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MICAH 3: 1 I said, "Please listen, you heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel: Isn't it for you to know justice?"

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In this chapter the prophet inveighs with great boldness and spirit against the princes and prophets of Judah; and foretells the destruction of Jerusalem as the consequence of their iniquity, Mic 3:1-12. The last verse was fulfilled to a certain extent by Nebuchadnezzar; but most fully and literally by the Romans under Titus. See Josephus.

Verse 1

Hear - O heads of Jacob - The metaphor of the flock is still carried on. The chiefs of Jacob, and the princes of Israel, instead of taking care of the flocks, defending them, and finding them pasture, oppressed them in various ways. They are like wolves, who tear the skin of the sheep, and the flesh off their bones. This applies to all unjust and oppressive rulers.

Suetonius tells us, in his Life of Tiberius, that when the governors of provinces wrote to the emperor, entreating him to increase the tributes, he wrote back: "It is the property of a good shepherd to shear his sheep, not to skin them." Praesidibus onerandas tributo provincias suadentibus rescipsit: Boni Pastoris esse Tondere pecus, non Deglubebe. This is a maxim which many rulers of the earth do not seem to understand.

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MICAH 3: 2 You who hate the good, and love the evil; who tear off their skin, and their flesh from off their bones;

MICAH 3: 3 who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the cauldron.

MICAH 3: 4 Then they will cry to the LORD, but he will not answer them. Yes, he will hide his face from them at that time, because they made their deeds evil."

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Verse 4

Then shall they cry - When calamity comes upon these oppressors, they shall cry for deliverance: but they shall not be heard; because, in their unjust exactions upon the people, they went on ruthlessly, and would not hear the cry of the oppressed.

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MICAH 3: 5 Thus says the LORD concerning the prophets who lead my people astray; for those who feed their teeth, they proclaim, "Peace!" and whoever doesn't provide for their mouths, they prepare war against him:

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Verse 5

That bite with their teeth - That eat to the full; that are well provided for, and as long as they are so, prophesy smooth things, and cry, Peace! i.e., Ye shall have nothing but peace and prosperity.

Whereas the true prophet, "who putteth not into their mouths," who makes no provision for their evil propensities, "they prepare war against him." קדשו עליו מלחמה kiddeshu alaiv milchamah, "They sanctify a war against him." They call on all to help them to put down a man who is speaking evil of the Lord's people; and predicting the destruction of his temple, and Israel his inheritance.

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MICAH 3: 6 "Therefore night is over you, with no vision, and it is dark to you, that you may not divine; and the sun will go down on the prophets, and the day will be black over them.

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Verse 6

Night shall be unto you - Ye shall have no spiritual light, nor will God give you any revelation of his will.

The sun shall go down over the prophets - They prospered for a while, causing the people to err; but they shall also be carried into captivity, and then the sun of their prosperity shall go down for ever, and the very day that gives light and comfort to others, shall be darkness and calamity to them.

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MICAH 3: 7 The seers shall be disappointed, and the diviners confounded. Yes, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer from God."

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Verse 7

Shall the seers be ashamed - For the false visions of comfort and prosperity which they pretended to see.

And the diviners confounded - Who pretended to foretell future prosperity; for they themselves are now thrall'd in that very captivity which the true prophets foretold, and which the false prophets said should not happen.

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MICAH 3: 8 But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of the LORD, and of judgement, and of might, to declare to Jacob his disobedience, and to Israel his sin.

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Verse 8

But - I am full of power - Here is the character of the true prophet. He is filled, all his soul is occupied with power, כח coach, with heavenly energy; by the Spirit of the Lord, the fountain of all truth and might; and of judgment, which enables him to make a proper discernment between the precious and the vile; and of might, גבורה geburah, prevalent power, against which vice shall not be able to prevail, and before which iniquity shall not be able to stand: but all shall fall together, and be confounded.

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MICAH 3: 9 Please listen to this, you heads of the house of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel, who abhor justice, and pervert all equity.

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Verse 9

Hear this - An appeal similar to that in Mic 3:1.

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MICAH 3: 10 They build up Zion with blood, and Jerusalem with iniquity.

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Verse 10

They build up Zion with blood - They might cry out loudly against that butchery practiced by Pekah, king of Israel, and Pul coadjutor of Rezie, against the Jews. See on Mic 2:9 (note). But these were by no means clear themselves; for if they strengthened the city, or decorated the temple, it was by the produce of their exactions and oppressions of the people.

I do not know a text more applicable than this to slave-dealers; or to any who have made their fortunes by such wrongs as affect the life of man; especially the former, who by the gains of this diabolic traffic have built houses etc.; for, following up the prophet's metaphor, the timbers, etc., are the bones of the hapless Africans; and the mortar, the blood of the defenceless progeny of Ham. What an account must all those who have any hand in or profit from this detestable, degrading, and inhuman traffic, give to Him who will shortly judge the quick and dead!

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MICAH 3: 11 Her leaders judge for bribes, and her priests teach for a price, and her prophets of it tell fortunes for money: yet they lean on the LORD, and say, "Isn't the LORD in the midst of us? No disaster will come on us."

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Verse 11

The heads thereof judge for reward - This does not apply to the regular law officers, who have their proper salaries for giving up their whole time and attention to the conscientious discharge of the duties of their office; but to those who take a reward, who take Bribes, for the perversion of justice; who will decide in favor of those from whom they get the greatest reward.

The prophets - divine for money - These are evidently the false prophets; for none, professing to be sent by God, used any kind of divination.

Yet will they lean upon the Lord - They will prescribe fasts and public thanksgivings, while not one sin is repented of or forsaken, and not one public grievance is redressed.

Is not the Lord among us? - Here is his temple, here are his ordinances, and here are his people. Will he leave these? Yes, he will abandon the whole, because all are polluted.

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MICAH 3: 12 Therefore Zion for your sake will be ploughed like a field, and Jerusalem will become heaps of rubble, and the mountain of the temple like the high places of a forest.

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Verse 12

Therefore shall Zion - be ploughed as a field - It shall undergo a variety of reverses and sackages, till at last there shall not be one stone left on the top of another, that shall not be pulled down; and then a plough shall be drawn along the site of the walls, to signify an irreparable and endless destruction. Of this ancient custom Horace speaks, *Odor. lib. i., Od. 16, ver. 18.*

*Altis urbibus ultimae*

*Stetere causae cur perirent*

*Funditus, imprimeretque muris*

*Hostile aratrum exercitus insolens.* "From hence proud cities date their utter falls;

When, insolent in ruin, o'er their walls

The wrathful soldier drags the hostile plough,

That haughty mark of total overthrow."

Francis.

Thus did the Romans treat Jerusalem when it was taken by Titus. Turnus Rufus, or as he is called by St. Jerome, Titus Arinius Rufus, or Terentius Rufus, according to Josephus, caused a plough to be drawn over all the courts of the temple to signify that it should never be rebuilt, and the place only serve for agricultural purposes. See the note on Mat 24:2. Thus Jerusalem became heaps, an indiscriminate mass of ruins and rubbish; and the mountain of the house, Mount Moriah, on which the temple stood, became so much neglected after the total destruction of the temple, that it soon resembled the high places of the forest. What is said here may apply also, as before hinted, to the ruin of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar in the last year of the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of the Jews.

As the Masoretes, in their division of the Bible, reckon the twelve minor prophets but as one book, they mark this verse (Mic 3:12) the Middle verse of these prophets.