

Micah 3:1-12

- Chapter 3 is part of the middle section of the book of Micah that begins in 3:1 and continues to the end of chapter 5 at 5:15. This middle section (chapters 3-5) addresses the present corruption in Jerusalem and promises there will a Jerusalem that is ruled in justice in the distant future
- Chapter 3 –
 - 3:1-4 – Rulers are addressed by Micah for injustice of crushing the people
 - 3:5-8 – Prophets are addressed by Micah for catering to the wealthy
 - 3:9-12 – Rulers, judges, priests and prophets are working together to build Jerusalem

Micah 3:1- **“And I said:**

Hear, you heads of Jacob

and rulers of the house of Israel!

Is it not for you to know justice?—

**3:2 - you who hate the good and love the evil,
who tear the skin from off my people**

and their flesh from off their bones,

1. The government of the southern kingdom is addressed for not supporting justice.
2. “Jacob” and “Israel” are terms now used to refer to Judah. Northern Israel has fallen so this is after 722 BC but before 701 BC. This may be in the final years of Ahaz (reign 735-715) the father of Hezekiah probably around 720-715 BC.
3. 715-705 - But, also, 3:12 clearly dates this to the days of Hezekiah as is seen in Jeremiah 26:19
4. This group of “rulers” included judges who were guilty of corruption who had been entrusted with the administration of justice.
5. They did not base their decisions on what was good, but instead used evil to get what they wanted.
6. Amos and Isaiah also addressed this:
 - a. Amos 5:15 – “Hate evil, and love good,
and establish justice in the gate;
it may be that the Lord, the God of hosts,
will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”
 - b. Isaiah 1:16-17 – “Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean;
remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes;
cease to do evil,
learn to do good;
seek justice,
correct oppression;
bring justice to the fatherless,
plead the widow's cause.”
7. Micah had already addressed the corrupt courts who sided with evil and empowered the criminals in chapter 2:

**3:3 – who eat the flesh of my people,
and flay their skin from off them,
and break their bones in pieces**

**and chop them up like meat in a pot,
like flesh in a cauldron.**

1. The people are treated like animals to be slaughtered for profit by the court system of corrupt judges who work with the wealthy criminal elite of society.
2. In Micah 2:2 the verb “grab” was used to refer to social oppression. Here in Micah 3:2 the word “tear” is used in the same sense. These are both OT words for social oppression when used of unjustly “grabbing” or “tearing”.
3. “eating” flesh is a metaphor for oppression.
4. The courts of Jerusalem of butchering the people’s legal rights and possessions.
5. This is Proverbs 30:14, the fourth generation: “Those whose teeth are swords and whose jaws are set with knives to devour the poor from the earth and the needy from among mankind.”
6. Micah likely witnessed this type of behavior

**3:4 – Then they will cry to the Lord,
but he will not answer them;
he will hide his face from them at that time,
because they have made their deeds evil.**

1. The misdeeds are again said to boomerang back on these people.
2. “cry out” is a technical term referring to an appeal to a judge for justice by the victim.
3. Those who did not respond to a cry for justice from the people will not get a response from the Lord when they cry for help.
4. See Proverbs 1:26-28 where God says he will laugh at your disaster and mock when calamity overtakes you.

**3:5 – Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets
who lead my people astray,
who cry “Peace”
when they have something to eat,
but declare war against him
who puts nothing into their mouths.**

1. The prophets tend to follow the money.
2. These are likely prophets who are called and gifted by God, but they have switched their allegiance as they were daily rewarded by society for their compromise. These were not “false” prophets in the sense that they were not called, but these are corrupted prophets who now present a false message.
3. Lamentations 2:14 exposes the prophets of Jeremiah’s day who failed to address the sin of the people so that the people could make correction.
4. Jeremiah 6:14, “They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. ‘Peace, peace,’ they say, when there is no peace.”
5. Notice God calls the people “my people”. The Lord sent prophets to help the people God loved, but instead the prophets cashed in on the Lord’s people instead of helping them.
6. “Peace” is the word “shalom” which indicates wholeness and is only attained by God’s blessing.

**3:6 - Therefore it shall be night to you, without vision,
and darkness to you, without divination.**

**The sun shall go down on the prophets,
and the day shall be black over them;**

3:7 - the seers shall be disgraced,

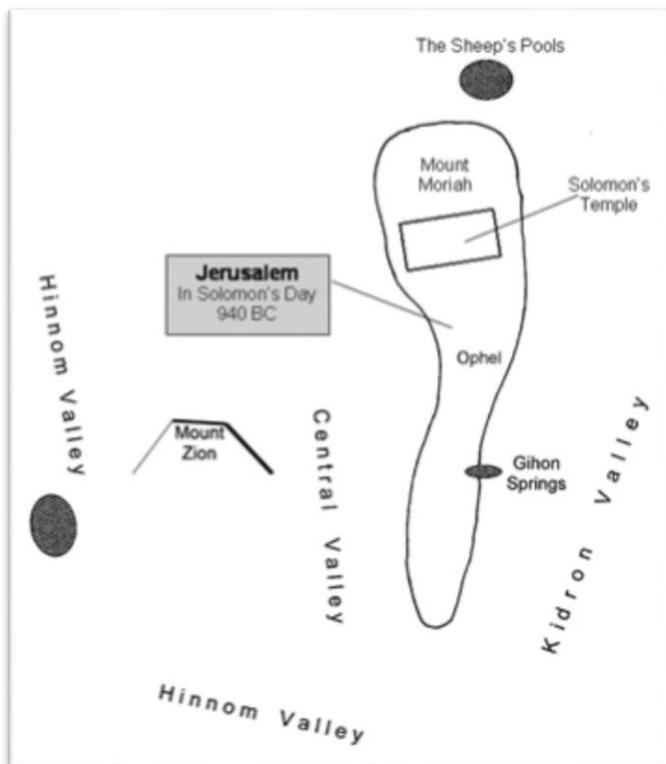
and the diviners put to shame;
 they shall all cover their lips,
 for there is no answer from God.

1. "Therefore" is now God's response to these prophets who have abused their position/calling.
2. Their spiritual insight will be stopped.
3. God will stop speaking to these prophets.
4. The popular and prosperous prophets will become powerless in poverty.

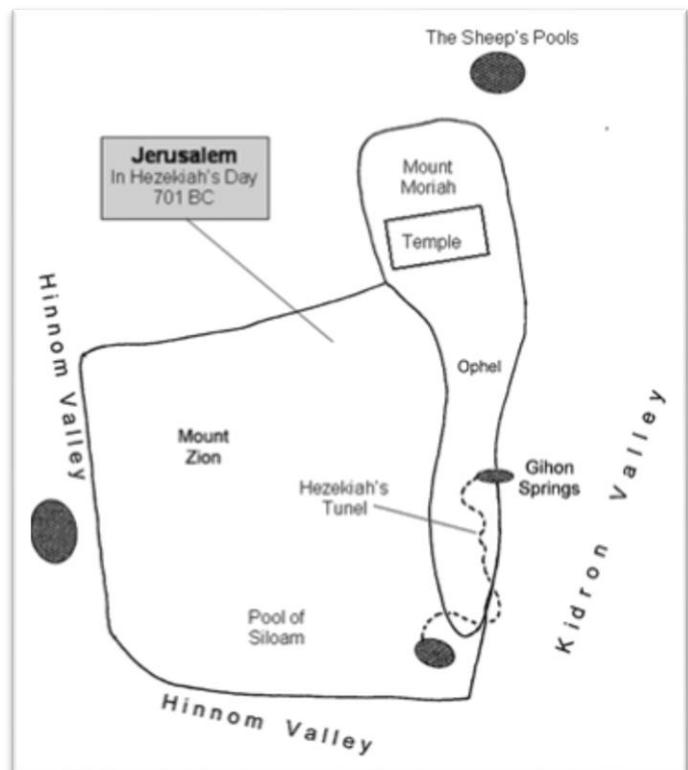
3:8 – **But as for me, I am filled with power,
 with the Spirit of the Lord,
 and with justice and might,
 to declare to Jacob his transgression
 and to Israel his sin.**

1. Micah compares himself to these powerless prophets
2. Micah's credentials are genuine and powerful
3. Micah's words are:
 - a. Consistently from the divine source and in line with God's personality and Spirit.
 - b. Justice is part of Micah's words and ministry. Another reflection of the character of God who is good and true.
 - c. There is no material advantage for giving the message Micah gives since he is rebuking transgressions and sin instead of promising "peace"
 - d. Micah is not manipulated by fear of men, but by the power of God which gives him courage to continue.

Jerusalem in 940 BC:



Jerusalem in 701 BC:



Uzziah (792-740 BC) –

"Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate and at the Valley Gate and at the Angle, and fortified them. . . In Jerusalem he made engines, invented by skillful men, to be on the towers and

the corners, to shoot arrows and great stones.”

- 2 Chronicles 26:9, 15

Jotham (750-735 BC) –

“He built the upper gate of the house of the Lord and did much building on the wall of Ophel.” - 2 Chronicles 27:3

Hezekiah (715-686 BC) –

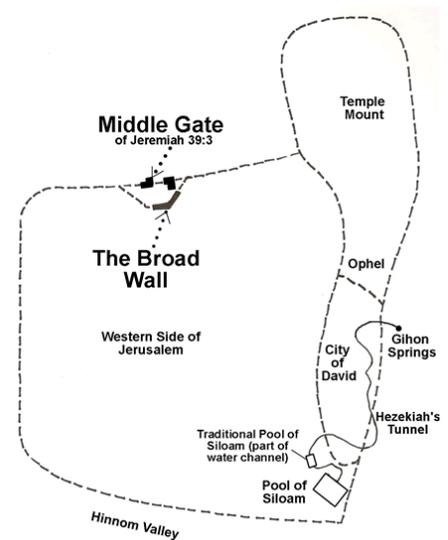
“In the first year of his reign, in the first month, he opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them.” - 2 Chronicles 29:3

“Hezekiah also built a wall around the western part of the city. This was the first time the Western Hill had ever been fortified. Hezekiah closed the upper outlet of the waters of Gihon and directed them down to the west side of the city of David.” - 2 Chronicles 32:30

Isaiah records Hezekiah’s efforts to prepare the city for the Assyrian invasion:

“In that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest, and you saw that the breaches of the city of David were many. You collected the waters of the lower pool, and you counted the houses of Jerusalem, and you broke down the houses to fortify the wall. You made a reservoir between the two walls for the water of the old pool.” - Isaiah 22:8-11

This wall is also mentioned in Nehemiah 3:8 and 12:38. It was built of stones from houses that were torn down to get the rock and other material. It is called “the Broad Wall” because it is 21 feet wide. A 210-foot section of this wall has been discovered. “The Broad Wall” images and map are below:



**3:9 - Hear this, you heads of the house of Jacob
and rulers of the house of Israel,**

who detest justice

and make crooked all that is straight,

1. Isaiah 3:2 begins a list of Judah’s social positions of leadership and positions
2. The focus here is everyone is building the city of Jerusalem with corrupt leadership

**3:10 who build Zion with blood
and Jerusalem with iniquity.**

**3:11 – Its heads give judgment for a bribe;
its priests teach for a price;
its prophets practice divination for money;**

**yet they lean on the Lord and say,
“Is not the Lord in the midst of us?
No disaster shall come upon us.”**

**3:12 – Therefore because of you
Zion shall be plowed as a field;
Jerusalem shall become a heap of ruins,
and the mountain of the house a wooded height.**

1. This is the verse that ties this section into Hezekiah’s day as seen in Jeremiah 26:19