

Micah 5:2-5

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[0 : 00] I'm going to step out of the book of Judges just for tonight. I know our practice on Wednesday nights and Sunday nights when we're together is just to go through the Old Testament and just to make our way.

And so we are really in that, well, for lack of a better way of saying it, it's a very difficult and dark portion of the book of Judges there in Judges 19. We've started that and we're really in kind of the worst state of mankind that we can find.

And I'm going to step away from that this evening because as I prayed about it and as I thought about it and really considered it and view of the season in which we're in, I'd rather for everything this week to be pointing us and directing us towards Christmas and towards Christ so that our minds and hearts will be prepared.

And while we understand that the truth found in the book of Judges shows the necessity and the need that we have for that Savior who's come, rather than focusing on man's problem, let's focus on the greatness.

So tonight and then we gather together for those of you that can be here and those who come on Christmas Eve, the Christmas Eve service, and even Christmas morning, everything will kind of be tied together, kind of intent on one purpose.

[1 : 19] So we're going to be in the book of Micah, Micah chapter 5, Micah chapter 5. When the Magi came following the star from the east and they came to the court of Herod, if you remember the Magi knew they were looking for a king.

And the reason we know they were looking for a king is because they brought gifts befitting of a king and they more than likely traveled with an entourage that would be in search of this king as far as recognition.

Much like we see in portions of the Old Testament when Solomon has people come to him and just bring him gifts, the Queen of Sheba comes to Solomon and wants to see his glory and his splendor. We see others coming even to Hezekiah. Hezekiah gets in trouble because people come from Babylon and he shows them all of his glory and splendor as a king.

So much of the same, when the Magi came from the east, we believe possibly, we can't say emphatically so, that they came from the Babylonian region, but we can say that they came from that direction.

[2 : 35] More than likely, they were moving in light of the prophecy that we have uttered in Numbers 24, verse 17. I see him, but not yet. A star shall arise from Judah and the scepter shall never depart from his hand.

That's the prophecy that is given there when the curse, Balaam was supposed to be pronouncing a curse upon the nation of Israel, but yet he's pronouncing blessings.

And that star and scepter are inseparable. The scepter is a sign of authority, a sign of rule. So they're looking for this king. They come to the court of Herod and they ask, and they're looking for this one who has been born king of the Jews.

And Herod calls in the religious leaders and the scribes and asks where the king shall be born. And they immediately quote Micah 5.2. Because this is the hope of the nation of Israel.

But this is, as you need a title this evening, it is the hope of the common man. This is the hope of the common man. We will look at Micah 5.2 and read down to the first part of verse 5.

[3 : 46] Okay, so 5.2 down to verse 5a. And I will explain to you why in just a moment why we broke it up that way. So let's read. The book of Micah, starting in the second verse, says, But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah.

From you one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. Therefore he will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has born a child.

Then the remainder of his brethren will return to the sons of Israel. And he will arise and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord and the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

And they will remain because at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth. Just the first portion of verse 5. This one will be our peace. This one will be our peace.

Here we see the hope for the common man. Or the hope of the common man. And the reason we say it's the hope of the common man is when we understand kind of the setting of the prophet Micah.

[4 : 59] Micah is a contemporary of the prophet Isaiah. They prophesy to a similar people at a similar time. They are both prophesying to the southern tribe of Judah.

The southern tribes of Judah. They are not those who are given to the northern tribes of Israel. This is after the division of the kingdom if you remember. So they are both prophesying to the southern tribes of Judah.

The two tribes there. They are around Jerusalem. Isaiah prophesies in the courts of the kings. This is why when Isaiah prophesies so much of the book of Isaiah speaks of a coming king.

Because he prophesies in the royal halls. If you remember Isaiah's vision in Isaiah chapter 6. It was after King Uzziah died. That he saw the true king seated on the throne.

Isaiah prophesies to the kings. He prophesies in the courts of the kings and around people of that rank in society.

[6 : 02] He speaks of a coming king. Micah on the other hand is the prophet of the common man. He doesn't speak in the courts of rulership or the courts of authority.

Micah prophesies to the common man in the open field. He prophesies to the everyday individual in the same region. Because God doesn't just speak to one part of society.

He speaks to all of society. So what Isaiah is declaring in the halls of government. Micah is declaring in the streets of the marketplace. Not the same thing but in the same vein.

Right. Because the word to the kings is not necessarily the word to the street. What Isaiah sees is a true king coming.

And the king who was set up on the throne. What Micah sees is the hope for a desperate man who's just trying to make it through another day. And both of them are telling.

[7 : 00] As a matter of fact. Tonight we're looking at Micah's prophecy. We gather together on Christmas Eve. We'll go to the book of Isaiah. And we'll see what Isaiah has to say about this coming one.

Because here we see the hope of the common man. In Isaiah we see the help of sinful man. And then we'll see the happening. We'll see the advent of Christ on Sunday morning.

Not very often do I tell where I think the Lord is leading me. But when it all fits together I think it is necessary to understand it. So Micah here declares this.

In Jewish scripture. In the Jewish Bible. The fifth chapter starts at verse 2. Because verse 1 of the English translation.

The English Bible. Is directly connected to the end of what happens in chapter 4. Okay. So I know we're kind of taking it out of context. But we want to put it in context real quick.

[7 : 58] We just read a portion of it. So if we were to read the first verse. We would know that that's directly connected to events that are transpiring in the fourth chapter. And what's going on in the fourth chapter of Micah.

This is so you know where we're at. Micah is talking about the fall of Zion. Zion is Jerusalem. Right. He is talking about how Zion is going to fall. Now he's prophesying.

At a time when the nation of Israel. The northern kingdom has already fallen. Or is about to fall. To the Assyrian rule. And there's still a hundred or.

A hundred plus years from falling in the southern. The southern kingdom. They lasted a little bit longer. They lasted about 200 years longer. Okay. The northern kingdom fell. Because of their sin. The southern kingdom had a great king named Hezekiah. Who was probably after David. One of the greatest most faithful kings. That the nation of Israel saw. That brought them back to the Lord.

[8 : 56] And Micah is prophesying during that time. Of Hezekiah. And also Uzziah. And some others that are in there. Um. So their. Their stay in the land is extended.

But. He declares just like. The other prophets declare. Even though things look good right now. Zion's going to fall. Jerusalem's going to fall. And he makes this abrupt shift.

From. Okay. And if you read the first verse. I know this is. This is kind of heady stuff. But just stay with me. I want you to see it. Uh. Verse 1 of the 5th chapter says. Now muster yourselves in troops. Daughter of troops. When they laid seeds against you. With a rod. They will smite the judge of Israel. On the cheek. Literally what it's saying is. Jerusalem's going to be full of soldiers. It's going to be full of troops.

Okay. Uh. And that's what happens. When Babylon. Babylonian empire finally comes in. Nebuchadnezzar shows up. Jerusalem's overrun. Now we can read that. If we tie it to what's happened.

[9 : 53] In the 4th chapter. But all of a sudden. He makes this shift. From looking at Jerusalem. To speaking of Bethlehem. Because. Man's hope in the darkest hours.

Are always found in the same prophecy. And we see this. Prophetic word is spoke. By Micah. And then he goes back to declaring. These other things.

After the 5th verse. And he goes back. One thing we need to understand. When reading the prophets. And I've. I've. Shared this with you before. No matter how dark it gets.

In that book of prophecy. God always shines a bright light. Right. Because when it gets as dark. As you think he can get. All of a sudden. He turns a light. Of the one coming.

On. And then he goes right back to it. It's like he gleams with hope. And then he goes back. And starts talking about. But the. Dread of the day. Right. And it's always like. These bright moments.

[10 : 49] In the darkest. List of chapters. So here we see. The hope for the common man. Hope is found. According to Micah. 5. 2. Through. 5.

5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5. 5.

5. 6. Now he has to put the Ephrathah in there because there are two cities by the name of Bethlehem, known in the Old Testament.

So he says, but as for you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah. From you, one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel.

The first thing we speak of is that hope is found in a place. And not just any place, but in a particular place. Because he declares here a very, very particular place.

[11 : 46] It's not just Bethlehem, it's the right Bethlehem. Right? It's the right Bethlehem at the right time. This is why when the Magi got to Jerusalem, the scribes and the religious leaders could tell you exactly where they should be looking for the king.

Because Micah had said so many years before, some think about eight centuries before the coming of Christ. He had named the place. And the place is an important place in scripture.

Bethlehem of Ephrathah. This particular Bethlehem. This is where Rachel gives birth to her last son and then dies. Matthew quotes that and says the weeping of Rachel after the slaying of the children.

This is where she dies. After she gives birth to Benjamin. If you remember that. This is where Ruth, the Moabitess, comes back with her mother-in-law, Naomi, in Bethlehem of Ephrathah.

And meets a man named Boaz. And ends up getting married to a man named Boaz. Boaz and Ruth have children. And then they have children. And then they have children. And all of a sudden there's a young shepherd boy named David who is watching the sheep in Bethlehem of Ephrathah.

[12 : 59] And this is where we find Samuel coming and anointing this David to be the king. And he is the king after God's own hearts.

This Bethlehem is a very important place in scripture. It's a particular place. It's not to be confused with any other Bethlehem or any other city. It is just this one.

But it is all too often an overlooked place among the nation of Israel. It's not a big enough city to be counted as one of the tribal inheritances. Right? It's not named among the major cities.

It's not named among the great metropolitan areas. It's not named among the Levitical towns. This is, if we go back to the book of Judges, it is only named in connection with sinning and falling.

Right? There was a Levi who should not have been in Bethlehem. There was people who were going to Bethlehem there at the end of the book of Judges, which should not have been. This is where the man went back to look for his concubine.

[14 : 00] And there's not necessarily anything good connected with it. He says, but you, Bethlehem of Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah. It's important that we understand that the hope, the hope that all men, not just the common man, but that the hope of man is found in a place.

It's a very particular place. Now, we know the prophecy of Christ is so extant. And we have all of these Old Testament prophetic words that find their fulfillment in one individual.

We see it in the life of Christ in an amazing way. He was to be born in Bethlehem. He was to be called out of Egypt. And he was to be from Nazareth. That's a pretty tangled web to weave that just no individual in history could meet but one.

We see scripture is full of a place. And here we see this is the place that we should look.

Because the hope for the common man, the hope for the man on the street was to be found in this place. More important than the place, though, was hope is found in a person. They wouldn't go to that place just because it was full of hope.

[15 : 17] They would go to that place. And they needed to go to that place because of the person that was there. He says, from you, one will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel. All of a sudden, we're introduced to the person that we're looking for of hope.

Now, we notice that this person has a purpose because one is coming forth for me. So what we're saying here is that, one, this person was to go forth for God to be a ruler.

This person had a purpose. But now look at this. By the way, if you ever want to doubt the deity of Christ, if anyone declares to you that he was not fully God and fully man and all of these things.

A lot of people use New Testament chapters and Testament verses that claim that Jesus never claimed to be God. And they kind of twist things around.

That's a big thing, by the way. Even in the early church where they had to form and fashion what they call creeds, what we believe. Right? Declaring what we believe.

[16 : 25] It was important to put the right words in place. So when you speak of Christ, be sure that you're using the right words. Some of the earliest church creeds spoke of the reality of Christ because people doubted his deity.

They wanted to make him human but not God because man could not reconcile how God could die on a cross. And they wanted to make him a good man but not necessarily fully God.

And if that's a good man hanging on the cross, then that's not good enough for us. Right? We needed a perfect one. And no man is perfect. And we needed a full fulfillment. So the particular wording is he is the only begotten.

He was begotten but not created. He's uncreated. And you understand that. That's the particular, you know, the, I know you say, well, we're splitting hairs.

Yes, but anything created has a beginning. Look at what Micah says here. This is a very important text in the Old Testament, by the way.

[17 : 29] His goings forth are from long ago. Now, it's hard to read because we want to say his going forth, but that's not what it says.

His goings, plural. And that's plural on purpose. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity. That from the days of eternity is the same wording we find in the book of Proverbs in the eighth chapter, when it speaks of God possessing wisdom at creation.

And it says that he possessed wisdom from the beginning and the days of eternity. And when you put those in connection, literally what it means is from the eternal past. So when you get to the edge of history and you get to the edge of time and you stand on the edge of time and you look back, those are the days of eternity.

And what Proverbs 8 is declaring is that God had wisdom before time began. In the eternal past. There was never a start date when God did not possess wisdom.

And what we find here is the same wording used that the one person who is coming from this place is one who has been going forth since eternal past.

[18 : 49] So to put it in common everyday language, there's no time when this man began to do stuff. Because when time began, he had already been doing stuff. And I know that makes our brains smoke because we cannot step out of time and we cannot see things without time.

Because you say, well, as far back as I can go, you can still go further back. Well, when you go further back, as far back as you can go and as far back as you can go from there and as far back as you can go from there, you get to a point in time when in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, right?

So when you get to the end, the beginning, and you're standing in the beginning, what you need to know is the one coming forth from this place had been goings forth all the way back there. That he is eternal.

This proves his deity. That this person to be born is also deity in nature. This is important. And when it speaks of his goings forth plural, what it says is that from eternity past, he has been seen. Not that he has been doing.

[19 : 56] We need to put this wording right. We see him, even though he's always doing it. Jesus says in John, my father is always at work, right? And he speaks of that kind of his same nature.

And I, too, am always at work. But what we see is him moving in and out of history over and over again, which, as many Bible scholars would say, this explains the theophanies we see in the Old Testament.

When we see the fourth man standing in the fire with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that's part of his goings forth. When we see the burning bush talking to Moses, that's part of his goings forth because it's the angel of the Lord.

When we see Joshua, after he is walking around trying to figure out how to fight the Battle of Jericho, and he meets the captain of the Lord's army, the angel of the Lord, that's part of his goings forth.

He's been stepping in and out of man's path since eternity. He has always been moving. So what we have now, just wrap your mind around this, is a person coming from a place who has no beginning, but this is where we're going to find him stepping into our world.

[21 : 03] He is an eternal deity who is going to become a part of our humanity. Now we're beginning to reconcile Scripture.

He is fully God and is going to be fully man. This is why this person is a person of hope, because he's not like us.

What we have in the book of Judges is a lot of individuals coming up and setting some people free who are just like the people they set free, and then they die. And when they die, the hope that was found in that person dies with them.

This person, we find at this place, has always been and will always be. He is the eternal God man. What we find at the place of Bethlehem is where he decided to become flesh, not where he began.

[22 : 08] I like how John refers to it. John refers to it in the Gospel of John and also in his letter of 1 John. Bethlehem is not the beginning of Christ.

And we behold his manifestation. Bethlehem is not the beginning of Christ. It's where he took off the glory of deity and veiled himself in the glory of humanity, and all of a sudden we can see him who's been going forth throughout all of eternity.

That's a big difference. Because if that's just a normal child wrapped in swaddling cloths, laying in a manger, we don't have a lot of hope.

But what we have is the one from eternal past, who's been moving in and out of man's history and goings forth. And he's been going back and forth and back and forth.

And now all of a sudden at this particular time, he clothes himself in humanity and he manifests himself to us. God interrupts history and we see what it looks like.

[23 : 19] Because sometimes God manifests himself. Here he does. This is the person of hope. This place is where we find this person.

And this person is directly connected to the third thing, which is the promise. Now you need to understand, when reading the prophets of the Old Testament, we're looking at, it's like we're standing in line with a mountain range.

Okay? Maybe you've noticed it when you're driving to the mountains or when you're driving near the mountains. It looks like there's one grand peak and you kind of look and all you see is this one grand peak.

But the closer you get to it, or if you ever decide you're going to go walk on it, you know you got to go up and over a lot of other peaks to get to the one grand peak. There's a lot of ups and downs, but they tend to blend in because all you can see is the one major one.

The prophets of the Old Testament are that way. They're looking in line and they see the pinnacle. They see the height. What they don't always see is the chasms and the dips that go between them. Because it reads as one big story.

[24 : 27] We refer to that as the first coming and the second coming of Christ and then the church age is the middle there. We see this here in Micah because it says he has come to rule, right?

It says he has come to rule. His goings forth are from long ago, from days of eternity. Therefore, and it says in verse 3, here's the valley. Therefore he will give them up until the time.

Now the them, because of who is saying it and who he is saying it to, is the nation of Israel. Now we don't know. I'm just going to go ahead and tell you the remainder of this verse.

Bible scholars are out on. Okay. Therefore he will give them up until the time. What we see is this person who is our hope shows up in the right place in Bethlehem.

He manifests God in the flesh. He manifests himself as God in the flesh. And then there's a period of giving up. And it says that that period of giving up ends when she who is in labor has born a child.

[25 : 27] Now this definitely doesn't mean, some people think that it means Mary giving birth to the child Jesus. I don't think it does because that's just been referred to in the verse that precedes this. Some believe that this refers to the revelation prophecy where she who is in labor gives birth and there's the nation of Israel.

So some see this, the birthing pains of the nation of Israel. Others refer to this as his second coming. We, just to be honest, I'll just say, we don't know. But we know there's a timetable in this chasm.

Therefore he will give them up until the time when she who is in labor has born a child. Then the remainder of his brethren will return to the sons of Israel. So some see this for that verse right there. I'm just trying to explain it to you best I can. That there will be a moment when the nation of Israel is reborn and regathered into one place. We refer to that as the second coming.

It says, and then he will arise and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord. Now, I want you to understand while prophecy looks at this and we see it has already happened and then we see the things that are still yet to happen.

[26 : 33] We live in the church age. This is kind of deep on Wednesday nights, but stay with me. This is good stuff, right? We live in the church age. We get to experience the living reality of what is yet to be on a world grand scale.

We get to experience in the church age a living reality what is still to be in prophetic history. That's a long way of saying it. Micah says there's going to come a day where he's going to shepherd his people and he's going to gather them back and shepherd them.

For those who come to him now, guess what? He is our great shepherd. He is the guardian of our souls. We experience today in that valley of when he gave up the nation of Israel for a time, we get to experience as a living reality his shepherding today.

That's the benefit because some say, well, then why should I come to Christ if all this thing is going to be? Because we can experience now the shepherding that is going to be in the future.

That's the joy. The joy is we have a shepherd today. We don't have to wait for then. This is something we get today. So it says that he will shepherd his people.

[27 : 42] This is the promise, right? He will shepherd his people in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God and they will remain because at that time he will be great to the ends of the earth.

Listen, we're being shepherded by one who's going to rule the entire earth and we understand this. And then it says in verse 5 there, this one will be our peace. Here is the promise.

The promise is that this person from this place will be the shepherd of our hearts and minds, be the shepherd of our lives and that shepherding will be done in the strength of the Lord and that shepherding will lead us to a place because this person is our peace.

What did Paul say in Colossians 1.20? Colossians 1.20, Paul says, having made peace through the blood of his cross.

Having made peace through the blood of his cross. See, we don't need to wait for the reign of Christ which produces peace over the entire world.

[28 : 49] Even in that valley, we can be shepherded by him and experience the peace of him today. That's the promise.

The promise is that we don't wait for these things. They will come about on a worldwide scale. Today, the blessing is they come about on a personal scale. Here's the hope of the common man.

There was a place and in that place the right person was born and that person is the shepherd we need who will fulfill the promise of peace that man has always been looking for because he has made peace through the blood of his cross.

Micah was speaking to the man on the street and the beauty of the season is we see the most common of individuals.

One of the questions posed on the table talk if you get it is what's so amazing about the public declaration to the shepherds. They were common people. What did Micah say to the common man?

[29 : 56] Hope is coming. Beauty of the Christmas event is that hope has come. There's more to this prophecy that is still to be.

There is more to that. When he regathers his people he rules over his people everlastingly. He rules over them eternally. He offers them peace. There are days of restoration yet in the future but the beauty of it is we experience it now as his people.

The shepherding, the peace, the comfort, the eternal nature of his presence. It is a reality today for those who trust in this person from that place.

Micah here offers us hope for the common man and for all men and how wonderful it is to be in the midst of that season where we see that hope become a reality and we live it out according to his promises.

Micah 5, 2 through 5a. Thank you guys. Thank you.

[31 : 48] Thank you. Thank you.