

Christmas Eve 2009

The King Has Come!

Micah 5:2-5a

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The King Has Come!¹

Scripture

I would like to draw your attention to a prophecy that was written about the place of Jesus' birth 700 years before he was born. It is found in Micah 5:2-5a:

**² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.**

**³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of his brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.**

**⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth.**

⁵ And he shall be their peace. (Micah 5:2-5a)

Introduction

In his excellent book titled, *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, Josh McDowell says:

Throughout the New Testament the apostles appealed to two areas of the life of Jesus of Nazareth to establish his messiahship. One was the resurrection and the other was fulfilled messianic prophecy. The Old Testament, written over a one-thousand year

¹ The material for this sermon is from Austin B. Tucker's "The King Has Come!" in *Preaching*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Sept/Oct 2009), 55-56.

period, contains nearly three hundred references to the coming Messiah. All of these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and they establish a solid confirmation of his credentials as the Messiah.²

It is simply astounding that almost three hundred prophecies concerning the first coming of Jesus were *all* literally fulfilled!

One of those prophecies had to do with the place of Jesus' birth. Seven hundred years before the Holy Spirit brought about a miraculous conception in a certain young maiden named Mary so that she would become the mother of the Christ, that same Spirit of God gave prophetic insight to one of his spokesmen. Micah predicted that the town of Bethlehem would be the place where the coming King would be born.

The Gospel of Matthew records that Magi came from the East following a star (2:1-12). They went to the palace of King Herod to ask directions to the newborn King. Herod could hardly control his apoplexy as he called his scholars to research this matter. They went to the royal library and found the answer written in Micah 5:2: "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days" (Matthew 2:6).

With the star to lead them on and the prophecy to tell them where to go, the Magi soon found the newborn King in Bethlehem.

Lesson

Two principal questions find answers in Micah 5. First, who is this promised King? And second, what kind of King is he?

I. Who Is This Promised King (5:2)?

First, who is this promised king?

² Josh McDowell, *The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1999), 165.

The King has come, and this King is Jesus! Three prophecies in this passage identify the King as Jesus the Messiah.

First, Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 says, **“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.”** This small village, just about 5 miles south of Jerusalem, had little to distinguish it before Jesus came into the world. Even though Jesus’ ancestor, King David, had also been born in Bethlehem a thousand years earlier, it was still a sleepy little village when Jesus was born. And yet, on that night when Jesus was born, everything changed forever. As Phillips Brooks so wonderfully captured in his popular carol, “O Little Town of Bethlehem”:

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.³

Second, Jesus was born according to divine purpose. Notice the phrase in the text, **“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days”** (5:2). It is for the eternal purpose of God that the Messiah came. And that eternal purpose is to reconcile sinners with God, as Phillips Brooks says in another stanza of “O Little Town of Bethlehem”:

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv’n!

³ Paul Eckert, *Steve Green's MIDI Hymnal: A Complete Toolkit for Personal Devotions and Corporate Worship*, Electronic ed. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1998).

So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His Heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him still,
The dear Christ enters in.⁴

And third, Jesus was eternally pre-existent. He was born on a certain calendar date in history, but **“whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days”** (5:2). Indeed, Jesus is eternally begotten of the Father. There never was a time when he did not exist, though he had a definite beginning as a human baby boy that night in Bethlehem. There is no re-incarnation in the Bible, but there is incarnation.

Jesus eternally existed, but one day he became flesh and blood.

II. What Kind of King Is He (5:3-5a)?

And second, what kind of king is he?

For one thing, this King will provide for his flock. Some translations focus on the feeding of the flock. The *ESV* and others translate the term more broadly: **“And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord”** (5:4a). This is a wonderful picture of King Jesus taking care of those who belong to him.

Also, he will protect his people. Micah says, **“And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace”** (5:4b). God’s people will be secure because they are under the control of the Prince of Peace. It’s one thing to be a peace officer; it’s so much more to be peace personified.

In addition, he will purge his kingdom of all material trusts and root out false religions. In Micah’s day, nations trusted in cha-

⁴ Paul Eckert, *Steve Green's MIDI Hymnal: A Complete Toolkit for Personal Devotions and Corporate Worship*, Electronic ed. (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1998).

riots and horses and fortified cities. The Messiah promised to end all that.

When Jesus came 2,000 years ago he brought spiritual peace to all who received him and believed on his name.

And just as surely as every one of the almost 300 prophecies came true regarding Jesus' first coming, so every one of almost 200 prophecies will come true when Jesus comes back again. And when he does he will rule and reign in power and glory forever and ever.

Conclusion

Do you see Jesus Christ as God's promised King and Messiah? Do you anticipate eagerly his return to earth in glory? If you have not already done so, let this message of the coming King call your heart to accept him now as your own Savior. Amen.

Mission Statement

The Mission Statement of the Tampa Bay Presbyterian Church is:

*To bring people to Jesus Christ
and **membership** in his church family,
develop them to Christlike **maturity**,
equip them for their **ministry** in the church
and life **mission** in the world,
in order to **magnify** God's name.*

Sermons by Rev. Freddy Fritz

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PRAAYER:

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for sending Jesus to be born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago. Thank you for reconciling sinners such as ourselves with you through Jesus Christ.

Your Word teaches us that Jesus is going to return to earth again one day. O Lord, enable everyone who hears these words to put his or her trust in Jesus Christ alone for the gift of salvation.

And for all of this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

CHARGE:

Go and glorify God in all that you think, do, and say! And as you do, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and always. Amen.