

Micah 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.

Analysis

Micah indicts corrupt leadership: 'The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof teach for hire, and the prophets thereof divine for money: yet will they lean upon the LORD, and say, Is not the LORD among us? none evil can come upon us.' Three leadership categories corrupted by greed: judges taking bribes (shoftim be-shohad yishpotu), priests teaching for payment (kohaneha be-mehir yoru), prophets divining for silver (nebi'eha be-keseph yiqsomu). Yet they presume divine protection: 'Is not YHWH in our midst? No evil will come upon us!' This exposes religious hypocrisy: mercenary ministry combined with presumptuous security. True faith produces justice and integrity; formal orthodoxy masking corruption provokes judgment (v. 12: 'Therefore shall Zion... be plowed as a field'). Jesus condemned similar religious exploitation (Matthew 23:23-28).

Historical Context

Eighth-century Judah's leadership was systemically corrupt while maintaining religious façade. Judges perverted justice for bribes (directly violating Exodus 23:8, Deuteronomy 16:19). Priests, who should have taught God's law freely (Deuteronomy 33:10, Malachi 2:7), charged fees. Prophets gave oracles for money rather than speaking God's authentic word. Yet they invoked temple presence and covenant relationship to guarantee security—classic presumption. Jeremiah later

denounced similar false confidence: 'The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD are these' (Jeremiah 7:4) while ignoring justice. God's presence among a people doesn't prevent judgment when they violate covenant; it intensifies accountability (Amos 3:2).

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. Do I use religious activity or service as means for personal gain rather than faithful stewardship?
2. How do I avoid presuming God's blessing while tolerating injustice and corruption in my life or community?

Interlinear Text

יְוָרֵא בְּמַחְיָה וְכַפְּנֵי יְהָה רָאשׁ יִקְרָא
The heads for reward thereof judge and the priests for hire thereof teach
H7218 H7810 H8199 H3548 H4242 H3384

וְשַׁעַר נָא יְהָה וְעַל יְהָה אֲזַבְּנָא יְהָה
and the prophets for money thereof divine Is not the LORD yet will they lean
H5030 H3701 H7080 H5921 H3068 H8172

עַל יְנוּ תָּבִא וְאַל אֶלְמָת ר
and say Is not the LORD among us can come
H559 H3808 H3068 H7130 H3808 H935

בְּשָׁה:
us none evil
H7451

Additional Cross-References

Jeremiah 6:13 (Prophecy): For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

Isaiah 1:23 (Judgment): Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves: every one loveth gifts, and followeth after rewards: they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

Micah 3:5 (Prophecy): Thus saith the LORD concerning the prophets that make my people err, that bite with their teeth, and cry, Peace; and he that putteth not into their mouths, they even prepare war against him.

Jeremiah 7:4 (References Lord): Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these.

1 Peter 5:2 (Parallel theme): Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

Micah 7:3 (Judgment): That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the prince asketh, and the judge asketh for a reward; and the great man, he uttereth his mischievous desire: so they wrap it up.

Titus 1:11 (Parallel theme): Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.

Isaiah 48:2 (References Lord): For they call themselves of the holy city, and stay themselves upon the God of Israel; The LORD of hosts is his name.

Jeremiah 8:10 (Prophecy): Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit them: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

Numbers 16:15 (References Lord): And Moses was very wroth, and said unto the LORD, Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.

