

# Micah

## Chapter 2

### *Woe to the Oppressors*

**Woe to those who devise wickedness and work evil on their beds! When the morning dawns, they perform it, because it is in the power of their hand. 2 They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away; they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance. 3 Therefore thus says the LORD: behold, against this family I am devising disaster, from which you cannot remove your necks, and you shall not walk haughtily, for it will be a time of disaster. 4 In that day they shall take up a taunt song against you and moan bitterly, and say, “We are utterly ruined; he changes the portion of my people; how he removes it from me! To an apostate he allots our fields.” 5 Therefore you will have none to cast the line by lot in the assembly of the LORD. 6 “Do not preach”—thus they preach—“one should not preach of such things; disgrace will not overtake us.” 7 Should this be said, O house of Jacob? Has the LORD grown impatient? Are these his deeds? Do not my words do good to him who walks uprightly? 8 But lately my people have risen up as an enemy; you strip the rich robe from those who pass by trustingly with no thought of war. 9 The women of my people you drive out from their delightful houses; from their young children you take away my splendor forever. 10 Arise and go, for this is no place to rest, because of uncleanness that destroys with a grievous destruction. 11 If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying, “I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,” he would be the preacher for this people! 12 I will surely assemble all of you, O Jacob; I will gather the remnant of Israel; I will set them together like sheep in a fold, like a flock in its pasture, a noisy multitude of men. 13 He who opens the breach goes up before them; they break through and pass the gate, going out by it. Their king passes on before them, the LORD at their head.**

2:1–5 Directed primarily against wealthy landowners who oppressed the poor. (CSB)

2:1 Judgment on wealthy oppressors who spent the nighttime scheming how they could use their power to exploit their poor and weak neighbors. At daybreak, they began putting their ungodly plans into practice. (TLSB)

*work evil on their beds* – At night, instead of silently communing with God in gratitude for His blessings, they communed with greed, spending the entire night plotting other evil ways to get still more money and land. (PBC)

*when morning dawns* – Without a moment’s delay, they eagerly set to work carrying out their plans. (PBC)

*power of their hand.* The rich, oppressing classes continued to get rich at the expense of the poor because they controlled the power structures of their society. (CSB)

2:2 *They covet.* In violation of the tenth commandment. (CSB)

Rich and powerful kindled God’s wrath by breaking the Ninth Commandment. Their wickedness destroyed the social order in the land and took away the ability of families to provide for themselves. (TLSB)

*inheritance*. Land that was to be the permanent possession of a particular family. See Lev 25:10,13 (Year of Jubilee); Nu 27:1–11; 36:1–12 (Zelophehad’s daughters); 1Ki 21:1–19 (Naboth’s vineyard).

**2:3** *Therefore*. Because of the sins of Israel’s influential classes, calamity will strike. (CSB)

*this family*. Oppressors. (TLSB)

*disaster*. The impending exile. (CSB)

While the oppressors “devise wickedness” (v 1), the Lord planned to bring disaster on them. (TLSB)

*cannot remove your necks*. Pictures people being led away, their necks collared under a yoke, bound for captivity after defeat (Jer 27:8; 28:14). (TLSB)

*not walk haughtily*. Instead, they will be marched as slaves, legs shackled. (TLSB)

**2:4** *In that day*. Day of God’s judgment against those who have oppressed their fellow citizens. (TLSB)

*taunt song*. Sung by enemies leading wealthy citizens into captivity, mocking their lament over lost possessions. (TLSB)

*changes the portion*. Deprives the rich of their property. (TLSB) *apostate*. Heathen outsiders such as the Assyrians, who took over the fields. (TLSB)

*He*. God. (CSB)

*apostate*. Heathen outsiders such as the Assyrians, who took over the fields. (TLSB)

**2:5** When exiles returned from captivity, their oppressors would not be among those who cast lots to divide the restored land. ((TLSB)

*you*. The oppressing classes—the rich landowners. (CSB)

*none to cast the line by lot*. They will be cut off from all the promises of the covenant people. (CSB)

**2:6** Micah quotes the oppressors, who do not want to hear him preaching about sin, judgment, and future disgrace. (TLSB)

*they preach*. The false prophets whose words were addressed to Micah. (CSB)

**2:7** Verses 6–7a are spoken by Micah; vv. 7b–13 are spoken by God. (CSB)

*Should this be said*. First of four questions Micah addressed to his hearers, hoping to get them to examine their opposition to his preaching. (TLSB)

Is He not always ready to show goodness to those who conduct themselves in accordance with His righteous and holy will? The guilt, therefore, is entirely on the part of the people. (Kretzmann)

*impatient?* Oppressors imagined that God’s patience was infinite (Ex 34:6). (TLSB)

*Do not my words ... uprightly?* Those who follow God's will in their lives can expect to hear good words from Him. (TLSB)

**2:8–9** Spirit of lawlessness had become prevalent among God's people, targeting peaceful travelers, women, and children. This directly violated God's commands (Ex 22:21–24). (TLSB)

**2:8** *as an enemy* – Like an invading army the greedy and unscrupulous merchants, landowners and court officials had arisen as the enemy in Israel, an enemy of God and an enemy of the people. Ruthlessly, with no love for their fellowmen, they took people's "rich robe," the heavier outer garment that also served the poor as a covering at night. They confiscated the garments of those "without a care," who trusted them unsuspectingly, or of the soldiers "returning from battle," too tired to argue and fight back. The merchants and landowners no doubt seized the garments as security for debts, a practice clearly limited by divine law (Ex 22:26, 27). (PBC)

**2:9** *the women of my people you drive out...houses* – With no regard for personal needs and feelings the greedy landlords evicted defenseless widows, who lacked sufficient funds to secure the ri homes. They were forced to vacate the homes which had provided them with pleasant memories of their deceased husbands. It was equally sad when in the process their fatherless children were deprived of their inheritance. (PBC)

**2:10** *Arise and go.* Micah suggested that because of the evil in the land, it was best to leave. (TLSB)

*place to rest.* A place that could be regarded as one's own possession, where a people could settle in security (cf. Jos 1:13–15; 21:43–44; 22:4). (CSB)

When they defiled the land, with their detestable sins God's will was specific: "If you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you" (Lev 18:28). (PBC)

*uncleanness.* Land's holiness had been destroyed by sin. (TLSB)

**2:11** Anyone who promised greater affluence would gain a hearing. (CSB)

People who did not like Micah's preaching (v 6) would be happy with a "windy" preacher who told them lies and urged them to indulge in drinking. (TLSB)

The false prophets quickly learned that they could enjoy a comfortable living if they told the people only what they wanted to hear (v. 6). So they prophesied messages pleasing to their hearers, promising "plenty of wine and beer," lives of ease and pleasure. Threats of punishment for sin never crossed their lips, because such preaching would get them no favors from the people. (PBC)

**2:12–13** Although Israel will be carried into captivity, a remnant will return. (CSB)

**2:12** *assemble ... remnant.* In contrast to conditions in Micah's day, the Lord speaks of a future time when He would gather the true Israel (Mt 10:6; Gal 6:16). (TLSB)

*Jacob ... Israel.* Here perhaps the entire nation, north and south. Contrast 1:5; 3:1, 9–10. (CSB)

*sheep ... pasture.* Remnant is likened to a flock of sheep, gathered in one place, with the Lord as their shepherd (Jer 23:3; Jn 10:1–16). Luth: "He now passes from the kingdom of Israel to the eternal, spiritual kingdom of Christ. You see, it was the custom of all the prophets—something we have seen earlier in those prophets whom we have interpreted—to prophesy first about the destruction of the people

and about the external kingdom and then to pass over to the spiritual and eternal kingdom of Christ. This kingdom, they had prophesied, would come after the external kingdom was destroyed. It is very important to notice this in the prophets” (AE 18:227). (TLSB)

**2:13** *opens the breach* – The KJV translates by called the shepherd “the Breaker.” By His perfect life of obedience and His innocent suffering and death Jesus has broken down all barriers of Satan’s stronghold that had held man captive. He has broken the power of sin, death and damnation. The way to God and to heaven is open. Now His redeemed may “pass through the gate and go out” to serve Him during this life, and to follow Him into eternal life. He, their Lord and King, will go before them, providing needed protection and offering guidance and comfort in His Word. (PBC)

Probably refers to how the Lord would free His people from captivity and lead them back to the Promised Land. (TLSB)

*Their king.* Although the line of human kings ended when Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonians, the Lord will uphold His promise to David (2Sm 7:1–17). He Himself is the true King. (TLSB)

**Ch 2** Micah condemns the wickedness of the rich and powerful oppressors and proclaims the Lord’s judgment against their covetous behavior. In mercy, God promises to gather a remnant out of Israel and shepherd them. Today the Lord calls us to help our neighbors protect their house and possessions in fear and love. Jesus is our Good Shepherd, who gave His life to redeem us from sin and everlasting death. He has satisfied our most pressing needs and will free us from covetous desires. • Lord Jesus, my Good Shepherd, guide my feet in the way of Your Commandments. Amen. (TLSB)