

Micah 6:12

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

Analysis

For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants thereof have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth. This verse specifies Jerusalem's corruption. "The rich men" (בְּנֵי־עַשְׂרֵה, ashireha) are the wealthy elite—merchants, landowners, rulers. They are "full of violence" (מְלָאוּ, male'u chamas). Chamas (violence, injustice, cruelty) describes economic exploitation—using power to oppress the vulnerable. Proverbs 22:16 warns: "He that oppresseth the poor to increase his riches...shall surely come to want." Violence isn't limited to physical assault but includes systemic injustice.

"The inhabitants thereof have spoken lies" (וְיֹשְׁבֵתּוּ שְׁקֵרָה, ve-yoshveha dibru-shaker)—lying pervades society. Sheker (falsehood, deception) characterizes business dealings, legal testimony, and social interaction. **"Their tongue is deceitful in their mouth"** (וְלֹשֶׁןּוּ רְמִיָּה בְּפִיהֶם, u-leshonam remiyah be-fihem) emphasizes calculated deception—remiyah (deceit, treachery) isn't accidental error but intentional fraud. Jesus called Satan "a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44); lying reflects demonic character, not divine.

Why does God hate lying? Because truth reflects His nature—God cannot lie (Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18). Bearing false witness violates the ninth commandment (Exodus 20:16). Proverbs 6:16-19 lists seven abominations to God; two involve lying: "a lying tongue" and "a false witness that speaketh lies." Revelation 21:8 warns liars face the lake of fire. Yet society celebrates deception: misleading

advertising, political spin, resume embellishment, social media facades. Believers must be truth-tellers, even at personal cost, because we serve the God of truth.

Historical Context

Judah's wealthy class exploited the poor systematically. Isaiah 5:8 condemned those who "join house to house, that lay field to field"—land consolidation forcing peasants into debt slavery. Jeremiah 5:27-28 described the wealthy grown fat through fraud. Ezekiel 22:29 charged: "The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully." This pattern persists: economic elites often amass wealth through exploitation, justified by legal loopholes and cultural acceptance. But God judges by His law, not human customs. James 5:1-6 pronounces woe on the rich who defraud laborers. The Church must champion economic justice, defending the exploited and denouncing oppressors.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing that "lying tongues" reflect Satan's character rather than God's nature convict you toward absolute truthfulness?
2. In what areas might you be guilty of "violence" (exploitation, oppression) through economic or social power over others?
3. What practical steps can you take to become a consistent truth-teller, even when honesty costs you personally, professionally, or socially?

Interlinear Text

רָאשָׁי	עֲשֵׂירִים	מְלָאִים	סְמָךִים	וַיְשַׁבְּ יְהֹוָה
H834	For the rich men	H6223	thereof are full	H4390
			of violence	H2555
			and the inhabitants	H3427
דִּבְרָיו	שְׁקָרָם	רַמְתִּים	בְּפִיהֶם:	וְלֹשׁוֹןָם
thereof have spoken	lies	and their tongue	is deceitful	in their mouth
H1696	H8267	H3956	H7423	H6310

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 1:23 (Parallel theme): 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.

Jeremiah 9:8 (Parallel theme): Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait.

Hosea 7:13 (Parallel theme): Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

Isaiah 3:8 (Parallel theme): For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen: because their tongue and their doings are against the LORD, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

Isaiah 5:7 (Parallel theme): For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.