

Title:        **“NOW SHALL HE BE GREAT!”**

Text:        Micah 5:4

Subject:    *The Greatness of Christ our Savior*

Date:        Tuesday Evening — February 7, 2012

Tape:        *Micah #17*

Readings: *Bob Duff and Don Raneri*

Introduction:

(Micah 5:1-4) “Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: **they shall smite the judge of Israel** with a rod upon the cheek. 2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] **out of thee shall he come forth unto me** [that is] **to be ruler in Israel**; whose **goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting**. 3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time [that] she which travaileth hath brought forth: then **the remnant of his brethren shall return** unto the children of Israel. 4 And **he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God**; and they shall abide: for **now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth.**”

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**“NOW SHALL HE BE GREAT!”** — That is my subject. — **“NOW SHALL HE BE GREAT!”** —

- **“Now”** — Now, since he has come into the world, God in our nature!
- **“Now”** — Now, since the Ruler and Judge, the King of Israel has been smitten for the sins of his people!
- **“Now”** — Now, since he has with his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us!
- **“Now”** — Now, since he reigns in the majesty of the name of Jehovah, his God and our God, — *“Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth”*

My subject is too big for me. — **“NOW SHALL HE BE GREAT!”** All I can hope to do is declare the fact of Christ’s greatness. Explanation is beyond me. The primary thing spoken of in the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter of Micah is not Nimrod, or Babylon, or the Assyrian, but Christ the Glory-man, and the glorious greatness of that Glory-man, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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**GABRIEL’S ANNOUNCEMENT**

Micah’s announcement concerning our Lord Jesus Christ’s incarnation for the saving of his people is much like the announcement of the angel Gabriel to Mary. It was no ordinary birth announcement. It was not the announcement of the birth of a mere man, but the announcement of the incarnation of God! **Like Micah, Gabriel was sent to proclaim that God the Son would take our humanity into union with himself and enter into this sin cursed world to save his people from their sins** (Luke 1:31-33).

**Luke 1:31-33** “And, behold, **thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.**”

**GLORIOUS HUMANITY**

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**Gabriel** said, “*He shall be great!*” **Micah** said, “*Now shall he be great!*” **David** sang, “*His glory shall be great in thy salvation!*” **Strictly speaking, these words refer to our Lord’s sacred humanity.** It was the humanity of Christ that was conceived in Mary’s virgin womb. It was our Lord’s humanity that came forth at Bethlehem Ephratah. The angel Gabriel spoke these words to Mary about the man child that would be born of her. They refer to the manhood of “*that holy thing*” which must be formed in her womb and born of her by the power of the Holy Spirit. **It was only the manhood of Christ (not his Godhead) that was born of her.** It was said to Mary, concerning our Savior as a man, “*He shall be great.*” — “*Now shall he be great!*” Strictly speaking, those words must be applied to the glorious humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

They do not, strictly speaking, refer to our Savior’s eternal, unalterable deity as God the Son, the second person of the Triune God. **Oh, what a great, great stoop our Lord Jesus made when he became a**

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**man!** When God took on himself and into union with himself our humanity, the stoop he made was unspeakable, indeed! Yet, having assumed our nature, having come into this world as a man, our Savior stooped very low, lower than any man, before he was made great. **He who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven stooped to be made the lowest.**

(2 Corinthians 8:9) “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”

(Philippians 2:1-11) “If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind. 3 [Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of

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others. 5 **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:** 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But **made himself of no reputation,** and **took upon him the form of a servant,** and was **made in the likeness of men:** 8 And **being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself,** and **became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.** 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth; 11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**At his first appearance, as far as mortal eyes could see, there was nothing great about him.** What could be more ordinary than a little baby nursing at its mother’s breast? Reading the accounts given of his life in this world, we would never call

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such a man as Jesus of Nazareth great. It came to pass exactly as Isaiah prophesied...

**Isaiah 53:3** “He (was) despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were *our* faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”

Indeed, Jesus of Nazareth was so poor as a man that he had no place to lay his head. He was so despised by men that he became the song of drunks. He was rejected as a mad-man and a wine-bibber, and as one possessed of the devil. So low was the man Christ Jesus in the esteem of men that he was crucified as a malefactor, a common criminal, a thief, and a murderer.

**During his days upon the earth our Lord’s enemies could not find words base and vile enough to express their contempt for him.** Never was a man brought so low as the man Christ Jesus in his temptations, in his trial, in his condemnation, in his sufferings, and in his death. In order to redeem

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sinful worms such as we are, he stooped so low that he cried...

**Psalms 22:6-8** “But I *am* a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. 7 All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, *saying*, 8 He trusted on the LORD *that* he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.”

**Who thought he was great** when he was covered with the sweat of his blood, when he was sold for the price of a slave, or when the soldiers came to arrest him like a common felon? — **Who thought he was great** when they bound him and led him away to the judgment hall as a foul criminal who deserved to die? — **Who arose to declare his greatness** when they blindfolded him, stripped him naked, spit in his face, and derided him? — **Who considered him great** when they beat him, led him through the streets of Jerusalem carrying his cross, and hung him up on Golgotha’s hill to die between two thieves? —

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**Who thought he was great** when even his kinsman and his disciples denied him, abandoned him, and fled from him?

**How he humbled himself!** A sword pierced through his mother’s heart when she saw her holy Son hanging in agony and shame upon the cursed tree. When she knew that he was dead and buried in a borrowed tomb, I suspect **Mary must have painfully wondered to herself**, — “What did Gabriel mean when he said, ‘*He shall be great?*’ Who was ever made so vile? The angel of God told me, ‘*He shall be called the Son of the Highest;*’ but he is brought down in humiliation to death and reputed by all as an abhorrently wicked man.”

**Before our blessed Christ could be exalted as the great One, he had to humble himself, make himself of no reputation, and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.** He could not be exalted as Jehovah’s Great One until he had accomplished all that was committed to his hands as Jehovah’s Righteous Servant.

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## **INFINITE DEITY**

Having said all that, I must hasten to add this — **Though our text speaks distinctly of our Savior’s humanity, his deity is not excluded.**

He who on earth as man was known,  
And bore our sins and pains,  
Now seated on the eternal throne,  
The God of glory reigns!

Yes, that very man who was despised and rejected of men sits in glory upon his Father’s throne. As a man he is anointed King of kings and Lord of lords. As a man he has been lifted up from the depths of the grave to the high throne of heaven. **The God-man our Savior reigns King forever in righteousness and total sovereignty over all things!** This is what Peter testified before the Jews, Stephen confessed before his murderers, and all the apostles preached everywhere.

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**Acts 2:36** “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

**Acts 7:55-56** *STEPHEN*, “being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.”

**Romans 14:9** “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

Let us rejoice in this fact. **There is a man in glory!** There is One in heaven who wears our nature, who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. **Yet, we must never attempt to separate the humanity of Christ from his divinity.** We must understand that Jesus Christ our Lord is both God and man in one glorious Person. We must never separate his

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manhood from his Godhead. And we must never separate his Godhead from his manhood. Jesus Christ is the God-man. He is the Man-God. Jesus is Jehovah! Jesus is God! He is God in our nature!

**Reading the New Testament, there seems to me to be a deliberate, total disregard for the rigid theological distinctions men make between the humanity of Christ and the divinity of Christ.** Godhead and manhood are so thoroughly united in the Person of Christ that they simply cannot and must not be separated.

For example – **In Acts 20:28** when exhorting the Ephesian elders, Paul tells us that it is the responsibility of every gospel preacher to “*feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.*”

We know that God is Spirit. Being pure Spirit, he has no body or blood. Therefore, “learned and brilliant theologians” might conclude that Paul was confusing the two natures of Christ. Rather than reading the text

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as it stands, they would “improve” it, and make it read – “Feed the church of God which the man Christ Jesus purchased with his blood as a man.”

**The Holy Spirit made no mistake.** He stated things exactly right. Paul wrote with infallible accuracy, by divine inspiration. He chose his words with inerrant precision. Why did he say what he did in Acts 20:28? He wanted us to understand that the two natures are perfectly and inseparably united in the God-man, Christ Jesus.

He who is our Savior is both “*God our Savior*” and “*the man Christ Jesus.*” **All the acts of either deity or humanity performed by him were the acts of one Person.** Therefore, we do not hesitate to sing Watts’ old hymn as Watts originally wrote it –

“Well might the sun in darkness hide,  
And shut its glories I,  
When God the mighty Maker died,  
For man, the creature’s sin!”

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When the Holy Spirit speaks of Christ in Holy Scripture, he speaks to men and women of understanding, to people who know and rejoice in the truth of our Savior’s indivisible Person as the God-man, Man-God, our Mediator. The Word of God simply does not use the kind of “brilliant confusion” you find in confessions of faith and theology books to describe our Redeemer. When men write about the God-man, they talk about the “hypostatic union” of God and man in Christ. When the Holy Spirit talks about the union of manhood and Godhead in the God-man, he does so in plain, easy to understand language — **“God was manifest in the flesh!”** — **“The Word was made flesh!”**

You will, therefore, forgive me, if I choose not to use the language of theologians, as I endeavor to preach Christ to you. I want you to see our Lord Jesus Christ in all the glory of his Godhead and in all the glory of his manhood. I want you to see how that Micah’s promise is fulfilled in the God-man, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: — **“Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth!”**

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**Proposition:** The Lord Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer, is exalted with greatness, both by the power of God at his ascension and in the hearts of all who know him.

God the Father says, concerning his dear Son, “**Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth!**” And all who are redeemed by his precious blood and saved by his grace gladly confess, “**Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth!**”

If I had the wisdom of God’s prophet Micah, the eloquence of Gabriel, and the space of eternity, I could not begin to describe the greatness of our Savior. But this I can tell you, this fact is made more and more real to my soul every day – **HE IS GREAT**. There is none to rival the Son of God in greatness! Look at our Savior from any position, from any direction, in any of his characters, in any of his works, and you will see that he is great.

**HIS INCARNATION**

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**The child born from Mary’s virgin womb was and is God the Son given in human flesh** (v. 31).

**Luke 1:31** “And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and **bring forth a son**, and shalt call his name JESUS.”

**Isaiah 9:6** “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

- “*God was manifest in the flesh!*”
- Immanuel is God with us!
- Only the incarnate God could save us.

**DIVINE COMMISSION**

**This great, incarnate God came into this world as our Mediator and covenant Surety on a specific**

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**mission** – **to save his people from their sins** (v. 31 — “*Thou shalt call his name Jesus*”).

**Matthew 1:21** “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”

As Joshua did for Israel what Moses never could, so the Lord Jesus Christ, our Joshua, did what the law could never do. — He brought us to God!

**Romans 8:1-4** “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: 4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

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It is written of this man Jesus, who is God the Son in human flesh, “**Now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth!**”

**IN HIS PERSON**

Christ is great in his magnificent person. Here is God and man in one person, fully God and fully man, yet completely one! There is none like him. He is the great God, the great Man, the great King, the great Mediator between God and man, our Great High Priest, and our great Savior. **God took man into union with himself in Christ, because there was no other way for God to save us from our sins.** God could not suffer, and man could not satisfy; but the God-man both suffered and satisfied all that was required for the salvation of God's elect.

**IN HIS PROPITIATION**

Our blessed Savior is great in his propitiation. Having brought in an everlasting righteousness for us, the Son of God suffered the wrath of God as our

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Substitute. When he was made to be sin for us, God drew forth the sword of his justice and buried it in his Son! **Now, there is no wrath left in God to be propitiated for us.** He says, **“Fury is not in me!”** Having punished our sins to the full satisfaction of justice, God will never charge his elect with sin (Romans 4:8; 8:1, 34; 1 John 2:12).

**IN HIS PRE-EMINENCE**

Our mighty Redeemer is great in his pre-eminence. God has made his Son to be Head over all things and has given him pre-eminence in all things and over all things. Christ has all power, all dominion, all authority, and all honor. He is to have all the praise of all his people for all things. The Lamb upon the throne is worthy of praise from all who are about the throne. **The triune God has so arranged the affairs of the universe that Christ shall be praised forever by all things.**

- All creation shall praise him as Creator (Revelation 4:11).

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- All rational creatures shall praise him as their rightful Lord (Philippians 2:9-11).
- All angels and men, both righteous and wicked, shall render praise to Christ the Judge in the last day (Acts 17:31).
- And all God's elect shall praise Christ alone for the whole of their salvation forever (1 Corinthians 1:30-31). Yes, Jesus Christ is the great God and our great Savior.

**FIVEFOLD GREATNESS**

If you will turn to Luke 1, in verse 32 and 33, we are given a fivefold declaration of our Savior's greatness.

**Luke 1:32-33** “He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

1. **“He shall be great.”**

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Great in all his offices!

Greater than all who went before him!

Greater than all who came after him!

**Our Lord Jesus Christ is the great God.**

**Titus 2:13** “Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

**Revelation 19:17** “And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God.”

**Jesus Christ is called the great Savior** (Titus 2:13).

**Psalms 21:5** “His glory *is* great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.”

- Great in His Covenant Engagements!

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- Great in His Representative Obedience!
- Great in His Substitutionary Sacrifice!
- Great in His Triumphant Resurrection!
- Great in His Priestly Intercession!
- Great in His Unceasing Advocacy!
- Great in His Grace to Sinners!

**1 Corinthians 1:26-31** “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: 27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea*, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in his presence. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

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**Our Lord Jesus Christ is called the great Shepherd of his sheep** (Hebrews 13:20).

**Hebrews 13:20-21** “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, *21* Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

- The Good Shepherd laid down his life for his sheep.
- The Great Shepherd obtained eternal redemption for his sheep in his resurrection glory.
- The Chief Shepherd is coming again to gather all his sheep into the heavenly fold.

How can we be sure of all these things? Many reasons might be given, but none better than his...

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**Our Lord Jesus Christ is the great King.**

**Psalms 47:2** “For the LORD most high *is* terrible; *he is* a great King over all the earth.”

**Psalms 48:2** “Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, *is* mount Zion, *on* the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”

**Psalms 95:3** “For the LORD *is* a great God, and a great King above all gods.”

**Malachi 1:14** “But cursed *be* the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I *am* a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name *is* dreadful among the heathen.”

**Matthew 5:35** “Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King.”

2. **He “shall be called the Son of the Highest.”**

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- By His Father!
- By His People!
- By His Enemies!

3. **“The Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David.”**

**Psalms 2:8** “Ask of me, and I shall give *thee* the heathen *for* thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth *for* thy possession.”

**John 17:2** “As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.”

**Romans 14:9** “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

4. **“And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever.”**

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5. **“And of his kingdom there shall be no end.”**

All the kingdoms of this world have been and are designed of God only for the building of the kingdom of our God and his Christ. **The kingdoms of this world are only the scaffolding by which our God builds his kingdom.** Like Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, Tyre, Carthage, Rome, and the Soviet Union, all the nations and empires of this world shall perish and all men shall be made to bow before this great and glorious King, who alone shall reign forever!

**Philippians 2:9-11** “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: *10* That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; *11* And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

**Daniel 7:14** “And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all

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people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.”

**Daniel 7:27** “And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom *is* an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him.”

**APPLICATION**

If you would be saved, if you would live forever, you must bow to this great King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Bow to His Righteousness.
- Bow to His Rule.

Soon all creation will see and acknowledge the greatness of God our Savior. May God make you to see it and rejoice in it now.

- The Lord Jesus Christ is great in mercy.

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- Soon, he shall appear in all the glory of his greatness. — To Save His People! — To Judge His Enemies!
- Let us publish his greatness everywhere.

Now, turn back to Micah. Read the opening verses of chapter five again. And I will send you home with just one more thought for your soul’s meditation. **It is our Savior’s greatness that is our peace.**

(Micah 5:1-5) “Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: **they shall smite the judge of Israel** with a rod upon the cheek. 2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, [though] thou be little among the thousands of Judah, [yet] **out of thee shall he come forth unto me** [that is] **to be ruler in Israel**; whose **goings forth [have been] from of old, from everlasting**. 3 Therefore will he give them up, until the time [that] she which travaileth hath brought forth: then **the remnant of his brethren shall return** unto the children of Israel. 4 And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the

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LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for **now shall he be great** unto the ends of the earth. 5 **And this [man] shall be the peace**, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men.”

Amen.