

Templates of Truth with Rick Smith
Audio Script – May 22, 2009

In the midst of our country's economic downturn, we have witnessed the greed and corruption of corporate & industrial America shamefully exposed. The prophet Micah confronted bad business practices in his day. What God had to say to those corrupt business people is the focus of today's Templates of Truth.

The question with which God challenged the business people of Micah's day was: *"Can I justify wicked scales and a bag of deceptive weights?"* (6:11). Wicked scales and deceptive weights characterized business and retail owners who took advantage of their customers by cheating them out of a quality product or service at a cost higher than its real value. Many such victims were impoverished and vulnerable to the needs for basic life necessities no matter what the price tag read. So, they were easy prey for these business vultures. Unfortunately, we still see business corruption in our day, especially in the midst of such bleak economic times. God declared a certain judgment, however, against this practice in Micah's day, and His declaration still applies to the business world today.

God said, *"I will make you sick, striking you down, desolating you because of your sin."* (6:13). How will God do that? Through the judgment of lack – *"You will eat, but you will not be satisfied."* (6:14). No matter how much effort is put forth for higher productivity and profit, there will never be enough positive cash flow, never enough inventory, and always red ink on the accounting books. Through the judgment of liability – *"Your vileness will be in your midst."* (6:14). Vileness refers to garbage and waste. In other words, the corrupt businessman will be liable to his own corruption. The way he takes advantage of others is the way others will take advantage of him. He will be swallowed up in his own muck and mire. Through the judgment of loss – *"You will try to remove for safe keeping, but you will not preserve anything. And what you do preserve, I will give to the sword. You will sow but you will not reap."* (6:14). Efforts will be made to place money aside in savings, reserving it for future security. It will be depleted by the consumption of demand for positive cash flow and operational overhead. What little does make it into reserve will disappear through market losses. Investments will fail as stock values plummet and mutual account balances fall with declines in interest rates. The result will be bankruptcies, foreclosures, lawsuits, seizure of assets, garnishments, layoffs and factory closings, all leading to total financial ruin – *"I will give you up for destruction."* (6:16).

This passage in Micah's prophecy could easily be translated into the current headlines displayed in the business section of any modern American newspaper. These conditions of judgment could describe the demise of companies, both large and small, that have made it to the news in recent months. One cannot help but wonder how much of these current economic events are the result of God's judgment in response to the greed and corruption that has come to distinguish some companies and business people in our modern world. The words of the prophet affirm that God will not tolerate unethical, dishonest, greedy and corrupt practices in business.

Are you in business today? When times are hard, it is easy to be tempted into the compromise of good, fair and honest business. To make up for the deficit, it is easy to fall into the trap of

cheating the books, taking advantage of customer vulnerabilities, price-gouging and reducing costs by replacing quality products with substandard ones, yet selling them at the same price as their more valuable counterparts. Don't fall for such evil. You and your business may become cursed of God and fall to the judgment He invokes against it. As a Christian business person, your work should always honor God and operate under the precepts and statutes of His Word. He is your Provider, and your dependence is on Him, not the retail market. You will one day stand accountable to Him for how you owned and operated your business and how you treated your customers. Make sure that you do so with divine dignity and integrity.

That's today's Templates of Truth. This is your Bible teacher, Rick Smith, reminding you to attend church this Sunday for Bible study and worship, pray for one another, and always strive to abide. Until next time, have a blessed and glorious day in Christ Jesus.

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