

**PARALLELS AND CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS OF LAND AND SOCIAL  
JUSTICE MOTIFS IN ISRAEL AND OGBOMOSO CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY**

**BY**

**OLUSEGUN OLAOSEBIKAN IGE  
(MATIC NO 118499)**

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**DR. ADEKUNLE OYINLOYE DADA  
(SUPERVISOR)**

**JULY, 2014**

## CERTIFICATION

I certify that OLUSEGUN OLAOSEBIKAN IGE in the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan carried out this work.

---

**Supervisor**

Dr.A.O. Dada

B.A. (Hons) Ibadan, M.A. Ph.D (Ibadan)

Associate Professor

Department of Religious Studies,

University of Ibadan

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**Date**

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## DEDICATION

God Almighty who made me fearfully and wonderfully

Late David and Ruth Ige

Ola-Oluwa Baptist Church

Elizabeth Bolanle, my wife

Dolapo

Obaloluwa

Oluwadara

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## ABSTRACT

Land and social justice are central to social life in the society of Prophet Micah (Micah), thus their motifs are dominant in the book of Micah of the Old Testament because of the oppressive government in power during the prophets time. Related situations obtained in Ogbomoso between 1978 and 2008, particularly among the Christians, when a number of people and organisations lost their land to the government or other individuals. Previous studies have identified several land and social justice motifs but have not compared these motifs in Micah with traditional Ogbomoso society's Christian experience in spite of their similarities. This study, therefore, compared land and social justice motifs in Israel and Ogbomoso Christian community in terms of types and manifestations with a view to establishing their contextual implications.

The study was premised on Itumeleng Mosala's biblical hermeneutics of liberation, using the historical-critical method. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 key purposively selected informants comprising 10 community/village heads and 10 opinion leaders across the five local governments in Ogbomoso land. Six Hundred and Fifty copies of a questionnaire were administered to 550 Christian and non-Christian land owners, 50 church leaders, and 50 land agents. Newspaper reports, Church records, land ownership documents and land Use Act of 1978 were also consulted. Data were subjected to exegetical analysis of the Book of Micah, and percentage scores

Three types of land and social justice motifs occurred in both Micah's society and Ogbomoso, namely, economic, social and political. Economically, farming constituted the professional hub of Micah's society. Consequently, depriving the people access to land (Micah 2: 1-5) had negative economic effects on them. In Ogbomoso, the same effect was exerted through the Land Use Act which affected the financial state of churches. Socially, the deprivation in Micah's society led to social discord (Mic. 3:1-4,5:7-15, 7:1-7) as many people were dislocated from their land. A similar situation occurred in Ogbomoso, leading to loss of church-owned schools, itself degenerated into tension between Christians and Muslims; threats to mission investments; and inter/intra family imbroglio. The political leaders of the time of Micah manipulated power to deprive the people of their land (Mic. 2:6-11). This was not manifested in Ogbomoso. One enforcer-based approach used during Micah's time was brute force, which received passive, prayer-based responses from the oppressed. The Ogbomoso cases received parallel but sometimes different approaches

from the Christians: amicable settlement (25.0%, produced 21.0 % land reclaim), defensive action against attacks and occasional physical assaults (3.0%, produced 3.0% reclaim), litigations (23.0%, produced 12.0% reclaimed), political influence (8.0%, produced 4.0% reclaim) and spiritual invocations (96.0%, led 6.0 % reclaim).

Micah's society and the Ogbomoso Christian community related to similar economic and social, but different political motifs, converging, with respect to reclaim approaches, only at the spiritual level. This reveals a deflection from the biblical example, which implies that geographic and social contexts rather than strict religious approaches determine effectiveness in land and social justice issues. Thus, achieving success in these issues required a more pragmatic than a biblically consistent approach.

**Key words** Book of Micah, Land and Social Justice, Land Use Act, Contextual implications, Ogbomoso

**Word count:** 500

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

#### 1.1. Introduction

Micah was a younger contemporary of Isaiah; He lived from about 735BC to 690BC and prophesied primarily in the Southern Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Micah ministered at the period of the invasion of Samaria and Judah by Assyria which was a period of great crisis, a period of anxiety and fear.<sup>2</sup> It was also a period of political “upheaval and social unrest.”<sup>3</sup> The eighth century B.C. in ancient Israel was also ironically a prosperous period. The economy boomed as a result of international trade routes which connected the then world together that passed across the land. However, the wealth and power accruing from the blossoming economy was concentrated on the hands of a few and this brought social injustice.<sup>4</sup>

The political and economic leaders of the time shared the boom among themselves leading to a life of opulence among them. They built mansions and acquired more lands at the expense of the poor. The religious leaders who could have been the crusaders for the poor had been bought over by the political class. The priests and prophets only spoke what the political class wanted to hear and so joined hands in the oppression of the poor. It was against this background that Micah of Moresheth appeared on the scene to declare the sins of the people to them. Micah was to operate against the mighty economic, political and even religious forces of the time. The psycho-emotional condition of Micah in the course of the delivery of the message can best be imagined. Perhaps the question of Michael Bentley might give an appropriate answer, “Why were religious people frequently filled with gloom and doom?”<sup>5</sup>

However, God is a God of Justice. J. Deotis Roberts ascertained that the Old Testament doctrine of God is based on justice. He says “the relationship between God and persons was based on the idea of justice. It is the common denominator that gives unity to Israel<sup>6</sup> prophets, priests, law givers, and all the common people. All these

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<sup>1</sup>Yoailah Yilpet (2006). “Micah” *Africa Bible commentary* ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo. (Nairobi, Kenya Word Alive Publishers.) p.1049.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew E. Hill and Hon H. Walton (1991-2000) *A Survey of the Old Testament* Grand Rapids Zondervan. p.504

<sup>3</sup> Andrew E. Hill and Hon H. Walton (1991-2000) *A Survey of the Old Testament*. p.504

<sup>4</sup>Yoailah Yilpet (2006). “Micah” *Africa Bible commentary* ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo. p.1049.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Bentley. (1994). *Balancing the Books Micah and Nahum simply Explained*, (Durhame Evangelical Press.). P.15.

<sup>6</sup>Deotis Roberts, (1987). *Black Theology in dialogue* (Philadelphia: The Westminster press.). P.74

persons in Israel are convinced of the justice of God as the basis for hope.<sup>7</sup> It is therefore necessary to examine social injustice among God's own people and also to examine God's response to this injustice through the book of Micah. Commenting from this perspective, Carroll believed that Micah must have belonged to the protest movement of his time described by anthropologists as revitalization movements.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The book of Micah opens up tremendous possibilities in the contemporary literary study of the Old Testament. This fact is evident in the fact that there are different motifs that can be identified in the book. We have the Zion- Jerusalem, the Lament, prophetic conflict, and judgment and redemption motifs. The fact that the book can be engaged from different perspectives therefore makes studying it an interesting and challenging enterprise.

However, existing studies on the book of Micah have not extensively explored the connection between two of the dominant motifs in the book: land and social justice. In ancient Israel, land occupied a prime position in the socio-economic schemes. This is because as an agrarian state the land remained the principal capital and heritage of the average Israelite. However, with the introduction of the monarchical mode of governance, new policies were introduced which had adverse effects on the access to land by the ordinary citizens. In view of this, this study will explore the factors responsible for the centrality of social justice especially in relation to land in the book of Micah.

Land is seen from the perspective of the Old Testament as a natural gift of Yahweh to his people. This is highly pronounced in the Abrahamic covenant where Yahweh made promise to the patriarchs of giving them a "land flowing with milk and honey"<sup>8</sup>. However, by the time of Micah, leaders of the people deprived the people of their land.

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<sup>7</sup>Robert P. Carroll. (1990). "Micah" *A Dictionary of Biblical Interrelation* (eds.) R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houldent.(London: SCM Press.). Pp.4512-352.

<sup>8</sup>Andrew E. Hill and John H. Walton (2000). *A Survey of Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids Zondervan.), p. 21.

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Waf' \_n"w> ~yTiĭb'W Wlz"ëg"w> 'tAdf'  
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“And they covet fields and seize them, houses and take them away; they oppress the people and take over their inheritance” (Micah 2:2).

Dispossessing a person or a group of people of their land could be seen as the greatest injustice that can be inflicted on them, when this happened in Judah, what was the consequence upon the people and their leaders? How did Yahweh react to this, as the giver of the land? Land was central in the social, religious and economic life of Israel. When an individual or a family is deprived access to land in ancient Israel it was tantamount to denial of the people’s commonwealth and heritage. Besides, when the prophet said:

'~L'K !yIa"+ ~d"Īa'B' rv"iÿ"w>  
#r<a'êh'-!mi 'dysix' db;Ûa' ~r<xe(  
WdWciÿ" WhyxiĪa'-ta, vyaiî  
Wbroêa/y<.~ymiäd"l.

“The faithful have disappeared from the land, and there is no one left who is upright, they all lie in wait for blood and they hunt each other with nets”, (Micah 7:2)

Does it really mean there was no single upright person in the whole land? What of the people who were oppressed and deprived of their land and the prophet himself?

What about the religious institutions of that period? What were the religious leaders doing at the time to make the political leaders realise the wrongness of what they had done and brought about a change of attitude and policies that would emancipate the suffering masses? To what extent did they succeed in their endeavour? What eventually became the lot of Micah who championed the course of the masses in the name of Yahweh? Why were religious people filled with gloom and doom?<sup>9</sup>

The work further explored how the situation in Micah could elucidate land ownership and tenure-ship in Ogbomoso land. Is there any injustice in Ogbomoso

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<sup>9</sup>Michael, Bently. (1994). *Balancing the Books Micah and Nahum simply explained* Burham Evangelical Press. p.15.

land in relation to land occupation? If there is, what are the institutions placed to address the issue and how successful are they in their duties? The pertinence relating Micah situation to Ogbomoso could be justified in the light of the need to relate the Bible to the African situation. In doing this the biblical text is either used to elucidate the African context or vice versa.

It has also been noted from the book of Micah, that there was class differentiation in the society of Israel and Judah. T. M. Green says, class differentiation in the societies of Israel and Judah of the eight century BC was a major cause of social injustice.<sup>10</sup> The problem here was what were the factors responsible for class differentiation? Did class differentiation really cause social injustice or social injustice cause class differentiation? Did the class differentiation fare better after Micah's message? What of the class differentiation among religious leaders who claimed to be speaking on behalf of the same God?<sup>11</sup> Does class differentiation exist in Ogbomoso land? What correlation does it have with land ownership and tenure?

### 1.3 Purpose of Study

The main objective of this study is to explore the connection between land and social justice and their dominance in the prophetic oracle of Micah. This is done with the view to determining the social, political and economic factors that made the issue of land and social justice central in Micah. To effectively do this the social and political structures of Judah in the time of Micah will be examined to see how they had in one way or the other engendered injustice in relation to land in ancient Israel.

Besides, the work will also explore how our findings on land and social justice as dominant motifs in Micah can further elucidate land ownership and tenure-ship in Ogbomoso land. Establishing the contemporary relevance of our study is predicated on the fact that contextual Biblical hermeneutics is a necessity. Contextual Biblical hermeneutics in Africa is the Biblical interpretation that makes African social, cultural, political and economic contexts a subject of interpretation. Specifically, it means that analysis of the text is done from the perspective of African worldview and culture.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> T. M. Green (1997). class Differentiation and Power (Lassness) in Eight Century BCE Israel and Judah. PhD Dissertation. Vanderbilt University. U.S.A..

<sup>11</sup> Micah's opponent www.Religion.Online net.

<sup>12</sup> D. T. Adamo, (2001). *Reading and Interpreting the Bible in African Indigenous Churches* (Eugene, Oregon: WIPE and Stock Publishers.), pp.46-47.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The study of the motifs of land and social justice in the book of Micah provided a contextual frame work for the study of the subject in the Nigerian society with special attention paid to land ownership and tenure-ship in Ogbomoso land. This subject of social justice has been an issue of concern from the ancient times to the contemporary period, therefore studying how it was will be a good starting point to see how it is in order to project on how it could be addressed. Moreover, colours may differ, regions may vary, periods may be different, but the core principles of social justice are permanent and universal. This study will help in providing some solutions to the problem of social injustices in Nigeria in the areas of politics, economy, religion and social harmony.

Moreover, contemporary Nigerian Christian leaders are motivated to speak against social injustice in the land following the example of prophet Micah of old, who fought against all oppositions, spoke against the oppressive system of his time thus fulfilling the mandate of his call.

Finally, this study served as an eye opener to the leaders and the led to the fact that there is a Supreme Judge who will judge the oppressors and make them to experience what they have given to other people. All forms of injustice that exist in any nation are firstly against humanity and ultimately against God, the Creator. This was made known to the leaders of Israel and Judah by prophet Micah and shall be made known to leaders of Nigeria by this researcher. God is always on the side of the oppressed and will ultimately fight their course for them.

#### **1.5 Scope of the Study**

The coverage of this work is an in depth study of the book of Micah in the Old Testament. Added to this, the various literary works that have been written on the book of Micah were consulted with the aim of bringing out land and social justice as the main motif in the book. The findings from this in depth study was related to the land ownership and tenure-ship in Ogbomoso land of Nigeria with the aim of finding solutions to the problems of social injustice relating to land matters across the nation.

At present, there are five local governments that formed Ogbomoso land namely Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso South (these are within the metropolis). We also have Oriire, Ogo-Oluwa and Surulere local governments respectively, which are the

suburb of Ogbomoso land. The research covered all these five local governments. Information was collected from across these local governments on matters of land ownership and tenureship. Ogbomoso was chosen for this study because most of the people in the area are rural dwellers and farmers who still have the land as their principal capital. One way or the other a wrong policy on land would have adverse effect on the people.

### **1.6 Research Methodology**

In the course of carrying out this research, different research methodologies were employed. Since we are dealing principally with a text with long history of composition and transmission, the historical-critical method was the basic exegetical framework of the study. This is a methodology that takes into consideration the social, economic, political and religious currents that shaped the texts until it reaches the final fixed point.

Six hundred and fifty copies of Questionnaire were purposively administered to derive primary information relevant for the study. The copies of the Questionnaire were distributed among the farmers, religious, community and political leaders and also among the land agents in order to achieve a balanced view of social justice in relationship to land ownership and tenure-ship. The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using the simple percentage ratings.

Moreover, structured and unstructured interviews were also conducted among different segments of the populace in the five local governments of Ogbomoso land. Some leaders and ordinary citizens were interviewed in order to elicit vital information that helped the researcher to properly address the issue at stake.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this research was premised on what is known as “liberational approach” in contemporary biblical hermeneutics in Africa. This is an interpretation schema that engages the Bible in the course of socio-political discourse. This approach had been effectively used by scholars of liberation theology to raise the level of consciousness of the oppressed by engaging discourse from the very book the oppressors used to justify their injustice. It must be acknowledged here that this project emanated through the influence received from the works of scholars of

liberation theology like Croatto,<sup>13</sup> Gutierrez,<sup>15</sup> Hendricks,<sup>16</sup> Mosalla<sup>17</sup> and West. To effectively engage this approach, the “three modes of reading” model popularized by Gerard West was utilized. These are reading ‘behind the text,’ ‘the text itself’, and ‘in front of the text’. The first mode concentrates on what is ‘behind the text’ of the Bible because it is primarily interested in the historical and sociological world that laid behind the text and from which the text comes. The second mode of reading emphasises what is in the text of the Bible because it is primarily interested in the literary world of ‘the text itself’. And the third mode of reading emphasises what is in front of the Bible because it is primarily interested in the major metaphors, themes and symbols that are projected in the text.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> J S Croatto (1978). *Exodus; A Hermeneutic of Freedom*. (trans. Salvador Attanasio; Maryknoll, NY; Orbis Books.

<sup>14</sup> J S Croatto (1998). The Function of the Non-fulfilled Promises; Reading the Pentateuch from the Perspective of the Latin-American Oppressed People in Ingrid Rosa Kitzberger (ed.) *The Personal Voice in Biblical Interpretation* (London; Routledge), pp 38-52

<sup>15</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez (1971) *A Theology of Liberation* (trans. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson, Maryknoll, NY; Orbis Books.

<sup>16</sup> Osayande Obery (1995). Hendricks Guerrilla Exegesis; “Struggle” as a Scholarly Vocation, *Seimia* 72. pp73-90

<sup>17</sup> Itumeleng Mosala (1989). *Biblical Hermeneutics and Black Theology in South Africa*. Grand Rapids; Eerdmans.

<sup>18</sup> Gerard. West (2003). *Contextual Bible Study* (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster.), pp26-50.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0. PROPHETS AND PROPHETISM IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

##### 2.1 Background to Prophecy

Prophetic phenomenon in ancient Israel is as old as the ancient Israelite religion itself. While studying prophetism, it was discovered that the phenomenon was not exclusive to Israelite religion; it was shared among many ancient and new religions of the world although at various levels of importance.<sup>1</sup> However, it must be noted that the prophetic tradition of the ancient Israelite religion is unique in the sense that it is preserved in the sacred scriptures of the three great religions of the world namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

According to Kenneth Baker, ancient Israel was not an isolated community. She shared with her neighbours many things including things that pertain to religious beliefs. For instance the case of Balaam referred to in the book of Numbers 22-23 in the Bible points to the commonality of prophetism in the religions of the ancient eastern world. Balak, king of Moab, hired Balaam who was a non-Israelite diviner, who had international reputation as a prophet, then, to curse the people of Israel to be destroyed. Balak knew that to engage Israel in battle would be catastrophic, he therefore thought it wiser to use spiritual means to defeat Israel. Some of the prophetic utterances of Balaam were preserved in the texts of some ancient Aramaic.<sup>2</sup>

Corroborating Kenneth Baker on the above John Skinner posited that Hebrew prophecy has its root and antecedents in widely diffused primitive ideas and customs which are found everywhere among peoples in the early stages of civilization.<sup>3</sup> This assertion of Skinner is correct to a reasonable extent because Israel as a social nation must of necessity have borrowed ideas, beliefs and customs from her neighbours. There is no nation or people that can live in isolation completely; there will be reasons for interaction. This might have been the experience of Israel with her neighbours. However, Israelite prophecy has its own unique characteristics which distinguished it from its contemporaries and marked it out from them.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Limblom (1962). *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* Oxford: Blackwell. p.1

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Baker. Ed. (1995). *The NIV Study Bible*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House. p. 220.

<sup>3</sup> John Skinner, (1961). *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the life of Jeremiah*. Cambridge: University Press. p.1

The uniqueness and distinctiveness of Israelite prophecy is that it is firmly attached to the covenant between Yahweh and his people, sealed around the Sinai Mountain symbolized by the Torah. Thus, the religion of Israel within which the prophetic phenomenon emerged was a national religion and Yahweh, the initiator and executor of the covenant is also a national God. Every prophetic oracle either in narrative or poetic form revolves around this fact. Moreover, since religion among the Israelites pervades and permeates every aspect of life, prophecy not only became a spiritual matter, it also became a vehicle of the best political guidance and the highest ethical tool by which the society was moulded.<sup>4</sup> Although, many earlier scholars did not agree with this assertion its truth cannot be played down. For instance R. R. Wilson in his work made mention of H. W. Ewald and B. Duhm opinions that, although the Hebrew prophets operated within their social milieu and were influenced by it, they had little significance in motivating societal change. The activities of Elijah and Elisha in the social political arena of Israel have rubbished the idea of Wilson and other scholars. Elisha was the initiator of the first military coup that ended Jeroboam's dynasty (2 Kgs 9; 1-37). This coup had far reaching consequences on the political development of the northern kingdom. Moreover, the involvement of the prophet Elisha in military campaigns of a certain king of Israel cannot be said to be ineffective (2 Kgs 8; 8-23). Furthermore, the prophetic ministry of Isaiah the prophet was a highly diplomatic one with involvement in both domestic and international politics, whose prophetic oracles affected political decisions widely. Some of them like Duhm however believed that the writing prophets worked both inside and outside of the religious establishment in order to change it. What these scholars did not realize is that, there was no way the prophetic ministries of the prophets would affect the religion of a people without affecting the social lives of such people. Moreover, copious examples abound in the Old Testament where as a result of the intervention of some prophetic personalities, there were social changes.<sup>5</sup>

In his conclusion, R. R. Wilson asserted and rightly so that "Although there is not much biblical data on the origins of Israelite prophecy, the Ephraimite tradition assumes that as early as the patriarchal period prophets carried out social maintenance functions within the central social structure of the Israelite tribes." He went further to ascertain that "As members of the central social structure the prophets presumably

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<sup>4</sup> John Skinner, (1961). *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the life of Jeremiah*. p.1

<sup>5</sup> Robert R. Wilson (1960). *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel*. Philadelphia: fortress press., pp1-7

had the task of unifying the society and regulating social change and this tasks may have also included cultic and political responsibilities.”<sup>6</sup> The case was not different from the Judean circle of prophets. This conclusively proved that the prophet played the roles of agents of social and religious changes throughout the history of ancient Israel. However, the level of their success in this pursuit is debatable. From the perspective of William Rainy, the essential element of the Old Testament is prophetic.<sup>7</sup> The J document which is believed to be one of the oldest documents of Israelite origins is essentially prophetic in presentation. William Rainy Harper identifies seven elements in the J document that made him conclude that it was prophetic. In the first instance, the spirit and purpose of the J document is prophetic because the writer assumed to be speaking on behalf of the Deity. This is conspicuously seen in the presentation of the divine purpose for the creation of the woman in Gen 2;18-24, the reason for the deluge Gen 6;1-4. Secondly, the national element in J document is so prophetic in character due to the prominence given to stories in which the principal characters were the reputed national heroes such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Joseph and Moses. Thirdly, the predictive elements in the J document are through and through prophetic. The patriarchal narratives were presented with a great futuristic tone, the history of sin was seen as a long struggle between man and the forces luring him to sin Gen 3;14. Israel’s relations with other nations are prophetically interpreted Gen 9;25-29. The beautiful future of Israel from the mouth of a foreign prophet was poetically predicted. All these predictions were characteristic of the prophetic element in the Biblical corpus. Fourthly, the prophetic element is seen in the idealism presented by the author of the J document. The author in his philosophical presentation of contemporary history tried through word pictures to lift up the minds of his audience from the lower level of reasoning to a high and lofty height required for an ideal man in an ideal society. The story of Abraham was an ideal relationship with Yahweh and society while the story of Joseph was a presentation of the perfect man whose relationship with God and man is idealistic. The story of the great deliverance of Israel from the mightiest power of the world by Yahweh was to psych up the heart of Israel to have absolute confidence in her God who is able to deliver from any enemy no matter how strong.

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<sup>6</sup> Robert R. Wilson (1960). *Prophesy and Society in Ancient Israel*. P 300

<sup>7</sup> William Rainy (1905). *A critical and international commentary on Amos and Hosea*. Harper  
Edinburgh T & T Clark

The progress of civilisation as presented by the J document also shows prophetic element. The building of the first city Gen 4:3-16, the beginning of arts and further spread of sin Gen 4:20-24 all were examples of prophetic elements in J document. The sixth point identified by William Rainy making the J document to be essentially prophetic is the author's graphic presentation of the covenant entered into between Yahweh and Israel. The circumstances leading to the covenant, the basis of the covenant and its eventual ratification in Ex 19:20-25,24:1-9 and 34:1-28 were all evidences that the whole idea of the covenant was a by-product of prophetic teaching. Lastly, the idea of sin and deliverance as seen in the J document made it to be essentially prophetic because sin as the major cause of suffering of a nation or an individual is the preoccupation of the prophetic thought. Also, the deliverance that Yahweh is always ready to wrought on behalf of a repentant people or individual is a corollary of the thought of the prophet. This factor seems to override all other factors in the prophetic oracles and so it is in the J document.<sup>8</sup>

In other to proof the dominance of the prophetic element in the Old Testament, we need to examine the E document too. Rainy believes that the prophetic element in E is most conspicuous. E presented Abraham as a prophet Gen 40:7, ascribed the spirit of Elohim to Joseph Gen.41:8, called Moses prophet Num.12:1-14, the treatment of Miriam as prophetess Ex 15:20, the recognition of Balaam as prophet Num.23:5-24, the prophetic inspiration and authority accorded the seventy elders Num.11: 16ff, the presentation of Joshua as minister of Moses and servant of Yahweh, the predictions of Israel's great future by dying patriarchs, are all prophetic in nature and presentation. The emphasis on high ethical standards, the demand for justice without partiality, the emphasis on individual rights and the removal of any detrimental information on the integrity of the prophetic heroes are further evidences of the prophetic character of E document.<sup>9</sup> Having seen the pervasiveness of the prophetic element in the two oldest traditions that formed the bedrock of the Old Testament corpus, we can safely conclude that Israelite religion is essentially prophetic. In its rudimentary level, the prophetic was the initiator and in its developmental process, the prophetic was working. When Israelite religion was entangled with syncretism, the prophetic element bailed it out. In fact the ultimate triumph of Yahwehism owes much to the

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<sup>8</sup> William Rainy (1905). *A critical and international commentary on Amos and Hosea*. Harper Edinburgh T & T Clark . (p lxxii-lxxvii)

<sup>9</sup> William Rainy (1905). *A Critical and International Commentary on Amos and Hosea*. (p lxxxi-lxxxii)

prophetic in the religion. The prophecy of Micah of Moresheth Gath definitely played its own role in influencing the religion and socio-economic spheres of ancient Israel, therefore its study today can also contribute to the emancipation of our economy and politics.

Having seen the pervasiveness of the prophetic element in Old Testament literature, we need to discuss briefly on the essential characteristics of prophecy firstly to distinguish it from the other elements of the Old Testament corpus and also to use some of the findings in the analysis of the book of Micah. Some of the characteristics of prophecy are;

**a. Forth telling**

Forth telling is God speaking through the prophet to the contemporary situation. It is an essential aspect of Hebrew and biblical prophecy that came out of the interaction between God and his people. It is believed that God spoke to these prophetic personalities within a social milieu in order to cause a social change. Forth telling means God speaking directly and succinctly to people in their current situations through his servant. Mostly, it reveals the attitude of God to the present behaviour of his people. Robert R. Wilson says “The prophets who have been considered moral and ethical innovators, brought Israelite religion to a higher level of development than it has previously achieved.”<sup>10</sup> From this assertion it is obvious that the prophets in playing the role of innovators of their societies must have taken forth telling seriously. It is not possible to lift a society above its present level without speaking to its present situation. Forth telling was part of prophecy because the prophets themselves were parts of the society, who were not living in isolation and were aware, of the goings-on in their society. Moreover, the God who they claim to speak on his behalf is also a God of history who was actively involved in the contemporary religion, social and political events of the people.<sup>11</sup>

**b. Foretelling**

Examining another feature of prophecy, foretelling is of paramount importance here. Foretelling is the prediction of future events through divine inspiration of the prophet. Speaking about the function of the prophet, John Skinner

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<sup>10</sup> Robert R. Wilson (1985) “Prophet” *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*. ed. P.824

<sup>11</sup> Robert R. Wilson (1985) “Prophet” *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*. ed. p.29

believes that human beings get to a stage of confusion in their historical and social development that they need a class of professionals who through their intimate communion and communication with unseen powers that control human destiny, are able to foretell the future and give direction in difficult matters and conduct that will bring people out of their confusion. To Skinner, such people are the prophets who by divine instruction are able to predict the future.<sup>12</sup> J. A. Mortyer also writing about foretelling says it is of paramount importance because, the prophet spoke to the people through warnings of the consequences of their behaviour on behalf of God of history, who knows the past the present and the future. Finally telling the future is the basis of prophecy.<sup>13</sup> All the prophetic books of the Jewish scriptures contain elements of prediction. This also is aimed at shaping the character of the community to become conformed to the standard aims of Yahweh the God of the nation.

### **c. The word of God**

Perhaps the most distinctive nature of Hebrew prophecy is the predominance of the word of God. The word of God is seen as an extension of the personality of God; therefore, the word is received, transmitted and also heard with awe. The oracles of the prophets were words of God spoken to the prophet and delivered to his people in human language. The prophetic formula of “thus says the Lord” which most of the prophets made use of as the introductory remark of their oracles put them in the position of men who are interpreters and heralds of the word of Yahweh.”<sup>14</sup> Due to the predominance of the word of Yahweh, the personality, pedigree and social relations of the prophets is often submerged in the oracles that were uttered.

It is believed that where there is biography of the prophet most of them were redactor's works who either was a contemporary or pupil of the prophet. More often than not these biographical notes were in prose form and are usually, except on very rare occasions, used as introductory notes or prelude to the oracles of God from the prophet. Within this redactor's work also, we sometimes glean the historicity of the works of the prophet because certain periods were mentioned for the reader. This also helps the reader to ascertain the authenticity of the message.<sup>15</sup> Examples of these are

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<sup>12</sup> John Skinner, (1961) *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the life of Jeremiah*. p.1

<sup>13</sup> J. A. Mortyer, (1982). “Prophecy, Prophets” *New Bible dictionary*, ed. p. 978

<sup>14</sup> Curt Hurl (1960). *The Prophets of Israel* ed. Rudolf J. Rhrich and J. P. Smith (Oliver and Boyd Edinburgh and London). p. 28

<sup>15</sup> Curt Hurl (1960). *The Prophets of Israel* ed. Rudolf J. Rhrich and J. P. Smith. p. 28

found in the book of Eze 1:1-3, Jol 1:1, Ams 1:1, and Mic 1:1. Most of the introductory passages are in the third person singular, which further reiterates that the work originates from redactors. Even where they are in the first person, it may be added in that form in order to preserve the originality of the word. T. Henshaw, corroborating the above believes that although the prophet may predict the future, contribute to social reformation, the prophets is primarily a spokesman of Yahweh<sup>16</sup> W. F. Albright commenting earlier on the role of the prophet as a spokesperson of God says the prophet was a man who felt himself called by God for a special mission, in which his will is subordinate to the will of God.<sup>17</sup>

## 2.2 Classification of Prophets

There is a wide range of classifications of prophecy and prophetism in ancient Israel. It must be clarified that these classifications did not really exist in the Jewish world view; rather they were as a result of scholarly studies of the phenomenon of prophecy in the modern world. While it is not possible to attempt an in depth study of the classifications, this will be left to other researchers who might show interest in this area. A brief survey shall be attempted.

The classifications are to be seen from the perspectives of some scholars, who had written earlier on the topic. Emil G. Kraeling classifies prophetism in ancient Israel historically. He classified the prophets according to the historical era they prophesied showing the nation of Israel in relation to other international powers surrounding her at the time. He categorized Amos, Hosea early Isaiah and Micah, the young Jeremiah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah and Nahum as the prophets of the Assyrian era: while the prophets of Babylonian era are Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Ezekiel, Deutero-Isaiah. Lastly, the prophets of Persian and Greek era are Haggai, Zechariah, Trito Isaiah, Obadiah, Malachi, Joel, Deutero-Zechariah, Trito-Zechariah, Jonah and Daniel.

The classifications of Kraeling did not take into consideration the earlier prophets like Samuel, Elijah and Elisha and others who played significant roles in the religio-political history of ancient Israel and sometimes the surrounding nations.. Such an omission could not have done good justice because whatever the Israelite prophetism could have become, the omitted cycle laid the foundation. Gerhard von

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<sup>16</sup> T. Henshaw (1958). *The Latter Prophets*. London George Allen & Unwin Ltd, p.61

<sup>17</sup> W. F. Albright (1940). *From the tile Stone Age of Christianity*, p.232.

Rad also made a similar classification but he had earlier dealt sufficiently with the omitted cycle by Kraeling and has therefore laid a solid foundation for a good start in the study of Hebrew prophecy.<sup>18</sup>

Gerhad von Rad's classification of Israelite prophets and prophetism is alongside tradition. He classified the prophetic phenomenon in Israel as having its sources and inspiration from two major traditions namely, the Ephraimite and the Judean traditions. He maintained that there were writing prophets who derived their sources from the traditions respectively. He believed that the Ephraimite tradition is deeply connected to the Deuteronomic historian while the Judean is tightly connected to the Chronicles. To him, the two traditions have their distinctive characteristic speeches.<sup>19</sup> Although not many scholars agree wholly with Rad but his identification of the Ephraimite and Judean traditions in the Israelite prophetism has been well accepted and had served as eye opener to the development of certain books in the canon.

In his own classification, Frederick Carl Eisen classified Prophetism in the Old Testament into the Former prophets and the latter prophets. He followed the division of the Hebrew canon that is divided into the Law or Torah, the prophets or the Nebim and the Writings or the Ketubim.<sup>20</sup> The Torah being the Pentateuch while prophets include Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings and the prophetic books, then the writings which are the Psalms, Job, Song of Song and Lamentations. He saw from Joshua to kings as the prophetic histories and the book of the prophets as the prophetic sermons.<sup>21</sup> The prophetic histories are divided into four earlier mentioned, the prophetic sermons are also divided into four namely; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve. This follows strictly the Judaist consideration of the Old Testament which is no more as important to the modern biblical scholars, but however still contains the basic historical elements of prophetism that are still regarded as relevant today.

Another minor classification mentioned by Eisen is the major and the minor divisions. The first division is called the Major Prophets consisting of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Lamentations and Daniel while the Minor Prophets consists of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai,

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<sup>18</sup> Emil G. Kraeling. (1969) *The Prophets*: n.p. Rand M. C. Nally & Company. p.22

<sup>19</sup> Gerhad von Rad. (1965) *Old Testament Theology II*. pp6-32

<sup>20</sup> Robert R. Wilson (1980). *Prophecy and Society in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, pp. 37)

<sup>21</sup> Frederick Carl Eisen (Ed.). (2005). *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press. p. 9

Zechariah and Malachi. According to Eisen, the distinction between the two is not that of quality but of quantity.<sup>22</sup> This assertion is very correct. This researcher also believe that the narratives that are included in the so-called major prophets, if removed will reduce those so called major prophetic books to a level even shorter than the minor prophets. The Minor Prophets contain very little narrative which mostly in the opening introduction, all other sayings were preserved in poetic form. This division is further rendered weaker by the fact that the messages of the so-called minor prophets were as pungent as that of the Major Prophets and their role as influential if not more. Mariano Digangi also made the same assertion that the messages of the Minor Prophets were major messages.<sup>23</sup>

Mariano Dignagi, went further to identify another classification. She said the scripture classifies true and false prophets. In her description she says “the false prophet is a windbag who has been given nothing to say, but says it most impressively. The true prophet is a spokesman for God.” A good example of this was Zedekiah son of Kenaneh and his group who prophesied to Ahab though impressively that he would win the battle but who was contradicted by Micaiah son of Imlah in I Kings 22. Micaiah was the minority yet his prophecy overwhelmed the majority false prophets. Micah of Moresheth also had opponents. However, we do not know categorically who his opponents were, but they were referred to in his prophecies.

R. E. Clements on his own writings believed that some prophets are attached to the cult while some are attached to the court.<sup>24</sup> Agreeing with R. R. Wilson, Clements says that the covenant tradition is the solid background on which the house of prophecy was built. He says further that the covenant tradition was not based on only one but combined the various traditions concerning Israel’s origin.<sup>25</sup> Clements believed that many of the prophetic oracles were delivered at the worship centres during communal worship. T. Henshaw also agrees that there were evidences that the prophet was closely connected with the cult.<sup>26</sup> Other scholars like H. H. Rowley and A. R. Johnson also believe this assertion with their respective modifications. From other biblical evidences, like the movement of the Elijah/Elisha cycle of prophets, moving from one cultic centre to another, it is not out of place to conclude that the

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<sup>22</sup> Marinao Digangi (1985). *Twelve Prophetic voice: Major Message from the Minor Prophets* Wheaton, Illinois: The Victor Books. p. 11

<sup>23</sup> Mariano Digangi (1985). *Twelve Prophetic voice: Major Message from the Minor Prophets*. p.9

<sup>24</sup> R. E. Clements (1975). *The Old Testament Prophets' Self Understanding of Their Prophecy*. p.21

<sup>25</sup> R. E. Clements (1975) *The Old Testament Prophets' Self Understanding of Their Prophecy*. p.21

<sup>26</sup> T. Henshaw (1958) *the Latter Prophets* London: Goerge Allen and Unwin Ltd.

prophetic ministry is connected with the cult. The cult is the religious centre and the prophets were also religious figures who stood in the council of the Lord receiving messages for the people of God. We believe that the religious centres were the best places of operations for the prophets to deliver their messages because the largest crowds were found there. In fact, they were the only meeting places between the poor and the rich, the ruler and the ruled.

As regards the court prophets, it seems that when the prophet became too antagonistic of the Kings and their administration, the kings also decided to have a guild that would favour them. This category of prophets is closely connected with the palace and are usually paid and sustained from the king's treasury. Since their means of livelihood are attached to the king's treasury they cannot but favour the king's policies. J. W. Stein opines that since this group of prophets condones immorality they can be classified as false prophets.<sup>27</sup> J. G. Strydom however believes that they were not court prophets per se, but cultic prophets that were attached to the temple but in the service of the king. He also agrees that they were false prophets quoting Micah 3:5-8.<sup>28</sup> Whether they can be described as court or cult prophets continues to generate debate. However, one thing that is sure is that, those attached to the courts were usually antagonists of those that were not. The case of Micaiah son of Imlah that was opposed by Ahab's prophets and Micah that was opposed by some unnamed prophets are sufficient examples.

Another classification which is purely on academic ground is the literary and non-literary prophets. It is believed that Amos was the first writing prophet who set the pace for documenting the oracles of the prophets.<sup>29</sup> That the original document went through stages of editing before they assumed the final form is not debatable.<sup>30</sup> Eiselen's position sums up the position of many scholars. Literary criticism even supports this assertion by saying that some of the writings of the prophet that were rendered in the third person could not have being the work of the original prophet.

Finally on the issue of classifications and categories of prophets in ancient Israel there can be no end. There is the classification of monarchical prophecy and post monarchical prophecy, which were so named because of the periods they fall

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<sup>27</sup> J. W. Stein (1985). "Isaiah and statesmanship". *Journal of church and state* vol..p.83

<sup>28</sup> J. G. Strydom (2000). Being a prophet in the New South Africa. Can we learn from the Old Testament Prophets? *Old Testament Essays* Vol. 13 no.p.110.

<sup>29</sup> Curl Kuhil, *the Prophets of Israel* p.59.

<sup>30</sup> P. F. Eiselen (Ed.). (2005) *Ancient Israel: The Old Testament in Its Social Context*. Minneapolis: Fortress,110.

into. The words of B. Davie Napier in describing the association of the prophets in ancient Israel are apposite here. “There is no doubt that associations of prophets existed over the whole range of the history of the kingdoms from the time of Saul in the eleventh century BC until the fall of Jerusalem in the early sixth century BC”<sup>31</sup> The classification and groupings exists from the perspective of scholars and readers of the books of the prophets. However, the basic thing about Israelite prophetism is not the classifications but the role it played in the socio-political and religious history of ancient Israel.

### 2.3 Definition of Social Justice

In any society there are rules and regulations that are used for the regulation of the behaviour of human beings in order to create a harmonious society. Natural human beings are selfish and will always want things done to suit their own ends without minding the disposition of others. If man is therefore left to his own will, society will degenerate to a level of survival of the fittest which will make life to become brutish, nasty and short.<sup>32</sup> The process by which society tries to maintain order and egalitarianism is called social justice, everyone and everything to be in their proper place and relations.<sup>33</sup> However, this definition by James Feibleman is too vague because it failed to spell out “the everyone and everything in their proper place and relations.” In order to maintain social justice there must be principles that are laid down to guide the behaviour of individuals in the community. In the traditional communities, customs, mores and folklores form the basis of social justice. In modern societies laws are the guiding posts for maintaining social justice. The society where social justice will be achieved must lay out principles and practices that will enhance proper relationships among human beings and also the guidelines that people must conform to in order to put the inanimate things that services the needs of human beings in their proper places.

According to Wikipedia “Social justice sometimes called civil justice refers to the concept of a society in which justice is achieved in every aspect of society, rather than merely the administration of law. It is generally thought of as a world which affords individuals and groups fair treatment and an impartial share of the benefits of

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<sup>31</sup> B. Davie Napier *Prophets in Perspective* <http://ww.Religion.Online.Org>

<sup>32</sup> Austin Raney. *The Governing of Men*(1961).Oxford University Press. P.15

<sup>33</sup> James K. Feibleman. (1985) *Justice Law and Culture* dordrecht: Martinus Nihoff publishers. p.23

society.”<sup>34</sup> This definition is all encompassing and takes social justice in all its ramifications. However, it is not only the benefits of society that would be shared; the problems confronting the society must also be shared by all the members of the society both poor and rich if social justice would be achieved. Social justice from this perspective is seen as a philosophical problem and also a political issue. Kelly Bryan Ovie Ejibude gave more elaborate, all inclusive and more accurate definition of social justice. He says “it is the promotion and application of basic human rights, basic human needs and the means of impartially protecting and enforcing them legally in any society”<sup>35</sup> This definition is much more accurate to us because it covers the three basic concepts encompassed in social justice namely, the rights of individuals, the legal system to enforce these rights and the society that will enhance equity. The term social justice seems to have emanated from the background of a group dissatisfied with existing social order that tends to infringe on their rights. In corroborating this view Ovie Ejibude further says “social justice comprises a force behind social change. This is because it is precisely when people find fault with the existing social order, involving oppressive and exploitative social conditions, that they raise the demand for social justice, seeking suitable changes in social policy for determining an authoritative allocation of values.”<sup>36</sup> In congruence with this assertion, there can never be a cry of social justice where things are going on well. However, the cry for social justice had been from ancient period on to the modern days because there had never been a perfect society, where some marginalization does not exist. Whatever cuts across these facets of life will also affect religion and economy. According to this view, the issue of social justice has divided political ideologies across the globe into socialist/communist and capitalist ideologies. Social justice is also the basic theme of human rights activism. In order to achieve a high level of social justice, there are many Human rights organizations that were formed, even in the great democracies of the world like the United States of America and the United Kingdom.

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<sup>34</sup> Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, *Social Justice*

<sup>35</sup> Kelly Bryan Ovie Ejibude June 2010 in, *Social Justice, Democracy and Cultural Renewal Nigeria, Africana*, p214

<sup>36</sup> Kelly Bryan Ovie Ejibude June 2010 in, *Social Justice, Democracy and Cultural Renewal Nigeria, Africana*, p215

## 2.4 Biblical foundations of Social Justice

If there is anywhere to look for the foundation of social justice, the Bible will provide a handy opportunity. The Bible is a book of history. It is a history of God's relationship with a people and the people's relationship with themselves and with others.<sup>37</sup> T. B. Maston writing with the aim of setting out Biblical ethics as pivotal in the message of the Bible believes that the laws, the prophets and the writings are more concerned with relationships than with theology. He agrees that the theology is only there to emphasize the morality of God.<sup>38</sup> He reiterates that while the Old Testament is more concerned with corporate harmonious relationship, the New Testament is more concerned with individual relation with God that will eventually enhance the harmony of the community.

The original Hebrew word translation into justice is *qdeeeeeeece* which means "just" or justice," and it has been translated "righteous."<sup>39</sup> It is translated "righteousness" in the Authorized Version which has been followed by many other translations. The concept of justice was primarily related to human relations with one another, especially with regards to the rights of others. It is applied to business where just weights and measures are demanded (Lev.19; 35, 36, Deut.25:13-16, Ams. 8:5., Pr.11:1, 16:11, Ex.45:9, 10). Moreover, it is demanded in courts where aliens, citizens, rich and poor, are to be treated equally without any influence of inducements (Deut.16:20, 16:18-20; Ex.23:1-3, 3-9).<sup>40</sup> From the Old Testament perspective justice is not limited to giving individuals his due and on time but also ensuring that these rights are always guaranteed. The great advocates of this aspect of justice whose essential nature is to dispense justice according to the deeds of man are the prophets. Yahweh usually engages his power on behalf of the oppressed.

Supporting the above assertion, Rail Harrid Franklin believes that one needs not search for the origin of the Hebrew morality because from the earliest beginnings Yahweh has shown himself as passionately devoted to what is right. Stressing further the sociality of justice, Rail Harrid Franklin says that humanity has come to realise

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<sup>37</sup> T. B. Maston (1997) *Biblical Ethics. A guide to the Ethical Message of scriptures from Genesis to Revelation* Mercer University Press, PXVI.

<sup>38</sup> T. B. Maston (1997) *Biblical Ethics. A guide to the Ethical Message of scriptures from Genesis to Revelation*. PXVI.

<sup>39</sup> T. B. Maston (1997) *Biblical Ethics. A guide to the Ethical Message of scriptures from Genesis to Revelation*. PXVI.

<sup>40</sup> Rail Harrid Franklin. (2002) "Justice" *International standard Bible Encyclopaedia* Haren: Word Etext CD.RIJM.

that individuals have larger relationships than have been imagined before. The influence of an individual touches others at more points than have been imagined before. We now see that the employer, the labourer, the professional, the public servant have larger responsibilities for the life of those that surround them.<sup>41</sup> This is more salient in the Hebrew corporate life in which the life of an individual may have infinite effects upon the whole community.

It is from this perspective that the Jewish community in particular and other peoples in general developed a body of rules and regulations, though not written down, at the inception but on the minds of the members of the group in order to regulate the life of the individuals both for his own inner harmony and for the corporate harmony of the society. There is no such thing as individual morality apart from the society. The unrighteous man has the power to contaminate the whole community. It is therefore the duty of the society to checkmate him in order to preserve the morality of the society. When Achan became unrighteous, his action brought defeat to the whole nation, and the nation has to punish him and his family in order to appease the wrath of Yahweh and also to serve as a deterrent to others and also to preserve the harmony of the society.

Arguing on standard of morality, Grudem submits that God should be the standard of morality. He based his argument on the fact that since there is no unrighteousness in God, and that he has the power to punish any unrighteousness; he should be the standard of morality.<sup>42</sup> From his perspective, we can say that anything that conforms to God's moral character is right. Justice conformed to God's moral character; therefore social justice is a just course. To be just is to do things according to laid down rules. Mark Coppenger believes that there are positive and negative obligations that must be followed in order to achieve a just society. In this he is referring to the dos and don'ts that guide a society. He believes that victims should be helped without victimizing. Offenders only must be punished and without prejudice.<sup>43</sup> For instance, the poor of society can be helped in many ways except killing the rich and distributing their properties to the poor. If this is done, it is not just. But the

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<sup>41</sup> Rail Harrid Franklin. (2002) "Justice" *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* Haren: Word Etext CD. RIJM.

<sup>42</sup> Wayne Grudem. (1994) *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*: Leicester. England and Grand Rapids Michigan U.S.A. InterVarsity Press and Zondervan Publishing Rouse. p. 204

<sup>43</sup> Mark T. Coppenger (1983) *A Christian View of Justice* Nashville: Boardman Press. p. 82

pursuit and achievement of justice must be in the best interest of the society. To Coppenger the Bible is not only the architect of justice, it's also its advocate.

## 2.5 Justice in Israelite Prophetic Tradition

The thesis of G L Lasebikan that describes the Israelite prophets as political activists of their time is very apposite here. Political activism according to Lasebikan implies the sense in which one is fully committed to a course, especially that of politics, in an effort to effect changes. In this way the prophets, as political activists, would be men with a deep sense of commitment to God and his ideals and the establishment of such ideals in the society. The prophets in Israel were certainly patriots playing a leading role in the socio-political development of the Monarchy. They were men who rose in protest against the oppressive rule, misuse of power and the despotic nature of their leaders. It is thus that they worked to prevent tyranny and unconstitutional rule by the kings insisting that whatever Yahweh puts in their mouth that they would speak. Prophets in Israel actively involved in fashioning Israel's foreign policy.<sup>44</sup> The deep involvement of Prophet Isaiah in the political struggle of his day is a good example. Indeed every prophet in Israel or Judah saw God as the centre of all politics and, as a prophet of God; he participated along with Yahweh in the national and political struggle. These actions characteristic of the prophet are what Martin Buber called "theopolitics."<sup>45</sup> Political activism is all about social justice both from the perspectives of the ancient Israelite prophet and the modern social justice crusader. Political activism is all about following an established standard of behaviour for both the ruler and the ruled for the betterment of the whole society. Seeing the ancient Israelite prophets as political activists by Lasebikan is in order because nearly all the Old Testament prophets spoke against one social disorder or the other. This assertion of Lasebikan is much more an accurate description of the prophets than that of Wilson and his followers. The tendency in every society to degenerate into dependency calls for the existence of a class of people who knows and who are prompted to act on behalf of the majority who either did not know or know but cannot fight for themselves. Every society, ancient or modern has this tendency, and there exists such group of elites who dedicate themselves for the task of emancipation of

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<sup>44</sup> G L Lasebikan, Prophets as Political Activists in Ancient Israel. *Orita; Ibadan Journal Of Religious Studies*, vol 27/1, June 1995. p51-57

<sup>45</sup> Martin Buber. (1949) *The Prophetic Faith*. New York. p. 135

the society from despondency. In ancient Israel the group is the prophetic guild. Akpenpuun Dzurgba identifies two distinct social groups in the society, namely, the peasants and the educated. According to him,

*The peasants are the poorest members of the society, but they are in the majority when population is considered. They live on the produce of their piece of land. They maintain a livelihood on such trades as pottery, basketry, blacksmith, mats, sacks, bags, calabashes and firewood. They engage in many petty trades. Poverty is always with them and they are often threatened by terrors of hunger, thirst, shelterlessness, isolation, ignorance, illiteracy, insecurity and frustration. In times of politics, they are exposed to all kinds of political risks and violence.*<sup>46</sup>

This group of people is always at the receiving end of any social injustice perpetrated by the leaders in the society. Most of the time, when their rights are infringed upon, they cannot seek redress either because they don't have the means, or when they have the means, they are still afraid of the oppressors and their powers. More often than not, this group takes solace in God, that He will eventually vindicate them.

The educated group is made up of a very few people. An educated person is the yeast and leaven in social dough. He is a fermenting stuff in a depressed economy and an unstable political activity. He knows that injustice had been both experienced and dealt with in other generations. So he knows and believes that injustice can be significantly reduced in society. He may not have all the answers to human questions, but he has a style of thinking and behaviour that is more likely to produce answers. But this is not to say that the educated person is necessarily a good person. However, he is more equipped to deal with societal problems than the uneducated person.<sup>47</sup> As Dzurgba has rightly observed, the educated person is not necessarily a good person. It has been observed that, most of the leaders who perpetrate all kinds of injustices belong to the educated group. Sometimes they even use the weapon of their knowledge to subjugate the uneducated. It has also been observed that the majority of the educated are also part of the oppressed and they remain so until they have the

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<sup>46</sup> Akpenpuun Dzurgba. "Christianity and Human Mobilisation; An Instrument for Social Change." *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. Vol. xxv/1-2, June & December, 1993. p. 12

<sup>47</sup> Akpenpuun Dzurgba. "Christianity and Human Mobilisation; An Instrument for Social Change." *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. p. 12

opportunity to climb the ladder to join the upper class. Moreover, only a few educated struggle to ensure social justice obtains in the society, fighting for the oppressed. The majority of the educated, if they fight at all, only do so for their own selfish end or at most their immediate family. However, we must not because of what obtains underestimate the power this group wields. If channelled towards the appropriate way, the power of the educated can be a weapon of deliverance for the oppressed.

The characteristics of the educated group have been clearly illustrated in the Bible and they have much relevance to our contemporary society. In about the 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C, at the time of Amos, Micah, Hosea and Isaiah, many of the small farms of the peasants had been absorbed into large landed estates or farms of a new aristocracy, a ruling body of the nobles (Isa 5:7-8) By means of mortgage, foreclosing and shares cropping arrangements, the peasants lost their small pieces of land which they had inherited from their ancestors generations ago. The peasants lost their social, political and economic positions, and they were disappearing as an independent class. In fact, many of them passed into slavery.”<sup>48</sup> From the foregoing, we can conclude that these prophets were the educated of their society, and they belong to the few educated who were not selfish but rather used their education as a weapon to achieve egalitarianism in their society. To be educated in this context is not a matter of diploma, although some of them may have had a reasonable level of education, but it really means to be aware of the social political developments within and without the society and to be highly informed of the situation and respond to the situation in a way that will enhance the alleviation of the situation of the general society in general and the emancipation of the oppressed in particular.

These conditions made the prophets call for social justice. The task of social justice was to restore the poor peasants to their position of independent political and economic power in the community. Their goal of redress was to return the poor people to a normal level of advantage and satisfaction in the community. The restoration of freedom and equality in the land was an important element of the redress that took place in Israel.<sup>49</sup>

The year of Jubilee recorded in Leviticus 25 is the best known of the provisions which were made to redress injustice. Its concerns are reflected also in the

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<sup>48</sup>Akpenpuun Dzugba. “Christianity and Human Mobilisation; An Instrument for Social Change.” *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. p. 12

<sup>49</sup> Akpenpuun Dzugba. “Christianity and Human Mobilisation; An Instrument for Social Change.” *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. p. 12

law, wisdom literature and the prophets. The aim of the people in institutionalizing the year of Jubilee was to guarantee the right of the poor people to be established in relationship to landed properties. When there is too large number of destitute in the society, charity capabilities will not be able to cope with their needs again, therefore, structural measures become necessary to achieve social justice. Micah looked forward to a time when, with equal and secure access to the means of production, each person would again “sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree” (Micah 4; 4).<sup>50</sup>

For an application of justice a society provides means or measures by which the benefits and burdens of a people living together in a society are distributed fairly. Justice enables a people to apportion resources, authority, power, rights, duties, liberties, privileges, opportunities, advantages, disadvantages, income, wealth, rewards and punishments fairly according to merits and qualifications”<sup>51</sup>. All the submissions of Dzurgba are correct of the eight century B. C prophets of ancient Israel. They were the elites who knew and who put their knowledge into use for the achievement of social justice in the society.

## **2.6 Civil Law and Justice in Old Testament**

Law in the Old Testament is usually traced to Sinaitic Covenant as recorded in Exodus 20 in the Bible. While it is not disputable that the Ten Commandments set out the bedrock of the civil and religious laws of the Hebrews, it is our belief that law has been from the time of creation. In Genesis chapter two and three, the Lord God put Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and gave them laws that guided their dietary life. He permitted them to eat certain fruits and prohibited them from eating the fruit of knowledge of good and evil. It was the violation of this law that brought judgment upon the violators and the accessories to the violating. This has to be because justice is embedded in the nature of God.

The Ten Commandments guided some aspects of the religious and moral life of the people while a comprehensive body of rules and regulations touching almost all aspects of life were recorded in Leviticus 10. Mortyer while commenting on Leviticus 19 says “it seems to be almost designedly without pattern or structure it sweeps

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<sup>50</sup> Akpenpuun Dzurgba. “Christianity and Human Mobilisation; An Instrument for Social Change.” *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. p. 12

<sup>51</sup> Akpenpuun Dzurgba. “Christianity and Human Mobilisation; An Instrument for Social Change.” *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*. p. 12

together into one place rules and directives of every kind.”<sup>52</sup> The lack of structure or coherence might be the fact that it was not a onetime formulation as we have in modern constitutional makings, but that each of the laws emanated as the people interact with themselves and with their environment and their being together in Leviticus 19 spells out the principle of kindness (19:14), commercial honesty (19:15), integrity in justice (19:15), sexual purity (19:20), animal husbandry (19:23), the avoidance of pagan practice (19:26-28), family honour (19:29), Sabbath keeping (19:30) respect for age (19:32), respect for the immigrant (19:33).

According to Mortyer, the development of the Old Testament legal procedure is like other areas where old truths were not lost but brought in congruence with new ones to establish the consistency of God’s dealing with the people.<sup>53</sup> During the Patriarchal period there was no mentioning of law. Justice at that time was left on the hand of the family head. At the time of Moses, there was a decentralization of the administration of justice (Ex.18:13-21) which however still left the head of the family as the first tier dispenser of justice while Moses served as the Supreme Court. At the period of Monarchy, the single administrative system left by Moses was proving incompetent in dealing with the complexity of settled and sophisticated life of the people. There were series of judges who were charismatic leaders who led the people for a while but soon faded away. The incompetence of the sons of Samuel also led the people to demand for a new form of governance that led to the institution of monarchy. The eldership continued even into the period of the end of monarchy but the palace bureaucracy replaced the one-man judge of the period of judges. Yet, the justice of this period also proved incompetent to establish social justice in the whole land. The institution of monarchy became widened as many officials were added to the court in the light of special assistants to carry out functions for the king and the kingdom. As a result of this, the monarchy became very expensive to run and in order to continue the administration; means were sought out through heavy taxation in various forms.

It was against this background that most of the prophets rose up denouncing the injustice of their societies and calling for the establishment of social justice, the failure of which will attract the wrath of Yahweh which will bring judgment upon the people, especially the perpetrators of the in justice. Although R. R. Wilson believes

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<sup>52</sup> J. A. Mortyer “Civil Law and Justice in Bible” Times Elwel’s Theological CD. Rom.

<sup>53</sup> J. A. Mortyer “Civil Law and Justice in Bible” Times Elwel’s Theological CD. Rom.

that the prophets rarely succeeded in their efforts at reformation but they were rewarded by providing an outlet for repressed individuals to express their frustrations.<sup>54</sup> Moreover, it might seem they were not successful at the time, but they made the authorities to be shaken.

A good example of this was Amos of Tekoa whose message made Amaziah to tremble, and by implication the king himself. If this did not bring immediate result, it would have made the authorities to make policy shifts for the betterment of society. It is good for any society to have voices that will proclaim the voices of the oppressed and repressed.

## 2.7 Old Testament Principle of Jurisprudence

J. A. Mortyer believes and correctly too that the Old Testament Jurisprudence as absolute equity. He sees the *Lex Talionis* not as a license to savagery but a means of exacting an equation as is humanly possible between crime and punishment. The issue of death penalty is also an insistence that punishment must match the crime.<sup>55</sup> E. Clinton Gardner establishing the fairness of Old Testament jurisprudence identified three law codes of the Old Testament namely the Covenant code, the Deuteronomy code and the Leviticus code. He saw the Deuteronomy code as an expansion and review of the Covenant code. For example, the covenant code prescribed death penalty for homicide, the Deuteronomy code provided for cities of refuge for those who are guilty of accidental killings.<sup>56</sup>

The aim of justice in the Old Testament is not reformatory but purgatory and deterrence of other potential offenders. The value of life was highly regarded in Old Testament justice, to the extent that even those that are given the privilege of salvation in the city of refuge would still be killed by the avenger of blood if he mistakenly leaves the city (Nu.35:26-28). The defenceless, were adequately protected by the Old Testament justice (Ex.21:7-17). Integrity in the law courts was firmly established (Dt.16:128-20). In all, the Old Testament made adequate provision for the development and maintenance of social justice. Mortyer portrays this well in his assessment of the Old Testament jurisprudence when he says “just as the Old Testament shows that when law is flouted love evaporates, so also that law itself must

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<sup>54</sup> Robert R. Wilson *Sociological Approaches to the Old Testament*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, p.76

<sup>55</sup> J. A. Mortyer “Civil Law and Justice in Bible” Times Elwel’s Theological CD. Rom.

<sup>56</sup> E. Clinton Gardner (1960) *Biblical Faith and Social Ethnics*. New York. Harper & Row publisher. p. 638.

be in filled with love if it is to reflect the character of the God in whose name it was administered<sup>57</sup>

Peter Berger wrote very succinctly that the possession of land is a very critical issue in the life of a person, people or nation. When a group of people does not have a land that can be called their own, they are in danger of losing their identity; they become disoriented and somehow become psychologically, sociologically disorganized.<sup>58</sup> The assertion of Peter Berger is very true because the occupation of a land by a people is part of the people's identity. Any group of people who does not have a territorial boundary is not yet a people. In corroboration of the importance of land ownership by a group of people, Walter Bruggman says "the yearning to belong somewhere, to have a home, to be in a safe place, is a deep and moving pursuit of a people"<sup>59</sup> Land is part of the identity of a people. Loss of land or yearning to occupy a place is dominant images in the mind of human beings.<sup>60</sup> In the ancient world, many wars were fought, won and lost because of land occupations. In the contemporary world, it is not different. Nigeria as part of the global world has her own share of the crisis of land. The Plateau crisis that has become an incurable cancer is largely because of land disputes.

The Bible itself is also primarily concerned with land occupation. From the earliest beginnings, the central discussion is about land occupation. Adam and Eve were placed on a land which they occupied at the providence of God. They enjoyed everything on the land until they disobeyed God and he displaced them. Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldeans and was promised to be given a yet to be identified land where he was instructed to move towards (Gen 12:1-6). Land is so central to the Bible that Bruggman concluded that it cannot be viewed as just a spread of earth demarcated for a people, but rather should be seen from its symbolic perspectives.<sup>61</sup> To Bruggman land is physical dirt but freighted with social meanings derived from historical experiences, bearing many over- pluses of meaning known only to those who have it or lose it.<sup>62</sup> Land can mean a territorial integrity. Land can mean a covenant. Land can mean a lot of things depending on the context of usage.

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<sup>57</sup> J. A. Mortver "Civil Law and Justice in Bible" Times Elwel's Theological CD. Rom.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Berger. (1974) *The Homeless Mind*. New York: Basic Books. p. 23-24.

<sup>59</sup> Walter Bruggman *The Land*. Philadelphia. Fortress Press. p. 1

<sup>60</sup> Alvin Gouldner. (1970) *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*. New York: Basic Books. p. 224-225

<sup>61</sup> Walter Bruggman. *The Land*, p. 3

<sup>62</sup> Walter Bruggman. *The Land*, p. 3

In ancient Israel all the traditions that formed the history and theology of the nation were attached to the land. The Sinaitic covenant though given during the wanderings of Israel from Egypt to the anticipated Promised Land was given to become fully operational on a land they were to occupy. The prophetic traditions evolved to guarantee the judicious use of the land always calling the political class to order on abuse of their powers concerning the usage of their authority over the land. A good example of this was the rebuke of Ahab over his unlawful and forceful dispossession of Naboth of his inheritance. Moreover, the exile became the ultimate punishment to the people of Israel as a result of their disobedience to the laws of the Lord. In fact the concept of the kingdom of God emerged during the exilic period partly because of the loss of the Promised Land to invaders and many failed attempts of the people to reclaim their land.

Possession of land and losing of land are two opposing histories that are presented in the Bible.<sup>63</sup> The first category was the stories of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, Noah and his people, and finally the people of the Tower of Babel, who all at one time or the other possessed land but because of their carelessness and misuse of the opportunities they had on their land, lost the land.<sup>64</sup> The second story in the first category is the story of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who never had a land that can be called their own but that lived all their lives in anticipation of acquiring the land which eventually became a reality at the time of their great grand descendants. The second category is the stories of a land already possessed but was at the brink of a loss because of the many abominations inherited by the Israelites from the former occupants of the land the Lord gave to them. Despite all warnings from Yahweh that if Israel did not change they will be removed from the land, the people did not change until they were dislodged from their land. The second aspect of this second category is the stories of the suffering of the people in a foreign land, their aspirations to repossess their land, the promises of the Lord to restore them which started but not really completed before we were ushered in to the New Testament.<sup>65</sup>

As mentioned above, the failure to be restored fully and early led to the concept of the kingdom of God, which will no more be territorial. The analysis of Bruggman concerning Israel's covenants and traditions as based on land is very

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<sup>63</sup>Walter Bruggman. *The Land*, p. 15

<sup>64</sup> Walter Bruggman. *The Land*, p. 15

<sup>65</sup> Walter Bruggman. *The Land*, p. 15

accurate because there cannot be a covenant without a land, neither can there be traditions without a people living on a particular land at a particular time. It must be reiterated that covenants and traditions evolves as a particular people relate with themselves and their environment. The impact of the environment in the evolvement explains the differences of traditions that people living in riverside areas and people living in the savannah. For instance, the Ijaw people of southern Nigeria will place a new born baby on a river in order to determine its legitimacy. If it floats on the river, it is not a bastard; however the Yoruba of South-Western Nigeria has another tradition of determining the legitimacy of a baby, the difference is explained by the differences in the environments which the two people lived. We can therefore conclude that what made Israel what it was, was the land.

Land in Ogbomoso too is not very different from that of ancient Israel. Ogbomoso is part of Yoruba of south western Nigeria. Land is one of the identifying marks of Ogbomoso people. A full description of Ogbomoso land is reserved till chapter six, suffice it to say here that land is the primary heritage of the people, it is part of their politics, it is the fabric of their economy. On land, the Ogbomoso people socialize and perform all their religious rites. We can say without land, there is no Ogbomoso. The Ogbomoso people will do anything to defend their territorial integrity.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher perused scholarly works on the background to prophecy in ancient Israel. It was discovered that despite the commonality of prophecy in the ancient near eastern people's religion, Israelite prophetic phenomenon has its distinguishing factors. There are many classifications of prophetic class and characteristics of prophecy. The prophetic role in Israel was more of social justice crusading than theology. Land was at the centre of the political, economic and religious life of Israel as it is for the people of Ogbomoso.

## CHAPTER THREE

### LITERARY BACKGROUND OF THE BOOK OF MICAH

#### 3.0. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher attempted to look into the factors that were responsible for the emergence of the prophetic guild. The researcher shall also look at the international environment that surrounded Ancient Israel in order to see if there were any influences from outside Israel that contributed to the flourishing of prophecy in Israel. Moreover, the researcher examined the role played by the prophets when they eventually emerged. Also, the trends in the study of Micah were briefly examined to justify the stand of this research.

#### 3.1 Historical background to the Book of Micah

From the opening verses of the book of Micah, scholars are opened to the background from which the prophecy of Micah emerged. It was recorded that Micah prophesied in the days of three kings namely Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. In the first instance, the prophecy of Micah falls to the monarchical period in Israel's social-political history. The united Israel broke up after the death of Solomon about 922 B.C. There were two capitals of Samaria and Jerusalem respectively. The Davidic dynasty continued in the Southern Kingdom for a long period, while in the North Rehoboam's lineage was terminated by the revolution of Jehu.<sup>1</sup>

As the story of the monarchical period progresses, by the middle of the eighth century B. C. the economy of the Ancient Near East had witnessed a sporadic boom. In fact, that period was described by Prior as the most affluent period in the whole history of Israel of the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> Claude V. King also described the eighth century B. C. as the greatest of centuries because of two factors. Firstly the booming economy which brought a lot of wealth to the nations of the Ancient Near East, and most especially Israel, but which unfortunately did not benefit the vast majority because the wealth was concentrated on the hands of a small oligarchy. The rich were getting richer the poor were getting poorer. Secondly, the King believed that the emergence of the eighth century B. C. prophets, who came on board, denouncing the status quo, and calling for radical changes that would benefit the poor and the

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<sup>1</sup> David Prior. (1998). *The Message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk*. Leicester, England. InterVarsity Press. p.103.

<sup>2</sup> David Prior. (1998). *The Message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk*. Leicester, England. InterVarsity Press. p. 103.

oppressed added impetus to the making of the eight century B. C. the greatest of the centuries.<sup>3</sup>

Going back to the opening verses of the book of Micah, we can determine the years of his prophecy through the names of the kings mentioned. The first clarification we made was that although the message was meant for the two kingdoms as the two capitals were mentioned, all the kings mentioned were the kings of Judah. Some reasons that may be adduced to this are for religious purposes. Prior believes that like other eighth century prophets, Micah would not want to mention any king from the northern kingdom because they (northern kings) were seen as usurpers of the divinely backed and religiously legitimate kingship of the house of David.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, since Micah prophesied mostly in Judah, for purposes of clarity, the names of the kings of the South will be more meaningful to the audience the message was first delivered. Be that as it may, if the message was delivered in the days of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah Kings of Judah that will fall between 742 and 686 B. C. This was near fifty to sixty years of ministry.<sup>5</sup>

In this long period of ministry in the reigns of three different kings of almost diametrically opposed dispositions to the Hebrew religion and history, Micah must have experienced a lot of political, historical and religious upheavals which demanded his responses. Corroborating this assertion Prior says that the circumstances around Micah were constantly changing in fairly dramatic ways.<sup>6</sup> The prophetic oracles of the Old Testament were largely as a result of the provocations of such sporadic changes in all spheres of life. As a result of this, prophets were seen as social justice crusaders of their times J. S. Skinner sees the Hebrew prophet as a moral analyst.<sup>7</sup> Although his specific writing was based on prophet Jeremiah but his submission is true of all the writing prophets of Israel. Infact, Skinner believes that Micah was the one who laid the foundation of prophets denouncing the sins of the society which others had followed.<sup>8</sup>

The upheavals mentioned above were ascribed to the Syro-Ephraimitic crisis of the 750 B. C. According to Stuart A. Irvine, it was a regional conflict between

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<sup>3</sup>Claude V. King. The Eighth: The Greatest of Centuries? *Journal of Biblical Literature*...

<sup>4</sup>Prior, *The message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk*. p. 110

<sup>5</sup>Prior, *The message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk*. p. 103.

<sup>6</sup>Prior, *The message of Joel, Micah & Habakkuk*. p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> J. Skinner, (1961). *Prophecy and Religion. Studies in the life of Jeremiah*. Cambridge. University Press. pp 138-140.

<sup>8</sup> J. Skinner, (1961) *Prophecy and Religion. Studies in the life of Jeremiah*. pp p.144

Rezin of Syria, Pekah of Israel and Ahaz of Judah. In between the three are the involvement of prophetic figures of Isaiah and his younger contemporary Micah. These two prophets were seen as antagonists of the Davidic monarchs because of their deviation from the covenant traditions<sup>9</sup> Writing the condemnation of the monarchy, G. von Rad is typical; “All the evidence suggests however, that these prophets increasingly wrote off the reigning members of the house of David of their own day, and even that they regarded the whole history of the monarchy from the time of David as a false development.” Although this is pressed a little too far by Rad, many of them approved of David’s reign.

This period as agreed by many scholars have distinctive features that affected the ministry of the prophets that operated then. Firstly, it was a period of struggle for political hegemony among the then super powers to control a vast area that linked the then western world and eastern world together with the advantage of controlling the economy of the nations that will come under their jurisdiction. The struggle was majorly between Syria and Assyria to have dominance over the entire Ancient Near East.<sup>10</sup> However, according to Gerhard von Rad mentioning Irvine’s position says several Syro-Palestinian states and peoples were involved in Assyria’s effort to suppress rebellion in the west in 734-731 B. C. Participants in the anti-Assyrian movement included Rezin of Syria/Damascus, Hiram of Tyre, Pekah of Israel, Mital of Ashkelon, Samsi queen of the Arabs, and quite possible Hanno of Gaza. Irving pointed out that Ahaz of Judah did not join the campaign, he submitted voluntarily to Tiglath Pileser III.<sup>11</sup> The main aim as earlier said was for Assyria to control the economy of the area, which the prophets did not submit to. Gerhard von Rad corroborated the assertion of Walter E. Rast writes that although there is newness in the prophets which cannot be accounted for by recourse to the older tradition, at the same time, it is increasingly evident that the prophets speak in a form or content that makes their attachment to these traditions unmistakable.<sup>12</sup> It must be clarified here that the prophetic oracles were not attached to only one tradition but to all the traditions that form the Old Testament. To this researcher, the tradition that takes the upper hand in the prophetic oracles was the covenant traditions of Sinai from which

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<sup>9</sup>Stuart A. Irvine (1989) *Isaiah, Ahaz and the syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*. Atlanta, Georgia. Scholar, Press, 50.

<sup>10</sup>Gerhard von Rad. (1965) *Old Testament Theology*. New York: Harper and Row. p.171.

<sup>11</sup> Gerhard von Rad. (1965) *Old Testament Theology*. p.171.

<sup>12</sup> Gerhard von Rad. (1965) *Old Testament Theology*. 171.

the Torah emerged. The Torah was the basis of justice, and the cry of the prophets was the administration of righteousness and justice, from the beginning to the end.

The book of Micah as we now have it in the Bible was closely connected with the Deuteronomists. Deuteronomists were regarded as the zealous Levitical priesthood, which in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century B. C. was responsible for the emergence of the first version of the Hebrew Bible. They were habitual priests and scribes with their roots firmly established in the traditions of the northern kingdom of Israel.<sup>13</sup> Apart from the first version of the Hebrew Bible they also produced the influential history of Israel which covers the canonical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. They were also responsible for the updated versions of four of eight century prophets whose oracles have been preserved before. These prophets are Amos of Tekoa, Hosea Ben Beeri, Micah of Moresheth and Isaiah of Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> It was asserted that these four prophets emerged between 750-700B.C. as social prophets who declared oracles critical of the decision makers in Samaria and Jerusalem with the sole aim of provoking a social change in the society. Doorly believed that the eight century prophetic oracles were primarily directed towards the ruling elite class.

Hosea said

*Hear this O Priest,*

*Give heed, O house of Israel,*

*Listen O house of the King*

*For the judgment pertains to you (Hosea 5:1-2)*

Micah addressed the people and said

*Hear this, you rulers of the house of Jacob*

*And chiefs of the house of Israel, who*

*Abhor justice and pervert all equity,*

*Who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem?*

*With wrong (Micah 3:9-10).*

These two quotations from the two eighth century prophets were quoted by Doorly as corroborating the fact that they directed their oracles to the rulers of the society. This assertion is very possible, but this does not mean that other people did

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<sup>13</sup> William J. Doorly, (1994) "*Obsession with Justice: The story of the Deuteronomists*". New York: Paulist Press. pp1-2

<sup>14</sup> William J. Doorly, (1994) "*Obsession with Justice: The story of the Deuteronomists*". pp1-2

not share in the hearing of the message. In fact, the preservation of these oracles were the handiwork of other people who heard it, for the ruling class who received the arrows of these oracles would not have deemed it fit to preserve the negative words against them but would have rather done everything possible to destroy it.

If the books of Micah, Hosea, Amos and Isaiah were redacted by the Deuteronomists as claimed by Doorly, it is not surprising that justice and equity were dominant in them. The Deuteronomists were a group obsessed with justice whose work became very popular during the Josianic reform.<sup>15</sup> It is paradoxical, however, that the Deuteronomists were against the oppression that evolved during the monarchical period because of the expensive nature of the king's court and their work was popularized by the same institution they were criticizing and trying to change.

### **3.2. Prophetic Role**

According to Patrick D. Miller, Jr, the prophetic role in the Israelite religion and society was paramount to that of a messenger. A messenger, who received a message from the council of the divine because of his relationship with that council, proclaims the message according to the desires of God to an individual or the society. It was a divine message through a human agent but in the divine mind to a people in their social and political milieu. This explains the frequent use of the prophetic, formula phrase of "thus says the Lord" (I King 22:19-23, Is.6, Jer. 23:16:22 and Micah 1:1). The socio-political role of the prophet cannot be doubted, but the pivotal role of the prophet was the role of a messenger. The contemporary socio-political events in the contemporary modern world are not unnoticed to the divine, and the divine has important role to play in the history of the peoples, especially in Israel because Yahweh is also involved in their history. Infact according to Miller the social world of the prophet is to be found in heaven as much as on earth.<sup>16</sup>

Apart from being word crafts, the prophets were also social justice crusaders and religious innovators. In this perspective, before the prophetic role is analysed in the Ancient Israelite and Judean society, it must be emphasized that religious and theological location of the prophet also affects his socio-political location. More complex in the society of Ancient Israel and Judah was the interplay of religion and

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<sup>15</sup> William J. Doorly, (1994) "*Obsession with Justice: The story of the Deuteronomists.*" pp1-2

<sup>16</sup> H. Gunkel, (1987) "The Prophets as Writers and Poets" *Prophecy in Israel* p.25 e.d. D. C. Peterson, Plural Fortress Press.

politics. In these ancient communities there can be no division into water tight compartments between religion and politics. Whatever affects the religions of the people affects the society. Ancient Israel and Judah were theocratic. The prophetic activity is therefore indicated in both his theological location and involvement in the human political scene. This gave them the opportunity to appoint and depose kings e.g. Samuel, Elijah and Elisha. They gave political advice to kings whether to go or not go into battles, they also predicted the outcome of battles. They also called kings to account for their failure to carry out righteousness and justice in the community they ruled e.g. Nathan rebuked David for his adultery with Bathsheba. Elijah condemned Ahab and Jezebel for unlawful seizure of Naboth's vineyard and his murder. By the eighth century B. C. prophetic oracles were directed against various segments of the society such as elders, priests, other prophets, women, upper class elements of the society, landholders and even foreign nations.<sup>17</sup>

Last but not the least, the prophetic role as a divine messenger, a word Smith, religious innovator and social justice crusader all were aimed at the preservation of the covenant tradition. Bernhard Duhm a respected Old Testament scholar believes that the prophets were great individuals who extended the religion of Israel beyond the frontiers of cult and sacrifices, to a higher level of religion grounded in ethics. To him, the prophets were responsible for the evolution of Israelite religion from the level of supremacy of Yahweh among many other gods to the level of ethical monotheism.<sup>18</sup> Followed by other scholars, the innovations of the prophetic circle on Israelite religion made Duhm and his followers to erroneously conclude that the prophets broke away from tradition. Rather than breaking away from tradition, they were upholding the tradition by condemning the leaders who deviated and also calling them back to restore the tradition. All the innovation made by them to control the economy of the Ancient Near East were exclusively to the detriment of Egypt and Ethiopia, other world super powers then. Assyria had to focus on the smaller and seemingly weaker nations to subjugate them to become stronger and cut off control from other areas. These campaigns had serious consequences on the economy and politics of Israel and Judah which the leaders must respond to. Some of their responses also attracted responses from the prophetic circles including Micah and Isaiah who were contemporaries.

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<sup>17</sup> Patrick D. Miller, Jr. *"The World and Message of Prophets. Biblical prophecy in its content."*

<sup>18</sup> Bernhard, Duhm. (1916) *Israel's prophets*. Turbingen. J.C.B Mohr e.t. Paul Siebeck. ppJ-8.

The second aspect of the upheaval was internal. As a result of the booming economy, there was much wealth in the land which however did not translate to good living for the populace. The wealth was concentrated in the hands of few individuals, who have become so powerful that they formed an oligarchy of oppressors. As Prior said in Micah's days, increasing affluence led to increasing callousness (2:1-2) and eventually (insatiably) to blatant disregard of these foundational laws from God (6:10 – 12). Those responsible for administering justice in accordance with these laws became involved in conspiracy, bribery and other forms of corruption (3:13, 9:11, 7:3). This venality became endemic even in a purported theocracy, when both priest and prophet bought into the same network of injustice. (3:11).

R. R. Wilson believes that there were cultural prophets who enjoyed some political power and wielded a lot of religious influence. This group worked towards the underlines of the society, maintaining the status quo and in a way favoured the rulers. However there was also the group which Wilson termed as the Peripheral Prophets who were individuals relatively unknown, that had neither political connection nor any significant strong religious background, but who claimed to have a divine message for the society. This group usually called for radical changes of the society, sometimes calling for a return to the abandoned societal norms and mores which may lead to the overturn of many social political institutions. Many times this group was not usually favourably disposed to the leader of the society. Their aim was to end social repression and to improve the conditions of living of the less privileged class which they belong. The one was conservative while the other was radical. Micah of Moresheth must have belonged to the radical group for all their characteristics manifested his message.

At the period Micah delivered his message, the two groups were the dominant religious groups influencing the policies of the nations at all levels. Invariably, the two groups were usually at loggerheads. Examples were the many prophets that prophesied success for Ahab against Micaiah Ben Imlah who prophesied doom. Others were Amaziah the priest at Bethel who ordered Amos to stop prophesying at Bethel, and also some unknown prophets who worked against Micah of Moresheth who were prophesying for money. Using this paradigm for the contemporary socio-political situation of many countries across the globe, one discovers that society is divided along the conservative and the radical lines even in societies that does not have or believe or allow prophetic phenomenon in their socio-political arena. More

often it is the less privileged that are found in the radical group while the well-to-do are usually on the side of the conservatives. However, occasionally we find a handful of the well-to-do on the radical side usually as social justice crusaders fighting for the emancipation of the less privileged.

Societies, ancient or contemporary, usually get to a level of several conflicts that will demand responses from the citizenship, if not all, the ones that can perceive beyond the ordinary. Such was the level the society of Israel and Judah got to during the time of Micah. The society had descended to a level of social disharmony of class differentiation, a political level of the ruler becoming oppressive against the ruled, and a religious level of religious leaders claiming to be speaking on behalf of the same God proclaiming diametrically opposed messages. All of these demanded responses from the various strata of the society. The book of Micah was one of such responses to the rottenness of the society of ancient Israel and Judah. It was a response that called for radical changes that will enhance the wellness of the whole society.

### **3.3. Trends in the Study of the book of Micah**

The study of the book of Micah is as old as the biblical text itself. However, the study of the book at first did not generate any critical examination; therefore many of the critical problems seem to have passed unnoticed. The emergence of the work of Heinrich Ewald however changed the scene in 1840. Ewald first believed that the book of Micah is a complete unit in itself,<sup>19</sup> which he himself eventually modified in the second edition of the same book, that there are other contributors to the making of the book of Micah, other than the prophet himself.<sup>20</sup> Both Bernad Stade and J. Wellhausen also at different times agreed with Ewald but with their own respective expansions of the view of Ewald.<sup>21</sup> These criticisms have been taken from the historical critical method using some psycho-social elements.

The critical study of Micah also went beyond the historical critical method. The redactional critical method was also used to study Micah. The redaction criticism of the book of Micah believes that the book of Micah at present is a product that passed through many stages and hands of redactors, who removed, added or reframed

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<sup>19</sup> Heinrich Ewald, (1840) *Die Propheten des alten Bundes* Vol.1 Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. p.323

<sup>20</sup> Heinrich Ewald, (1867) *Die Propheten des alten Bundes* Vol.1 Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. p.525-327 as quoted by Delber R. Hillers.

<sup>21</sup> Bernad Stade "Bermakungenuub a das Buch Micah" ZAW, (1881), pp161-172 as referred by Delber R. Hillers.

some of the words or phrases as time, theology and expectation of the people demanded in order to produce the best of the book as they could. Scholars like Jorg Jerimias.<sup>22</sup> James Luthur Mays,<sup>23</sup> and Ina Willi -Plean<sup>24</sup> all made their contributions on the redaction history of Micah. However, Brevard Childs says that, the discordant conclusions of all the redaction history contributors on the book of Micah left much to be desired of it.<sup>25</sup> Delbert Hillers also consistently argued that, redaction should not only be seen as growth, the element, of removing some words phrases or sentences, that may not be in tandem with the redactors belief should always be considered.<sup>26</sup> Infact, redaction should be seen as a modern day editing. Suffice here to say that the book of Micah is not a one-time production but a processed production.

Delbert Hillers, in rejecting the inadequacies of historical criticism, textual criticism and redaction criticism, postulated a unifying explanatory approach of the social situation from which the book of Micah emerged. He proposed that Micah belonged to a 'revitalization' movement or a millennia movement.<sup>27</sup> These movements of revitalization as explained by Hillers are groups of people who feel cheated and who have come together to press for changes in the society that will alleviate their suffering, and by all possible means to achieve an egalitarian society. This concept is very outstanding in the book of Micah. He denounced the oppressive leadership and the wretchedness of the vast majority of the people.

Hillers identified five major elements in the book of Micah that is found in every movement of revitalisation. First is the removal of foreign elements that enhances the present status.<sup>28</sup> Micah 5:10-15. Secondly, the time of troubles as recorded in Micah 5. This is not limited to chapter 5; the entire book is a graphic illustration of the times of troubles. Thirdly, the expectation of reversal of situation, since the poor play the prominent roles in the revitalization movements, they will eventually take over their rights. (Mic.4:6-7). The fourth feature as seen in revitalization movements is the idea of an ideal ruler or leader who will lead the people to realize the yearning and aspirations of the vast majority of the people. This

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<sup>22</sup>Jorg Jerimias. (1965) *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alteramartlichen Gathung*. WMANT. Vol. 10 (Neukirchen.Yluyn: Neukirchener as referred by Delber R. Hillers.

<sup>23</sup> J. L. Mays,(1976) *Micah: a commentary*. Vorfurmes der Sc Philadelphia Westminster.

<sup>24</sup>Ina Willi-Plein .*Wic hriftexegeseinnerha Ib des Alten Testaments* (BZAW).

<sup>25</sup>Brevard S. Childs (1979) *Introduction to the Old Testaments as Scripture*. Philadelphia. Fortress press, p.430

<sup>26</sup> Delbert R. Hillers. *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. P.4

<sup>27</sup> Delbert R. Hillers. *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. P.4

<sup>28</sup> Delbert R. Hillers. *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. P.4

is seen in the messianic figure of Micah 5. Lastly, the feature of the triumph of righteousness over unrighteousness is prominent both in revitalization movement and the book of Micah.<sup>29</sup> Hillers was not the only scholar who argues for the coherence of the book of Micah. John T Willis<sup>30</sup>, James Limborg<sup>31</sup> and Lamontte Luker<sup>32</sup> all agreed with Hillers with mild modifications respectively.

We need not press further than to agree with Hillers. The focus of this research in a broader sense is to examine the book of Micah from a sociological perspective with the sole aim to prove that social justice was its main motif. Although there was not a prominent group to which Micah belong, but what he stood for is very conspicuous. There is no doubt about it that Micah would have had admirers, supporters and fellow social crusaders underground who gave him all the support he needed to voice out the feelings of the oppressed and repressed. We can therefore safely conclude in agreement that he belonged to a revitalisation movement of his own time. He was actually one of its leaders.

Taking the study of the book of Micah from a sociological perspective will enhance the understanding of the book in contemporary times and enhances better its application to contemporary situation. The prophetic corpus, Micah inclusive, contains a large element of revitalisation movements. Hardly is there any book of the prophets that did not denounce the injustices of its time. The study of any discipline at present should be to benefit the human society and the general environment. In one way or the other, the pursuit of education is for the betterment of the society. This research therefore approaches the biblical book of Micah from a social perspective. We approach the book from a social perspective firstly, to understand it better and secondly, to be able to apply its principles and teachings to our contemporary corrupt society with the sole aim of achieving social justice.

### **3.4. Structural Analysis of the Book of Micah**

There is no agreement among scholars regarding the thematic organisation of the prophecy of Micah. There are as many themes and organisation as we have scholars who have attempted a commentary or examination of any subject concerning

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<sup>29</sup> Delbert R. Hillers. *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. p. 4

<sup>30</sup> T Willis. *The Structure, Settings and Interrelationships of Pericopes in the Book of Micah* (PhD dissertation, Vanderbilt University, TN, USA), pp. 123-124, 194, 312.

<sup>31</sup> James Limburg. (1988) *Hosea-Micah: Interpretation*. Atlanta, John Knox Press. p. 162

<sup>32</sup> Lamontte Luker. *Doom and Hope in Micah; The Redaction of Oracles Attributed to an Eight Century Prophet*. (PhD Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, TN,US). p. 224-228

the book of Micah. One of the commentators said from the earliest period of biblical criticism, attempts have been made to write on the structure of the book of Micah. For instance Grey Hubert Skipwith says “the genuine text of Micah falls into four portions”<sup>33</sup> According to Skipwith, the first portion consists of chapter 1:1-16 skipping to 4:8-5:1-5, while the second portion falls within chapter 3-4. The third portion is connected to 6:1-7:6 and finally the fourth portion belongs to 7:7 ff with some isolated verses like 2:2-13, 4:6-7 and 5:7-8 linked together by the idea of the flock.<sup>34</sup> Excel in his own analysis of the prophecy of Micah believes the book is arranged, for rhetorical purposes, into three prophetic addresses, consisting of words altered originally at various times as the Spirit within moved the prophet to speak. The three portions have a generally distinctive character and a certain inward connection. The first is briefly of a threatening nature, in the second, Messianic hope predominate; the third is hortatory, which is urging to repentance under God’s hastening hand, in remembrance of past mercies and promised salvation.<sup>35</sup> This three tier arrangement is corroborated by many scholars but with some slight variations. Waltke believes chapters 1-3 are full of threats, 4.5 presents hope and 5-7 again present threats.<sup>36</sup> Yilpet Yoilah in his own analysis believed that there were three oracles in the prophecy of Micah each with three themes of denunciation, promise and hope or restoration as the case may be.<sup>37</sup> Delbert R. Hillers in his profound analytical commentary of the book of Micah, warning that any accurate thematic or chronological arrangement, division or grouping of the prophetic oracles might not be possible, also agrees easily with a tripartite plan of the book of Micah, just like Leslie<sup>38</sup>, Waltke and others.<sup>39</sup>

The researcher shall want to follow the analysis of Yilpet Yoilah as contained in African Bible Commentary for two reasons. Firstly, the authorship, content and comments of Yoilah are Afrocentric, of which this research agrees. Moreover, the

<sup>33</sup> Grey Hubert Skipwith. On the Structure of the Book of Micah and on Isaiah ii 2-5. *The Jewish Quarterly Review*. Vol. 6 no 3, April 1894, p583

<sup>34</sup> Grey Hubert Skipwith. “On the Structure of the Book of Micah and on Isaiah ii 2-5.” *The Jewish Quarterly Review*. p583

<sup>35</sup> Joseph S. Excel “Micah” *Pulpit Commentary*. London. Frank and Wagnalis Company.

<sup>36</sup> Bruce Waltke (1988) Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, *An Introduction and Commentary*. Leicester. Intervarsity Press. p.144.

<sup>37</sup> Yoilah Yilpet. *African Bible Commentary*. P.1050

<sup>38</sup> E. A. Leslie (1962) “Micah” *The Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press. pp.369-377.

<sup>39</sup> Bruce Waltke (1988) Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, *An Introduction and Commentary*. Leicester. Intervarsity Press. p.144.

researcher chose it because the Biblical culture agrees more with the African thought than any other, but unfortunately the westernization of the gospel by the activities of the missionaries who brought the gospel to Africa have influenced the African mind to think that the Biblical message is the same thing as western civilization. Secondly, the issue of social injustice that this research pursues is much more pronounced in Africa, which must be addressed in the proper content and context. Lastly this researcher follows Yoilah's analysis of Micah because it follows the historical critical method of studying the prophetic oracle which is a complement of the social critical method. The historical critical method believes that the prophets did not set out to write books initially rather, their oracles came to them as God prompted them within a historical context and as occasion demanded. The prophets delivered their messages peace-mill but were later preserved and compiled by their disciples as evidence against the society or as evidence of ascertaining the veracity of the prophecies when they eventually came to be fulfilled. The historical critical method saw the oracles as dependent upon the response of the audience that received it, whether it will be fulfilled or not. Biblical prophecy is not taken to be complete if threats were not balanced with promises of hope of the people will repent, therefore, since these were taken care of by Yoilah, this research follows this analysis.

In the three oracles, the researcher discovered a tripartate division. Firstly, the sins of the people were analysed, secondly, the judgment that was fitted for the sins were delivered and thirdly, a promise of restoration was made; if the people concerned will repent.

#### **Micah 1:1**

The first verse is referred to as superscription. It is believed that it is the work of a redactor who put the information for the reason of clarity and historicity. The superscription on Micah is a common phenomenon in the prophetic oracles. Here it mentioned Micah as a native of Moresheth-Gath and the period he prophesied. Micah's vision comprised the entire book.

#### **The First Oracle 1:2-2:13**

The book opens rather with the delivery of judgment. The coming of the Lord which has been succour to the people before would now be an affliction to them (1:3). The Lord was coming to punish his people. His coming would bring a terror and physical explosions (1:4). All these would happen because of the sins of the people.

The mentioning of Samaria and Jerusalem was because the two cities were the capitals of the two kingdoms and it was in these cities that the sins were more pronounced. Samaria, since the revolt of Jeroboam I had been a place of idolatry. The idolatry grand in leaps and in bounds until it spread to Jerusalem, the capital of the Southern kingdom which had remained more faithful to Yahweh until she was influenced by her northern sister. The theophany expressed in verses 3-4 is a common expression in the Old Testament cf. Jdg 5:4, Isa 63:19.

Samaria would be destroyed because she was rich because of her unfaithfulness. Often, the figurative expression of illicit sexual relationship is used to describe idolatry. Yahweh is portrayed here as the husband while Samaria is the unfaithful wife.<sup>40</sup>

Verses 8:9 shows the reaction of the prophet to the calamity that was about to fall upon the land. He would go barefoot and naked. These two actions were symbols of mourning. He would also cry out like howling jackal or an ostrich and crying out like these also were symbols of cruelty and loneliness.<sup>41</sup> The mentioning of Judah as the gate of my people might refer to the fact that Jerusalem was the centre of the political and the religious life of the people. It might also refer to the faithfulness of Judah which was far and above that of Samaria, but which had been negatively affected because of the deadly spread of the wound of Samaria.

In verses 10-16, the poetic character of the prophet came out in a very pronounced way. There were several figures of speech used, out of which pun was most outstanding. Some of the names mentioned were made used of sarcastically. Mention must be made here that this passage is textually the most difficult in the entire book.<sup>42</sup> However, since the research is not on textual criticism, we shall deal

with it from the literary perspective as earlier mentioned. **tyiB; hr;ohpho** “Bayit Ophrah” means ‘house of dust’ and the inhabitants were to roll in dust.

**rhiph;iS** “Shaphir” means ‘beautiful or pleasant’ but her people would only feel the unpleasantness of nakedness and shame. **n[;N;K;** Canaan means ‘to come out’

but its inhabitants shall hide themselves. **lz;t,b,** (Betezal) means ‘the house of

<sup>40</sup> Delbert R. Hillers. *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. p.21

<sup>41</sup> Yoilah Yilpet. *African Bible Commentary*. P.1050

<sup>42</sup> Himer Kelsen *What is justice?* (London: University of California Press, 1957), p4

taking ways', therefore its treasure would be taken away. **krom;** (Marok) means 'bitterness'<sup>43</sup> and though they waited for sweetness, bitterness will come to them as they experience invasion. Lachish was a garrison city in Southern Judah; however its people rather than using their chariot to fight would use them for flight because the enemy would chase them since it was the first place to embrace the enticement of sin from the north. Moresheth-Gath, the home town of the prophet which sounded like the Hebrew word for betrothed would be given out as bribery to the invading Assyrian army, as a dowry was given to a maiden that was betrothed. **bzik.a;** (Aczib) means 'deception'<sup>44</sup> and intent to helping Judah, she would not be able to give what she supposed to give because she had become 'a dry water courts' to the house of Israel. **hh;sr,m** ((((((Mareshah;)) sounds like the Hebrew word for 'conquers', but it would be conquered. Adullam which was known for its caves for hiding would play host to the glory of Israel. This section ended with the tone of mourning with which it started because the people would shave off their hair and become as bald as the eagle, a symbolic position of mourning.

This poetic passage showed the depth of the thought of the prophet as he observed the calamity that was about to befall his people. It cannot be gainsaid that poetry, expresses more deeply, the feelings of the prophet in ancient world much more than prose. Moreover, because, the oracle was first delivered orally, it would be easier to commit to memory when it was rendered in verse than in prose. The message Micah was trying to pass across in this passage was that the exact opposite of what the people believed or anticipated would happen to them, none of their aspirations would be realised rather, what they did not bargain for would befall then because they too did the exact opposite of what Yahweh expected of them. This ended the part one of the first sermon.

Chap.2:1-11 formed the body of the second part of the first sermon. In this passage, the prophet highlighted the sins committed and the punishment that would follow each sin, which would lead to all that have been enumerated above that, would befall both Israel and Judah.

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<sup>43</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramic. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana. 599

<sup>44</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 87

We are exposed to flagrant misuse and abuse of power here. Whatever evil the leaders thought or schemed for in their hearts when they were on their beds in the night, when the morning broke, they used their power to carry it out. Contrary to the expectation of God and the people on the responsibility of the leaders, they coveted and seized people's property. The word (WdÜm . x ' ) meaning "they covet" was used by the prophet to show the leader's violation of the tenth commandment. The covetousness of the leaders become more grievous and treacherous when it relates to land seizure, as Hillers says "if the family land was lost, little other economics opportunity remained."<sup>45</sup> Taking other people's land was specifically forbidden by the law Lev.6:2-5; 19:13, Deut.27:17. Yahweh would not fold his arms as these evil plotters plotted their evil, He would also plot their disaster, which they would not escape (Mic.2:3-5). Yahweh is the ultimate owner of land which he gave as inheritance to his people Lev.25:14-34.

In verse 6-11, an unimaginable injustice was mentioned by the prophet. Prophets were supposed to be the mouth piece of God, speaking the truth no matter whose ox is gored. However, prophets had incited the public against the true oracles of God. Probably, verse six was speaking of other prophets who opposed Micah, who saw his prophecies as that of doom and therefore was not from God, who would always do well to his people. The people were so polluted that the prophecy of liars that would speak a sociality and merry making would be acceptable to them. In this context, this kind of prophecy would only be acceptable to the oppressive leaders and not the repressed citizenry. The kind of prophecy cherished by this group of prophets and leaders, only led to social disequilibrium. Labourers could not get simple cheap clothing, women were driven from their homes and children were denied a dream future.

2:12-13 served as the conclusion of the first oracle. In this section, there was a glimpse of hope. It would not be a total delusion, there would be a remnant. Although these two verses posed a lot of problem in that they were not completely congruent with the preceding flow of thought and neither was their theme of shepherd flock relationship associates with others in the whole book. As a result of this incongruence some scholars attributed this passage to the false prophets of the time of Micah, who

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<sup>45</sup> Delbert R. Hillers. *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. p.32

opposed him.<sup>46</sup> However Margo says it is “not likely that the false prophets concerned themselves with the events following the downfall of the nations, which contingency they were most emphatic in denying.”<sup>47</sup> Whether it was a misfit or not, one thing that was certain about the prophetic oracles was that they usually contain elements of hope. Here, Yahweh would judge his people because He is God of justice and would not allow injustice to go on with impunity, yet because of his mercy and justice, He would save the repentant. The repentant remnant, contrary to their former leaders who oppressed them would then have an ideal leader, who would lead them in triumph.

### **The Second Oracle**

Micah 3:1-5:15 Denunciation of the people’s sinfulness 3:1-4 Indictment of leaders. The leaders were accused of injustice. Instead of maintaining justice, the leaders were those who destroyed the people they were to lead. They hated justice and loved injustice. They robbed the people and roasted them like meat in the kettle. This simile was so strong that it exposed the level of wickedness of the leaders. They were described as cannibals, wolves that were preying on the people. They took what belonged to the ordinary people by force and used it for their own selfish ends. The punishment for these leaders was that Yahweh would not listen to them when trouble came upon them and they cried unto Him, as they did not listen to the poor when they were crying in agony.

The injustice of the leaders in ancient Israel against the people was very terrible. However, as terrible as it was, it cannot be compared with the injustice in contemporary African continent. Yoilah Yilpet got it right describing the leaders as corrupt, selfish and tyrannical.<sup>48</sup> Nigeria as a leading African country share in this corruption and injustice. Bruce Waltke says the prophet described the leaders as cannibals because the leaders were abused the law and circumvented it, instead of using their privileged position to defend the defenceless poor.<sup>49</sup> As a result of the wickedness of the leaders, they were sending the poor to their early graves, therefore, the leader was held responsible for this.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibu Ezra, van dan Woode were the great advocates of this hypothesis as summarized by Hillers.

<sup>47</sup> Max L. Margolis, (1908) *Micah*. Philadelphia. Jewish Publication Society.

<sup>48</sup> Yoilah Yilpet. *African Bible Commentary*. P.1053

<sup>49</sup> Bruce Waltke. (1988) *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: An Introduction and Commentary*. Leicester. InterVarsity Press. P 162

3:5-8 Prophet Micah also pointed out an irony in the land. The prophets were supposed to be a mouth piece of God, to speak and act against injustice. However, the prophets of Micah's time abused their offices and joined hands with the oppressors. The prophets prophesied peace where they have something to eat, but spoke woes against the poor who could not give the prophet anything (Micah 3:5). The use of the messenger formula "this is what the Lords says" by Micah against these prophets was showing that it was not Micah himself that was against them but Yahweh. It was not a matter between Micah and the others but a case between Yahweh and the gluttonous prophets. The punishment against these prophets was that they would lose their vision and experience the drought of the word of Yahweh, because He would block His line of communication against the table prophets. Contrary to what would happen to the false prophets, Micah was full of power and spirit to tell Jacob his sins. This means Micah would not be a crowd pleasing prophet like others but would rather show them their sins, in order for them to repent.<sup>50</sup> The more obvious quality which was present in Micah but absent in the other prophets was "judgment" (יָדָע מִיִּשְׁרָאֵל)<sup>51</sup> that is according to the passage 'to do justice', to discern what is right or wrong, no matter who was involved. The 'power and the might' (עֹז וְקֹדֶרֶת) also were charismatic characteristics of the leaders of ancient Israel, whose author was Yahweh Himself. More often than not, servants of God, collaborated either patently or latently, with corrupt leaders because of what they could get from such leaders, forgetting their divine mandate of upholding the truth and rebuking of misbehaviours of dishonest people in the society, no matter who was involved. There were often conflict between the pro-authority servants of God and the anti-authority servants of God. This conflict sometimes led to the confusion of the general public as to who was right or who is wrong.

**3:9-12:** In this section judges, heads, priests and prophets were indicted. The heads 'perverted all what was right' (שָׁדוּ אֶת־כָּל־יֶשֶׁר) [ ; י > הַר"בּוּ' י > ה ; - לְכָל' ). This was an indication that there was a total breakdown of justice. Bribery

<sup>50</sup> Delbert R. Heelers, 'Imperial Dream: Text and Sense of Micah 5:4b-5', in Huffmon, Spina, and Green. 1983. p. 45

<sup>51</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramic. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana. 606

and subversion of justice was the order of the day. The priests who were supposed to be the custodian of teaching what was right, were teaching those who could afford to pay. Prophets also prophesied for money. This abuse of the sacred was regarded as the worst rebellion. All the construction going on in Jerusalem was done at the cost of the blood of the people, and because of this heinous crime, both the city and temple would be ploughed down. (Mic. 3:12). The ploughing down of the capital city, where the activities were perpetrated, was a signal to God's judgment and condemnation of injustice. Zion seemed to be inviolable because the temple of Yahweh, and therefore the presence of Yahweh were there. The delivery of such a prophetic oracle against the holy place and holy city of God must have been a rude shock to those who listened to it. However, Yahweh was not interested in any structure built on injustice because such would violate his holy nature of justice. As Samaria would become a heap of ruins, so would Jerusalem be, because she too was involved in the sins of Samaria. This again showed that Yahweh was not a respecter of persons or places.

4:1 – 13: Once again, the concluding part of the second oracle was a reflection of a typical prophetic oracle of the eighth Century B.C. The sins would also be highlighted, and then a promise of hope would follow. In most of the prophetic oracles this is the sequence. In Micah 4: 1 – 13, the darkness that had pervaded the whole land by the sins of the people and the consequent judgment of God received a ray of light, although very far in the horizon, but sure to come.

It must be noted here that Micah 4: 1 – 4 had its parallel in Isaiah 2: 2 – 4. There had been so many arguments that the passage was authentic to Isaiah, or to Micah, or to an anonymous source to which both Micah and Isaiah referred in the deliverance of their oracles. Mays argue fervently against Micah's authenticity.<sup>52</sup> Hillers also mentioned that Cannawurf argued in favour of Micah's authenticity. The position of Hillers seemed to be the best among scholars who had attempted some work on this passage. He arrived at the hypothesis that the Micah book arose from a revitalization movement to which Isaiah belonged. That Isaiah was the author, and being the senior of the two contemporaries, Micah saw his work and added it to his own as part of the same movement or that the passage belonged to an older tradition than both Isaiah and Micah.<sup>53</sup> Reinforcing this last view J.J.M Roberts believed that

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<sup>52</sup> John Luther Mays (1976) *Micah: A commentary*. Philadelphia: Westminster.

<sup>53</sup> Hillers. (1984) *A commentary on the Book of The prophet Micah*. Philadelphia. Fortress press, p. 53.

the major elements of the Zion tradition had been developed long before the exilic period<sup>54</sup> It is not uncommon in the contemporary time to see social justice activists using the same phrase or language peculiar to them, it might be the same sense that was responsible for these parallels in both Isaiah and Micah. The two were social justice crusaders, sent by Yahweh to their respective societies.

In this section an ideal future was seen by the prophet, when there would be a political, social and religious transformation. Then Zion, the abode of God, in Israelite religion, will be lifted up above all other mountains and Yahweh would rule with justice and equity contrary to the present injustice. The rule of Yahweh then would be universal. There would be unequal tranquillity, which would allow each person to learn the ways of the Lord under his own fig tree. All the physically and emotionally wounded shall be healed. No foreign nation would invade the people again, Jerusalem, their capital would rule over them. In verses 9 – 10, the barrenness and powerlessness of the monarchy was strongly rebuked through phrases, like “as at first, “from of old, from older times”, referred to the golden age of the Davidic rule which was part of the monarchy. This also could be seen as a subtle reference to the theme of Messianism which we are going to encounter in chapter five.

In concluding this section, this city was portrayed as being in distress like a woman in labour pain, the intervention of Yahweh alone could deliver her. Although the enemy had surrounded her, yet she would triumph over all of them and plunder their camps. Then the wealth of the enemy nations would be transferred to the Lord and the people of God would become prosperous again, not because they would inherit the wealth of the enemy for that wealth is to be totally destroyed, but because they would have peace that would lead them to wealth.

This was the concluding section of the second sermon and it showed the people a ray of hope. In 5: 1 – 14, Micah announced the birth of a new king, in David's line, in sequence to the oracle preceding in chapter four, from Bethlehem Ephratah. The origin of the Messiah was from of old, unlike all other kings whose origins were from their birth. The birth of the Messiah would be the beginning of deliverance. Bethlehem was significant in two ways namely as the birth place of the great king David and as so small a place to produce such a mighty man. This shows, in Hebrew theology that mightiness belongs unto God, and He can use any means to

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<sup>54</sup>J.J.M Roberts (1973) “The Davidic origin of the Zion” *Tradition Journal of Biblical Literature* vol. 92, pp 329 - 344

save his people. It was highly ironical that the most insignificant place would produce the most pre-eminent person. Micah draw an inference, that Israel would be abandoned for a while. This might be a reference to the impending invasion from powerful neighbouring nations.

Two similes that were used as a pointer to the future hope the Messiah would bring to this people were 'dew' and 'lion'. The dew represented the life giving benediction from Yahweh which was beyond the manipulation of man. When the dew falls upon the earth, it causes revival to the dying vegetation especially in the time of summer. The coming of the king and the relationship with the remnant would bring a socio – political vibrancy that would once again put Israel above the surrounding nations. This leads again, to the figure of the lion, which among all other animals regaled in ferocity, power and elegance not found in others.

It must be noted that Micah 5: 1 – 4, was a very popular passage used by Christian apologists to ratify the birth of the Messiah and the place where he would be born. Micah 5: 4 – 5 shows the elimination of Assyria, the most profound among the enemies of the nation; while 6 – 8 brings to the fore the irresistible might that Jacob (the nation of Israel and Judah) would possess. 9 – 14 explain the purification of the nation where chariots, cities, divination and idols which were abominations to Yahweh, would be removed and the people would triumph over their enemies.<sup>55</sup> The removal of weapons of war, idolatry and all the defence systems, must occur because they were the people's snares by which all the corruption and eventual injustice emerged, therefore their removal would pave way to a robust relationship with Yahweh, through whose Messiah, the people would have peace and social equity which had eluded them for a long period of time, especially from the end of the reign of David to the time of Micah. This ending of the second oracle, is another confirmation of the fact that, the people would not be perpetually punished that, Yahweh would still restore them as they repented in keeping with his covenant with them.

### **The Third Oracle**

The third oracle was delivered in chapter six and seven. Like the other messages, it contains three specific parts. The first section deals with the indictment

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<sup>55</sup> Delbert R. Hillers, (1992) 'Micah' *Anchor Bible Dictionary* New York. Double Day., pp 808 - 809

of Israel for not keeping to her covenant obligations. It was presented as a graphic scene in a law court. Chapter 6:1-8 describes God's challenge of this people to a law suit. Chapter 6:9-16 gives reasons of judgment against the people of God. The second section dealt with the prophets lament as a result of God's judgment. This is highlighted in chapter 7:1-6. Chapter 7:7-10 promises salvation to the people, while 7:11-20 is a glorious epilogue of the prophecy eulogizing God's grace and mercy upon his people.

### **Chapter 6:1-8**

This section is presented in a dramatic form. It can be analysed in the light of other law suits in biblical and extra biblical treaties.<sup>56</sup> The speech can be divided into two sections.

Firstly, an anacrusis calling the people to attention to be able to listen to this accusation against them. In this case verse 1b-2, the Lord spoke firstly to Micah to speak to the environmental elements about the suit between Him that is the Lord and his people. The second aspect of this showed Micah summoning these elements and speaking to them to be witnesses of the law suit between God and His people. The trial involved Yahweh, the prophet, the elements and the people. The Lord through the prophet asked two fundamental questions from the people. What have I done to you and how have I troubled you? These two questions were asked to put Israel to the defensive.<sup>57</sup> Israel had believed that the current intolerable punishment they were going through, through the foreign invasions was an unjustifiable punishment from Yahweh, after all, the people were ready to always sacrifice to Him but their sacrifices were not accepted. These two questions were asked to make Israel realise that it was them that had wronged Yahweh and not the other way round. The people were reminded of the exodus which was solely an act of Yahweh. Also they were reminded of the plan of Balak and Balaam that was frustrated by Yahweh alone. These two questions were directed to the people to identify the reason why Yahweh saved them on those previous helpless occasions now refused to deliver them.

Even in this law suit it was obvious that the Lord was not interested in just punishing the people but was interested in wooing the people back to himself. Two

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<sup>56</sup> G. W. Ramsay. Speech forms in Hebrew Law and Prophetic Oracles. *Journal of Biblical Literatures*. Vol.96 no 1, 1977, pp.45-58.

<sup>57</sup> Bruce Waltke. *Micah*

times, preceding the pungent question, the Lord referred to them as “my people” in order to show the people how loyal he was to the covenant relationship and how unfaithful the people had been. The Lord warned the people to cast their minds back to the period of exodus when, he provided them with good leadership, and also called them to remember his saving acts.

The questions did remind the people of their historical and theological experiences but did not bring the expected response. Instead of the people to repent and change their attitude they were asking Yahweh, probably through one of the leaders who was part of the social injustice, for the price to buy off the judgment or to placate the Lord. The question must have been from the aforementioned source, the question must have been from one of the leaders because of the objects of the sacrifices mentioned. Although Hillers believes it was one of the benighted people.<sup>58</sup> We believe it was the upper class because, the so-called benighted people if it meant the lower class, could not have mentioned articles of sacrifices they could not afford. The speaker mentioned burnt offering calves, thousands of rams, streams of oil by the ten thousands. One of them could not be afforded by the deprived people let alone many which would have to be a question of committing suicide. Moreover, the graduated form as presented was a show of affluence, who could afford any volume of salvation because they were wealthy. Thirdly, the mention of first born son, to be offered as a sacrifice could not have been made by the repressed people, all of whom were peasants, innocent and still very loyal to the covenant tradition that forbade them from offering their children to Molech as the Canaanites did. Such an abominable offer could have only come from a class who had no regard for the covenant tradition again, which invariably were the leaders.

However, the answer to the question of the people was given by the prophet. The phrase “He told you” must have referred to Yahweh, who in the Torah had already spelt out his ethical standards which the people had failed to follow. The answer of Yahweh to the question of the people was not new. It has been there as early as the covenant relationship was born. There are three elements of the requirement to be a good man. (Is 17, 5: 20, Am. 5: 14 – 15, Mic 6:8). The prophets always referred to the stipulation of the covenant whenever leadership had failed to observe them. Here in the book of Micah, the first element is to act justly. This means,

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<sup>58</sup> D. R. Hillers. Micah. p.78

that the people, whenever occasion demanded, must rise to defend the weak and the wronged, by punishing the offender according to the injustice meted out to the oppressed. This exactly was where the leaders of the time of Micah had problem. They did the opposite (Mi 2: 1 – 2; 3: 1 – 3, 5-7, 9 – 11). The second element was to have mercy. An unfortunate person should be helped out of his misfortune willingly and by the institutions of the society in order to restore them. This again the leadership of the time of Micah was guilty of. Justice and mercy were expected to be activated among those bound together by covenant. The third term according to Hillers was obscure. He says if correctly translated it should refer to ‘employment of discretion, prudence and wisdom in the religious life. To walk humbly with the Lord, to Micah would mean to carry out the moral elements of their religion far above the ceremonial. Carrying out the covenantal obligations would redress the social imbalance and bring about the ideal society the Lord had planned for his people. Both the leader and the led were supposed to accept this.

Micah made the people to go back to the covenant tradition. The answer given to the question did not attract any new thing but a reference to what the people had known before but which they neglected and which had become their archiles heels. The Sinaitic covenant that produced the Torah that was the law, which was the pivotal of all the traditions, was based on social justice. Hence going back to that old but contemporary legacy would bring solution to the present problem, thus Micah says “...it has been told thee.....” This one who had told thee was Moses in the law.<sup>59</sup> As mentioned earlier, most of the prophetic oracles were clarion calls back to the covenant tradition. If the leaders had followed the precepts of the law as they led the nation, all the aberrations would not have arisen. We see verse 8 as the nucleus of the book of Micah on which all other themes and verses revolved. It is a call to justice.

Section two of the third oracle 6:9-16 was another delivery of judgment upon the misdemeanours of the leadership so that they would not claim ignorance of why they were being punished. The rich men were full of violence, they spoke falsehoods and the treasure they gathered were that of wickedness. They got their treasures by manipulating the measures. The bags and the stones had been manipulated against the down trodden in favour of the rich. Moreover, the people observed the practices and

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<sup>59</sup> W. J. Deane. “Micah” *The Pulpit Commentary*. Chicago Wilcox & Follet com. n.d. p.88

abominations of the house of Omri. The people would be punished because of all these sins.

The practices of the Omri and the house of Ahab might not be specific here. However, historical records showed that Omri was the one who built and fortified Samaria in order to make it a befitting capital, and we believed to make it a fitting competitor with Jerusalem in order to discourage the populace from having a nostalgic feeling about the city. Omri did this at the expense of the poor. Ahab, probably the most popular from Omri's dynasty was an expert in using his political power to get whatever he wanted. A good example of this was the forceful seizure of Naboth's vineyard. Moreover, Ahab popularized idolatry more than those before him. The worship of Baal and the maintenance of its prophetic guild was from the royal treasury at the instigation of Jezebel the queen. From the foregoing, the precepts of Omri and the practices of the house of Ahab could be summarized as treachery and injustice. Judgment against this corrupt leadership was best outlined by Hillers as futility curses that is the people would undertake a course and they would be frustrated in it.<sup>60</sup> In a more succinct way, the corrupt leadership would be pursuing mirage, the reason they perpetrated all their atrocities would not be realized. This often was the case of the many corrupt leaders in contemporary times across the world, their intentions were often frustrated.

It seems this section continues through Micah 7:1-7. Although there had been a lot of scholarship work on this chapter, especially on its unity, authorship and date, this research will limit itself to the unity, of this section with the preceding one. The flow of thought was not disturbed. This however is not a justification of single authorship with the previous, section but only of the thematic pre-occupation of time. The emphasis of this section was the frustration of a man, who most probably was the prophet Micah himself, who was looking for just a little positive thing throughout the land but could not get any. All what he would see were violence, betrayal and treachery, even from hard to believe quarters, for example daughter against mother, son against father, lovers against themselves. The selfishness and callousness had reached such an extreme that none could be trusted to carry out a simple moral obligation. The most intimate relationships had collapsed as a result of social injustice.

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<sup>60</sup> Hillers. *A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*. p.82

If Yahweh were not part of the history of the people all hope had been lost. The prophet's use of absolutes in this section was a reflection of the hopelessness of the situation. Greed and injustice had gone so far that one would be afraid to practise traditional moral values. This unimaginable level of social disintegration was also focused upon in Jer.9:3-4. The prophet had no option than to put his personal trust in Yahweh since all avenues of succour and hope had been dashed. Habakkuk in 3:18 also echoed the same thought of Micah in a hopeless situation.

This section is a close reflection of many African countries including Nigeria, where all hopes of the citizenry had been dashed as a result of long experience of social injustice which have led to the highest level of poverty, occasioned by corrupt and wicked leadership. Like the prophet, the African people had been disappointed by many leaders they had hoped would save them but had added to their plights, they therefore had resigned their fate to God, hence religious activities multiplied.

The last section of the third oracle is called a closing liturgy of hope by Delbert Hellers.<sup>61</sup> Indeed it was a message of hope in the power of Yahweh who unlike the deluded leaders promises to give them expansion and triumph. This section was also described as a Psalm. Bernhard Stade believes that the change of speakers, mood and tone are elements of the psalms.<sup>62</sup> Bruce Waltke also says that "Micah concluded his book with a liturgical hymn which commences (v 8) with the note of confidence that concluded his lament (v7)"<sup>63</sup> Waltke went further to say that this section contains four almost equal strophes in v. 8-10, 11-13, 14-17 and 18-20.<sup>64</sup> The first strophe, described the nation in her fallen state confessing her faith in the Lord. The second strophe presented the prophet probably answering on behalf of God, promised the nation that she would become a safe haven for her people. The third strophe consists of prayer, assurance and reflection. The fourth strophe like Moses' victory song at the Red Sea, celebrated the saving power of Yahweh over his people and his defeat of the enemies of his people.<sup>65</sup>

The prophet, in this section presented the people seeing their suffering not as wickedness from Yahweh, but as a deserved punishment from him as a result of their

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<sup>61</sup> Delbert Hellers. *A Commentary of the Book of the Prophet Micah*, p.87.

<sup>62</sup> Bernhard Stade "Steriflichter auf die Entesterhung, derjertizigen Gestalt der altestamentichen Prophetenschritten ZAW 23 (1903), as quoted by Delbert R. Hillers.

<sup>63</sup> Bruce Waltke. (1988) *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: an Introduction and Commentary*. Leicester and Downers Gorge: InterVarsity Press, p.202

<sup>64</sup> Bruce Waltke. (1988) *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: an Introduction and Commentary*. p.202

<sup>65</sup> Bruce Waltke. (1988) *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah: an Introduction and commentary*. p.202

sins. This was unlike the people's former thought of seeing Yahweh as punishing them unjustly in chapter six. Disobedience to God's word and ethical values would definitely play communities into chaos and anarchy.<sup>66</sup> When the people acknowledge their sin, the Lord would plead their case and pardon them according to his nature of justice. Hillers believed that this concluding section reflects the hymn of Moses in Ex.34:6.<sup>67</sup> This is repeated in Micah 7:18-20 with an emphasis on the power of Yahweh demonstrated against the Egyptians by hurling them into the sea, making way for his people to escape miraculously, so would Yahweh again do, by hurling the sins of the people into the sea, defeating their enemies and restoring his people unto their former glory.

### 3.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, through the search into the happenings that contributed to the emergence of the prophetic guild in general, and the prophecy of Micah in particular, it was discovered that economics and politics played a major role in the emergence of the prophets. When the prophets emerged, they did not really come as religious reformers but as social justice crusaders as was seen from their oracles which were condemnations of socio-political and economic injustices of their time. However, their messages were mostly delivered at the worship centres and also attached to the covenant traditions. Trends in the study of Micah showed that, historical critical method had dominated the scene in early period. In recent times, redaction criticism, literary criticism, textual criticism were followed. More recently, biblical texts are being subjected to sociological studies in order to make the text more relevant to the society which this research follows.

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<sup>66</sup> Yilpet Yoilah. (2006) "Micah" *African Bible Commentary*. Nairobi. WordAlive: p.1057.

<sup>67</sup> Hillers. *A Commentary on the book of Micah*. p.91

## CHAPTER FOUR

### EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS ON SELECTED VERSE OF THE BOOK OF MICAH

#### 4.0 The Person of the Prophet

The prophet was Micah the Morasthite; his name Micah was a contraction of Micaiah, the name of a prophet some ages before in Ahab's time, (1 Kgs 22:8); his surname, the Morasthite, signifies that he was born, or lived, at Moresheth, which was mentioned here (verse 14) a town in southern Judah, or Mareshah (yāTiêv.r:Moâ), which is mentioned in verse 15, and Jos. 15:44. A younger contemporary of the great prophet Isaiah, His prophecy revealed his country origins; he used many images from country life (7:1).<sup>1</sup> The place of his abode was mentioned, that any one might enquire in that place, at that time, and might find there was, or had been, such a person there, who was generally reputed to be a prophet.

Micah spoke out strongly against those who claimed to be prophets of the Lord but who used this position to lead the people of Judah into false hopes and further errors: "The sun shall go down on the prophets, and the day shall be dark for them" (3:6). Little else was known about this courageous spokesman for the Lord. Micah also was known as the champion of the oppressed. He condemned wealthy landowners for taking the land of the poor (2:2). He also attacked dishonest merchants for using false weights, bribing judges, and charging excessive interest rates. Even the priests and prophets seemed to be caught up in this tidal wave of greed and dishonesty that swept his country. To a people more concerned about observing rituals than living a life of righteousness, Micah thundered, "He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" (6:8) this is one of the greatest passages in the Old Testament.<sup>2</sup> It expresses the timeless truth that authentic worship consists of following God's will and dealing justly with other people.

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<sup>1</sup> Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers

<sup>2</sup> Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers

He tells us in his book that he prophesied during the reigns of three kings in Judah: Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Mic 1:1). This would place the time of his ministry from about 750 to 687 B.C. Ahaz was one of the worst of Judah's kings, and Hezekiah one of the best; such variety of times pass over God's ministers, times that frown and times that smile, to each of which they must study to accommodate themselves, and to arm themselves against the temptations of both.<sup>3</sup> The promises and threatening of this book are interwoven, by which it appears that even in the wicked reign he preached comfort, and said to the righteous then that it should be well with them; and that in the pious reign he preached conviction, and said to the wicked then that it should be ill with them; for, however the times change, the word of the Lord is still the same.

The parties concerned in this prophecy; it concerned Samaria and Jerusalem, the head cities of the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah, under the influence of which the kingdoms themselves were. Though the ten tribes had deserted the houses both of David and Aaron, yet God was pleased to send prophets to them.

**4.1 Exegesis and Analysis of selected verses in the Book of Micah**

**4.2 Lamentation of the Prophet. CHAPTER 1: 1-8<sup>4</sup>**

ykeäl.m; hY"βqiz>xiy> zx'îa' ~t'²Ay  
 ymeîyBi yTiêv.r:Moâh; `hk'y mi-la,  
 hy"©h' rv<åa] ÿhw"âhy>-rb;D>1  
 ~Øil' (v'Wr) ywI !Arβm.vo-l[; hz"ïx'-  
 rv,a] hd"\_Why>

<sup>3</sup> Stuart A. Irvine (1989) *Isaiah, Ahaz and the Syro-Ephraimitic Crisis*. Atlanta, Georgia. Scholar, Press.

<sup>4</sup> BibleWorks Version 7.0.012g, electronic software. Copyright (c) 2006

yn"βdoa]] • d[eêl. `~k,B' hwIÛhy>  
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 l[;%r:βd"w> dr:îy"w> Am=AqM.mi aceäyO  
 hw"βhy> hNEihi-yKi ( 3  
 ~yrIiG"mu ~yIm:βK. vaeêh' ynEåP.mi  
 `gn:ADK; W[Q"+B;t.yI ~yqIβm' []h'w>  
 wyT'êx.T; `~yrIh'h, ( WSm;Ûn"w >4  
 `dr" (AmB.  
 !Arêm.vo) `aAlh] bqo<sup>a</sup>[]y: [v;p,ä-  
 ymi(lae\_r"f.yI tyBeä twaJoβx;b.W  
 tazOë-lK' `bqo[]y:) [v;p,ÛB. 5  
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`hL, (g:a] h'yd<PsoywI h'yn<ëb'a]  
 `yG:l; yTiÛr>G:hiw> ~r<k'\_ y[eJ'äm;l.  
 hd<PF'h; y[iîl. !Ar±m.vo yTiîm.f;w> 6  
 yKiû hm'\_m'v. ~yfiäa' h'yB,Ëc;[]-  
 lk'w>vaeêb' Wpår>F'yI `h'yN<'n:t.a,-  
 lk'w> WTK;<sup>a</sup>yU h'y1,äysiP.-lk'w 7  
 `WbWv)y" hn"BAz !n:it.a,-d[;w>  
 hc'B'êqi `hn"Az !n:Ût.a,me  
 `dPes.mi hf,Û[/a, ~Ar+['w> îll'PAvÐ  
 ;ll'yveÀ hk'îl.yae hl'yliêyaew>  
 hd"äP.s.a, `taz0-l[;8  
 `hn")[]y: tAnõb.Ki lb,aePw>~yNIËT;K;

### TRANSLATION

1. Word of the Lord that came to Micah the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah which he upon Samaria and Jerusalem.
2. Hear, all the peoples of the earth, give attention to the Lord God, the Lord from his Holy temple.

3. For, behold the Lord is coming out of his place and will come down to tread upon the high place of the earth.
4. And melt the mountain under him and the valleys shall be cleft, as the wax from the surface of fire and as the waters poured down from a descent
5. For the transgression of Jacob is all this, and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? If not Samaria? What are the high places of Judah? If not Jerusalem?
6. And set Samaria as the heap of ruin field and as a planting vineyard and I will pour its stone in the valley and its foundation discover.
7. And all her images will be beat to pieces, and all her wages shall be burned with the fire, and all of the idols be put to waste for the wages of her harlot to be gathered and return.
8. Above this, lament and howl, be going barefoot and naked, I will make a wailing like jackal and mourning like ostriches.

Prophet Micah was talking about God's intervention in the affairs of His people. He is not only transcendent above but immanent in the world, one of the most basic concepts in Old Testament theology. Waltke says "If men would tremble before God, instead of before each other, they would have nothing to fear."<sup>5</sup> The Lord's intervention was due to the Israelites' sins and rebellion against the sovereign Lord. Samaria personified the rebellion of the Israelites, and Jerusalem had become a high place for idolatry rather than for holy worship. These capital cities had become leaders in wickedness rather than in holiness.

Micah liked to use "Jacob" as a title for all Israel (2:7, 12; 3:1, 8, 9; 4:2; 5:7, 8), though he also used it to describe the Northern Kingdom (here) and the patriarch Jacob (7:20). This name recalls the rebelliousness that marked the patriarch for most of his early life and that had subsequently marked his descendants. Micah used the name "Israel" to describe both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Bruce K. Waltke. (1998) "Micah." In *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary*, 2:591-764. 3 vols. Edited by Thomas Edward McComiskey. Grand Rapids: Baker Books. Page 152.

<sup>6</sup> Several of the prophets referred to the Southern Kingdom as "Israel," especially after the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C., because that kingdom represented the true Israel under the Davidic kings and the Aaronic priesthood. They referred to the Northern Kingdom as "Israel" in contrast to the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

The word [V; P, (peh'-shah) which is translated “to transgress”<sup>7</sup> has many other meaning too. and it was used majorly throughout the old Testament and part of the New Testament, as transgression, trespass, sin, rebellion.

Note that, External privileges and professions will not secure a sinful people from the judgments of God. A charge of sin upon them, as the procuring cause of these desolating judgments (v. 5): *For the transgression of Jacob is all this.* But there was a question asked, *What is the transgression of Jacob?*

1. It is idolatry; it is the high places; that is the transgression, the great transgression which reigns in Israel; that is spiritual whoredom, the violation of the marriage-covenant, which merits a divorce. Even the high places of Judah, though not so bad as the transgression of Jacob, were yet offensive enough to God, and a remaining blemish upon some of the good reigns. Why all these high places do was not taken away?

2. It is the idolatry of Samaria and Jerusalem, the royal cities of those two kingdoms. These two cities were the most populous places and where there were most people there was most wickedness, and they made one another worse. These were the most pompous places; there men lived most in wealth and pleasure, and they forgot God. Note that, Spiritual distempers are most contagious in persons and places that are most conspicuous.

## Chapter 2

Chapters 1-2 form a literary unit. God’s judgment on Samaria, the capital of Israel should have been a warning to Judah. As chapter 1 is in the literary form of a court scene, chapter 2 is in the literary form of a funeral dirge. This chapter has many similarities to the book of Amos, Micah’s eighth century contemporary to the Northern Ten Tribes.

Here the prophet denounces a woe against the plotters of wickedness, the covetous and the oppressor, 1, 2. God is represented as devising their ruin, 3. An Israelite is

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<sup>7</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana. 833

then introduced as a mourner, personating his people, and lamenting their fate, 4. Their total expulsion is now threatened on account of their very numerous offenses, 5-10.<sup>8</sup> There was great infatuation of the people in favour of those pretenders to Divine inspiration who prophesied to them peace and plenty, 11. The chapter concludes with a gracious promise of the restoration of the posterity of Jacob from captivity; possibly alluding to their deliverance from the Chaldean yoke, an event which was about two hundred years ahead at the delivery of this prophecy, 12, 13.

### 4.3 Oppression of the poor over the issues of land: Chapter 2: 1-5

Verse 1. Woe to them that devise iniquity ( !w<a"±-ybev .xο ).  
 “Woe”<sup>9</sup> This interjection, (yĀhō) “ah,” “ha,” means “alas”<sup>10</sup>. This is the characteristic literary marker of a funeral dirge. As chapter 1 was replete with words of lamentation and mourning (cf. vv. 8,10,11,16), so chapter 2 continues this theme (cf. v. 4). “to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds.” These are parallel lines. The first verb “devise” (bV ; x ' ) and the second, “work upon” (l [ ; P ' )<sup>11</sup> are both *Qal* Active participles. This reflects the premeditated plans of evil Israelites (cf. Ps. 36:1-4; Prov. 23:7; Isa. 32:7). In this context it is referring to ways to get more land from the poor rural farmers. “when the morning is light, they practice it” (h'Wfê [ ] y : `r q , Bo' h ; rĀaÝB . ) The verb in the second line is repeated, but here it is a *Qal* Imperfect denoting continuing action. Sin starts in the thought life (cf. Hos 7:6). The rabbis said our mind is like a ploughed field ready for seed. What our eyes see, our ears hear, and what our thoughts dwell on becomes our actions. “Because it is in their power to do it” This is the OT equivalent of “might makes right.” Just because we can does not mean we should. There is an

<sup>8</sup> Leslie Allen, *New International Commentary on the Old Testament*. Page 292

<sup>9</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramic. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana. 1978. 362

<sup>10</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*,

<sup>11</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, 821

ethical God. He has made an ethical world. All humans will give an account to Him of their stewardship of the gift of life

Verse 2. “And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.”

$\text{`At) l'x]n:w} > \text{vyai} \text{Pw} > \text{At} \hat{\text{e}}\text{ybeW} \text{rb, G} < \hat{\text{a}}$   
 $\text{`Wqv. [ ' (w} > \text{Waf' _n} \text{"w} > \sim \text{yTi} \text{Pb' W}$   
 $\text{Wlz} \text{"} \hat{\text{e}}\text{g} \text{"w} > \text{'tAdf' Wd} \hat{\text{u}}\text{m. x' w} >$

These are four parallel lines (chiastic structure) with two strong verbs:

1. “covet” - *Qal* Perfect
2. “take” - *Qal* Perfect
3. “take away” - *Qal* Perfect
4. “oppress” - *Qal* Perfect

Remember the extreme importance that the Jewish people placed on land inheritance within the Promised Land (cf. Lev. 25:23; Num. 33:54; 36:1-12; Josh. 12-21). God’s gift to all the descendants of Abraham was now in the hands of greedy, wealthy exploiters. Micah, growing up and living in a small rural community, had seen it again and again. The term “house” ( $\text{ty} \text{I} \text{B} ;$ )<sup>12</sup> can refer to a place of dwelling or to one’s family:- as could the term “inheritance”  $\text{hl'x]n:}$ . These exploiters wanted everything - land, children, adults, and all their property. These are the rich and mighty in the land; and, like Ahab, they will take the vineyard or inheritance of any poor Naboth on which they may fix their covetous eye; so that they take away even the heritage of the poor.

#### a. LAND

When land  $\text{hm' d' a ]}$  (<sup>a</sup>damah) is mentioned in Old Testament, it is a property. This noun also occurs in Arabic. Hebrew occurrences number for this word about 224 and cover every period of Biblical Hebrew. Initially this noun represents

<sup>12</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*,. 108

“ground” (probably red in colour).<sup>13</sup> The body of the first man, Adam, was formed exclusively from the  $\text{h m ' d ' a ]}$  (<sup>a</sup>damah) (cf. Gen 2:9): "And the Lord God formed man  $\sim \text{d ' a '}$  ) ) (<sup>a</sup>adam) of the dust of the ground  $\text{h m ' d ' a ]}$ <sup>14</sup> (<sup>a</sup>damah)..." Gen 2:7.

Throughout the Old Testament there is a relationship between  $\sim \text{d ' a '}$ , (<sup>a</sup>adam) “man,” and the  $\text{h m ' d ' a ]}$  (<sup>a</sup>damah). The two words have an etymological affinity because they both appear to be derived from the verb  $\sim \text{d \ a '}$ , (<sup>a</sup>adom) “to be red.”<sup>15</sup>

$\text{h d \# c}^*$  **sadeh** (saw-deh'); or **saday** (saw-dah'-ee); from an unused root meaning to spread out; a field (as flat): e.g. country, field, ground, land, soil, wild.

$\# \text{ r , a ,}$  (<sup>e</sup>rets) means land (the whole earth); dry land; ground; land (political); underworld.<sup>16</sup> This word has cognates in Ugaritic, Phoenician/Punic, Moabite, Akkadian, Aramaic and Arabic.  $\# \text{ r , a ,}$  (<sup>e</sup>rets) occurs in biblical Hebrew about 2,504 times (22 times in biblical Aramaic) and in all periods.

The word often represents the whole surface of this planet and, together with the word “heavens,” describes the entire physical creation and everything in it. <sup>o</sup>**Erets**  $\# \text{ r , a ,}$  sometimes means “land” as contrasted to sea or water. This use, for example, is in Ex 20:11: “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day....” This more narrow meaning first appears in Gen 1:10, where God called the dry ground “land.” Here “land” includes desert and arable land, valleys and mountains — everything that we know today as continents and islands.

<sup>13</sup> Sabourin, Leopold. (1974) *The Psalms: Their Origin and Meaning*. New York: Alba House, pg. 5–7

<sup>14</sup> Benjamin Davidson. (1970) *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, Michigan. 7

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin Davidson. (1970) *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. 7

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Davidson. (1970) *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. 48

#ר, א, °Erets refers to the physical “ground”<sup>17</sup> under the feet of men and animals. Upon the “ground” creep all creeping things: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion... over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth” Gen 1:26. Dust lies upon the °Erets #ר, א, Ex 8:16, and rain and dew fall on it Gen 2:5. °Erets #ר, א, may be used geographically, i. e., to identify a territory: “And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity” Gen 11:28.

°Erets #ר, א, sometimes bears a political connotation and represents both a given political territory and the people who live there. “And there was no bread in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the famine” Gen 47:13. Not only the “land” languished, but (and especially) the people suffered. Next, in several passages this noun has both geographical and political overtones and identifies the possession or inheritance of a tribe.

#ר, א, (‘erets) refers to the physical “ground” under the feet of men and animals as reflected in Gen 1:26-28. #ר, א, (‘erets) may be used geographically, i. e., to identify a territory: “And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity”

Gen. 11:28. ~yDI (f.K; rWaïB. ATßd>l;Am

#r<a, îB. wybi\_a' xr:T, ä ynEßP.-l[;

!r"êh' tm'Y"åw:

### **Implication**

Land and man since the inception and the existence of the world are inseparable. And so if any man is trying to take it whether gently or forcefully from another man, it is like taking the life of that person. And this was the exact thing that the wealthy people were doing to the less privileged in the time of Micah.

<sup>17</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 74.

## b. PROPERTY

### i. Noun.

°**achuzzah**: This word appears 66 times, with most of its appearances being in Genesis-Joshua and Ezekiel. Essentially °**achuzzah** is a legal term usually used of land, especially family holdings to be passed down to one's heirs.<sup>18</sup> In Gen 17:13 (an early occurrence of the word) Abram is promised the territory of Palestine as a familial or tribal possession until the indeterminate future. In Gen 23:20 (cf. vv. 4,9) the word bears a similar meaning. The difference appears to be that here no feudal responsibilities were attached to this "possession." However, the rather small lot belonged to Abraham and his descendants as a burial site: "And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying place by the sons of Heth" Gen 23:20.

In Lev 25:45-46 non-Israelites could also be inheritable property, but a fellow Israelite could not. The "inheritable property" of the Levites was not fields but the Lord Himself Ezek 44:28.

### ii. Verb.

°**achaz** means "to seize, grasp, hold fast, bolt (a door)."<sup>19</sup> This verb, which occurs 64 times in biblical Hebrew, occurs also in most other Semitic languages. The verb appears in Gen 25:26: "...and his hand took hold on Esau's heel..." The meaning of "to bolt" (a door) appears in Neh 7:3: "...let them shut and bolt (KJV, "bar") the doors" (NASB). In 2 Chron 9:18, °**achaz** means "fastened."

### Implication

Property is an entitlement of the owner; it is the benefit of the owner sweat. For anybody to have a property, it must be by either inheritance or by work. This connotes that property is not something that someone can get easily.

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<sup>18</sup> Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words, Copyright © 1985, Thomas Nelson Publishers.)

<sup>19</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 38

### c. OPPRESSED

**dalal** means “to be low, hang down.”<sup>20</sup> This verb appears only 8 times in the Bible and always in poetical passages. It has cognates or near cognates in Arabic, Ethiopic, Akkadian, and extra-biblical Hebrew. The word appears in Ps 79:8: “O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us; for we are brought very low.”

**anah** means “to afflict, oppress, humble.”<sup>21</sup> This verb, which also appears in Arabic, occurs about 74 times in biblical Hebrew and in every period. The first occurrence is in Gen 15:13: “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years.”

### d. JUSTICE

**qdē** (tsedeq) from **q . d : c ' (tsadaq)** a primitive root; to be used causatively, make right (in a moral or forensic sense): the right (natural, moral or legal); also (abstractly) equity or (figuratively) prosperity.<sup>22</sup>

#### 1. Verb usage

**q . d : c ' (tsadaq)** means to be righteous, be in the right, be justified, be just.<sup>23</sup> This verb, which occurs fewer than 40 times in biblical Hebrew, is derived from the noun **tsedeq**. The basic meaning of **q . d : c ' (tsadaq)** is “to be righteous.” It is a legal term which involves the whole process of justice. **q . d : c ' (tsadaq)** may also be used to signify the outcome of the verdict, when a man is pronounced “just” and is judicially cleared of all charges. Job believed that the Lord would ultimately vindicate him against his opponents Job 13:18. In its

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<sup>20</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 520

<sup>21</sup> Benjamin Davidson. (1970) *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. 248

<sup>22</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramic. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Davidson. (1970) *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. 584

causative pattern, the meaning of the verb brings out more clearly the sense of a judicial pronouncement of innocence.

In its causative pattern, the meaning of the verb brings out more clearly the sense of a judicial pronouncement of innocence: “If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify (**tsadaq**) the righteous (**tsaddiq**), and condemn the wicked” Dt 25:1.<sup>24</sup> The Israelites were charged with upholding righteousness in all areas of life. When the court system failed because of corruption, the wicked were falsely “justified” and the poor were robbed of justice because of trumped-up charges. Absalom, thus, gained a large following by promising justice to the landowner 2 Sam. 15:4. God, however, assured Israel that justice would be done in the end: “Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and righteous slay thou not: for I will not justify the wicked” Ex 23:6-7. The righteous person followed God's example. The psalmist exhorts his people to change their judicial system: “Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy” Ps 82:3.

## 2. Noun usage

**qdeeeeeeece** (tsedeq) means “righteousness.”<sup>25</sup> This noun comes from a Semitic root which occurs in Hebrew, Phoenician, and Aramaic with a juristic sense. In the Old Testament we meet the name Melchizedek (“king of righteousness”).<sup>26</sup> A more limited meaning of the root is found in Arabic (a South Semitic language): “truthfulness” (of propositions). In Rabbinic Hebrew the noun tsedaqah signifies “alms” or “demonstrations of mercy.”

The word **hq;d;ce** (tsedaqah), which occurs 157 times, is found throughout the Old Testament (except for Exodus, Leviticus, 2 Kings, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah). **qdeeeeeeece** (tsedeq) which occurs 119 times, is found mainly in poetic literature.

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<sup>24</sup> *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers. 1985. Electronic software

<sup>25</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 716

<sup>26</sup> *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*,

Exegetes have made attempts to understand contextually the words **qdeeeeeeece** (tsedeq) and **hq" ) d" C** (tsedaqah). The conclusions of the researchers indicate a twofold significance. On the one hand, the relationships among people and of a man to his God can be described as **qdeeeeeeece** (tsedeq), supposing the parties are faithful to each other's expectations. It is a relational word.

**qdeeeeeeece** (tsedeq) and **hq;d;ce** (tsedaqah) are legal terms signifying justice in conformity with the legal corpus (the Law; Dt. 16:20), the judicial process Jer. 22:3, the justice of the king as judge 1 Kgs 10:9; Ps 119:121; Pr. 8:15, and also the source of justice, God Himself.

### 3. Adjectival usage

**qddic" \_** (tsaddiq) means “righteous; just.”<sup>27</sup> This adjectival form occurs 206 times in biblical Hebrew. In Old Aramaic the adjective signifies “loyalty” of a king or high priest to his personal god, often represented by a gift to the god. Similarly in Phoenician, the noun and adjective apply to the loyal relationship of the king before the gods.

Verse 3. “Therefore, says the LORD, Behold, I am planning” (**bve<sup>2</sup>xo ynIin>hi hw"ëhy> rm:âa' hKo... !ke<sup>a</sup>l'**) The Interjection “behold” (**ynIin>hi**) denotes a surprising statement of outcome. The UBS Helps For Translators series on Micah, says, “This is a way of showing that something new and unexpected is about to happen.”<sup>28</sup> This is irony. As evil humans plan, same verb as was used in v. 1, “scheme” so too, God plans “against this family” (**hx' îP'v.Mih;-l [ ;**) The term “family”(**hx' P'v .mî**) means

<sup>27</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 716

<sup>28</sup> UBS *Helps For Translators* series on Micah. Page 82

clan. Notice the aggressive sin of some affects the complacent, silent majority and the whole nation (cf. Amos 3:2) is judged.

NASB “calamity”

NKJV, TEV, NJB “disaster”

NRSV “evil”

This Hebrew term ח [ ' ר ' means “evil,” “distress,” or “wickedness.”<sup>29</sup> In Exod. 32:12, 14 it refers, as here, to the judgment of God (cf. Dt. 29:112; Am 9:4). It is used twice in v. 3 and also in 3:2,11. “You cannot remove your necks” The verb (וּרְמַם) is a *Hiphil* Imperfect. This idiom of conquest is also used in Lam. 1:14; 5:5. It refers to a yoke on the neck of an ox which directs its activity. “Walk haughtily” Israel had become proud and arrogant (i.e., eighth century historical setting). God will change their walk and mind about this. God was planning to devise the evil to you of punishment for your conduct; you shall have your necks brought under the yoke of servitude. Tiglath-pileser ruined this kingdom, and transported the people to Assyria, under the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah; and Micah lived to see this catastrophe.

Verse 4. “He exchanges the portion of my people” (רַמַּם יְמִיָּהּ יְמִיָּהּ ; קָלַי , אֶת־עֵינַי) The term “exchanges” (רַמַּם) (*Hiphil* Imperfect) is a legal term for the transfer of a land title. Verses 4 and 5 are the wail of the powerful, wealthy, influential Israelites (who stole from the poor) over the coming exile.<sup>30</sup> But notice, it is not sorrow for their actions, but sorrow over the consequences of their actions. They are reaping what they sowed “To the apostate He appoints our fields” (קָלַי (אֶת־; יְמִיָּהּ > וְנִדְעָהּ אֶת־בְּעֵינַי אֶת־.)

Verse 5. “you will have no one to throw a cord” (לֹא־אֶת־, אֶת־, אֶת־ אֶת־יְלִיָּהּ ; אֶת־עֵינַי . הַיְתָאֵל־יְהוָה־אֶת־) -אֶת־) ' !kel ' ) The LXX changes the verb “exchange” (רַמַּם) in the previous verse to “cord” (לֹא־אֶת־, אֶת־, אֶת־) to match

<sup>29</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.thruthebible.org/atf/cf/%7BF5EA5B386-48F1-4797-9023-5F77EED319B7%7D/Micah.pdf>. accessed on 7/12/2012. 12:07pm

this line of poetry. “For you by lot in the assembly of the LORD” (חַו"ל) חַו"ל  
 חַו"ל; פֶּקֶד. בִּי לַחֲוֹלָה אֲגִבֵּנִי.) This refers to the sacred division of the  
 Promised Land (Jos. 12-21). This statement is tantamount to the powerful, wealthy,  
 influential being excommunicated from the Promised Land, both temporally and  
 eschatologically (cf. v. 10). This passage implies that God’s judgment to these  
 exploiters is even more severe than Exod. 20:5; Deut. 5:9 (“visiting the iniquity of the  
 fathers on the children”). This exclusion is permanent and transgenerational. “By lot”  
 (לַחֲוֹלָה אֲגִבֵּנִי.) The term “lot” (לַחֲוֹלָה אֲגִבֵּנִי) originally referred to the Urim and  
 Thummim carried by the High Priest on his chest behind the twelve stones. It is not  
 certain what form this mechanical means of knowing YHWH’s will took:

1. different coloured stones
2. stones with “yes” or “no” painted on them
3. stones with letters on them
4. other unknown means.

#### 4.4 Judgment of Yahweh over the transgressions of Israelite: Chapter 3

Chapter three contains standard 8th century poetic prophecy, which makes it  
 reasonable to date the writing of the oracle to this period of time. Most scholars  
 believe chapters 1-3 to be authentic words of Micah.<sup>31</sup> Chapter three begins with  
 “And I said” “*waomar*” (אָמַרְתִּי; אָמַרְתִּי), which seems to connect it to the  
 previous section, but at the same time begins a new sub-section. Chapter three can  
 begin a new section based on the use of the word “*sim'u*” (שִׁמְעוּ), which also  
 can begin two other sections at 1.2, 6.1 which have a similar form. Each section is  
 similar, beginning with a doom section and ending with a hope section.

<sup>31</sup> Hillers, Delbert R. (1984) *Micah: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Micah*, Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress Press. Page 807

On the other hand, chapter three may go with the chapter before it. The support for this is that the content of chapter three is somewhat similar.<sup>32</sup> If this were the case, the book would still have three sections, but the first section would be chapters one to three because of similarity in content. The second section would be chapters four through five because of the feelings of hope these oracles convey. Finally the last section would be chapters six through seven which contain both threat and promise. There are other proposals for the structure of Micah, but these does not seem to be an overall consensus among scholars. As far as I can see, the only thing that is clear is that Micah alternates between oracles of doom and oracles of hope.

As far as chapter three goes, not everyone is in agreement as to the function of “*waomar*” (רמ; אַאֹו״). Some see it as nothing more than a remnant of an older prophetic narrative that was removed. Others see it as a redactional link or break to the previous section. I am not sure if it is beneficial to make a sharp break with the previous chapter, or to tie it too closely to it. Chapter three begins with *waomar* (רמ; אַאֹו״), which not only seems to begin a new section but also ties what follows to the previous section. Maybe it would be better to say that chapter three begins a new “sub-section.”

Chapter three is made up of three sections (1-4; 5-8; 9-12). The first and third sections are marked by a summons to hear *semu* (וַיִּמְצַו). The second section is marked by a “Thus says Yahweh” *koh omar Yahweh* (הַכֹּהֵן אָמַר יְהוָה רַמֶּ׃ אַאֹ״ הַכֹּהֵן...). Each of the three sections are parallel to each other in form and function as a condemnation to one of the groups of officials in Israel. Verse eight begins with “on the other hand,” and then contrasts Micah to the prophets and seers he had just condemned. Verse eight could be viewed as a parenthesis. However, it seems better to view it as part of the middle section of the chapter since it is designed to show the contrast between Micah and the prophets who were leading the people astray.

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<sup>32</sup> Hagstrom, David Gerald. (1988) *The Coherence of the Book of Micah: A Literary Analysis*. Atlanta: Scholars Press. Page 13

The form of chapter three is prophetic judgment speech.<sup>33</sup> It contains four parts. The first part is directed at the political leaders, the second is directed at the prophets, the third part is an interlude, and the last part is directed at Israel's leaders. According to Anderson, Micah's pattern here is to use incomplete synonymous parallelism (A,B,C: B,C) with a tendency to develop lists<sup>34</sup>. Micah also uses participles to describe the perpetrators. This does not imply that they are doing it now, but are used as titles. As far as a date for this particular oracle, one possibility might be the time period around the Syro-Ephraimite siege of Jerusalem around 728-725 BC. The references to butchering the country and building Jerusalem by bloodshed are not references to oppression of the poor and weak, but references to those who did not abide by Ahaz's decision not to align with Pekah and Rezin. They wanted to align with them and to do so would have meant building Jerusalem by bloodshed and war. The problem that I see with this is that the references in chapter two clearly refer to oppression of the weak in the land. Whatever the original historical context of these oracles, their canonical context suggests that the problem was a lack of justice through oppression. The only thing we can say for sure about the date of this oracle is that it came sometime during the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, or Hezekiah (Micah 1:1). *vI-4*. Verse one begins with "And I said." (רמ; א אֹו"")<sup>35</sup> It is curious that while the Masoretic text has a first person perfect verb, the Septuagint has a third person plural verb in the future tense. "And I said" (רמ; א אֹו"") is quite different from "And he will say" It is not altogether clear why there is a difference between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint. One possibility is that the consonantal Hebrew text was mistranslated into Greek as a third person. This is highly possible given the fact that it appears that the Greek and Syriac versions are the only ones that render 'mras (סר;מא) a third person verb, according to the apparatus of BHS. The weight this evidence tends toward the reading of the Masoretic Text rather than the Septuagint. Mays emend this first section by putting the latter half of verse 2 at the end of verse

<sup>33</sup> Dempsey, Carol J. (1999) "Micah 2-3: Literary Artistry, Ethical Message, and Some Considerations about the Image of Yahweh and Micah." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 85. Page 124.

<sup>34</sup> Andersen, Francis I & David Noel Freedman. (2000) *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday. Page 344.

<sup>35</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 253

three.<sup>36</sup> His reasoning is that the pronouns in verse 2 have no antecedent previous to it. It seems obvious that the antecedent is “my people” (עַמִּי [ ; ) in verse three, so he puts the phrases with the pronouns in verse two after that. However, these oracles were originally oral instead of written, so it is perfectly acceptable to accept the current arrangement of the text. The summons to hear is directed to the “heads” (רָאשׁ) of Jacob and the “rulers” (שׂוֹפְרוֹת) of the house of Israel. “Heads” is an imprecise general term for leaders. It is used a number of times with the meaning of a “chief” or “leader” (Jgs 10:18; Dt 1:15; 2 Chr 20:27). It is used in 2:13 of God. שׂוֹפְרוֹת “Rulers” is an old word for a tribal military leader that may have been elected. What is interesting is that the king is not specifically mentioned here, though he may be implicated by the parallel references to “rulers” and “heads.” It is difficult to know whether Israel and Jacob were meant to refer to the Northern kingdom or to the people in general. The king is the highest level of justice in the land. He is the “ultimate court of appeal” for the citizen. It is possible that the judicial situation in chapter three is a reflection of the judicial reforms that Jehoshaphat initiated during his reign (1 Chr 19:4-11). This reform shows that the judiciary in the land became more centralized, and that there was more control over the system by the priests and Levites.<sup>37</sup> Therefore the condemnation includes all of the rulers and priests. Since the king is the highest court of justice in the land, he would be implicated in these condemnations.

It is possible that if this oracle were spoken during the time of Hezekiah’s reign, that the reason the king is not mentioned is because he initiated a reform. But this does not seem likely because the amount of injustice this chapter seems to portray would still implicate the king since he has ultimate responsibility in the land. It would be best to see this as a blanket condemnation of all rulers in the land who were responsible for justice, including the king. The heads and rulers are “haters of right” (בְּאֵיבֹת יָאֵנֹפֹד) and “lovers of wrong.” (אֵיבֹת יָאֵנֹפֹד וְרָאשׁוֹת יָאֵבְדֹת). (bAjb yaen>foð) and “lovers of wrong.” (Ā [ r" \_ ð ħ [ ' r"À ybeh] aoãw>).

<sup>36</sup> Mays, James Luther. (1976) *Micah: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library. Philadelphia: Westminster Press. Pages 76-77.

<sup>37</sup> Andersen, Francis I & David Noel Freedman. (2000) *Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Bible. New York: Doubleday. Page 350.

Micah mockingly quotes the leaders in verse eleven. He shows them in verse twelve that their confidence in Yahweh was nothing more than false security. They did not realise that Yahweh was a God of justice (Mi 4:3). In the description of the resulting judgment, Micah paints a picture of an utterly destroyed Jerusalem. Micah apparently describes the destruction in terms of typical international treaty curses on vassals<sup>38</sup>. This suggests that the leaders of the land had broken covenant with Yahweh by the way they were treating their fellow Israelites.

Even though chapter three seems to be a new sub-section, it clearly has a thematic link to chapter two. Chapter three expounds on 2:1-11. The preservation of these oracles obviously served as a reminder and explanation of the reasons why Israel suffered at the hands of the nations around them. The applications of chapter three for future generations would have been obvious. Those who were responsible for justice were to be impartial and upright in upholding justice. Those who were responsible for instruction in God's word were to carry out that role faithfully.

#### **4.5 Prophetic word of hope and promise: Chapter 4-5**

In chapters 4-5 of Micah hopeful words dominate, in contrast to the prevalence of the judgment oracles in the first three chapters. There are, however, clear indications that much trouble must be endured before hopes will be realised. Because of the nature of the promise and its placement in direct contrast to the terrible judgment on Jerusalem in 3:12, it seems most reasonable that 4:1-5 is an exilic or post-exilic expression of hope.<sup>39</sup> The destruction of Jerusalem and oppression by foreign tyrants is not the end of the story. Throughout this we see a strong desire for relief from oppression, a return of what was lost, a world in which God reigns supreme, God's sovereignty is recognised by all, and justice is finally a reality.

Micah 4:1-5<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Shaw, Charles S. (1993) *The Speeches of Micah: A Rhetorical-Historical Analysis*. Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press. Page 112.

<sup>39</sup> Simundson, Daniel J., (1996) *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 7, Nashville: Abingdon, p564.

<sup>40</sup> BibleWorks Version 7.0.012g, electronic software. Copyright (c) 2006

aWh aF'nIw> ~yrIh'h, varoB. !Akn"  
hw"hy>-tyBe rh; hy<h.yI ~ymiY"h;  
tyrIx]a;B. hy"h'w>1  
~yMi[; wyl'[' Wrh]n"w> tA[b'G>mi  
'tyBe-la,w> hw"©hy>-rh;-la, hl,ä[]n:w>  
ÿWkål. 'Wrm.a' (w> ~yBi<sup>a</sup>r: ~yIåAG  
Wkúl.h'w>) 'tyBe-la,w><sup>2</sup>aceät '!AYCimi  
yKiÛ wyt'\_xor>ao\*B. hk'Pl.nEw>  
wyk'êr"D>mi 'WnrE'Ayw> bqoê[]y:  
yheäl{a/hr"êAt aceäte  
'~Øil'(v'Wrymi hw"ßhy>-rb;d>W hr"êAt  
~h,øytebor>x; Wt'T.kiw qAx+r"-d[;  
~ymiÛcu[] ~yIiAgl. x:yki<sup>2</sup>Ahw> ~yBiêr:  
~yMiä[; !yBe... jp;<sup>a</sup>v'w><sup>3</sup>

dA[β !Wdim.l.yI-al{w> br<x,ê `yAG-la,  
 yAGÝ Waúf.yI-al{) tArêmez>m;l.  
 `~h, yteto) ynIx]w: ~yTi<sup>a</sup>ail.  
 `hm' (x'l.mi  
 `rBE) DI tAaßb'c. hw"ïhy> ypi<sup>2</sup>-yKi  
 dyrI+x]m; !yaeäw> Atàn"aeT. tx;t;îw>  
 An<sup>o</sup>p.G: tx;T;ó vyaiä Wb<sup>a</sup>v.y"w><sup>4</sup>  
 hw"ïhy>-~veB. %lE±nE Wnx.n:©a]w:  
 wyh'\_l{a/ ~veäB. vyaiP Wk\$1.yE  
 ~yMiê[;h'ä-lK' yKi...hw"ïhy>-~veB.<sup>5</sup>  
 p `d[, (w" ~l'îA[l. WnyheP{l{a/

### TRANSLATION

Micah 4:1-5

1. But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it.
2. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

3. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning knife, nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.
4. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.
5. For all people will walk everyone in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the LORD our God forever and ever.

#### A. The Promise (4:1a)

Being one of the most popular passages in the Old Testament, Micah 4:1-5 has received a generous amount of attention. This attention is largely due to this opening verse. There are countless debates arguing whether or not this passage is eschatological in nature or “a salvation oracle...with eschatological overtones.”<sup>41</sup> Waltke writes, “In the days to come is better than “in the last days”<sup>42</sup> (tyrIâx] a; B.), because, although either one is possible, the oracles of salvation that follow in chapters 4 and 5 envisage the re-establishment of Zion as beginning with Israel’s return from the exile rather than exclusively in the last stretch of history, which the New Testament presents as having begun after Christ ascended his heavenly throne and sent his Spirit.” (cf. Acts 2:17; Heb. 1:2).<sup>43</sup> Most scholars believed this to be a glimpse of the future, prophetic in nature. It is a vision of end times, or the Apocalypse. This apocalypse is perhaps the most famous of all the visions to come from the imagination of the prophets of Israel, or revealed by the God of Israel (v. 4b).<sup>44</sup> This researcher also believes this. An interesting account of this even is also recorded in Isaiah chapter 2. Isaiah 2:2-4 is virtually identical to Micah 4:1-3. The Isaiah account does not contain v. 4 and 5 of Micah. However, its conclusion is somewhat similar to that found in Micah, differing only in the fact that Isaiah calls out “the house of Jacob” (bqoê [ ] y: -tyBe ()), whereas

<sup>41</sup> Anderson, Francis I. And David Noel Freedman, (2000) *Micah*, New York: Doubleday, 397.

<sup>42</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 716

<sup>43</sup> Waltke, Bruce K., *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*. (1988) Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 168.

<sup>44</sup> Anderson, Francis I. And David Noel Freedman, (2000) *Micah*, 397.

Micah uses the pronoun “we.” (Wn x . n : © a ] w) The possibility of interdependence and borrowing looms here as both author were considered contemporaries. The most integral part of this passage, and the one that related the most to my discussion, is the concept of a promise. This vision of a future event is not restricted to a dream or a good thought. This is an actual event that God promises to put in place in the “last days.” This generic promise, one that has a series of successive fulfilments, found a partial fulfilment when the second Temple was rebuilt, is now finding a much more intense fulfilment in the heavenly Mount Zion (cf. Heb. 12:22-24), and will find its consummation when the new Jerusalem comes down from heaven. (cf. Rev. 21:1, 10, 22- 27) This is a reminder to us as Christians that this is not it. There is so much more than just this earthly life. In fact, one day this will all pass away and a new earth will be established and we, who have been chosen by God, will inhabit it and enjoy its riches and fulfilment. It is important to grasp this concept of future fulfilment when reading this passage out of the book of Micah. Too often we skim over it denying its relevance to us as modern day Christians when, in reality, this applies to us just as much as it applied to Micah’s audience many years ago. Christ’s return is still on the horizon. His New Jerusalem is still awaiting its inhabitants.

#### **B. The Mountain (4:1b)**

The use of the word “mountain” (r h : ã)<sup>45</sup> in the second part of the first verse is important because as the counterpart of the heavenly throne, Zion was always viewed as towering above all other mountains, though in terms of physical geography it was actually lower (cf. Ps. 68:16-17).<sup>46</sup> Many ancient peoples considered mountains holy places. Mount Sinai (Deut. 33:2; Judges 5:4-5) and Mount Zion (Ps. 68:16) were specifically honoured by the Hebrews as the places of God’s revelation and abode. Mountains in Scripture are symbolic of eternity (Gen 49:26) and of strength and stability. They also portray the difficult obstacles in life, but God will overcome these

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<sup>45</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramic. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana. 1978.

<sup>46</sup> Waltke, Bruce K.,(1988) *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 168.

mountains for his people (Isa. 49:11; Matt 21:21).<sup>47</sup> It seems Micah's use of the word "mountain" (רֶחַם) in these verses was not an accident. He recognised the connotations associated with this word and used it to his advantage. How else could he explain the glory that is associated with God's kingdom? It is steady, eternal, and strong.

This verse represents the glory of the New Jerusalem. When this new kingdom is established it will be made chief of all nations, the highest in authority and in importance. Its primacy will be made evident to all and peoples from all nations will flock to it. This is a direct revelation of what is to come. All of these events are visual and can be seen. Just as the prophet Micah spoke of seeing this, so shall the nations at the end of time see the rise of the Temple of the Lord. This section focuses on the fact that apocalyptic events will be made evident to all. This is not something that takes place simply within the Israel, but in plain view of the entire world.

### C. The Universality (4:2)

Micah takes a unique approach in this verse in terms of appropriation of salvation to other nations during end time events. During Micah's lifetime salvation was restricted, rather given, only to the nations of Israel and Judah. Interestingly, Micah seems to accentuate a universality of Soteriological capabilities when referring to end time events. The object of the people's attraction to Jerusalem is to be their desire for God's word that emanates from the city. The magnetic attraction of Zion lies in the instruction (torah) which goes out of Jerusalem.<sup>48</sup> Micah saw a change in the hearts of all peoples at this time when the law of the Lord would be received universally rather than by Israel and Judah alone.<sup>49</sup> The nations will make pilgrimage for the sake of the word of YHWH; they will come to Jerusalem to learn what YHWH's path is in the problems they face and the choices they have to make. Mays writes, "With the elevation of Zion, the life-giving power of YHWH's torah, creating justice and bringing salvation, is revealed, and a hunger and thirst for the word of

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<sup>47</sup> Tenney, Merrill C., *The New International Dictionary of the Bible*. Rev. ed. J.D. Douglas. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 676.

<sup>48</sup> Mays, James L., *Micah: A commentary*. (1976) Philadelphia: Westminster, 96.

<sup>49</sup> McComiskey, Thomas E., (1985) *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Gen ed. Frank E. Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan. p422.

YHWH draws a swelling tide of people to its source.”<sup>50</sup> As people see the eternality and the strength of God’s glory in the end times, they will begin to search after and long for what it is he provides. The promise results in the rise of the kingdom which then draws the people. Micah’s use of an overheard conversation in the text provides it with a sense of growth and popularity via word of mouth. It describes a search element found within the lives of people who are looking for answers to their problems. Those who have found the answers then turn around and bring in those who are still looking. This exhortation among all nations is notable in eschatological events.

#### **D. The Authority (4:3)**

The first two lines of 4:3 identify the setting in which the law is given by depicting the role of YHWH. He sits as royal judge on His sacred mount. The result of God’s rule in this time will be that the nations of the world will experience peace. While the people of God who are the church have experienced peace in their hearts, it is difficult to limit this prediction only to Christians. Again, the prophecy is national and even universal in scope and looks forward to a time when the nations will come so fully under the influence of God’s Word that war can be no more. When YHWH himself is arbitrator among nations and his authority determines the resolutions to their problems, there leaves no room for war. God sits as a king and exhibits ultimate authority on all matters resulting in nations fashioning weapons of mass destruction into agricultural implements.<sup>51</sup> All this to say, once the New Jerusalem is established, YHWH will rule as the ultimate authoritative body. God will judge directly without the intrusion of sinful human institutions. The world will once again return to its original state of true theocracy. Objective conclusions can be drawn from this passage by realising that true peace comes only from God. No human institution, no matter how well planned out, can truly provide peace in its purest sense. Peace comes only from knowledge of and obedience to God.

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<sup>50</sup> Mays, James L., *Micah: A commentary*. (1976). p 97.

<sup>51</sup> McComiskey, Thomas E., (1985) *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Gen ed. Frank E. Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 422.

#### E. The Response (4:4)

This verse describes the response of the people as a result of the establishment of the kingdom of God in the last days. The analogy used by Micah is a symbol of peace. The peacefulness of this era is further described in pastoral imagery. The people will dwell in peace and safety because of the word of the Lord Almighty, and not because of their own strength. The certainty of this event is established in Micah's mind because God has sovereignly declared that such will happen: "The Lord Almighty has spoken"<sup>52</sup> (רַב־עֶזְרָא) דִּי תִּאֲבִיב' צ . הַוַּ"י הַיְיָ) God's sovereignty is revealed through the fulfilment of his promises. Micah recognises this element of sovereignty. As Waltke puts it, "Micah uses the military title for God, YHWH Seba'ot, to underscore the certainty of the promise and to focus our attention not so much on the prediction as on the one who made it."<sup>53</sup> This ending phrase also helps to authenticate the prophecy as an expression of what YHWH himself has said, and not a creation of the prophet himself.

This verse is important because it proves the peacefulness of God's plan, and the countless faults in ours. As soon as people recognise the demonstrative functions of God's kingdom, they will realise that fighting is no longer necessary. They have all they need. They are then left to live peacefully, having been completely satisfied and fulfilled.

#### F. The Choice (4:5)

Lastly, this verse provides an element of action and excitement. The reason for the people's safety and security is that they will walk in the name of the Lord forever. "To walk in the name" (לַמֵּשֶׁבֶת . לַיְיָ) implies more than simply adhering to the religious requirements associated with the deity in question. It means to live in reliance on the strength of that deity.<sup>54</sup> It means relying on the might of his power. Unlike the nations who walk in the name of their gods, God's people will

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<sup>52</sup> Barker, Kenneth L. and John R. Kohlenberger III, (1994) *Zondervan NIV Bible Commentary: Volume 1: Old Testament*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1474.

<sup>53</sup> Waltke, Bruce K., (1988) *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*. Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity, 169.

<sup>54</sup> McComiskey, Thomas E., (1985) *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Gen ed. Frank E. Gaebelein. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 422.

enjoy his strength forever. Waltke notes, “As Micah represented the glorious future by quoting the converted nations (v.2), so he represents the faith of the hopeful congregation by quoting them.”<sup>55</sup> It is an admission that this vision of hope has not yet appeared on earth. The time for universal allegiance to the God of Israel lies still in a distant and uncertain future. But the worshipping congregation that lives in this hope commits itself to continual walking in the way of the Lord until the promise is fully realised.<sup>56</sup>

This is the choice that the Israelite nation must make. No matter what those around us do, we will stay loyal to our God. This is a great example of not only our loyalty to God, but also more importantly, His loyalty to us. This statement comes as a present conclusion in the face of a futuristic prophecy. In other words, this statement is made specifically for the author’s audience, encouraging them and exhorting them to continue “walking in the name of the Lord.” (חַוּ"י הַיְיָ - ~v e B . ׁ l E ± n E) It stands as a proclamation of “no matter what.” No matter what anyone else does, we will serve our Lord. This is just as important for us today as it was for the people of Israel and Judah. Ultimately, we are called to serve our Lord no matter what the circumstance is.

#### 4.6 Yahweh’s requirement: Chapter 6

The personal translation’s paragraph breaks differed from the other translations in that I chose to include v.3 as part of my first paragraph. The reason for including v.3 with vv.1 and 2 is that, v.3 is part of God’s announcement of his case against Israel—His opening statement before the jury, so to speak. God then proceeds in vv.4 and 5 to lay forth His case against Israel by noting His past dealings with them. After pleading with them to remember His devotion to them, God shows His people what He requires of them—their hearts.

Personal Translations of Critical or Difficult Phrases:

<sup>55</sup> Waltke, Bruce K., (1988) *Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*. 169.

<sup>56</sup> Simundson, Daniel J., (1996) *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. 7, Nashville: Abingdon, 565.

Micah 6: 8<sup>57</sup>

tb;h]a;äw> `jP'v.mi tAfÜ[]-~ai yKiä  
^aM.mi vrEäAD hw"ùhy>-hm' (W bAJ+-hm;  
~d"Pa' ^±l. dyGIihi  
p `^yh, (l{a/-~[i tk,l, P [;nEic.h;w>  
ds, x, ê

NKJV – “He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?”

NIV – “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

NRSV – “He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

ESV – “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

**Personal – “He showed you, man, what is good and what the LORD is requiring from you: surely to act with justice, to love grace, and to walk humbly with your God.”**

The personal translation of this focal point of the text is somewhat different from many of the others. The writer translated a little more woodenly than the NKJV, NRSV, and ESV because he want to stay as close to Hebrew syntax as possible in this verse. Chose to translate `jP'v.mi tAfÜ[] as “to act with justice”<sup>58</sup> rather than the traditional “to do justice” because he feel that the latter is a bit too

<sup>57</sup> BibleWorks Version 7.0.012g, electronic software. Copyright (c) 2006

<sup>58</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*, with an appendix containing the Biblical Aramic. Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc., Lafayette, Indiana. 1978.

abstract. What YHWH is requiring from man is that he carries out justice in a concrete sense. Acting justly was a common theme of the prophets (cf. Amos). The writer then translated  $\text{דָּס, ח, ע}$  as “grace” rather than “kindness” or “mercy.”<sup>59</sup>

The reason for doing so is that  $\text{דָּס, ח, ע}$  implies both kindness and mercy along with other things such as fellowship and hospitality, which are unmerited. The only word that encompasses all of this is “grace.”

### Various Commentators’ Views on Micah 6

Let us briefly look at the way in which three different commentators handled this passage, noting their strengths and weaknesses. The commentators choosing to engage are Bruce Waltke, Ralph Smith, and John M.P. Smith. Critically look at how they treat the passage as a whole; however I will primarily focus on their treatment of v.8. Waltke sees this passage as YHWH’s charge that Israel has broken the covenant that was established at Sinai. He notes that just as Jacob and Laban, as well as the eastern tribes, erected stone pillars as witnesses to their covenants (Gn. 31, Jos. 22), God summoned “the heavens and earth as a cosmic forum of witnesses to his covenant with Israel.” Now 700 years later, he summons the mountains and the everlasting foundations of the earth to witness the truthfulness of His case against his people. He goes on to state: “...the appeal to these silent witnesses could have carried conviction only if the parties assumed that the treaty had been handed down unchanged from generation to generation.”<sup>60</sup> In dealing with vv.6-7, Waltke imagines that these verses portray the attempted bribery that was perhaps committed by one of Israel’s kings. His primary reasoning for this is that the sacrifices mentioned in this section are of unbelievable extravagance.<sup>61</sup> Such hypothesising, while interesting, is not necessary for understanding the main point of this passage which Waltke sees as obedience to the covenant in which “God has shown humankind what is good, a term that summarizes the law’s requirements: to act justly and to love mercy, and to walk humbly (or ‘to walk thoughtfully’ in the light of the covenant’s requirements) with

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<sup>59</sup> Benjamin Davidson. (1970) *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. 48

<sup>60</sup> Wenham, G.J. et.al. ed., Waltke, Bruce. *New Bible Commentary* InterVarsity Press. Page 830

<sup>61</sup> Wenham, G.J. et.al. ed., Waltke, Bruce. *New Bible Commentary* Page 830

your God.”<sup>62</sup> Waltke’s treatment of this passage, while a bit speculative as to the identity of the speaker of vv.6-7, is a very good one, especially given its’ brevity.

Another short treatment of this passage is that of Ralph Smith. Smith’s is a bit more technical than Waltke; however this is due to the intended audience of their respective commentaries. Looking at the structure and authorship, Smith begins by noting that the first five verses make up a covenant lawsuit and the last three are an example of Torah liturgy. He views the dialogue session as the people’s response to the charges brought against them. He then states that there is no substantial reason for denying this passage to be the work of the prophet Micah.<sup>63</sup> Moving into the commentary, Smith notes: “This is one of the great passages of the OT. It...epitomises the message of the eighth-century prophets.”<sup>64</sup> Smith, like Waltke, feels that the mountains and hills are called as witnesses because they have been around long enough to witness God’s dealings with Israel. Smith sees a play on words in vv.3-4 with  $\text{^y}t\text{i\_a}e\text{l.h},,$  (I have not wearied you) and  $\text{^y}t\text{i}'\text{li}[/math>/ $\text{h},,$  (I have brought you up from Egyptian bondage).<sup>65</sup> Smith goes on to state again that Israel is the speaker vv.6-7: “She had displeased Yahweh but she claims ignorance. She asks God what he wants.”<sup>66</sup> After stating that the implied answer to these questions is more than what these things required, Smith engages the question as to the purpose of sacrifices in the first place: “Is there no need for sacrifice? Yes, there is.$

What Micah was speaking about, and Isaiah, and Amos, and the Psalmist, was not that sacrifice was wrong, but in and of itself without a proper relationship to God and neighbour, sacrifice is useless.”<sup>67</sup> Smith’s commentary on this passage, like Waltke’s, is short but excellent. It is not so technical as to be impractical. Especially useful is his tackling of the issue of the necessity of sacrifice in Israel’s worship. This is a subject that Christians today must be prepared to face in-depth as we seek to reach out to other people.

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<sup>62</sup> Wenham, G.J. et.al. ed., Waltke, Bruce. *New Bible Commentary*. Pages 830-831

<sup>63</sup> Smith, Ralph L. (1984) *Word Biblical Commentary* Vol. 32 Micah-Malachi Word Books. Waco. Page 50

<sup>64</sup> Smith, Ralph L. (1984) *Word Biblical Commentary*. Page 50

<sup>65</sup> Smith, Ralph L. (1984) *Word Biblical Commentary*. Page 51

<sup>66</sup> Smith, Ralph L. (1984) *Word Biblical Commentary*. Page 51

<sup>67</sup> Smith, Ralph L. (1984) *Word Biblical Commentary*. Page 51

Finally, we come to another Smith—John Merlin Powis Smith. Unlike Waltke and R. Smith's, J. Smith's treatment of this passage is fairly long. Also unlike Waltke and R. Smith, J. Smith denies Micah's authorship and applies form criticism and the documentary hypothesis to this passage. Right off the bat, J. Smith chooses to eliminate from v.5 *ba'êAm ʔl, m, ä, and rA [=B. - !B, ,* in order to make the rhythm "smooth and harmonious."<sup>68</sup> However, the question that must be asked of J. Smith is "smooth and harmonious to whom?" This is a highly subjective criterion and should not be seen as textual scholarship, but rather opinion. J. Smith also denies Micah's authorship on the following basis: "...the fact that in chapters 1-3 the religious and political leaders were the objects of denunciation as leading the people astray, while here the people as a whole is reproved, points to different authorship."<sup>69</sup> (Apparently, multiple authors are required to address two different sets of people in one book). J. Smith then seeks to bolster his case for a different author by stating "the presence of this passage in this context and in the collection of oracles making up chapters 6 and 7 is a sign of late origin."<sup>70</sup> However, J. Smith merely states this and offers no other evidence or reason for coming to this conclusion.

That such speculation finds its way into a critical commentary is not surprising and it is not necessary to dwell on it any longer. For, despite the above-mentioned weaknesses, J. Smith's commentary does offer some valuable insight into this passage.<sup>71</sup> Regarding v.8, J. Smith feels that it is "the finest summary of the content of practical religion to be found in the OT."<sup>72</sup> Noting the extravagance of the gifts mentioned in vv.6-7, J. Smith sees these offerings as "the acme of religious zeal. It is the expression of the religious emotions of men who agonise with longing for the

<sup>68</sup> Smith, John M. P. et.al. (1928) *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Jonah* T&T Clarke. Edinburgh. Page 118

<sup>69</sup> Smith, John M. P. et.al. (1928) *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Jonah*. Page 119

<sup>70</sup> Smith, John M. P. et.al. (1928) *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Jonah* T&T Clarke. Edinburgh. Page 119

<sup>71</sup> One major weakness of J. Smith's commentary is his positing Miriam's presence in v.4 as a later addition by "some reader, as is clear by its prosaic form." In support of this, he notes that this is the only mention of Miriam in the prophetic books. (121) However, on the same page, J. Smith makes a surprising (and refreshing) statement about the historicity of Israel's redemption: "This event lies so deep in the national conscience and is referred to so frequently as the starting-point and basis of the national development, that it is impossible to escape the conviction that it was a historical fact, rather than the product of religious imagination." J. Smith, 121

<sup>72</sup> J. Smith's commentary 123

divine blessing, and are willing to yield their hearts' dearest treasures in order to secure it. The prophet here recognises this fact, and his words; therefore, reflect an unmistakable depth of sympathy and tenderness toward his people. But the practice grows out of a wholly wrong idea of the character of God, and therefore can never be pleasing to him."<sup>73</sup> J. Smith's finest observation, however, is his paralleling of this passage with the teachings of Jesus: [v.8] links ethics with piety, duty toward men with duty toward God, and makes them both coequal factors in religion.

In this respect it anticipates the famous saying of Jesus (Mt. 22:34-40), and it marks a wide breach with the popular religion of the prophet's own times."<sup>74</sup> J. Smith ends by stating that the main point of this passage is that religion is not a matter of action, but chiefly of character.

#### **4.7 Lamentation on the decay of piety and the growth of ungodliness: Chapter 7**

The prophet begins this chapter with lamenting the decay of piety and the growth of ungodliness, using a beautiful allegory to imply (as explained in ver. 2) that the good man is as seldom to be met with as the early fig of best quality in the advanced season, or the cluster after the vintage, 1, 2. He then reproveth and threatens in terms as expressive of great calamities as to be applied in the New Testament to times of the hottest persecution. 3-6. Matthew 10:35, 36. Notwithstanding which a Jew is immediately introduced declaring, in the name of his captive people, the strongest faith in the mercy of God the most submissive resignation to his will, and the firmest hope in his favour in future times, when they should triumph over their enemies, 7-10. The prophet upon this resumes the discourse, and predicts their great prosperity and increase, 11, 12; although the whole land of Israel must first be desolated on account of the great wickedness of its inhabitants, 13. The prophet intercedes in behalf of his people, 14. After which God is introduced promising, in very ample terms, their future restoration and prosperity, 15-17. And then, to conclude, a chorus of Jews is introduced, singing a beautiful hymn of thanksgiving, suggested by the gracious promises which precede 18-20.

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<sup>73</sup> J. Smith's commentary 126

<sup>74</sup> J. Smith's commentary 126

7:1. “Woe is me!” (yḷi<sup>a</sup> yḷ;l . a ; ä) This is an individual lament, although at times it moves into the area of a corporate plea. This is a common literary technique of the Psalms (cf. Ps. 5,13,22,55,71).

It is uncertain who is speaking:

1. the prophet himself
2. the prophet as YHWH’s spokesperson
3. the prophet on behalf of the godly remnant

NASB “I am like the fruit pickers”

NKJV “For I am like those who gather summer fruit”

NRSV “For I have become like one who, after the summer fruit has been gathered”

TEV “I am like a hungry person who finds no fruit left”

NJB “a harvester in summer time”

In the NASB translation, the term “summer” (#yIq; ê) which denotes “heat.” was left out. This gathering is not the initial harvest, but the last picking. YHWH waited and waited for fruit, but there was never a harvest. “Like the fruit-pickers and the grape gatherers” (#yIq; ê-yPes . a 'K .

`yṭiyI' h' yKiÛ) Micah craves righteousness or a righteous people or righteous leadership, i.e., v. 3 as a hungry man craves food. The concept of righteousness as food is found throughout the Bible (cf. Amos 6:12; John 15:1-8; Phil. 1:11; Gal. 5:23).

The Jewish Publication Society of America (JPSOA) says v. 1 refers to Samaria. They search for food, but cannot find it because of:

1. The siege or
2. God’s famine.

The JPSOA continues this thought through v. 7. However, it is likely that this context relates to Jerusalem. In one sense they are too late, the harvest of their unrighteousness has occurred—exile and in another sense they are too early, the

promise of restoration in the future has not yet come. “first ripe fig, which I crave” (yvi (p.n: ht' îW>ai hr" ðWKBi). These early figs were very sweet and sought after. They first appeared in June, although, the major harvest did not occur until August. Micah (as God’s spokesman) is searching for righteousness as a man longs for these first figs<sup>75</sup>.

7:2 “The godly person” (dysix') This is the adjective form of the covenant term, “hesed”, (**hesed**) which means God’s unconditional, no strings attached, covenant loyalty. It is parallel to “upright person.” (rv' y")<sup>76</sup> This is referring to a covenant faithful person, of which there is none. “All of them lie in wait for bloodshed” (Wbroêa/y< ~ymiäd"l. v~L'Ku) The verb (Wbroêa/y<) is a Qal Imperfect, which is often used in Joshua and Judges and is translated “ambush.” This is a metaphor of hunting to describe the scheming violence of the elite of God’s people (i.e., the greedy, wealthy, powerful leaders). This term (~ymiäd"l.) is literally “blood.”<sup>77</sup> It is used often in the eighth century prophets (mostly Ezekiel, cf. Hosea 1:4; 4:2; 6:8; 12:14; Jonah 1:14; Micah 3:10) to describe violence and death. “Each of them hunts the other with a net” (~r<xē (WdWciy" WhyxiPa'-ta, vyaiî) They exploit each other at every opportunity. Their motto would be “more and more for me at any cost!” Persons made in God’s image, covenant partners, have no value.

7:3. “Concerning evil, both hands do it well” (byjiêyhel. v~yIP;'K; [r:Ûh'-l[;]) This is another striking metaphor of ambidextrous evil. The verb (byjiêyhel., Hiphil Infinitive construct) means to do something well or thoroughly. Here a word normally used of doing something good is used of purposeful evil! “The prince asks, also the judge, for a

<sup>75</sup> Jewish Publication Society of America

<sup>76</sup> Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs. (1978) *The New Brown-Driver Briggs-Gesenius, Hebrew and English Lexicon*. 716

<sup>77</sup> Benjamin Davidson. (1970) *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*. 48

bribe” (~WL+ViB; jpeḶVoh;w> laeêvo rF:âh;) )

The leaders were seeking rewards instead of justice. “And a great man speaks the desire of his soul; So they weave it together” (h'Wt) B. [;y>w:)

aWhß Av±p.n: tW:ih; rbe'Do lAd<sup>a</sup>G" h;w)

This verse describes the corrupt judicial and political situation (cf. 3:1-12; Isa. 59:9-12; Jer. 8:8-12; 22; 23; 26:12-15). The wealthy man tells the judges and governmental officials what he wants and they find a way to get it for him, no matter what it takes. God's covenant people have become corrupt. They look and act just like all other fallen nations! The verb “weave” (tḶ; [ ' , Pie Imperfect) is found only here. The related form is found in Joel 2:7 as “deviate” or “swerve.” This term may be a play on the concept of sin as a deviation from God's standard (i.e., righteousness).

7:4. this seems to be sarcasm, but it is possibly related to the idea that everything they tried to do to prepare for invasion did not work. There seems to be a change of subject in v. 4. The first two lines describe the ungodly mentioned in vv. 2-3. However, the next three lines may refer to:

1. The prophets (watchmen, cf. Jer. 6:17; Ezek. 3:17; Hos. 9:8) or,
2. Judah's preparations for siege. “Confusion” This term (hk'Wbm.) is used to describe God's judgment.

7:5-6: These verses show;

1. The level of corruption that had occurred within the Judean society or,
2. The stress caused by the siege. Everyone was out for personal gain.

This verse has two imperfects used as “Jussives” and one “Imperative”:

1. “do not trust” (Wnymîäa] T; -la; ), Hiphil Imperfect used as a Jussive
2. “do not have confidence” (Wxßj .b .Ti -la; ( ) Qal Imperfect used as a Jussive
3. “guard” (rmoàv . ), Qal Imperative

7:6 “son treats father contemptuously” (ba'ê lBeän:m. '!be-yKî ()) The verb (V, Piel Participle) means “treat with contempt,” “dishonour,” or “scoff” (e.g., Deut. 32:15; Jer. 14:21; Nahum 3:6). This metaphor is also used in the NT in an eschatological sense (cf. Matt. 10:35-36; Mark 13:12; Luke 12:53). God knows how this feels (cf. 2:18)

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**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**LAND AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MOTIFS IN ISRAEL AND OGBOMOSO**  
**CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY**

**5.0. Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher tried to prove the dominance of social justice and land in the prophecy of Micah. The motifs in the book are so many that a single research may not be able to elucidate all of them, however all the motifs discussed in this chapter were done in such a way as each of them proves or enhances the dominance of social justice and land.

**5.1 The Zion and Jerusalem Motif**

There are some passages in the book of Micah relating to Jerusalem and Zion. Micah 1:8-16 and 3:9-12 are oracles delivered against Zion (זִיּוֹן) and Jerusalem (יְרוּשָׁלַיִם), Zion and Jerusalem are sometimes used as synonymous both in the Psalms and the prophetic writings. Zion is one of the highest points in ancient Jerusalem which was probably a Jebusite worship centre before the conquest of David. When David conquered Jerusalem, he made Zion which is sometimes called the city of David a worship centre and the political headquarters of his kingdom. It is therefore important that any discussion on Zion and Jerusalem include the discussion of David's military escapades. There cannot be a discussion of any of the three without the mentioning of the remaining two.

A little explanation of the origins of Jerusalem and Zion is apposite here, S. Vernon, Maccland believed that Jerusalem was first mentioned in Joshua 18:28, but its existence dates back before then. He also believed that Jerusalem was also called Jebusite probably after the name of the inhabitants who were called Jebusite. He also believed that Jerusalem which is also called Zion had another name- the city of David. Leland Ryken and others, believes that Zion, is a metaphor of Jerusalem mostly and for the people of Israel some times.<sup>1</sup> He believed that David captured the Jebusite's city and made it both his political and religious capital. However Youngblood and others believed that Zion was very different from Jerusalem but when David captured

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<sup>1</sup> Vernon Maccland (1959) "Jerusalem" *The Bible companion: A Complete Pictorial and Reference Guide to the People, Places, Events, Background and Faith of the Bible* ed. William Neil. London: Sketlington. p.111

it, and made it the city of David, the name later expanded its horizon by including all the temple area and Mt Moriah which before were not the same with Zion.<sup>2</sup> J. Jeremias and J. J. M. Roberts agreed that the origins of the Zion tradition were a conflation of the role of the ark in history of Israel and Canaanite traditions with slight modification. G. Waltke however says the origins of the Zion motif were definitely post exilic. Stansell also agrees with J. J. M. Roberts and J. Jeremias that Zion motif was not a post exilic concept basing his agreement that its emphasis in Micah and Isaiah is a pointer to the fact that the tradition has been in existence before their prophetic ministries. This researcher also agrees with Stansell and the former scholars on the same premise because the prophet was part of the society and he was well informed about the historical and religious developments before and during his time.

John D. Levenson says that “Sinai is the mountain of Israel’s infancy, of the days of Moses, when the nation as the story has it was but a few generations old”, later on the tradition of Yahweh’s theophany, his earth-shattering, apparatus were transferred from Sinai to Zion.<sup>3</sup> For the religious imagination of Israel, Sinai and Zion are fundamentally the same mountain of theophany, in as much as the same Lord manifests himself enthroned on Sinai, but were only on separate locations.

### **Micah 3:9-12**

- v 9** Hear this, you heads of house of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel who abhor justice and pervert everything that is right.
- v 10** Who build Zion with blood and Jerusalem with wickedness
- v 11** Her heads render judgment for a bribe, her priests teach for gain, her prophets prophesy for money, And they trust in Yahweh, saying “Is Yahweh not in our midst? Misfortune will not come upon us.
- v 12** Therefore on your account, Zion will plow as a field, Jerusalem will become a heap of ruins, and the mountain of the house will belong to the animals of the forest.

From the above passage, four things can be elucidated. Firstly the city’s system of justice has been reversed by the leaders. The ruling class abhor and twist all that is right. Secondly the city itself has been built upon corruption and oppression. Thirdly, the rulers including the priests and prophets perform their official duties for

<sup>2</sup> Leland Ryken. (1998) *Dictionary of Biblical*. Lingery, Illinois InterVarsity Press. p. 980

<sup>3</sup> John D. Levenson. (1987) *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (New York: Harper Sanfransisco, pp.89, 91.

bribes and money, invariably, justice was for the highest bidder as teaching and prophecy were given to more of favouritism than objectivism. This clearly led to social injustice and oppression of the poor. Lastly, the group of the oppressors including the religious leaders believes that because Yahweh was in Zion, the city was inviolable. This Micah contested and made a devastating pronouncement of total destruction against the city.

Again, this has shown that the major motif of the book of Micah is social justice. The leaders had become very corrupt and they had corrupted the whole system of the society and because of their corruption, the whole city would be uprooted. Since the leaders could not dispense justice justly, Yahweh himself would bring down the full weight of his judgment upon the whole city. Stansell believes that, the judgment of Yahweh upon Zion-Jerusalem as proclaimed by Micah was a pointer to the fact that he totally rejected the concept of Zion's protected status.<sup>4</sup> Yahweh would only protect just leadership and a just nation. The inclusion of the whole city in the punishment was bared on the fact that, according to Micah it was built with 'blood' and wickedness".

For the inhabitant of Maroth

Waited anxiously for good,  
Because evil is come down  
From Jehovah to the gate of Jerusalem.

~Øil' (v'Wry> r[;v;Pl. hw"ëhy >taeäme  
\[r" dr;y"Û-yKi( tAr+m' tb,v, äAy  
bAjßl. hl' (x' î-yKi(

**Micah 1:12**

The announcement of judgment of Yahweh upon the land was seen as so great and so irrevocable as to bring death to Judah.<sup>5</sup>

## 5.2 The Lament Motif

<sup>4</sup> Gary Stansell, *Micah and Isaiah: A Form and Tradition Historical Comparison* (SBLDS, 85; Atlanta: Scholars Press). 1988. p.52

<sup>5</sup> Gary Stansell, *Micah and Isaiah: A Form and Tradition Historical Comparison* . 1988. p. 44

In chapters 1:9; 12b, 13b and 3:10 and 12, there is sharp focus on Jerusalem-Zion motif, but within it we discover the Lament (הח'נ") Motif. In verse 8, the prophet spoke in the first person singular, expressing his intention to make the people to lament. The reason for the lament was given in verse 9 by the word *yki* (meaning because). The reason was as a result of the wounds received by Jerusalem. This lament was made deeper because they were incurable and were sources of disgrace to Jerusalem before her arch enemies in the southern borders as reflected in vs. 10 with the admonition that the fate of Jerusalem must not be discussed, in order to avoid the ridicules. According to George Forhrer, the passage is a very difficult passage to interpret. As a result of this difficulty several scholars have attempted to provide some conjectural emendation, which is not the subject of this research suffice to say that the lament motif is shown in this passage.

However, the lament motif, is only inserted by the prophet in order to enhance the intensity of the judgment of God coming upon Jerusalem-Zion which invariably is an enhancement of social justice as a dominant motif in the book of Micah.

hf, Ū [ / a ~Ar+ [ 'w > îll' PAvÐ ; ll' yveÀ  
hk' îl. yae hl' yliêyaew > hd" äP. s. a,  
'tazo-l [ ;  
`hn") [ ] y: tAnðb. Ki lb, aePw > ~yNIëT; K;  
`dPes. mi,

**Micah 1:8**

Vs 8 For this will I make a lament wail,  
I will go stripped and naked,  
I will make a wailing like the jackals,  
And a lamentation like the ostriches.

s ` %ME) mi Wlßg" yKiî rv, N<ëK;  
` %tex' r > q' ybixi Ūr > h; %yIg" + Wn [ ] T;  
ynEßB. -l [ ; yZIgOëw" yxiär > q'

Vs 16 Make the bald,  
 And cut off thy air  
 For the children of my delight  
 Enlarge thy baldness as the eagle;  
 For they are gone into captivity from thee.

Verse 8-9 was a personal lament while vs. 16 was a call to national lament. Stansell however says instead of lament, this should be called a dirge. To him going 'barefoot and naked' were words belonging to the mourning rites for the dead here however the death is not a person but of a political entity. Both lament and dirge are expressions of sorrow as a result of an unpalatable event.

### 5.3 The Theophanic Motif

One of the most frequent themes of the Old Testament is theophany. Theophany can be described as God's relationship with his people in a descriptive and experiential way. To Gerhard von Rad, "the description of theophanies are undoubtedly the most central subject of an Old Testament aesthetic, for they reveal more clearly than all else, how the special experience of God undergone by Israel also became normative for the special features in the experience of reality."<sup>6</sup> This assertion by Gerhard Von Rad is corroborated by the Biblical narratives. From the earliest beginnings of the Israelite history, from Abraham, it was from the relationship of God with His people that all other themes such as covenant and theology emanated. There could not be any covenant if God did not speak to Abraham at Ur, nor could there be Sinaitic covenant without God's relationship with Moses first, then with the whole assembly when they came out of Egypt. All the major books of the Old Testament described one theophanic experience or emphasized one already existing in a tradition. The prophetic oracles were not exempted from this description or emphatic, in fact, Gerhard von Rad says the theophanic descriptions of the prophetic oracles are so colourful and vivid especially when explaining the corruption of the society and the impending judgments.<sup>7</sup> Among these prophetic utterances are those of Micah of Moresheth, the subject of this research.

<sup>6</sup> Gerhard von. Rad. Old Testament Theology 1p. 366.

<sup>7</sup> Gerhard von Rad. Old Testament Theology 1

One of the most illuminating motifs in Micah is theophany. According to Gary Stansell, Micah 1: 2 – 7; the opening of the oracles, was as a theophanic expression.

**Micah 1:2-7**

lk;îyheme yn"βdoa] d[eêl. `~k,B' hwIÜhy>  
 yn""doa] •yhiywI Ha'\_l{m.W #r<a,ä  
 ybiyviPq.h; ~L'êKu ~yMiä[; `W[m.vi<sup>2</sup>  
 `Av\*d>q'  
 `#r<a' îytem\B'îÐ ;ytemB'À-l[; %r:βd"w>  
 dr:îy"w> Am=AqM.mi aceäyO hw"βhy> hNEihi-  
 yKi(<sup>3</sup>  
 `dr"(AmB. ~yrIiG"mu. ~yIm:βK vaeêh'  
 ynEåP.mi `gn:ADK; W[Q"+B;t.yI ~yqIβm'[]h'w>  
 wyT'êx.T; `~yrIh'h, ( WSm;Ûn"w><sup>4</sup>  
 !Arêm.vo]: `aAlh bqo<sup>a</sup>[]y [v;p,ä-y mi(  
 lae\_r"f.yI tyBeä twaJoβx;b.W tazOë-lK'  
 `bqo[]y:) [v;p,ÛB.<sup>5</sup>  
 `~Øil'(v'Wry> aAlβh] hd"êWhy> tAmåB' `ymiW  
 `hL,(g:a] h'yd<PsoywI] h'yn<ëb'a `yG:l;  
 yTiÛr>G:hiw> ~r<k'\_ y[eJ'äm;l. hd<PF'h;  
 y[iîl. !Ar±m.vo yTiîm.f;w><sup>6</sup>  
 yKiû hm'\_m'v. ~yfiäa' h'yB,βc;[]-lk'w>  
 vaeêb' Wpår>F'yI `h'yN<'n:t.a,-lk'w>  
 WTK;<sup>a</sup>yU h'yl,äysiP.-lk'w><sup>7</sup>  
 `WbWv)y" hn"βAz !n:üt.a,-d[;w> hc'B'êqi  
 `hn"Az !n:Ût.a,me

Vs 2 Hear, O peoples, all of you hearken,  
O earth, and all that fills it  
And let the Lord Yahweh be a witness against you,  
The Lord from his holy temple.

Vs 3 For behold Yahweh comes forth from his place  
And comes down and treads upon the high places of the earth.

Vs 4 And the mountains will melt under him and the valleys will be cleft  
Like wax before fire,  
Like water poured down a steep place

Vs 5 All these is for the transgressions of Jacob,  
What is the sin of Jacob?  
Is it not Samaria?  
What is the 'sin' of Judah  
Is it not Jerusalem?

Vs 6 Therefore I will make Samaria  
Into a planted vineyard  
And I will lay bare her foundations.<sup>8</sup>

Vs 7 All her images shall be smashed,  
All her lives shall be burned with fire.  
For from the hire of a harlot she gathered them,  
And to the hire of a harlot they shall return.

Although Stansell says scholars are not in agreement as to the form and unity of the above passage. Which this researcher also believes, but since this research work is not based on the form critical analysis, it is left for other scholars to do study in this area. However, this researcher could identify the theophanic motif in agreement with both Gerhard von Rad and Gary Stansell. However, this researcher differs from both scholars in the pre-eminence of theophanic expression over other motives. We can identify that the theophanic passage rather presents justice as the main motif. The coming of Yahweh from his place or the temple was to dispense judgment upon Samaria and Jerusalem. The emphasis according to the expression of Micah was on the dispensation of judgment of Yahweh as a result of the corruption of the two capital cities. Yahweh was not coming to relate with His people but to dispense

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<sup>8</sup> Micah 1:8

justice, therefore this theophanic passage in the book of Micah agrees totally with this researcher that social justice is the major motif of the book of Micah.

Stansell analysed Micah 1:2 – 7 as having a three part structure:

- I. v. 3- 4 Theophany description
- II. v. 5a Prophetic Speech: accusation
- III. v. 6 Yahweh speech: announcement of disaster.<sup>9</sup>

Although Stansell did not say anything about which of the structures is major or minor, but a careful observer should see the Yahweh speech: announcement of disaster as the climax of the three part structure, which invariably makes Stansell to indirectly argue for the dominance of the social justice motif in the book of Micah. He says “form critical analysis of Micah 1:3ff. has shown that the prophet in proclaiming Yahweh’s impending punishment of Samaria, has made use of a theophanic description which derives from an ancient two – part structure, describing Yahweh’s coming and nature’s reaction. From the above statement, it is correct to conclude that Micah only made use of the motif of theophany in order to enhance his main aim of social justice.

#### 5.4 The Motif of Prophetic Conflicts

Prophetic conflicts in this sense means the opposition that sometimes occur between a prophet and another prophet, or between a prophet and a group of other prophets or between a prophet and people. There was the story of Miriam and Aaron disputing with Moses about whether Yahweh speaks only through Moses (Num. 12:1ff). The point of dispute here was Miriam and Aaron also claiming prophetic authority. We also have Elijah and the prophets of Baal (I Kings. 18). There was another story of an older prophet from Israel and a younger prophet from Judah, the latter claiming the same divine authority as the former.

In the prophetic literature too, there are copious examples of prophetic conflict. Passages in Jeremiah (Jer.2:8, 5:31, 6:10 ff 8:10ff, 14:13ff; 23:9ff, 26:7ff 28:29).<sup>10</sup> Moreover in Ezekiel we also have instances of prophetic conflict. (Ez 13:2ff, 14:9, 22:25).<sup>11</sup> We also have in Zeph. 3:3ff and Zec 13:2ff. In our subject, Micah we also have it in Mic 3: 5 – 8, 9 – 12 and also in an indirect way in Nah 2:11.

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<sup>9</sup> Gary Stansell, *Micah and Isaiah: A Form and Tradition Historical Comparison*. 1988. pp. 18-19

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Overly, (1970) “The threat of falsehood.” *Studies in Biblical Theology* 2<sup>nd</sup> series. p. 16

<sup>11</sup> K. Charley, Ezekiel (1975) “Among the prophets. *Studies in Biblical Theology* 2<sup>nd</sup> Series. p. 31.

J. Crenshaw believe that, it would not have been a conflict if it is dispute about seniority or presentation of message, but it becomes a conflict when two prophets speeches are opposite and they still claim the same divine source.<sup>12</sup> A typical example of this is Micaiah ben Imlah and the four hundred prophets of Ahab in 2kg 22. The former was prophesying doom for Ahab while the later were prophesying victory and the two groups claiming divine inspiration from Yahweh. In the book of Micah however, we did not read the words of the prophets directly but only as inferred by Micah himself in the three passages to be considered.

V5 Thus Yahweh has said against the prophets who cause my people to go astray, who, when they have something to eat, cry out 'peace' but he who does not put (anything) into their mouth against him they sanctify war.

V 6 Therefore it shall be night to you without vision and darkness to you without dominion. The sun shall go down upon the prophets and the day darkens for them.

V 7. The seers shall be ashamed and the diviners confounded. All of them shall cover their moustache, for there is no answer from God.

This passage starts with the messenger formula "Thus says the Lord," This implies that the dispute was not really between Micah and the other prophets but between Yahweh who has already made up his mind against them by proclaiming his judgment against them. Moreover Micah's description of them as (**haero**) seers and (**hs,ho**) diviners was very derogatory. The term seer was only used positively at the time of Samuel, all other times in the prophetic oracles, it was to slight the opposing prophets. In fact the word diviner was even a stigma theology of the prophets. The passage must therefore, be seen as an indictment of prophets, for their oppression of the poor by prophesying evil to them and also their support of the anarchy by prophesying peace to them.

In Micah 3:11 there was further accusation against the rulers, priests and prophets.

V 11 "Her heads render judgment for a fee, her priests teach for gain, her prophets prophesy for money and they trust in Yahweh, saying misfortune will not come upon us"

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<sup>12</sup> J. Crenshaw. (1971) "Prophetic conflict. Its Effect upon Israelite Religion" BZAW, p. 124 as quoted by J. Stansell in *Micah and Isaiah: A form and Tradition Historical Comparison*. p. 68.

Wn[eäV'yI 'hw"hy>-l[;w> Wms0+q.yI @s,k,äB.  
h'ya,Ëybin>W WrêAy ryxiäm.Bi 'h'yn<'h]kow>  
WjPo<sup>a</sup>v.yI dx;voåB. Ýh'yv,äar"  
`h['(r" WnyleË[' aAbit'-al{) WnBeêr>qiB  
`hw"hy> aAlÜh] rmoêale

**Micah 3:11**

This again is both abuse and misuse of official position. Two things emerge again here, the corruption of the rulers, the priests and prophets, and their false trust in Yahweh as the protector of Zion in spite of all their avarice. There was judgment upon them in the following verse. However, unlike in 3:5-7, Zion and all these corrupt leaders will perish together.

In Micah 2:11. 'If one would go in the Spirit and deceive with lies (Saying) "I will preach to you of wine and strong drink" (hy"ih'w> rk"+Vel;w> !yIY:ßl; ^êl.) He would be a preacher'

Micah was speaking to a larger crowd, probably outside the circles of the rulers, priests and prophets as before but obviously was drubbing the attitude of these opponents. J. C. Mays believe that Micah 2:11 was a formulation that portrays the opponents, preachers of shalom, whose oracles are governed duties for financial gain and who trust (falsely) in Zion's security.<sup>13</sup> The passage also suggests that Micah's opponent were both frivolous and given to strong drink, an attitude not befitting their office.<sup>14</sup>

**5.5. The Motif of Gender Binary**

The presentation of the work of Micah shows a kind of gender division. The Lord is usually described as the male, which implies the husband and Israel is presented as the female and by implication the wife. Gender words are not uncommon in theological discourse because of the way the scriptures were penned down with gender pronouns. Runions asserted that this gender binary is necessary for Israel's theological identity since the relationship between Israel and Yahweh is pedagogical

<sup>13</sup> J. C. Mays (1976) *Micah: A Commentary Old Testament Library*

<sup>14</sup> J.C Mays. *Micah: A Commentary Old Testament Library*

in order to show that the nation's existence is absolutely dependent on Yahweh. She believes that to the Israelites, it seem the only way they can understand their collective aspirations, fears and future was through a gendered metaphor.<sup>15</sup> The conclusion is that to the writers and interpreters of biblical text, gender binary seems to facilitate and was even crucial to theological articulation. Whether this position is true or not cannot be established here, we don't know if the book of Micah was written without gender binary, whether it will still have the same fervour as it is now. The gender division was the language the scriptures was written, and interpreters must see the deliberate use of gender words as delineating the superiority of Yahweh to Israel who singularly determines the guidelines which Israel will follow if she will prosper. This motif also indirectly enhances the motif of social justice because by the time Yahweh showed forth his supreme power, Israel had no saviour that could deliver her. All the terms of relationship were dictated by Yahweh, as long as Israel submitted she prospered but when she disobeys she suffered.

#### **5.6 The Motif of Judgment and Redemption**

It is very recurrent in the book of Micah, the motif of judgment (יָפֹּד . מִי) and redemption. If the people were still in their state of disobedience and moral decadence, the judgment coming upon them was irrevocable. From the three oracles analysed above, it is discovered that the pattern was judgment upon all kinds of sins, restoration after due punishment which might have caused repentance. Scholars have written about this motif in Micah, however the one by John Bright is more relevant to our study. He says Micah decries crimes against justice that flout Yahweh's grace to her in the formative events of the exodus, wanderings and possession of land, therefore her ungrateful attitude towards her benefactor attracts judgment of total proportion.<sup>16</sup> The judgment however will be clouded with clemency that will result to the restoration of a remnant.<sup>17</sup> This is very evident in the conclusive parts of the three oracles.

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<sup>15</sup> Runions. *Zion is Burning*. Semeia. Vol. 82.1998. pp. 225-246

<sup>16</sup> John Bright. (1976) *Covenant and Promise: The Prophetic Understanding of the Future in Pre-exilic Israel*. Philadelphia. Westminster Press. p 117

<sup>17</sup> John Bright. (1976) *Covenant and Promise: The Prophetic Understanding of the Future in Pre-exilic Israel*. p. 117

## 5.7 The Land Motif

In his profound elucidation of the centrality of the land in the theology of Israel, Bruggman affirmed that the Torah was given to ensure the judicious use of the land. The obedience of the Torah will make the people to enjoy the prosperity of the land. Moses minced no words at the boarder of the land when he warned vehemently in the book of Deuteronomy that any misuse of the land would lead to expulsion from it. Torah was not to cramp behaviour, neither was it to coerce or control, but rather to keep Israel in perspective both with God and with the land freely given to her.<sup>18</sup> Akpenpuun Zurgba also mentioned that the year of jubilee was instituted for justice over the ownership of land, especially to protect and guarantee the poor that they will always have their land no matter what happens.<sup>19</sup> Runions also solidified the importance of the land as he says the understanding of Israel's identity is closely linked with the making and breaking of covenant that was intimately tied to the giving and taking of land.<sup>20</sup> In the book of the final punishment was the loss of the land which they usurped and on which all the injustice were perpetrated. In another confirmation of the primacy of land in both history and theology of Israel Donald Gowan submitted that the promise to Abraham was primarily land which protrudes throughout the historical periods of Israel even to the time of the prophets which they also appropriated into their messages.<sup>21</sup>

The land is so important to Yahweh that in Dt.4:29-30 and Le.26:40-41, it is asserted that even though when the people are driven from the land they will be restored because Yahweh will always remember his covenant and the land. From this perspective the motif of exile and restoration is established and understood. Runions therefore conclude that "certainly the notion of Israel's divinely ordained right to land and dominion over other lands (and nations) is common and seem to reappear in scholars' discursions of Micah's portrayal of Israel's identity and future."<sup>22</sup> There can't be a better conclusion, because without a land Israel's identity is blurred.

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<sup>18</sup> Walter Bruggman. (1977) *The Land*. Philadelphia. Fortress Press. pp59-61

<sup>19</sup> Akpenpuun Zurgba. Christianity and Human Mobilisation; "An Instrument for Social Change. Orita Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies". Vol. xxv/1-2, June & December, 1993. p 60.

<sup>20</sup> Erin Runions. (2000) *Changing Subjects; Gender, Nation and Future in Micah*. New York; Sheffield Academic Press. p. 200

<sup>21</sup> Donald Gowan. (1998) *Theology of the Prophetic Books; The Death and Resurrection of Israel*. Louisville. Westminster/John Knox Press. p. 7

<sup>22</sup> Erin Runions. (2000) *Changing Subjects; Gender, Nation and Future in Micah*. New. p. 201

It is pertinent to note here that even after thousands of years have passed, the conflict of land especially relating to Israel's territorial integrity in contemporary time has continued to generate global controversies which has resulted often to bloody massacres and deadly destructions affecting in one way or the other the whole world.<sup>23</sup> This conflict is usually top topic in global news. It has caused divisions of tribes of Arabs versus Jews, religious conflicts of Christians versus Muslims all over the world, and amazingly in countries that are not contiguously located to either Israel or her Arab neighbours.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

There are many motifs in the book of Micah all drawn from several traditions that formed the Old Testament corpus. All the motifs as summarized above proved directly or enhanced indirectly the motif of land and social justice. The clarion call for justice was for the land to experience peace and its occupants to prosper. The execution of judgment on the people as a result of their constant and consistent disobedience was for their cities of pride to be ploughed down and their land to be lost to aliens.

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<sup>23</sup> Stanley Ellison.(2003) *Who Owns The Land* (updated and revised by Charles H. Dyer).Wheaton. Tyndale House Publishers. p. 5.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LAND ISSUES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN MICAH: IMPLICATIONS FOR LAND OWNERSHIP AND TENURESHIP IN OGBOMOSOLAND

#### 6.0. Introduction

In this chapter, Ogbomoso, the object of research was described very briefly from the perspectives of geography history and culture. The biblical evidences were thoroughly evaluated, the Land Use Act was critiqued, as the field data collected analysed and interpreted.

#### 6.1. A Brief Description of Ogbomoso Land

The place known as Ogbomoso is situated almost midway between Igbon and Iresa. It was surrounded by four kings of remote antiquity; Aresa is to the east, Onikoyi of Ikoyi is to the west; Olugbon is to the north; and Timi of Ede is to the south. Three huts or settlements had been built at different points forming the nucleus of the growing town before Soun emerged on the scene. The three more important settlements are the camp of Baale Oke-Elerin, the camp of Baale Ijeru and the camp of Baale Isapa.<sup>1</sup> Ogbomoso land now comprises of five local governments namely; Ogbomoso North, Ogbomoso South, Surulere, Ogo-Oluwa and Oriire Local Governments. Ogbomoso land is socially divided into two main divisions, the main city and the suburbs. Ogbomoso land is a homogenous community. No matter where anyone resides or comes from, they still see the main city as their common origin. Although there are some little social disagreements when it comes to the citing of some social infrastructure, these disagreements are usually between the traditional rulers who will want such social amenity to be sited in his own immediate jurisdiction. The vast majority of indigenes do not care about where any infrastructure is cited, all what they care about is for such amenity to serve the entire community and the people.

Ogbomoso city is now one of the biggest cities in Yorubaland and even in Nigeria. Ogbomoso land is becoming highly urbanised. The citing of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology in the city has changed the social demography of the land. There are many small scale industries doing well within the metropolis and the

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<sup>1</sup> N D Oyerinde (1958) *The history of Ogbomoso*. p1

environs. The entire Ogbomoso land is situated on the link road between western Nigeria and northern Nigeria. It also had a direct link road to Lagos, the commercial capital of Nigeria. The land's linkage to the eastern part of the country is also very accessible. Ogbomoso people are highly travelled people, through their itinerary; they are highly educated and enlightened. The predominant religion is Christianity, with a handful of Muslims and traditional worshippers. The Baptist missionary enterprise was highly successful in Ogbomoso to the extent that, the majority of Christians are of the Baptist denomination.

The traditional system of administration is still very much in practice especially on matters of land ownership and tenure-ship. Ogbomoso is a core Yoruba community. Among the Yoruba of south western Nigeria land ownership and tenureship is a matter of family inheritance or lease-ship respectively.<sup>2</sup> The traditional ruler is the owner of the land hence the phrase *oba loni ile*, meaning the king is the owner of the land. However, this must not be seen as absolute ownership, the king only hold the land in trust for the entire community as the overall custodian of the traditional values and customs of the people. In relationship to this, there are several compounds with their chiefs or leaders who have received orally, the history of land ownership from their forebears, who must in turn pass the same information to coming generation. It is these chiefs or leaders who are the direct custodians of the lineage family land and who also ensures its protection, distribution and onward transmission to the rightful owners as the generations increase.

## **6.2. Yoruba Traditional Concept of Land Ownership and Tenureship**

In the traditional Yoruba society, land is never sold.<sup>3</sup> Reporting an interview with a native (a Yoruba) as quoted by an unsigned paper in African Journal, p.312 no 3, April 1902, R E Dennet says the idea of selling a parcel of land is completely alien to the Yoruba.<sup>4</sup> He went further to say that, to the Yoruba, land is completely inalienable.<sup>5</sup> Dennet pointed out the erroneous impression of the British when they came to colonise Africa, especially Yorubaland that land can be sold or bought like it

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<sup>2</sup> Samuel Johnson. (1921) *The History of The Yoruba*. C S S Bookstores,p95

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Johnson,(1921) *The History of The Yoruba*. p95

<sup>4</sup> R E Dennet "Notes on the Land Laws in the Western Province of Southern Nigeria." *Journal of the Royal African society* vol. 9,no 34 Jan 1910 .p 132

<sup>5</sup> R E Dennet "Notes on the Land Laws in the Western Province of Southern Nigeria." *Journal of the Royal African society* P132

was in Britain.<sup>6</sup> The British got it wrong on dangerous assumptions, until they investigated and found out the truth of the matter. It must be noted here that what land has become today in Yoruba land where there are several disputes over land is an indirect result of the British colonial administration. We must also note a little difference of what obtained in the Yoruba land of Lagos area and what obtained in the hinterland. The British settlement in Lagos area and the introduction of the British laws into the area caused a little difference in the traditional understanding that land is inalienable. As early as the colonial period, nearly immediately after the abolition of slave trade and the attendant settlement of many people in the Lagos area, there has been buying and selling of land. Lagos therefore became a centre of mixed population.<sup>7</sup> However, the remaining part of Yoruba land where the British native law was less prominent, the traditional value of land ownership was held in high esteem. Land can be given to outsiders for life mostly for building houses and for subsistence farming. Such gracious grants do not usually include cash crop trees like cocoa, kolanut and palm trees, therefore when a parcel of land is being granted, the grantee is told not to look up but down. This means the fruit bearing trees, already tall are not included in the grant, only the ground and whatever the grantee can cultivate on the ground. The issue of land ownership is by inheritance from the father to the children, and this kind of ownership is perpetual. When a land is on lease to a foreigner, the land reverts back to the original owners when the grantee is leaving that environment.

Any attempt by anyone including the custodians of the land, to use any fraudulent means to deprive the people of their inalienable right of land ownership is usually resisted even to the shedding of blood. In the traditional Yoruba setting, land disputes though uncommon is settled by the elders of the two contending families. When this is impossible, elders of neutral families can be involved. Usually land disputes are settled this way, However if it cannot be settled this way, the supreme traditional ruler of the town and his council of chiefs will adjudicate on the issue and whatever this supreme council declares is the final. There is no any other room for appeal.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> R E Dennet "Notes on the Land Laws in the Western Province of Southern Nigeria." *Journal of the Royal African society* 131

<sup>7</sup> R E Dennet "Notes on the Land Laws in the Western Province of Southern Nigeria." *Journal of the Royal African society* 143

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Johnson. (1921) *The History of The Yoruba*. p97

As earlier mentioned, due to sporadic urban development caused in part by the citing of a university in the city and the incessant ethno-religious crises in the northern part of Nigeria, where many indigenes of Ogbomoso took their sojourn as traders and the consequent insecurity of lives and property, that compelled many of them to come back home with their resources, land occupation has become a serious matter. In the first instance, the traditional values of not selling land have been abandoned. The simple law of economics which states that when demand exceeds supply, there is bound to be inflation. Many people who came from the north for fear of evil will not want to build their houses where their family land is. Sometimes, because of proximity to developing or developed area, people will abandon their own family land and prefer to buy lands from other families. Also, workers who came from other towns or other parts of the country, that want to build houses where they are working to avoid landlord embarrassment and to dignify themselves, will have no choice but to buy land from indigenes. These are some of the factors responsible for change in the custom of not selling land in Ogbomoso land.

The demarcation of land in the traditional Yoruba land, Ogbomoso inclusive, was made by the planting of trees where natural marks like rivers, mountains or gullies do not exist. The two neighbours agreed on the type of tree to plant, which will be jointly nurtured to maturity. Then the leader of the neighbouring land owners will in each compound show the land mark to the men that are matured enough in their compounds respectively. Such trees are not allowed to be cut on any circumstance. Anyone who cuts such ancient land mark is frowned at and seen as mischievous. For farming purposes, male members of the family will occupy sections of the land, making sure they covered the entire land in order to prevent trespassers from usurping their property.

Land is considered to be the most important property a person or family can have. No person or family takes with hand of levity any attempt by anyone or a group of people to deprive him of his land. It is believed to be a sacred trust from the creator and therefore must be guarded with all jealousy. In contemporary times, we have seen several land disputes in the law courts that have lingered for a long time between two or more families. When leaders of the disputing families die, the next leader will inherit the law suit and vow that it will not be in his own period that the land of the family long held, and passed down to his own generation will be lost. Such a leader will use everything in his capacity to fight for the retention of the ownership of the

land. Even family members living in diaspora will usually contribute in cash and kind to fight for their sacred right.

In the light of the above, when the Obasanjo administration came out with the Land Use Decree in 1978, it was resisted very seriously. The Land Use Decree transferred the ownership of all the land to the government.<sup>9</sup> The Land Use Decree has now become the Land Use Act. The Land Use Act was arrived at among other things because of:

*The realisation of the complexities of the land laws in Nigeria led to legislative activities for a single national land law, comprised of rules taken from the pre-existing systems, but devoid of their objectionable features, their uncertainties and complexities*<sup>10</sup>

Anyone who occupies a parcel of land must get a certificate of occupancy which is valid for 99 years after which the land is returned to the government or is renewed by the occupant if still alive. This kind of decree was seen then as the greatest usurpation of people's rights. The decree to a large extent only works for the government and people in power at a particular time, but for the vast majority, the decree has not worked. Till date, land is being sold and bought from the original owners of the land. The Land Use Decree cannot work because it put families in disadvantage position and land matter is a do or die affair.

### **6.3. A Critique of Land Use Act of Nigeria**

The land use act was termed revolutionary as reported by the Nigerian Law report.<sup>11</sup> However, the revolutionary nature is highly questionable. The one who has obtained a favourable law verdict can term the Land Use Act as revolutionary, while the one who was on the receiving end of the law will term it as objectionable and fallen short of expectation as it is nothing but the usurpation of his inalienable right. The main provision of the law placed the right of trusteeship on the Governor of the state where the land is situated. A direct quotation of the section will be apposite here.

*Subject to the provisions of this Act, all lands comprised in the territory of each state in the federation are vested in the governor of that state and such land shall be held in trust and administered for the use and common*

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<sup>9</sup> Land Use Decree No 6, March 29, 1978

<sup>10</sup> R W James. (1982)*Nigerian Land Use Act; Policy and Principle*. Ile Ife.p 6

<sup>11</sup> Nigeria Weekly Law Report, Savannah bank vs Ajilo, 1989, p305

*benefit of all Nigerians in accordance with the provision of this Act.*

In the first instance, this provision is very ambiguous. In fact Maitland describe the technical term in law as “an institute of great elasticity, as elastic and general as contract.”<sup>12</sup> Its meaning is so loose that it can mean anything to anyone. Moreover, regarding the type of politics being practised in Nigeria, the Governor may use his power of trusteeship to deny members of the opposition their rights to ownership of land. This has manifested many times. In another sense, the time lag that exists between the application for the certificate of occupancy and its grant more often than not is so long that the usefulness of it might have become almost useless. The looseness of the word trust is so verbose that an expert in law, Emmanuel Nwabuzor believes that Governors can use their power of trusteeship for political patronage or personal financial gains.<sup>13</sup>

The certificate of occupancy to be issued is another point of controversy. Legal moguls have argued about the legality of the certificate of occupancy. Some believe that it does not bestow ownership right on the owner but rather occupancy because it can only be issued after a deed of conveyance which is the legal document transferring the ownership of a parcel of land from one person to the other.<sup>14</sup> This noted by a legal expert is an eye opener to porosity of the Land Use Act. The conclusion of Nwabuzor is instructive in this respect “it is no longer disputable that that a certificate of occupancy is a fragile, defeasible document, and in some cases the right may not be worth the paper on which it is written”. To further illustrate the fragility and futility of the certificate of occupancy, in a highly criticised verdict of the Supreme Court, Belgore, a judge of the Supreme Court says;

*The Land Use Act is not the magic wand it is being portrayed to be, or a destructive monster that at once swallowed all rights on land and that the Governor or Local Government, with mere issuance of a piece of paper, could divest families of their homes and agricultural lands overnight with a rich holder of a certificate of occupancy driving them out with bulldozers and cranes*<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> F W Maitland. *Equity*. Cambridge, 1936. p23

<sup>13</sup> Emmanuel O Nwabuzor. (1994) “Real Property Security Interests in Nigeria: Constraints of the Land Use Act.” *Journal of African Law* vol 38 no 1. p3

<sup>14</sup> Emmanuel O Nwabuzor. (1994) “Real Property Security Interests in Nigeria: Constraints of the Land Use Act.” p3

<sup>15</sup> Belgore, Alfa. *Nigeria Weekly Law Report*, 1990. p745

With this assertion, one needs no more to burden himself in looking for arguments to defeat the corruption of the Land Use Act. The ownership of land from the time immemorial is by inheritance in Africa. Any attempts to change or transfer by government fiat or fraud cannot succeed. The reality on ground has even proved beyond all reasonable doubts the failure of the Land Use Act. Majority of land buyers are still buying from the traditional owners and majority, including the elite do not bother to obtain any certificate of occupancy. The Land Use Act as it is today can only serve the interest of a selfish insensitive and irresponsible government and a few unscrupulous and greedy wealthy elites.

#### **6.4. Evaluation from Biblical Data**

The structural analysis of the book of Micah as embarked upon by this writer revealed that there was a lot of wealth in the land of Israel at the time of Micah but it was concentrated on the hands of a few ruling oligarchy. The majority was suffering not because they were lazy, or were ignorant of the wealth in the land but because the powers that be collaborated together to oppress and suppress the poor. The majority could not do anything to help themselves because they have been reduced to the level below the human; their properties were forcefully bought by the powerful wealthy ruling class. The group to cry to were the very people perpetrating the atrocities.

When prophet Micah said “the faithful have disappeared from the land, and there is no one left who is upright, they all lie in wait for blood and they hunt each other with nets” (Micah 7:2) he was lamenting the depth of the crave for material wealth at the expense of human dignity. This did not however mean that there was no single individual who was upright. The prophet was especially speaking of the ruling class and how unresponsive they had become. In fact the religious leaders who should have served as the last hope and protection for the people had violently deserted the poor and sided with the wicked ruling class. If there was no single faithful person in the land, what of the prophet himself who stood against the vast majority of prophets who prophesied for money? If there was no single individual who was faithful in the land, what of the vast majority of the poor who held on to the covenant tradition which had been handed down to them, who the prophet was fighting for?, What usually happen in such situation wasto employ the use of figures of speech that would attract the audience that were listening to the message of the prophets. In this case, prophet Micah employed the use of hyperbole to describe how terrible the situation

was. The prophet was also a member of the same society but was a different person from the two groups described in the prophetic oracle of Micah. The first group introduced to the reader was the oppressive ruling class who had thrown all decorum to the winds in their pursuit of wealth using the advantage of the state machinery to achieve their greed. The second group was the oppressed who had been reduced to the level of animals by their oppressors and were being devoured as lions would devour their prey. The prophet can be likened to what Appenpuun Dzurgba called the educated of his society.<sup>16</sup> The prophet was aware of the atrocities being perpetrated by the leaders against the downtrodden and took it upon himself as being empowered by the Lord to denounce the corruption and the corrupt. The prophet seemed to be a lone ranger in his crusade against corruption, because there was record of stiff opposition from other prophets. The prophet was more likely to be part of the suffering majority but who was more equipped than the majority because of his call into prophecy by Yahweh who empowered him to be able to face the ruling class to let them know their sins and repent so that Yahweh would have mercy on them and bring peace, hitherto unknown to the people. Land is seen from the perspective of the Old Testament as a natural gift from Yahweh to his people. In fact every tribe was allotted her own portion of the land as the nation entered into the Promised Land. Land was completely inalienable among the people of Israel. E. A. Martens believed that Yahweh is the owner of the land. He is also the donor as reflected in Lev. 25:23. This means the land was a gift to all the people. It also implies that the people were not at the mercy of any king or ruler for the occupancy and utilisation of land.<sup>17</sup> However at the time of Micah, precisely in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C, land had lost its inalienable value through the manipulations of the monarchy and corrupt priesthood and prophetic guild. Leaders were usurping land from the poor “they covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them away: they oppress the people and take over their inheritance” (Mic2:2). Dispossessing a people of their land was the greatest injustice that could be perpetrated against them. Wars had been prosecuted between nations and nations, inter-tribal wars had been fought within same nations because of land disputes. The injustice become more painful when it was perpetrated by the leaders against the led from the same nation like that of Israel.

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<sup>16</sup> Appenpuun Dzurgba. *Christianity and Human Mobilisation :An Instrument for Social Justice*. Orita: Ibadan journal of Religious Studies. vol .xxv/1-2, June & Dec, 1993

<sup>17</sup> E A Martens. (1981)*Plot and Purpose in the Old Testament*. Leicester; Intervarsity Press. 186

In order not to allow such thing to happen in Israel Yahweh instituted the year of Jubilee. “The jubilee year in which the encumbered property was returned to the head of household illustrates this understanding of inheritance of land as inalienable”.<sup>18</sup> Despite this provision, the leaders still seized peoples land. The institution of jubilee was a measure to ensure social justice. As Dzurgba rightly noted, the year of Jubilee recorded in Leviticus 25 was the best known of the provisions which were made to redress injustice concerning land ownership and occupation. Its concerns were reflected also in the law, wisdom literature and the prophets. The aim of the people in institutionalising the year of Jubilee was to guarantee the right of the poor people to be established in relationship to landed properties.<sup>19</sup> When there was too large number of destitute in the society, charity capabilities would not be able to cope with their needs again, therefore, structural measures became necessary to achieve social justice. Micah looked forward to a time when, with equal and secure access to the means of production, each person would again “sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree” (Micah 4:4). At the time of Micah, the once glorious heritage of a land flowing with milk and honey to be enjoyed by all Israelites had become a song of lamentation. Micah lamented and wailed uncontrollably because of the injustice against his people. Martens say “the glorious part of Israelite history is the way in which, relying on the promise, she received the gift of the land. The tragedy of Israel’s story is that the gift of the land was forfeited,”<sup>20</sup> The forfeiture here was that of a powerful Israelite oligarchy forcefully taken over the parcel of land of the poor Israelites. Jubilee was no more respected and as a result some Israelites at that time lost their inheritance forever. Those who lost their land automatically lost their economic power and hence their means of livelihood. Those who took over the land of others became overlords to those whose lands were seized, enslaved them and made them to serve with rigour on their own parcel of land. The magistrates looked the other side at the practice of this social injustice. The judiciary ceased being the last hope of the people. The only place left for the people was religion.

However, unfortunately, the religious leaders at the time of Micah were carried away by the whirlwind of corruption. The priests were teaching the law of

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<sup>18</sup>E A Martens. (1981)*Plot and Purpose in the Old Testament*. pp104,105

<sup>19</sup>Akpenpuun Dzurgba. “Christianity and Human Mobilisation; An Instrument for Social Change.” *Orita: Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies*.

<sup>20</sup>E A Martens. (1981)*Plot and Purpose in the Old Testament*. P 186

God to those who could pay them and the prophets were prophesying for money. The one who fed the prophet received the proclamation of peace, the one who could not receive the proclamation of evil (Micah 3:5). It became a double tragedy against the poor. Those who usurped them were blessed, the poor lost their land, and they still received woes from the prophets. Micah did what he could. There was no immediate remedy, but he made the denunciation which eventually led to some sort of reforms at the time of Hezekiah. If there were no people like Micah, social injustice could have been thriving without challenge. Micah's case became a reference point at the time of Jeremiah.

In every society there is class differentiation, so was the Israelite society. There was class stratification between the poor and the rich. From the earliest period Yahweh had made provisions for the poor in the law of gleanings, so that the poor would be cared for and there would be no much gap between the poor and the rich. However by the time of Micah the gap had widened so much that the poor were completely subjugated and their economic power which was the land was forcefully taken from them by their rulers. The class system that developed polarised the Israelite society into two opposed extremes. There was the group of a few extremely rich and a vast majority of extremely poor people.

Some scholars believe that the appearance of Micah on the scene during this period was like a lone voice in the market place which could hardly be heard. For instance H. W. Robinson believes that the change from oral to written prophecy was an indication of the failure of the 8th century B C prophets to lift their society to the lofty ideal they envisaged and claimed Yahweh wanted. He further believes that the prophets failed to influence their national thought and conscience to move towards the ideal.<sup>21</sup> This researcher however believe contrary to Robinson that the movement from oral to written form of prophecy was due to advancement of the time and not failure of the prophets in their social justice crusade. If the prophets had completely failed there could not have been Hezekiah's reform which was directly linked to the prophecy of Micah. Moreover, rulers could not have been terrified at the appearance of prophets if they were not forces to reckon with. For example, Amaziah the priest at Bethel trembled together with the rulers at Bethel when Amos appeared at the shrine denouncing the sins of the rulers (Am 7:10). Leaders could not have been spending

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<sup>21</sup> H W Robinson. (1956). *Religious ideas of the Old Testament*. London; Gerald and Duckworth & Co. p.122

fortunes to maintain their own guild of prophets to oppose the prophets of Yahweh if as Robinson said they had failed. The crusade embarked upon by the 8<sup>th</sup> century writing prophets of whom Micah was significant may not have had a quick positive response from the leaders, they did not fail. Several years after the prophecy of Micah, during the time of Hezekiah, when Jeremiah was arrested because of his prophecy, reference was made to Micah that he was not killed by the ruling king then, but that the leaders changed for the better ( Jer. 26:17-19). Such a reference could not have been made about a failed project. As the contemporary social justice crusaders all over the world and in Nigeria in particular, use the weapons of pressure groups to influence positive changes in their societies, therefore many times it seems they have failed because they do not use the weapon of collective violence. However their contributions to social and political development are immeasurable. The only difference between contemporary social justice crusaders and the ancient prophets of Israel is that contemporary crusaders have access to mass media which make them reach the people more quickly than the ancient prophets. The biggest crowd the ancient Israelite prophet could reach at a time was the crowd that gathered at the popular worship centres, which they made use of adequately.

## **6.5 Data Analysis**

### **6.5.1. Questionnaire Findings**

This research was carried out among five local governments that form Ogbomoso land. The five local governments are Ogbomoso North with headquarters at Kinnira, Ogbomoso South Local Government with headquarters at Arowomole and Oriire Local Government with headquarters at Ikoyi Ile. The two remaining Local Governments are Surulere Local Government and Ogo-Oluwa Local Government with headquarters at Iresaadu and Ajaawa respectively. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 key purposively selected informants comprising 10 community/village heads and 10 opinion leaders across the five local governments in Ogbomoso land. Copies of a questionnaire were administered to 650 subjects: 550 Christian and non-Christian land owners, 50 church leaders, and 50 land agents. We made use of some Pastors, Agricultural Extension Officers, Primary School Teachers and Public Health Extension Workers across all the five local governments. We made use of these people because they cover nearly every village in their respective local governments. They have already created the rapport necessary to elicit information for

research purposes because they are well known by the indigenes in their respective areas of coverage. The questionnaire was administered among people residing or farming within the specific local governments. Random sampling method was used in selecting those who are to respond to the questionnaire. There were twenty five items on the questionnaire with questions relating to land ownership and tenure ship.

The analysis was based on simple percentage as follows

$$N/TN \times 100/1$$

N= number of respondents

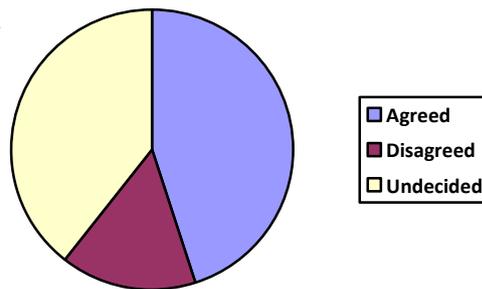
TN= total number of respondents per question

100/1= percentage

### Item 1

#### Is your ownership of this land by inheritance?

228 agreed which is 44% significant percentage, 79 disagreed which is 16% insignificant percentage while 201 were undecided which is 40%. This means the majority who responded inherited their parcel of land. This is in accordance with the Yoruba traditional and Biblical concepts of land ownership. Although the majority responded positively, the whopping 40% that were undecided is worrisome. It may be due to interpretation or some extraneous factors that may not be opened to this researcher.

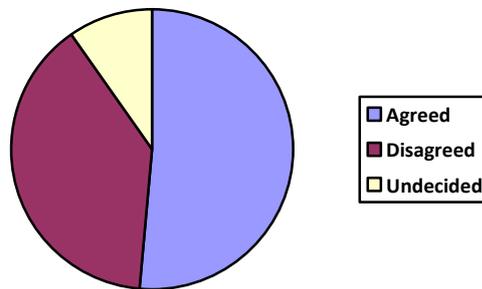


### Item 2

#### Is your ownership of land by permanent occupation?

257 agreed which is 51% significant percentage. 195 which are 39% disagreed. 48 were undecided which is 10% insignificant percentage. Land occupation through

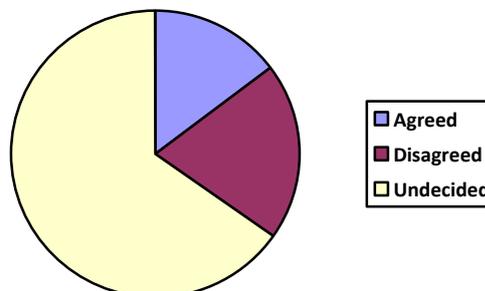
inheritance among the Yoruba is on permanent basis. The 39% who disagreed might be those who were given their land from other families for temporary use.



### Item 3

#### Is your ownership of land by tenure ship?

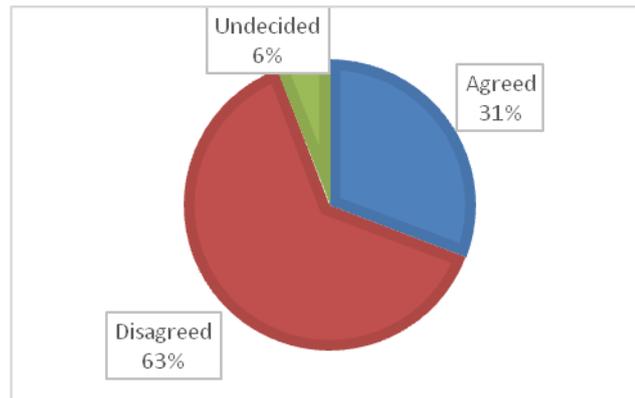
195 responded in the affirmative which is 39%. 257 disagreed which is 51 % significant percentage. 48 were undecided which is 10% insignificant percentage. This also is in accordance with Yoruba traditional concept of land ownership because some people will move from their own traditional area to be sojourners in another area where they do not have right of inheritance, therefore it cannot be held in perpetuity or be inherited by his children. If the land is for building purpose, which is usually smaller, it can be held in perpetuity and can also be passed on to the children. Moreover it was discovered that there were many non-Yoruba occupying land in Ogbomoso land. These people also do not usually own their land permanently. On very rare occasion we have some of these who naturalised themselves and continue to live among the people through many generations. Some of these types eventually are assimilated after several generations and they become Yoruba.



#### Item 4

##### **You have experienced dispute over your occupation or tenureship of land.**

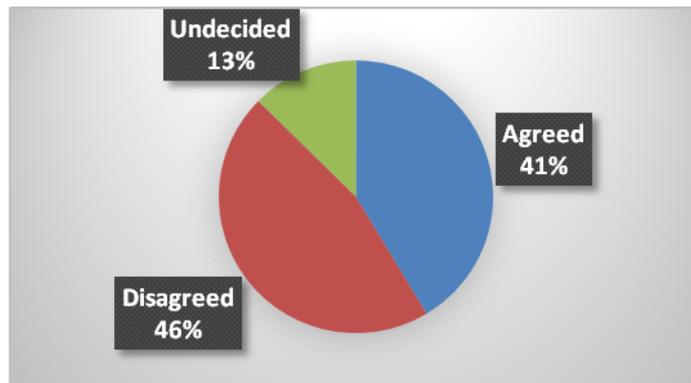
154 agreed which is 31%. 317 disagreed which is 63% significant percentage. 29 were undecided which is 6% insignificant percentage. By interpretation this means that land dispute is still very minimal in Ogbomosoland. This is not unconnected with the homogenous nature of the people and adherence to the traditional concept of land occupation and ownership. The custodians of the land are still given high respect.



#### Item 5

##### **You have defended your land occupation before**

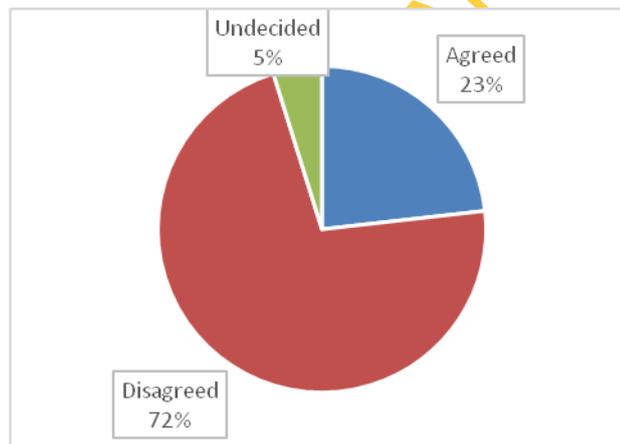
207 answered in the affirmative which is 41% of the responses. 230 answered in the negative, which is 46% significant percentage. 63 were undecided which is 13% insignificant percentage. The lesser percentage of those who have defended their ownership of land and the higher percentage of those who have never defended their occupation further confirmed that disputes over land is at the low level in Ogbomosoland. The defence meant here do not mean court case. It should be highlighted here that it is not all land disputes that results to litigation. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are elders in each lineage that can settle land disputes without destroying the harmonious relationship of the disputants over a parcel of land. It is traditionally held that contiguous location of land brings relationship and it must be upheld at all costs.



**Item 6**

**You have participated in court case over land ownership before**

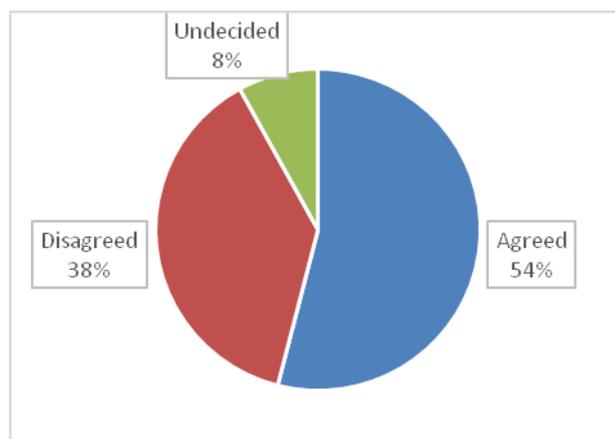
116 agreed. 360 disagreed. 24 were undecided. This means 23%, 72% and 5% respectively. It is a further reinforcement of the fact that land disputes that results into court case are still very rare.



**Item 7**

**You have contributed something before in order to retain land ownership**

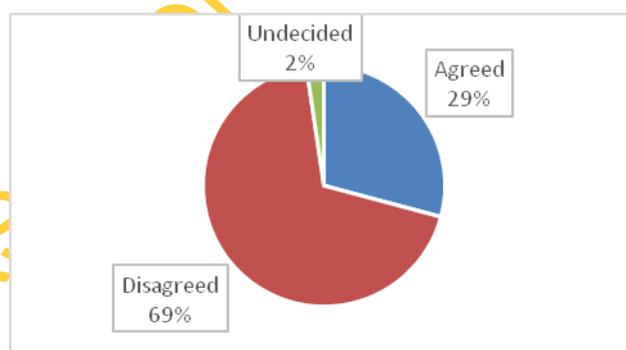
270 responded affirmatively which is 54% significant percentage while 190 responded negatively which is 28% as 40 were undecided which is 8% of the responses. The higher percentage of contributing to the retention of land as against the low percentage of those who have not contributed confirmed the fact that individuals and families will go out of their way to retain their ownership of land. These contributions might not be in cash alone, it might involve some other things so that the heritage of the family will not be lost.



**Item 8**

**Will you willingly give up the ownership of your land?**

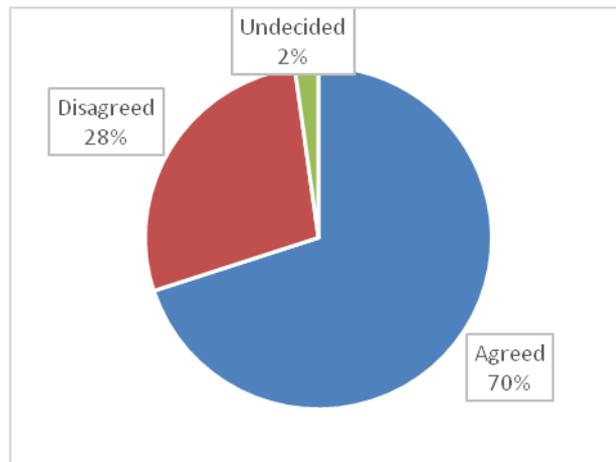
138 responded in the affirmative which is 28% of the responses. 324 responded negatively which is 64% of the responses significant percentage. 11 were undecided which is 2% insignificant percentage. These results show that not many people will willingly give up their ownership of land. The 28% that says they can give up the ownership of their land willingly might have some conditions attached to it but since we cannot see them to confirm, we have just have to accept their responses like that. This is one of the limitations of the use of questionnaire.



**Item 9**

**Your children will inherit your land when you have become very old.**

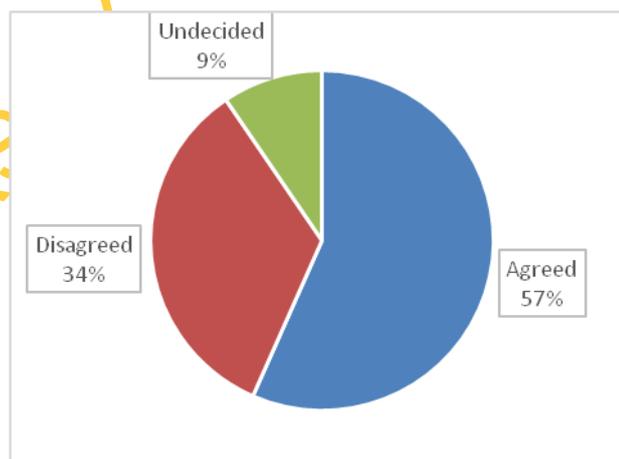
350 agreed. 139 disagreed. 11 were undecided. These are 70%, 28% and 2% respectively. In Ogbomoso land, land ownership is by inheritance. The results of the questionnaire gathered have confirmed it again. There is the probability that the 28% that did not agree that their children will inherit their land were those who occupied by tenures-hip.



**Item 10**

**Your family has a lawyer to defend you on land ownership matters.**

227 said yes. 136 said no. 38 do not know. This is 57%, 34% and 9% respectively. This is another confirmation that individuals and families do not take the issue of ownership of land lightly. It is amazing that, despite the confirmation of the rarity of land disputes in Ogbomoso land and especially court cases on land matters, families still have standby lawyers to fight their case in case there is a court case. This further confirms that land ownership in Ogbomoso land in particular and Yoruba land in general is defended at any cost. Families are not ready to be caught unprepared in defence of their heritage concerning land.

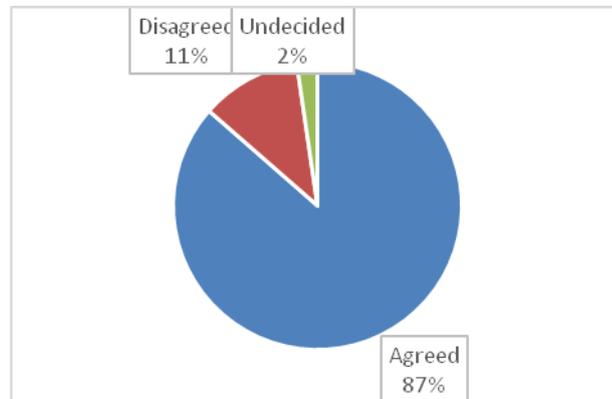


**Item 11**

**Are you aware of the land Use Act?**

339 confirmed yes. 44 were unaware. 9 were undecided. Statistically, this means 87% significant percentage knew about the existence of the Land Use Act. 11%

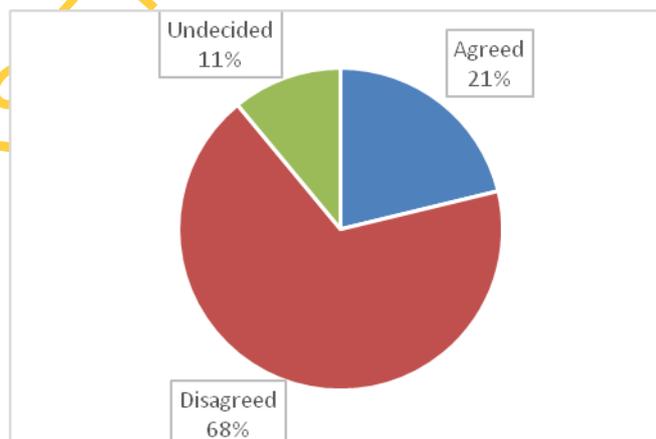
insignificant percentage do not know .2% is not sure. The staggering confirmation of the awareness of the existence of the land Use Act surprised this researcher. This researcher had previously thought that not many people are aware of the Land Use Act, but he has been proved wrong. This means the Land Use Act is well known among the peasants also.



**Item 12**

**Is your response to the Land Use Act positive?**

85 agreed. 272 disagreed. 44 were undecided. The results showed that despite their awareness of the Land Use Act 68% of the people disagreed with it which is significant percentage. Only 21% agreed with its aim and 11% do not know what to say about it. The majority of the respondents do not show a positive attitude to the Land Use Act. They saw it as usurpation of their property.

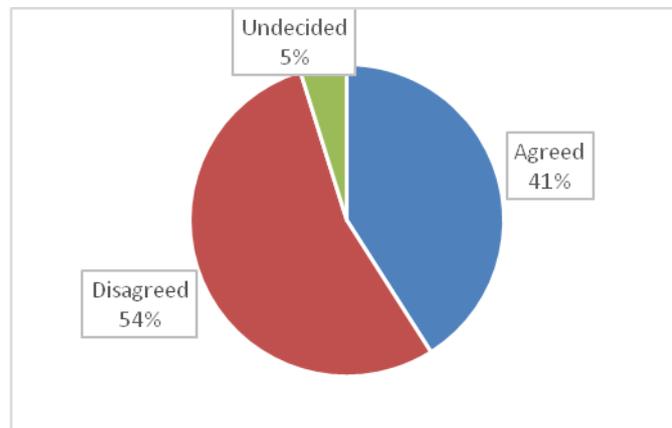


**Item 13**

**Do you agree that all land belong to government?**

205 Agreed, which is 41% of the respondent. 271 disagreed, which is 54% of the respondents, significant percentage. 5% were undecided, insignificant percentage.

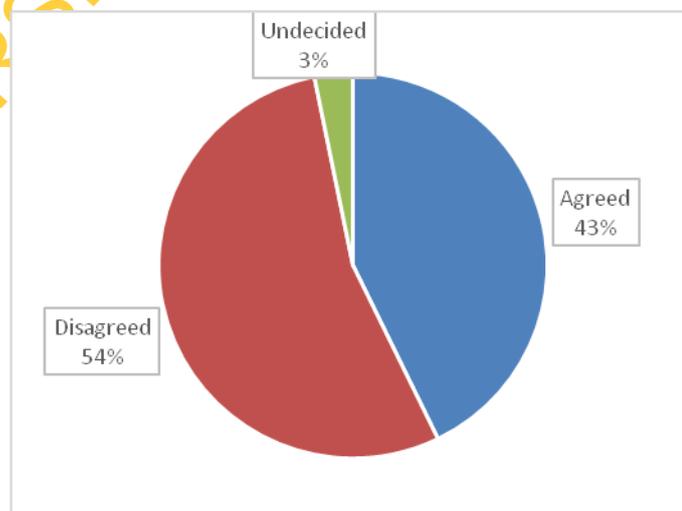
This is sequence to the former question. Since many did not agree to the Land Use Act, the majority that rejected government ownership of land confirm the validity of the test.



#### Item 14

**Do you agree that you must possess the certificate of occupancy to proof your ownership of land?**

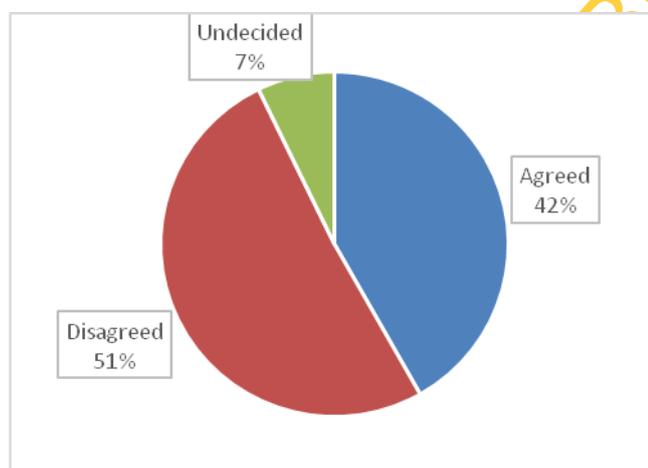
214 agreed which is 43% while 270 disagreed which is 54%, as 16 were undecided which is 3%, insignificant percentage. This is another confirmation that the Land Use Act is not acceptable to the people. A significant percentage said they cannot for a heritage handed over to them by their forefathers. This throws light on the reason not many people pursue the certificate of occupancy which is given by government as prove of ownership of land, but which has been confirmed earlier that its power is not absolute and tenure not permanent.



### Item 15

#### **Do you give some compensation for your tenure-ship on this land?**

209 agreed. 255 disagreed. 36 were undecided. This is 42%, 51% and 7% respectively. The significant majority do not pay compensation because they were occupying their land by inheritance and hence they don't need to pay any compensation. We must be aware that compensation is demanded from land tenants not for any material gain but for the proof that the land does not belong to the tenant on permanent basis. If there is any dispute where the tenant wants to claim the ownership of the land the question he has to contend with is why was he paying compensation if he actually owns the land?<sup>22</sup>

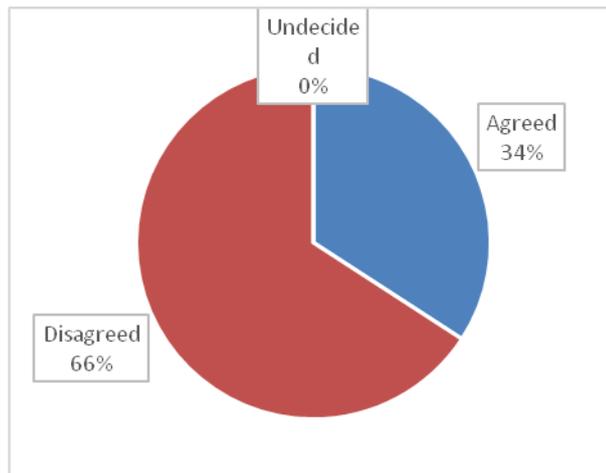


### Item 16

#### **Will you be compensated if this land is taken from you by the owners if you have crops on it?**

300 responded no which is 60% a significant percentage of the responses and this is because the majority of the respondents were the actual owners of their land, so no individual is going to send them away from their land. 156 responded yes and these are definitely the tenants who knew they were not the owners of the land. The compensation to be given is not specific, but by oral interview it was gathered from few tenants that they were only given the grace to harvest their crops, which they see as compensation because if the owner decides not to compensate them, there is nothing they can do.

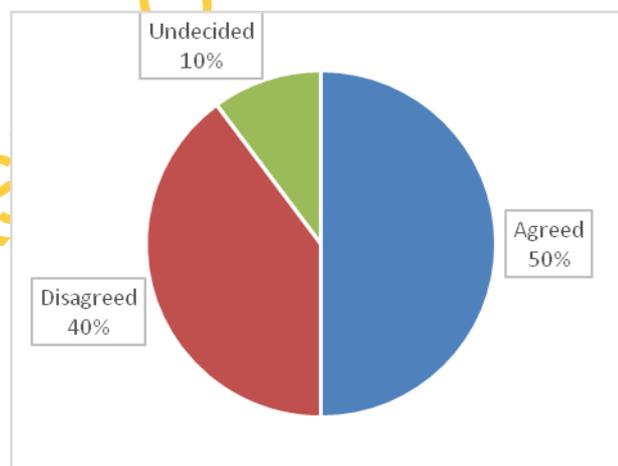
<sup>22</sup> Oba Samuel A Amao. The Baale Okelerin of Ogbomoso. Oral Interview on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2012.



**Item 17**

**When the family land is sold, do you benefit from the proceeds?**

250 benefits from the proceeds of family land sold. This is 50% of the respondents, significant percentage. 199 do not benefit from the proceeds of sold family land. This is 40% of the respondents. If these respondents were not part of tenants, this is another form of injustice on land issues which is becoming rampant and must be properly addressed. 51 were undecided which is insignificant 10% of the number of the respondents. This may be the group of people who are complacent about family matters.

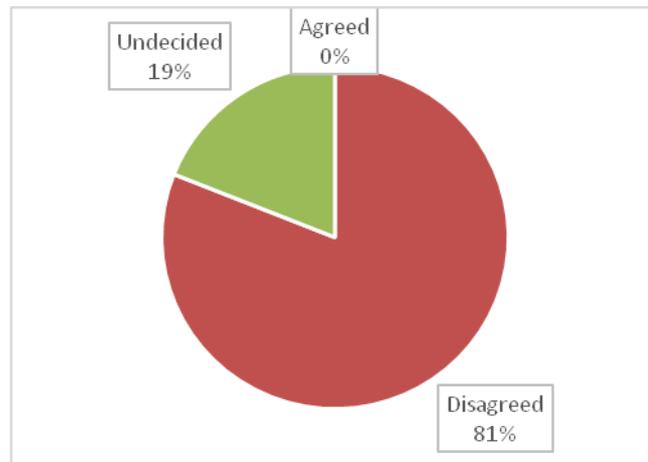


**Item 18**

**Is it justifiable for government to take over your family land?**

409 which are 81% of the respondents said no, a significant percentage. This is an overwhelming decision from the people and it shows the level of loyalty of the people of Ogbomoso land to the traditional concept of land ownership. It also reflects how

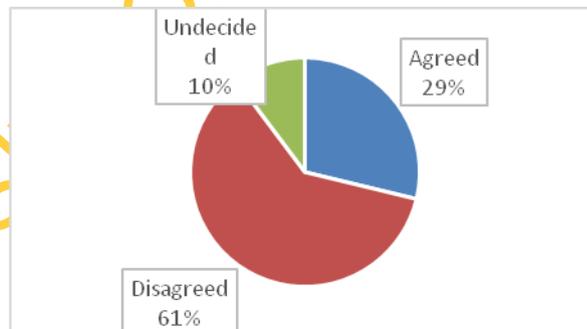
unacceptable the Land Use Act is and moreover how much value the people placed on their heritage.



**Item 19**

**Do you agree to selling of family land?**

305 disagreed which is 61% of the respondents, significant percentage. This is in furtherance of the fact that family land is a heritage to be preserved for generations until human existence will be no more. 144 agreed that family land can be sold which is 29% of the total response. This very low percentage of agreement to sell family land is also the confirmation of the thesis pursued from the beginning.

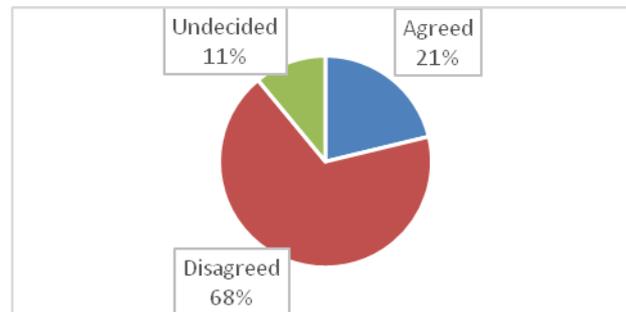


**Item 20**

**Do you cooperate with family heads in selling family land?**

272 would not cooperate with the family head. This is 68% of the respondents, a significant percentage. 85 will cooperate with family head to sell family land which is 21%. 44 were undecided which is 11% insignificant percentage. Many people believe that selling of family land will dispossess future generations of their inheritance and it

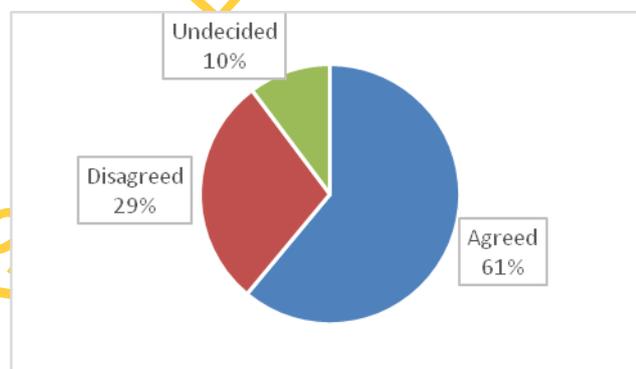
would be a double loss for such future generation since they do not share in the proceeds from the sale of their land and yet they will not have a parcel to possess.



**Item 21**

**When all family land is sold or taken over the future generations will be at a loss.**

305 agreed that future generation will lose if all family land is sold. This is 61% of the respondents, significant percentage. 144 believe that future generations will not lose. Some people interviewed believes that family land cannot be fully exhausted because there will always be land available to a family, although it may not be in the same contiguous location. This is 29% of the respondents. The validity of the above claim cannot be established in this research, maybe future researches will be done on this claim.

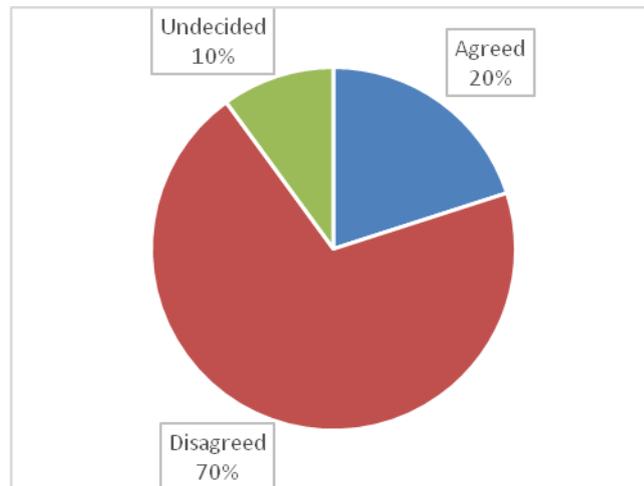


**Item 22**

**Do you like the rich people who buy large portions of your family land?**

350 which are 70% of respondents do not like large portions of their land sold to a rich person, which is significant percentage. 100 which are 20% of respondents like rich people who buy large portions of their land. 50 which are 10% were undecided which is insignificant percentage. The overwhelming hatred of family members against rich people who buy their family land is established here. They see these rich people as usurpers who because of their economic power have deprived them of their

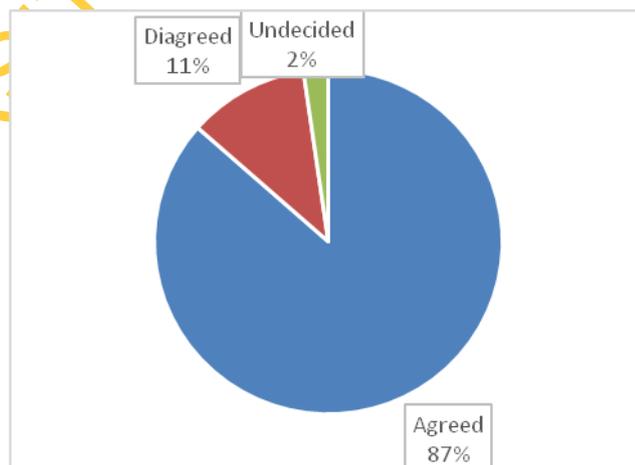
property. Many land litigations were discovered to have arisen as a result of such deals when the original buyer and seller have died.



**Item 23**

**Would you like that the Land Use Act be abrogated?**

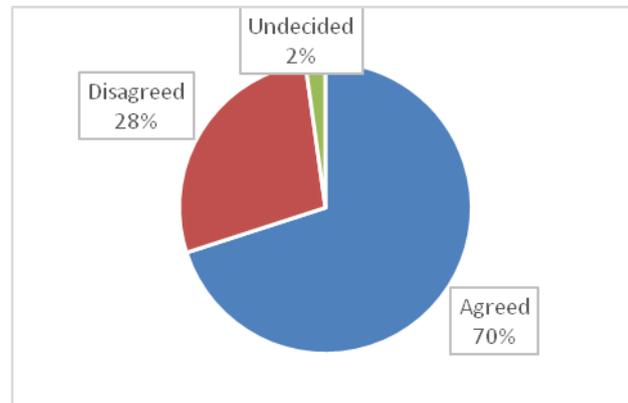
339 agreed which are significant 87% of the respondents, 44 disagreed which are 11% of the respondents and only 9 which are 2% are undecided, which is insignificant percentage. This is another confirmation of the attitude of the majority of people in Ogbomoso land towards the Land Use Act. Many see its abrogation as a great relief from injustice and a return to fair play. The government of the federation should act quickly to avoid collective violence that can erupt from the continual adherence to Land Use Act.



**Item 24**

**Would you like a return to the traditional concept of land ownership by inheritance without government interference?**

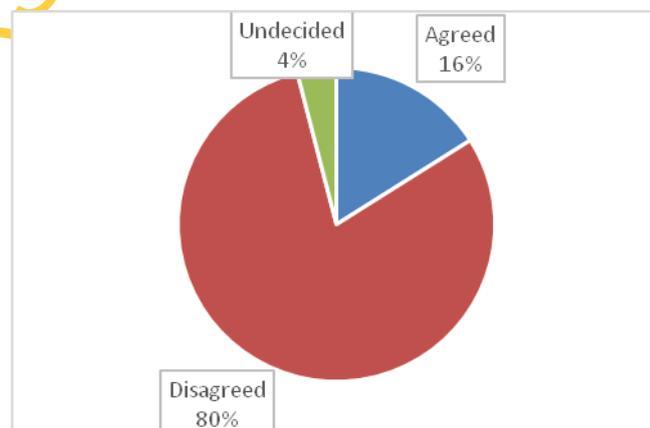
350 agreed. 139 disagreed. 11 were undecided. Statistically significant 70% agreed, 28% disagreed while 2% were undecided which is insignificant percentage. The decision of the majority of the respondent is that government should not interfere on the issues of ownership of land; this should be left to the families. The neutrality of the government on ownership of land should be transparent.



**Item 25**

**Do you think the Land Use Act is Effective?**

400 say the land use act is not effective. This is 80% of the respondents which is significant percentage. 80 says it is effective which is 16% of the respondents and 20 were undecided which is 4%, insignificant percentage. This is the overall verdict on the Land Use Act. It is obvious that despite its popularity, the majority of the citizens do not take it seriously. Even many people in government don't care to follow its stipulations. An act that even the custodians don't care to follow definitely cannot be effective therefore to be discarded.



### **6.5.2 The Christian Community Findings**

The Christian community consists of groups of Christian fellowshiping together under different denominations. These denominations include but were not limited to the Roman Catholic Church, the Methodist Church Nigeria, The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), The Nigerian Baptist Convention, The various Independent Baptist Churches, the Evangelical Church Winning All (ECWA), The Faith Tabernacle, and The Gospel Baptist Conference. We also have the various African Indigenous Churches namely the Cherubim and Seraphim in their different sects, the Celestial Church of Christ, the Church of the Lord (Aladura), and the numerous independent churches under the umbrella of the Pentecostal Fellowship too numerous to mention for the purpose of this research. All of these groups for the purpose of this research were referred to as the Christian community.

The Christian community in search of education and empowerment for their children and also the emancipation of Ogbomoso community in general and primarily for the propagation of the gospel embarked on education and health care projects. The schools founded and hospitals established were blossoming and serving all the purposes for which they were established effectively until 1978 when the Land Use Decree (now Land Use Act) was promulgated transferring land ownership rights to the government. Moreover, there was the nationalisation of all mission owned schools by government fiat in the name of equal education for all.

It is apposite here to mention the schools founded by churches and their founders which were annexed by the government for the purpose of clarity. Ogbomoso Baptist High School and Baptist Secondary Grammar School were founded by the cooperation of all Baptist churches in Ogbomoso. Anglican Grammar School was founded by the Anglican Churches. Methodist High School was founded by the Methodist Church. Christ Apostolic Grammar School was founded by the Christ Apostolic Church. The Apostolic Grammar School was founded by the Apostolic Church. The Training Centre for the Blind was founded by a Baptist Missionary for the specialised training of the blind in reading and writing. All of these institutions before 1978 were forces to be reckoned with in the educational enterprise in the whole of south western Nigeria.

All these schools were annexed by the government. From the interactions with leaders of these churches, there was no any compensation paid to them by the government at the time of annexation. It was also opined by the leaders that since the

annexation there was no any significant development in all these institutions after thirty years of government control. In fact all the schools were in lamentable situations of infrastructural decay and moral degradation says Rev Dr Israel Olaniyan.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, it was gathered that there were several acres of land wasting and being trespassed by unscrupulous people around many of these schools because of government neglect. The consensus opinion of all the Christian leaders was that the schools would have fared better if they were left with the original owners and even now they are ready to take them back.

On what steps were taken to redress the situation, it was gathered that the Christian community have used several means like stewardship of influence, litigation, sometimes physical defence of the properties in order to retain the Christian heritage in these institutions and even reclaim some of them. For instance, the Baptists were forced by a family who want to take over the Training Centre for the Blind, to go to court in defence of their heritage. When it was necessary they mobilised their members to physically stop those who wanted to start erecting illegal structures on the land. They also went on prayer warfare to reclaim their heritage. To the Baptists on the Training Centre for the Blind, it was a case of “no retreat no surrender” until victory was won.<sup>24</sup> Rev Dr John Adetutu believed that the family that wants to usurp the Baptists of their heritage does not have any interest of the Training Centre in their minds but are only interested on acres of land yet undeveloped in the centre that has now become highly marketable.<sup>25</sup>

The Christian leaders said they are still using pressure group tactics on the government of Oyo State to reclaim their schools. They were pointing to the example of Lagos state government that has done so and are pleading with Oyo state government to take a cue from its Lagos counterpart. The Baptists also in 2004-2005 used stewardship of influence to reclaim part of the land of Ogbomosho Baptist High School to build Beulah Baptist Centre. According to Rev Dr J A Ayanlola, they made representations through political party stalwarts, people who occupy government

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<sup>23</sup> Israel O Olaniyan. The current President of Ogbomosho Baptist Conference. 12/8/2011

<sup>24</sup> Rev Dr J O Adetutu, the Caretaker management Chairman, The Training Center for the Blind, 2003-2008.

<sup>25</sup> Rev Dr J O Adetutu, the Caretaker management Chairman, The Training Center for the Blind, 2003-2008.

positions, and eminent Baptists to achieve the feat.<sup>26</sup>The Anglican Church also used court order to send away the illegal occupants of their remaining land from the annexed Anglican Grammar School. There is now a new school on that piece of land owned by the Anglican Diocese of Ogbomosho.<sup>27</sup> It is believed many other churches are taking steps to bring back the golden era of sound education through the churches. The annexation of Christian schools brought financial stress upon churches. The income that used to come to the churches from these schools, although was not the primary target of the Christians suddenly. Moreover, they have to start to look for virgin lands on which they have to start new schools through which they will continue their ministries. Furthermore, it was gathered that when government began to allow Muslims or were planning to allow the use of *hijab* (a religious wear for Muslim women) in schools originally founded by Christians, tension rose among the Christians. The Christian community resisted what they called an abomination. This resistance by Christians was also seen as discrimination by Muslims, therefore the existing peaceful relationship among Christians and Muslims became very fragile. Till today, the relationship has been bedevilled with a lot of suspicions from one group against the other.

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<sup>26</sup> Rev. Dr J A. Ayanlola. Former Conference of Ogbomosho Baptist Conference. 23/4/2007

<sup>27</sup> Prof. C O Osunade. Bishop of Ogbomosho Anglican Diocese. 3/7/2010

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 7.1. Introduction

The theoretical framework of this research is premised on what is known as “liberational approach” in contemporary biblical hermeneutics in Africa. This is an interpretation schema that engages the Bible in the course of socio-political discourse. To effectively engage this approach, the “three modes of reading” model popularized by Gerald West was utilised. These are reading ‘behind the text,’ ‘the text itself’, and ‘in background to the book. This research has also read behind the historical background on land ownership and tenure-ship in Yoruba land and especially Ogbomoso land. We have also read the text of the prophecy of Micah with attempts at some analysis and interpretation. We have also attempted a critique of the Land Use Act in relationship to the traditional concept of land ownership and tenure-ship in Ogbomoso land. In order to complete the three fold reading method of West, we now try to read in front of the text. This means we relate our findings to the present situation and make recommendations.

#### 7.2. Summary

Land and social justice is the motif which dominates the book of Micah but which has not been given sufficient attention by Biblical scholars. Moreover it was embarked upon to find out the reason for the wealth of the land of Israel and Judah of the time of Micah in the midst of which the majority of the citizens were still suffering. It was discovered that land and social justice motif was the dominant motif in the prophecy of Micah. All other motifs that were discussed by Micah were mentioned in order to magnify the social justice motif. The social justice motif that dominates the prophecy of Micah in the 8<sup>th</sup> century B C was not accidental; it was the response of the prophet to the prevalent injustice in the land then. It was a social reaction against the polarity that uneven distribution of the wealth of the land had caused. It was an exposition of the barrenness of the leadership and insensitivity of even the religious leaders to the suffering of the majority of citizens living in abject poverty. It was discovered that Micah seemed to be a lone ranger in the crusade against injustice of his time. It seemed as if it was an immediate failure at the time of delivery, but it later became a reference point which was a pointer to its successful effect.

It was discovered that the socio-political situation forming the background to the prophecy of Micah was one of great injustice. The introduction of the monarchical system of government into ancient Israel ceded so much power on the court of the king as an almost absolute ruler whose authority cannot be challenged by ordinary citizens. As it is often said, power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely. The courts became absolutely corrupt, using its powers to seize the landed properties of the peasants, thereby throwing them into abject poverty. This brought the majority of the citizens to become subservient to the ruling class. The prophetic circles emerged as social justice crusaders fighting for the emancipation of the downtrodden. Among the prophets there were some who were pro status quo, because many of them were maintained by the ruling class. The prophecy of Micah contained three major oracles with the main motif of land and social justice based on the many traditions on which Israelite religion and politics were based. The favour of Yahweh can only be curried through the maintenance of justice. The inviolability of Zion can only be guaranteed on the just and egalitarian society. Through the prophecy of Micah, it was discovered that true religion is more than rituals but based on justice and humility (Mic. 6:8).

It was discovered that the usurpation of land from the poor was the greatest injustice done against the people. The smallest indivisible and inalienable means of livelihood of any people is their land. If land is taken from a people, such a group have been literally annihilated. Such was the practice condemned by Micah in ancient Israel.

What was condemned in ancient Israel also found its way into Ogbomoso land through the introduction of the Land Use Act. The right of ownership of land was transferred to the governor of the state. This parliamentary robbery of the people though unchallenged by collective violence is being resisted vehemently through non-compliance action by both the elite and the unlettered. The traditional concept of land ownership which is the best form is still being held with all seriousness. The Land Use Act was seen by the majority of the respondents as daylight robbery.

### **7.3. Conclusions**

The political operators have a lot of influence on the socio-economic condition of any nation. The way the leaders manage the distribution of the wealth of the nation will affect either negatively or positively the wellbeing of the citizenry. When leaders became obsessive with power and became greedy they rule in such a way as to misuse

and abuse the powers reposed in them. When this kind of situation happens, injustice will be the result.

In any society where there is injustice, the devastated majority poor cannot fight for themselves because the means by which they can fight have been taken away from them. However, no matter how small or big that society is, there is a few groups of people who though might not be among the suffering majority, but will be equipped and be ready to confront the leadership and fight for the peoples' rights. Micah was such a one in ancient Israel and Nigerian society also needs many of such.

The prophetic oracles of Micah were based on condemnations of misrule. George Forher believes that the prophecy of Micah contained eight discourses on three broad subjects of condemnation of the capital cities, condemnation of all the economic and political leaders and also condemnation of the professional prophets and priests who base their ministry on money.<sup>1</sup> At any time there must be condemnation of injustice. If social justice formed the major concern of the sermon of Prophet Micah, there is need for our Christian clergymen to review their focus on the other worldly messages and begin to focus on these worldly sermons.

All the above findings from the book of Micah concerning the society of Israel are related to Ogbomoso. Although Ogbomoso is not an entity on her own like Israel, she belongs to the larger Nigerian political entity. In the larger Nigerian political entity, the military rule that covers most period of Nigerian history became so corrupt that there was increasing injustice and corruption in the country. When the civilian administration started again in 1999, the hopes of people were high about economic emancipation and general infrastructural development. However, almost sixteen years of unbroken democracy the hopes of the citizenry had been completely evaporated. Nigeria is believed to be one of the most naturally endowed countries in the world yet she is ironically one of the poorest.

Like the society of Micah, there is great wealth in the country but they are concentrated on the hands of the ruling oligarchy. There is usurpation of people's land through wealth and political powers operating under the guise of the Land Use Act. There is class differentiation that has widened the gap between the poor and the rich that someone says the middle class has been submerged by the deluge of poverty

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<sup>1</sup> George Forher. (1972). *History of Israelite Religion*. E. T. David Green. London; S.P.C.K., pp. 257-258

occasioned by corruption and misrule.<sup>2</sup> When Prophet Micah says there were no more righteous people on the land he was correct if it is related to the current Nigerian political situation. Experience had taught Nigerians that there is no difference among the political parties. The collapse of the judicial system in Israel of the time of Micah was a child's play when compared with what is obtainable in Nigerian judiciary today. In Nigeria today justice is for the highest bidder, just like the society of Israel of the time of Micah. The judiciary is as corrupt as the political system. In all ramifications, Ogbomoso as a micro society of Nigeria suffers the same things like the society of Micah, hence the relevance of relating the motifs of land and social justice from the two societies together.

As the researcher concluded in chapter five, it is necessary to look elsewhere apart from democracy as additional concept for the actualisation of social justice in our country. The most viable option is religion. The influence of religion on Nigeria's political terrain cannot be quantified. The most important factor today affecting the politics and politicians in Nigeria is religion. In this research the focus is the influence of the church on the socio-political process in Nigeria in this period of democracy. Enwerem commented on the usefulness of religious leaders in influencing the political arena of the country that

*Our fundamental assumption has been that, given the centrality of religion in traditional Nigeria, religious leaders can play major role in the Nigerian polity. Our finding was that they contributed and still contribute in setting the tone---albeit a generally negative one---for the country's socio-political change and its current economic condition.<sup>3</sup> Thus the impact the religious leaders can make on the country's quest for economic and political progress should not be neither dismissed nor underestimated.<sup>4</sup>*

To make our religious leaders to become more socially functional and responsive to the issues of national social justice and egalitarianism what we need to do according to Enwerem is to "extend the imperative for emancipatory struggles into the religious terrain" and also to "explore avenues towards the formation of a more

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<sup>2</sup> Abimbola Adhlakun (2013) Nigerian Dilemma. The Punch .June20, p. 61

<sup>3</sup>Inheanyi Enwerem. "Religious Leaders and their Role in The Political Process; The Nigerian Experience." *Orita; Ibadan Journal Of Religious Studies*. Vol. xxviii/1&2. June-Dec 1996

<sup>4</sup> Inheanyi Enwerem. "Religious Leaders and their Role in The Political Process; The Nigerian Experience."

meaningful religiosity in the polity as well as a new cadre of religious leadership to retrieve the emancipatory potential of religion from its current misuse and redirect it towards a revolutionary project for a more egalitarian society in Nigeria.”<sup>5</sup> This clarion call by Enwerem is very important and necessary if social justice will be achieved. The involvement of religious leaders to become revolutionary in their approach to socio political issues will help the democratic process to accelerate faster if the attitudes of the stakeholders in politics are changed for the better. Every leader is a religious person who holds his religion sentimentally; therefore if leaders’ attachment to religion is positively explored and utilised to affect the behaviour of the leaders in a way as to lead with the principle of justice and equity, Nigeria will become a better nation in all areas of life.

Land is the primary inheritance of the Yoruba people. They believe that God is the one who allocates their land to their forefathers who bequeathed it to them for onward transmission to the succeeding generation. The traditional custom of land ownership by inheritance is still the most cherished way of land ownership in Ogbomoso land. Although land dispute is not common in the land, yet many families are prepared to defend their ownership in case there is dispute, so they already have lawyers that can defend them if the traditional method of settling land dispute failed. The Land Use Act is looked upon with disdain and is seen as the greatest injustice the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has done against the people. Many people are calling for the abrogation of the act. Family members frown at rich people buying large portions of their land as they also frown at family leaders who sell their heritage to rich people. Land among Ogbomoso people is inalienable.

The economic wellbeing of the people is wholly dependent upon the land. Majority of the people are farmers, any policy, law or legislative act that affects their land will have infinitesimal effects upon their livelihood. It is therefore cruel for political leaders to tamper with the inalienable rights of the people they lead. Instead of depriving the people of their land, they ought to guarantee the people’s confidence and assurance of their means of livelihood.

Politically, it is the land that serves as an identity mark for the Ogbomoso people. They know where their boundaries with their neighbours are. Even within the land each family and lineage know her land boundary and any attempt by anybody to

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<sup>5</sup> Inheanyi Enwerem. “Religious Leaders and their Role in The Political Process; The Nigerian Experience.”

infringe or trespass on their property will be resisted vehemently. There have been wars fought, won and lost because of ownership of land. From the field data analysed it was shown conspicuously that the people have resolved to defend their rights. It is the land mass that gave the Ogbomoso people the five local governments they have within the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This identity given should be guaranteed.

#### **7.4. Recommendations**

Following the outcome of the research work, the researcher makes the following recommendations.

The prophetic books should be subjected to a more sociological study in order to discover their relevance to the general society than it is at present. In the course of this research, it was discovered that the prophecy of Micah addressed socio-political issues more than it did religious issues. Through this discovery, we found out that, the prophet and those who might have contributed to the making of the book of Micah as it is now found in the Biblical corpus addressed social issues through their divine mandate.

Moreover, it is recommended that today's Christian clerics should address socio-political issues in their preaching more than they are doing now. Many of the clergy are too busy preparing people for heaven that their welfare here is not given adequate attention. Heaven may not have meaning to a people who are denied the basic needs of life here. In addition to this, corrupt leadership must be denounced with pungency and not with kid's gloves as it is at present. More importantly, the corruption which most people believe is the cankerworm that has destroyed the very fabric of the Nigerian society is being perpetrated not by non-human beings, but by human beings who are religiously inclined. An average corrupt politician, career worker, business man or woman, academic in Nigeria is a religious person; he/she is either a Muslim or a Christian.

The study of the book of Micah should be used as a liberationist approach to the socio-political problems in Nigeria. The number of the clergy in Nigeria is an advantage for this approach. Social justice crusaders are so few that their activities could not cope with the magnitude of the size of the country and also the magnitude of injustice being perpetrated; therefore if the clergy will use their offices to join the crusade against social injustice, things are likely to get better.

The Land Use Act should be revoked from the constitution. The present National Assembly had put it on advertisement as one of the sections of the national laws to be revoked; the researcher recommend that it should be pursued objectively in order to return the ownership of land to its former status of inheritance. Most political office holders abuse the powers entrusted to them to favour themselves or their cronies and at the same time to punish their opponents. We have seen cases where a governor or minister leaves office and his successor revoked many of the certificates of occupancy he issued. Instead of certificate of occupancy, a land registration bureau is recommended for government approval of ownership.

Moreover, the Christian community must be taught to take pragmatic steps on issues of land and social justice that may not be instructed by the Bible in the contemporary period. They must realise that the geographical location and dispensation of the biblical period is quite different from our society today. Some of the explicit recommendations of the Bible were relevant and adequate for that time. Modern political, economic and judicial development has opened up a wide range of more pragmatic approaches to land and social justice issues. Making use of such approaches is not necessarily unbiblical or unchristian.

More researches could be done on the prophecy of Micah especially to resolve the difficult areas in terms of textual criticism to put the several arguments to rest. Furthermore the prophetic books should be studied more sociologically to find out their relevance to the contemporary society without losing their religious vibrancy, after all religion is part of the history of any people.

**APPENDIX A**  
**UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN**  
**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**  
**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PARALLELS AND CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS OF LAND AND  
SOCIAL JUSTICE MOTIFS IN ISRAEL AND OGBOMOSO CHRISTIAN  
COMMUNITY**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to obtain information for the purpose of conducting a research study for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programme under the auspices of the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan. This questionnaire is to be completed by our respondents whom we have selected in trust and confidence that they will assist us in our effort to collect reliable data. The study and its findings are meant exclusively for academic purpose and the confidentiality of the information to be supplied is guaranteed. The pieces of information supplied and collected will be held and treated in strict confidence.

Thus, your cooperation towards the success of this research will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

**Ige, OlusegunOlaosibekan**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**PhD Thesis Questionnaire**

**Topic: PARALLELS AND CONTEXTUAL IMPLICATIONS OF LAND AND SOCIAL JUSTICE MOTIFS IN ISRAEL AND OGBOMOSO CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.**

Your Local Government \_\_\_\_\_

Your Town/ Village \_\_\_\_\_

Your age \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick as appropriate to you.

1	Is your ownership of this land by inheritance?	Agree	Disagree	Undecided
2	Is your ownership of the land by permanent occupation?			
3	Is your ownership of land by permanent occupation?			
4	You have experienced dispute over your occupation or tenure ship of the land?			
5	You have defended your occupation or tenure ship of the land before?			
6	You have participated in court case over land ownership before?			
7	You have contributed something before in order to retain land ownership?			
8	Will you willingly give up your land?			
9	Your children will inherit your land when you have become very old?			
10	Your family has a lawyer to defend you on land ownership?			
11	You are aware of the Land use Act?			
12	Your response to it is positive?			
13	Do you agree that all land belong to government?			

14	Do you agree that you must possess the certificate of occupancy to prove			
15	Do you give some compensation for your tenureship on this land?			
16	Will the owner of this land compensate you if they want to use their land and you have properties like crops?			
17	When the family is sold do you benefit from the Proceeds?			
18	Is justifiable for government or anyone to takeover your family land?			
19	Do you agree to selling of family land?			
20	Do you cooperate with the family head for the sale of your land?			
21	When all the family land is sold or taken over the future generation will be at loss?			
22	Do you like the rich people who buy the family land?			
23	Is it right for government to claim the ownership of all land?			
24	Do you think is right for you to pay government for the ownership of your land?			
25	Do you think the Land Use Act is effective?			

## APPENDIX B

### NAMES AND PARTICULARS OF THOSE INTERVIEWED

S/N	NAME	SEX	STATUS	ADDRESS	LOCAL GOVT.	AGE
1	Oba Adaramola, Elijah Oladunmoye	M	The Oloko of Oko	Oloko Palace, Oko	Surulere	70+
2	Adebayo, Gbadebo	M	Former Chairman, OgoOluwa Local Government	Ile Ate, OrileOje via Ogbomoso	OgoOluwa	50
3	Adeyemo, Moses Akano	M	Prominent Land owner and opinion leader	Aaku compound, Isaleora, Ogbomoso	Ogbomoso South	70+
4	Afolabi, John Taiwo	M	Village head and opinion leader, Saamo	Saamo Compound, Saamo via Ogbomoso	Oriire	70+
5	Afolabi, Olusayo	M	Opinion leader and former Supervisory Councillor for works.	Apamadari Compound, Arogbo village , Ogbomoso	OgoOluwa	40+
6	Oba Ajadi, A. Onaolapo	M	Alaipo of Aipo	Aipo Palace, Aipo, via Ogbomoso	Oriire	50+
7	Ajao, Alice Omoniyi	F	Prominent Woman	Akaso Compound, Taraa, Ogbomoso.	Ogbomoso North	50+
8	Oba Amao, A. Samuel	M	The AaleOkeleri n, Ogbomoso	Aale's Palace, OkelerinOgbomos o	Ogbomoso North	70+
9	Aremu, James	M			Oriire	70+
10	Aribike, Olukunle Christopher	M	Elder of AwoleekufonnaCompound, Taraa, Ogbomoso	Awolekufonna Compound Ogbomoso	Ogbomoso North	50
11	Babalola, Alaba Solomon	M	Village Head and opinion leader	Elesin Meta village, Ogbomoso	Surulere	50+
12	Oba Moses Olayiwola	M	Aresaapa of IresaApa	Aresaapa Palace, Iresaapa	Surulere	70+
13	Ige, Joel Adetunji	M	Land Custodian and Olori Ebi	Bangudu Compound, Ogbomoso	Ogbomoso South	80+

14	Hon.Mafolasere, Kehinde	M	Former Chairman OgoOluwa Local Government	Opinion Leader, Odo Oba, via Ogbomoso	OgoOluwa	40+
15	Ojo, Thomas Olaniyi	M	Pastor, Laka Baptist Church, Ogbomoso	Chairman, Pastors Fellowship, Ogbomoso Baptist Conference, Ogbomoso	Ogbomoso North	40
16	Olayanju, Isaac Adekola	M	Local Government Worker and opinion Leader	Araromi via Ogbomoso	Oriire	40+
17	Oloyede, Jimoh	M	Prominent Muslim leader	Gambari via Ogbomoso	Surulere	65
18	Oloyede, Thomas Aremu	M	A prince of Ijeru	Oluwusi Compound, Ijeru, Ogbomoso	Ogbomoso South	60+
19	Oba Sunday Oyediran, Osekun 11	M	The Onpetu of Ijeruland	Onpetu Palace, Ijeru	Ogbomoso South	60
20	Oyelade, Olasupo Joshua	M	Christian Leader and land Agent	Bale compound, Ajaawa	OgoOluwa	55

**APPENDIX C**  
**ARCHIVAL MATERIALS**

N. D. Oyerinde *The history of Ogbomoso*. (1958)

A speech from Rev Dr J O Adetutu, the Caretaker management Chairman, The Training Centre for the Blind, 2003-2008.

A speech from Rev. Dr J A. Ayanlola. Former Conference of Ogbomoso Baptist Conference.

A report from Prof. C O Osunade. Bishop of Ogbomoso Anglican Diocese

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