

“The Place of Messiah’s Birth” *Micah 5:1-4*

INTRO;

Our journey must begin in **Matthew 2**. You remember how the Magi came to see Jesus. *“Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, ‘Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.’ When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. So they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.’”* (Matthew 2:1–6).

When the Magi appeared, Herod knew right away they were looking for the Messiah. He also knew where to lay his hands on the information that they needed. It would be in the Bible. Herod the great summoned the scribes and the chief priests, the resident scriptural experts and asked where the Messiah would be born. They read to Herod from the prophet Micah. Because this is Christmas season, I thought it would be appropriate to explore this prophecy of where our Lord would be born. Our text is found in **Micah 5:2-4**.

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A. Because of Israel and Judah’s great sin of turning away from the living God to dead idols, they did experience great humiliation. However, the day will come when a new king will arise, their Messiah and He will remove their shame.

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.” (Micah 5:2).

We learn here where He would come from, and what He will be.

1. Where will He be born? He will be born in Bethlehem, the little town in the district of Ephrata, *“The fruit full place,”* a district in Judah. The place tells us of His connection with David. The Messiah would be David’s greater Son, the promised king. This also shows us that He will not be born as expected in the great town of Jerusalem, but in the humble birth place of David himself.

2. The Messiah will not be the usual self-centered ruler that Israel has known so well. He would be God's ruler. The Messiah would come forth to God, Himself. He would rule as God tells Him to rule.

3. Yet, He will be more than just another king. He would have ancient even eternal roots. Those who wish to discredit the Messiah as God incarnate wrestle with the language here. This language indicates that He is divine, how else will He have these roots?

B. Before Messiah is born, Israel will be in bondage. When Messiah shall reign, He will be an enormously successful king.

“Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; Then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock In the strength of the LORD, In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God; And they shall abide, For now He shall be great To the ends of the earth.” (Micah 5:3-4).

1. Some of the most terrifying words any child of God can hear is said of Israel before Messiah's birth. ***“Therefore He shall give them up.”*** God let Israel experience the result of her sin. The struggles Israel had and would have until Messiah's reign is established are troubles that she richly deserves. Finally, Israel's Messiah would be born. He will come as the God/man.

2. The rest of these two verses shall be fulfilled in the future when Israel will one day in the future recognize her Messiah and submit to Him. He will rule over God's people. He will be God's great shepherd king. Our Lord uses this image repeatedly to visualize God's love and care for His people.

C. We must close by considering how the Lord Jesus Christ, Israel's Messiah, is also our good shepherd. In **John 10:14–16**, our Lord Jesus said,

“I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.”