

## Sunday School Lesson

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of the Northern Kingdom. Samaria was its capital city; Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah.

Both Samaria and Jerusalem were urban centers where the social and economic vices of the people would have been more frequently practiced. These were the great market centers; they were also the places where many of the poor people of the rural areas came looking for some sort of livelihood. For these reasons Samaria and Jerusalem

were particularly singled out as representative examples of the religious and moral decay of God's people.

In Micah 2:6-7 it appears that the people were trying to get the prophet to stop preaching doom and woe (such as we find in 1:8-16). This reaction was probably partly due to the fact that the people did not want to be reminded of the truth. But there is also something deeper here.

In the ancient Near East the people believed that spoken words could actually help bring to pass that which was spoken. Hence the people did not want

the prophets to speak of disaster for fear that by their speaking the prophets might actually bring disaster upon them.

Micah 3:11 is significant because priest, prophet, and prince alike were condemned for having led the people astray. They were more severely criticized because they had acted under the pretense of having the word and protection of Yahweh.

In Micah 6:1-2 the hills, the mountains, and the very foundation "pillars" of the earth itself were called to act as jury in the courtroom where Yahweh would present his case against the

apostate people Israel. In verses 3-5 Yahweh began to plead his case, reminding the people of his gracious acts toward them, particularly of his delivering them from Egypt in the Exodus.

In Micah 6:6-7 the questions asked imply a No answer. The conventional methods of worshiping a deity were not those preferred by Yahweh. The offering of multitudes of sacrificial animals and enormous quantities of oil, or even the rather common practice of child sacrifice, did not please Yahweh. What pleased him was the expression of love for one's fellow men.

## WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS TO US

As society becomes more and more complex, the expression of love to one's fellow man becomes more and more difficult. The question arises, then, How can we put into practice in our own highly complex, industrial, urban, secular society the principles of action that Micah suggested in the magnificent passage, 6:6-8?

It seems to me that we must grow into a mood of concern that will help us see and understand the needs in our day and

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