

A Ruler from Bethlehem Micah 5:1-5a

Now...the situation is bleak

- **NOW:** you have no king and exile is coming (4:9-10)
- **NOW:** the world mocks you and judgement is coming. (4:11-13)

“Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops;
siege is laid against us;
with a rod they strike the judge of Israel
on the cheek.” Micah 5:1

- **NOW:** you cannot defend yourself against the siege and humiliation of your enemy. (5:1)

“Verse 1 tells us the setting for God’s work- complete humiliation. Here is what looks like the total demise of the Davidic dynasty. This is so often where God begins- in our abysmal helplessness.” Dale Ralph Davis pg. 105

But...Bethlehem

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,

Bethlehem: A small and obscure place

- First mentioned as the burial place of Rachel (Genesis 35:19)
- The home of Ruth’s father-in-law Elimelech (Ruth 1:1-2)
- Where Ruth and Boaz live and have a family (Ruth 4:11)
- Not mentioned in over 150 cities allotted to Judah (Joshua 15)
- David’s place of anointing as king (1 Samuel 16)

The primary significance of Bethlehem is its very insignificance.

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.” Micah 5:2

The Lord’s covenant with David

When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” 2 Samuel 7:12-13

The People’s Despair

- The king is not coming from Jerusalem?
- Has the Davidic throne been lost?

“Here then we see a frequent tendency in God’s ways, for God is prone to choose the obscure, the insignificant, the lowly, the common, the unnoticed as the very instrument through which he displays the brightest flashes of his glory.” Dale Ralph Davis pg. 105

Hope after Hardship: Labor Pains

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;

The people are given over



Through the pain will come a joyous birth

The Birth of Messiah will bring:

Unity

then the rest of his brothers
shall return
to the people of Israel.

Security

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.

Peace

And he shall be their peace.

Prophecy Fulfilled in Jesus

The Birth of the Messiah

Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem

“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.” Luke 2:1-7

The chief priests and scribes know the prophesied birthplace

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, ²saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:

⁶“And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for from you shall come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.” Matthew 2:1-6

The people knew the prophecy

“When they heard these words, some of the people said, ‘This really is the Prophet.’ ⁴¹ Others said, ‘This is the Christ.’ But some said, ‘Is the Christ to come from Galilee?’ ⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?’ ⁴³ So there was a division among the people over him. ⁴⁴ Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.
John 7:40-44

The seemingly insignificant Savior

- Born in Bethlehem in a manger to Mary and Joseph
- Lived in Nazareth
- Worked as a craftsman/carpenter/mason
- Minimal is said about his life until age 30

“For he grew up before him like a young plant,
and like a root out of dry ground;
he had no form or majesty that we should look at him,
and no beauty that we should desire him.” Isaiah 53:2

“Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’” John 1:46

“...but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.” Philippians 2:7

“But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are...” 1 Corinthians 1:27-28

Ruler from ancient days

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” John 1:1-2

“Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.’” John 8:58

“And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.” John 17:5

“For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” Colossians 1:16-17

Hope after hardship: Labor pains

His suffering made many righteous

“Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;
by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant,
make many to be accounted righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.” Isaiah 53:11

His suffering brought peace and healing

“upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.” Isaiah 53:5b

Suffering for Christ brings the Kingdom and great reward

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you
falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted
the prophets who were before you.” Matthew 5:10-12

Suffering for Christ will result in glory

“But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his
glory is revealed...Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful
Creator while doing good.” 1 Peter 4:13, 19

Christ's power and grace are seen clearly in our suffering

“But he said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’
Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon
me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and
calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

Life in Christ: Now

Unity

“For he himself is our peace, who has **made us both one** and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of
hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might **create in himself
one new man in place of the two**, so **making peace**, and might **reconcile us both to God in one body through
the cross**, thereby killing the hostility.” Ephesians 2:14-16

Security

Messiah shall stand and His people shall sit in security.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” John 10:11

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or
nakedness, or danger, or sword?...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved
us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor
powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:35, 37-39

Peace

Peace does not mean one never fights; peace is what comes after you win the fight!

Peace with God, Inner Peace, Relational Peace, International Peace all in Christ alone

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Life in Christ: To Come

Unity

Revelation 7:9-10, 13-14

"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"

¹³ Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, "Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?" ¹⁴ I said to him, "Sir, you know." And he said to me, "These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Security

Revelation 7:15-17

¹⁵ "Therefore they are before the throne of God,
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.

¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst anymore;
the sun shall not strike them,
nor any scorching heat.

¹⁷ For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of living water,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

"AND HE SHALL BE THEIR PEACE." Micah 5:5

DISCUSSION

1. Where do you see God bringing unity, security, and peace amongst His people now?
2. Where does it seem as though unity, security, and peace will not be fully experienced until He returns?
3. Where do you need to view certain hardships, difficulties, trials, etc as labor pains instead of hopeless, fruitless pain?
4. When have you seen God use the obscure, insignificant, lowly, common, unnoticed instrument for His glory?
5. How has today's teaching brought a deeper understanding of Christ as the Messiah, prophesied in Scripture?
6. How is Christ our peace?

HOMEWORK

READ

1. 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 to-night.

2. O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep the Angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.

3. How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given;
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His Heaven.

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. Where children pure and happy
Pray to the blessed Child,
Where misery cries out to Thee,
Son of the mother mild;
Where Charity stands watching
And Faith holds wide the door,
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
And Christmas comes once more.

5. O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray!
Cast out our sin and enter in,
Be born in us to-day.
We hear the Christmas angels,
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel!

REFLECT

What aspects of the song point to the insignificance of Bethlehem?

What about the song seems different to you now that you have studied Micah 5?

What verses of the song declare Christ as the source of unity, security, or peace?

Are there any other Christmas songs you may think of or sing differently because of our study?

REMEMBER

“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.” Micah 5:4