and own those things?

On a scale of 1 to 10, one being the false prophets and ten being Micah, where would you place yourself in your willingness to speak up for Jesus? What will it take to shift up a notch?

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1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10