

**June 17, 2018**

**Micah 3**

## **A Nation in Decline**

Throughout the course of human history many different nations have risen to regional or world power. Ancient Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome are just a few examples. The British Empire once reached around the world. In recent times the United States has been the world's greatest superpower.

History shows that nations rise and nations fall. One superpower is replaced by the next. What causes nations to decline in influence?

Ancient Israel under King David and King Solomon was a great, wealthy, and powerful nation, but soon the kingdom was split in two by civil war. The Northern Kingdom of Israel sanctioned wicked and perverse idol worship, causing them to decline morally and spiritually. Micah prophesied shortly before the fall of that kingdom. Let's see what was going on in Micah's time, and look for any similarities to conditions in our modern world.

**Mic. 3:1**      Who did Micah address?

What did he say they should have known?

**Mic. 3:2**      Micah said the wicked leaders "hate the \_\_\_\_\_, and love the \_\_\_\_\_."

Israel's leaders should have known right from wrong, but they were all messed up. All they wanted was what was best for them. Like hungry beasts, figuratively they ripped the people apart.

**Mic. 3:3**      How did they treat the people?

**Mic. 3:4**      When calamity comes, even wicked leaders will cry out to God for help. What will God do?

Next God addressed the corrupt religious leaders of Israel.

**Mic. 3:5**      What did these prophets cause the people to do?

People tend to follow the examples set by their leaders. When religious leaders don't live right, their people won't either. In the face of the approaching Assyrian army, these false prophets cried "Peace," insisting that God would protect them from harm. These false prophets were NOT speaking for God.

**Mic. 3:6**      Would these false prophets receive any real messages from God?

God promised to send darkness (see **John 3:19**).

**Mic. 3:7** “Then shall the seers be \_\_\_\_\_, and the diviners \_\_\_\_\_.” Why?

**Mic. 3:8** What was different about Micah?

Israel’s rulers were wicked and her prophets were liars. What happens when a nation has civil and religious leaders like that?

**Mic. 3:9** Who did God address?

How did He describe them?

**Mic. 3:10** How did the wicked leaders run the country?

**Mic. 3:11** “The heads thereof judge for \_\_\_\_\_, And the priests thereof teach for \_\_\_\_\_, And the prophets thereof divine for \_\_\_\_\_.”  
Israel’s leaders were corrupt and only interested in money. They didn’t know God and they weren’t receiving any messages from Him (v. 6). In spite of this, what did they promise the people?

**Mic. 3:12** What’s the first word of this verse?

“Therefore” ties this verse back to everything that came before it in this chapter. It reveals the **reason** for what’s described in the rest of the verses. Because Israel’s civil and religious leaders were wicked and corrupt some bad things were going to happen.

**Mic. 3:12** What will happen to their land?

What will happen to their cities?

What will happen to the Temple Mount?

**Concluding Thoughts:** Israel’s rulers hated good and loved evil. They abused their people, treating them like game to be killed, butchered, and eaten. Israel’s religious leaders led the people to do evil and preached false promises of peace. Because Israel’s leaders were wicked and led the people to sin, God promised to destroy the nation. Judgment was coming. Israel was a nation in decline, because their leaders were wicked and corrupt.

Do the descriptions of Israel’s leaders remind you of any modern leaders? Do any of our rulers “*hate the good, and love the evil,*” seeming more interested in their personal wealth and power than in the good of the people they lead?

Wicked leaders cause a nation to decline. What should we do?

First we must **pray**. In **1 Timothy 2:1-2** we are commanded to pray for our leaders. We must also **obey** our leaders (**Rom 13:1-7; Titus 3:1**). Finally, we should **tell** others about Jesus Christ

so they can follow Him as Lord. **Psalm 33:12** tells us “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.*” Do you want to be blessed?

Pray for your civil and religious leaders right now.

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**Project:** Memorize **1 Timothy 2:1-2**. Pray for civil and religious leaders every day.