

Micah 1:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are they not Jerusalem?

Analysis

God identifies the problem's source: 'For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? is it not Samaria? and what are the high places of Judah? are not they Jerusalem?' The rhetorical questions pinpoint systemic sin: Samaria (Israel's capital) embodies Jacob's transgression—idolatry centered in the royal shrine at Bethel. Jerusalem, though housing the true temple, had corrupt 'high places' (bamot)—illicit worship sites. Leadership centers, meant to model faithfulness, became sin epicenters. Micah emphasizes corporate guilt: national capitals concentrate and spread corruption. When leadership is compromised, the entire society follows. This anticipates Jesus's indictment of Jerusalem's religious establishment (Matthew 23). Institutional corruption from the top poisons the whole body.

Historical Context

Micah prophesied during the late 8th century BC, addressing both northern (Israel/Samaria) and southern (Judah/Jerusalem) kingdoms. Samaria's royal sanctuary system (established by Jeroboam I, 1 Kings 12:26-33) institutionalized idolatry for over 200 years, leading to Assyria's conquest (722 BC). Jerusalem, despite having the legitimate temple, tolerated 'high places' where syncretistic worship occurred. Even godly kings like Hezekiah and Josiah struggled to

eliminate these (2 Kings 18:4, 23:5-20). That the capitals—seats of religious and political power—led in sin aggravated judgment. Leadership failure multiplies damage exponentially. The principle applies to church leadership: when pastors, elders, or prominent Christians compromise, they don't sin in isolation but corrupt many (James 3:1).

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. What leadership positions do I hold where my sin could multiply damage by leading others astray?
2. How do I respond when institutional religious structures, though legitimate, become vehicles for compromise and corruption?

Interlinear Text

וּבְחַטֹּאתָיו	זֶה	כָּל	יַעֲקֹב	פֶּשַׁע
is all this and for the sins	H2063	H3605	of Jacob	For the transgression
H2403			H3290	H6588
הַלֹּא	יַעֲקֹב	פֶּשַׁע	מִי	יִשְׂרָאֵל
H3808	of Jacob	For the transgression	H4310	of Israel
	H3290	H6588		H3478
הֲלֹא	יְהוּדָה	בָּמָה	וּמִי	שָׁמָר
H3808	of Judah	and what are the high places	H4310	is it not Samaria
	H3063	H1116		H8111
				יְרוּשָׁלַם:
				are they not Jerusalem
				H3389

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 2:19 (Parallel theme): Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord GOD of hosts.

Amos 8:14 (Sin): They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

Jeremiah 2:17 (Parallel theme): Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the LORD thy God, when he led thee by the way?

Jeremiah 4:18 (Parallel theme): Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.

Jeremiah 6:19 (Parallel theme): Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.

1 Kings 13:32 (Parallel theme): For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Beth-el, and against all the houses of the high places which are in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

Lamentations 5:16 (Sin): The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us, that we have sinned!