

Message #8

Micah 5:1-4

We are living in godless times. Just as in Micah's time, the political and religious leadership does not seem to be focused on leading a nation into the right ways of God. In fact, they are leading the nation into the judgment of God by promoting and sanctioning things that God says are abominable.

We get to vote, but quite honestly it doesn't appear that any election is going to change much. In fact, we keep hearing about elections being rigged so that if we do vote for someone who might turn the nation back to God, we can't even be certain the outcome is honest.

So who do we turn to for help? Where do we look? Who can actually intervene and destroy the evil and raise up the godly? There is only one Person who can do that and that One is Jesus Christ, and we need to be looking for Him to intervene.

It will not be the United Nations who will cause nations to "hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks"; it will be Jesus Christ who will do it.

That is what Micah wanted people to do and that is what God wanted people to know.

GOD WANTS HIS PEOPLE KNOWING HOW TO COPE IN A GODLESS WORLD BY KEEPING THEIR FOCUS ON THE FACT THAT ONE BORN IN BETHLEHEM WILL COME BACK AND IN ANGER AND WRATH POUR OUT GOD'S VENGEANCE ON AN EVIL, SATANIC AND GODLESS WORLD.

Bethlehem was known in Old Testament times for many things.

- 1) It was the place of Rachel's death and burial (Jacob's wife) (Genesis 35:19).
- 2) It was the place of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 1-4).
- 3) It was the place of David's birth (Ruth 4:22).
- 4) It was the place where David was anointed king by Samuel (I Sam. 16:1-13).
- 5) It was the place that was actually called the city of David (I Sam. 17:12).
- 6) It was the place where Rehoboam built it into a fortified city (II Chron. 11:6).

Notice the first word of **verse 1**, "now." For those in our How to interpret the Bible class, you know that is a time adverb. So when God's people see the world is against God and them, this is what they need to do. These are four realities that God wants His people to know:

REALITY #1 – God’s people need to gather together because they are being attacked by an enemy. **5:1**

For a while, the godless world and its leaders will slap God’s people in the face. They will slap God in the face, God’s word in the face and God’s people in the face.

In times of trouble and attack in this world, God’s people need to muster themselves together and band together around the word of God and the truth of God.

The word “muster” (gadad) is one that means to build a fortified wall or fence or hedge around something for safety purposes (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 160). One Hebrew Lexicon says it also means to gather together against something (Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Verteris Testamenti Libros*, p. 169).

So what we understand this to mean is that when God’s people are surrounded by a godless world led by godless powers, they are to set themselves apart from it and protect themselves by putting up protective hedges.

The fact that they are referred to as “daughter of troops” means God’s family is in warfare. This is true for Jerusalem, for Israel and for us.

The text says these enemies will “smite the judge on the cheek.” The word “judge” (shopet) is not the same as the word “Ruler” (moshel). Whoever would be the Judge over Israel would be hit until the Ruler comes and takes over the world. We may applicably understand this to mean is that those who make right judgments in accordance with the word of God, will take verbal and physical hits from those who are God mockers. In fact, Jesus, Himself, was hit in the face when He was here. However, what is also predicted in this text is that that “Ruler” (moshel) will return and destroy them.

God says I want you to know that when godless people are running things, there will be times they will slap you in the face. They will smite you on the cheek. They will make things difficult for you. Life will not be millennial bliss. They will slap you and hurt you but they will not destroy you. You keep yourself separated from them and their evils. While you are separated, keep your sights on Jesus Christ, who will come and will settle the score.

One way we may certainly apply this admonition to ourselves in this Church Age is that we need to keep gathering ourselves together to focus on God and His word. There is strength and courage and power that come from that.

REALITY #2 – God’s people need to keep looking for the One from Bethlehem to come who will rule over the world. **5:2**

As we have already seen in this book, Israel was being ruled by godless political and religious power-crazed losers. They were greedy and immoral. They did not care about God’s word and they did not care if they led God’s people into judgment. They made deals for themselves when in office that would make them rich. They were not interested in justice or truth.

God says don't keep looking at them; look for One to come whom I will send who will destroy them. That One will come from Bethlehem.

By the way, notice the personal pronoun "Me" used in this verse, which means Micah is writing what God is saying.

Many years ago, one of the old Bible teachers said, and I am going to paraphrase it, "**The prophet Isaiah had predicted a virgin birth (Is. 7:14), but the prophet Micah predicted a village birth (Micah 5:2).**"

There are several important facts that are brought out in this verse:

Fact #1 - Bethlehem was in Ephrathah.

The word "Ephrathah" either refers to a section or township of people who lived in Bethlehem or it could refer to the district or county in which Bethlehem was located.

Ephrathah was the specific district of the location of Bethlehem. This was the Bethlehem that was just south of Jerusalem.

It would be like saying we are in Texas Township in Portage. Or we are in Texas Corners in Kalamazoo County.

Now in the northern part of the land of Israel, in the tribe of Zebulun, was another city named Bethlehem. God could just have said He will be born in Bethlehem and leave it at that. But He is specifically pointing out the exact spot and village where His King/Ruler will be born.

Fact #2 - Bethlehem was little.

This Bethlehem was a small, insignificant place. God says you are "little among the clans of Judah." So you are a little village among thousands of villages. From this seemingly insignificant place would come the One who can take over the world and stamp out all the evil.

What is so interesting is that today, this little village is revered by millions and millions of people. This little village, some 5-6 miles from Jerusalem, is one of the most sacred places on the surface of this earth because that was the place where Jesus Christ was born.

Fact #3 - Bethlehem will be the originating birthplace of the Ruler of Israel.

Micah is making this prophetic prediction in 730 BC. So he is predicting where this God-King-Ruler, who has existed from all eternity, will be born over 700 years before He would be born.

Micah is predicting that the Ruler over the whole world, who will eventually take over the world, would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah.

So think about this, Micah is eliminating every other city in the world as a possibility and narrowing it down to one city, Bethlehem, where the One will be born who can destroy the godless political and religious leaders of the world.

We may recall that when Herod asked the Scribes and chief priests where the king was to be born, they answered Bethlehem (Matthew 2:4-6).

(Ruler Reality #1) - The ruler of Israel is God's Ruler.

Don't overlook this. This will be God's ruler, not the democratic people's ruler. The word "ruler" (moshel) is one that refers to the promise in Deuteronomy 15:6 in which God's people will eventually rule over everything, including all nations and powers.

God's people can shelter themselves in the knowledge that when the Ruler comes, they too will rule and reign over all the evil political and religious leaders who did all the evil things.

(Ruler Reality #2) - The Ruler of Israel is God's ruler from all eternity.

This Ruler has been involved in Divine work long before He would be born in Bethlehem. This Ruler would be the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (Rev. 22:13). This Ruler is the Creator who made everything (Col. 1:16-17; John 1:1-3).

Jesus Christ was involved in all the Divine work of old, such as creation and Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden and all of the Theophanies of the Old Testament, in which He appeared prior to His incarnation.

This One is the second member of the Trinity who would come in full deity and full humanity.

One of the great proofs that the Bible is the word of God is the prophecies that are made that are fulfilled.

The Bible made some amazing predictions that are very specific about the One who will be God's ruler:

- 1) Micah predicts here that He will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- 2) Isaiah predicts that He would be born of a virgin (Is. 7:14).
- 3) Zechariah predicts that He would be sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech. 11:12-13).
- 4) David predicts that He would die by having His hands and feet pierced (Psalm 22).
- 5) Isaiah predicts that He would be buried in a rich man's tomb (Is. 53:9).

Someone calculated that the odds that these predictions could come true are one in a quintillion. In fact, he calculates that if you took silver dollars and put a black X on one of them, you would cover the state of Texas two feet deep and you would have to blindfold a man and let him go anywhere and pick one coin that would be the one with the mark. He said that is the odds you have of just one of these predictions coming true by chance.

It is significant that we have no record of anyone giving the baby Jesus a teddy bear or a rattle or something that most babies are given. What was given to Him was the worship and honor of the Magi from the East who recognized this is the Ruler of the world.

At Christmas time many people think of Jesus as a baby to be viewed. He is the King to be revered. This is God's only begotten Son, who is the God-Savior-Messiah and He is to be worshiped and revered.

REALITY #3 – God's people need to know that God is permitting these evil things to go on until all the brethren and sons of God are in the family. **5:3**

What I understand this verse to be saying is that Jesus Christ would be born in Bethlehem, but He would not initially take over the world. He would temporarily permit His people to go through a painful disciplinary time for her failure to honor Him.

However, eventually the focal point of the work of God would be to gather the brethren. In other words, Mary would give birth to Jesus and the world would still be in labor pains for Him to reign until all of the sons of God are in the family of God.

There would be a temporary rejection, but there will also be an eventual restoration.

REALITY #4 – God's people need to know that His King will arise and rule and reign. **5:4**

There are some very important prophetic facts we learn here about Jesus Christ:

Fact #1 - He will arise - the King will have a resurrection.

Fact #2 - He will shepherd His flock in the strength of the LORD. The ultimate political leader.

Fact #3 - He will return - the King will leave and return "at that time."

Fact #4 - He will be great worldwide.

Five specific applications we may observe as we live in this evil and corrupt world being led by evil and corrupt religious leaders and politicians:

1) Jesus Christ will eventually shepherd His in the strength of the LORD.

Jesus Christ will Shepherd His people and He will do so in the full strength and power as God. In fact, He is looking out for His flock now.

2) Jesus Christ will shepherd His in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.

His flock will have the same relationship with God that He has.

3) His people will remain.

The Evil people will be gone, but His people will remain. The Shepherd is protecting them.

4) His people will reign.

In many different passages God promises that one day His faithful people will reign over many nations (i.e. Deut. 15:6).

5) He will be great to the ends of the earth.

When we see a world being governed by evil and corrupt leaders, don't look at the news, look to God's word and God's promises. Jesus Christ is our hope, not our elections and not our political and religious leaders.