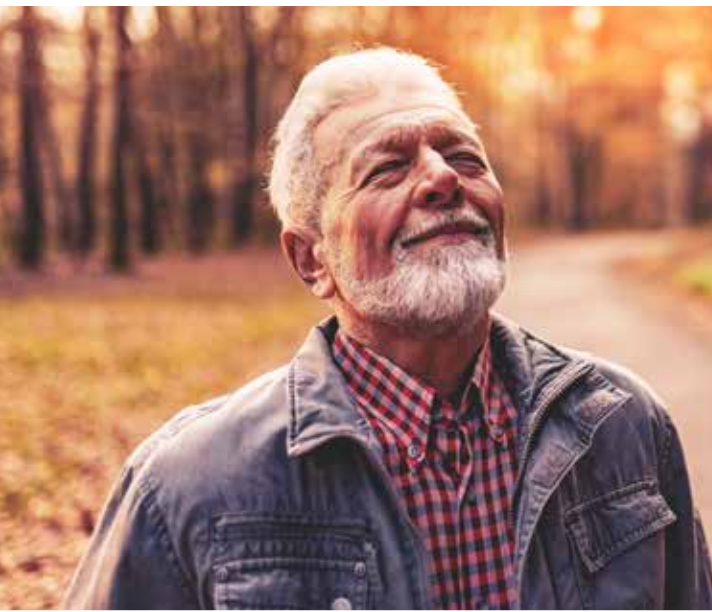


Humble Beginnings

Peace and security come through obedience to God.

MICAH 4:6-8; 5:1-9



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Amorite.
s for proph-
or Nazarites,
dren of Israel?

rites wine to drink;
prophets, saying,

ISRAEL'S SINS

am pressed under you, as a
ed *that is* full of sheaves.
ore the flight shall perish from
and the strong shall not strength-
force, "neither shall the mighty de-
himself:
Neither shall he stand that handleth
e bow; and *he that is* swift of foot shall
ot deliver *himself*;" neither shall he that
rideth the horse deliver himself.
16 And *he that is* courageous among the
mighty shall flee away naked in that day,
saith the LORD.

GOD HAS SPOKEN

3 Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken
against you, O children of Israel,
against the whole family which I brought
up from the land of Egypt, saying,
2 "You only have I known of all the families
of the earth: therefore I will punish
you for all your iniquities.
3 Can two walk together, except they be
agreed?
4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he
hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of
his den, if he have taken nothing?"

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the
father
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ery altar, and
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FAITHFULNESS

the Amorite before
ght was like the height of
e was strong as the oaks;
ed his fruit from above, and
n beneath.

When have you witnessed a victory that came after you counted the situation to be hopeless or already lost? How do these situations impact a person in the future?

We know about sports fans who stopped watching a game because there seemed no way for their team to win, only to discover they missed one of the greatest comebacks in that team's history. There are times when things appear hopeless for God's people. But no matter how hopeless the situation seems, in the end God will turn their sorrow into joy through Jesus.

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

This section of the book of Micah reveals that someday in the future God will establish Himself as the one true King who will eternally reign over His people and all of the nations from Mount Zion. He will do this by replacing Israel's wicked kings with His own King who will shepherd them. Even though Micah prophesied that the temple would be destroyed in the near future (Micah 3:12), sometime beyond that it would once again be established on Mount Zion. The nations will stream to it to receive instruction that they may live according to God's will (4:1-2). The Lord will establish peace on earth, and those who walk in the name of the Lord will do so for eternity (4:3-5). The Lord will gather to Himself all the injured and lame who had been scattered in exile and with this remnant build an eternally strong nation (4:6-8).

Before the people of God experienced restoration, they would experience a time of difficulty. The Babylonians would invade and carry the people of God into captivity (4:9-10). Nevertheless, this judgment would not be God's last act regarding His people,

for He would redeem them from the grasp of their enemies (4:11-13).

In chapter 5, Micah returned to the message of Judah's imminent judgment as its enemies lay siege to it. These enemies would prevail and then strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod (5:1). Micah then revealed that God was planning to raise up a new King who would be born in Bethlehem. This King's origin is from antiquity (5:2). He would shepherd His people. He would be their peace, and His greatness will extend "to the ends of the earth" (5:4). For some among the nations, the remnant of Jacob would be a blessing, but for others it would be like a roaring lion bringing death. What's more, God would eradicate His people's ungodly practices from among them and take vengeance against the nations that disobeyed Him (5:7-15).

MICAH 4:6-8; 5:1-9

4:6 On that day^A — this is the LORD’s declaration — I will **assemble the lame and gather the scattered^B**, those I have injured. **7** I will make the lame into a **remnant^C**, those far removed into a strong nation. Then the LORD **will reign^D** over them in Mount Zion from this time on and forever. **8** And you, watchtower for the **flock^E**, fortified hill of Daughter Zion, the former rule will come to you; sovereignty will come to Daughter Jerusalem. [...]

5:1 Now, daughter who is under attack, you slash yourself in grief; a siege is set against us! They are striking the judge of Israel on the cheek with a rod. **2 Bethlehem Ephrathah^F**, you are **small among the clans^G** of Judah; one will come from you to be **ruler over Israel^H** for me. His **origin is from antiquity^I**, from ancient times.

3 Therefore, Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of the ruler’s brothers will return to the people of Israel. **4** He will stand and shepherd them in the strength of the LORD, in the majestic name of the LORD his God. They will live securely, for then his greatness will extend to the ends of the earth. **5** He will be their peace. When Assyria invades our land, when it marches against our fortresses, we will raise against it seven shepherds, even eight leaders of men.

6 They will shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword, the land of Nimrod with a drawn blade. So he will rescue us from Assyria when it invades our land, when it marches against our territory. **7** Then the remnant of Jacob will be among many peoples like dew from the LORD, like showers on the grass, which do not wait for anyone or linger for mankind. **8** Then the remnant of Jacob will be among the nations, among many peoples, **like a lion^J** among animals of the forest, like a young lion among flocks of sheep, which tramples and tears as it passes through, and there is no one to rescue them. **9** Your hand will be lifted up against your adversaries, and all your enemies will be destroyed.

Key Words

- A. Refers to the last days (Isaiah 2:2; Hebrews 1:2).
- B. Signifies the weakened state of Israel and their dependence upon God, but He will reunite His people back together.
- C. God has promised to preserve the faithful (2 Kings 19:30).
- D. A Messianic prophesy (Zechariah 14:9; Revelation 11:15).
- E. A term for God’s people (Jer. 13:17; John 10:16; 1 Pet. 5:2-3). Jesus is the “good shepherd” (John 10:11).
- F. The city of Bethlehem, where David was born, and where the Messiah, Jesus, would be born (Matthew 2:1).
- G. The town of Bethlehem was small in population but significant in history.
- H. Refers to God’s rule over the world (Judges 8:23; Psalm 89:9).
- I. The Messiah is eternal and divine in nature (John 1:1-14).
- J. God’s people would be the means of destruction for those who would oppose Him.

EXPLORE **THE TEXT**

1. IN THAT DAY (MICAH 4:6-8)

Believers can find hope in God's promise of salvation.

How does the promise of a future bring hope when enduring God's discipline?

2. ONE WILL COME (MICAH 5:1-6)

Believers can experience God's peace through faith in Jesus.

What is the significance of this promised deliverer being born in a humble setting?

3. THEN THE REMNANT (MICAH 5:7-9)

All people must decide to trust God.

What is the difference between those who receive God's blessings and those who receive His wrath?

APPLY THE TEXT

Discuss as a group how sharing the gospel creates a watershed event for those who stand between salvation and judgment.

How can this message be shared without being judgmental?

KEY DOCTRINE: Last Things

The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in heaven with the Lord. (See Isaiah 2:4; 2 Timothy 4:8.)

BIBLE SKILL: Create a compare/contrast chart to study a passage.

Ezekiel wrote of the shepherd-king who will reign over the people of God. Read Ezekiel 34:17-31 and compare it to Micah 4:6-8; 5:1-9. Note where Ezekiel and Micah's messages are similar. Then note what is unique to Micah's message and what is unique to Ezekiel's message. How do both passages together anticipate the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ?

TALK IT OUT

Focus on Micah 5:2. How does Jesus fulfill this promise?

The Bible loves to tell stories of unlikely individuals and out of the way places that God used in great ways. Bethlehem was so small that it wasn't even worth mentioning in the list of 100 towns conquered in Joshua 15. Bethlehem was the hometown of King David. The LORD says that David is a ruler over Israel "for Me." This is God's surrogate, God's designated leader.

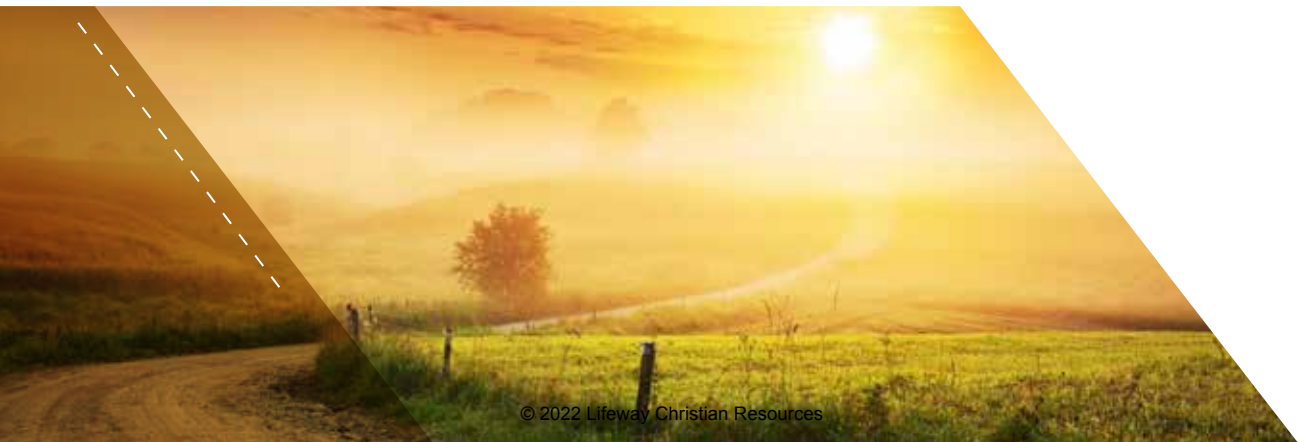
How does the size of the city impact the significance of the promise?

Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea during the time of King Herod. Herod was alarmed when the magi came through Jerusalem looking for the king of the Jews. Even the chief priests and scribes knew about Micah's promise about Bethlehem. When they informed Herod about this promise in Micah, he immediately sent the magi to look for the child (Matthew 2:8). The magi were warned in a dream to say nothing to Herod, and when he realized he had been outwitted, he gave orders to massacre all the boys who were under two years old (2:16-18).

Discuss how the information found in Micah 5:2 impacts our lives today.

Memorize Micah 5:2, being mindful of God's plans to save His people.

Prayer Requests



DAILY EXPLORATION

Day 1: Micah 4:6-8

Focus on the word remnant, and the hope tied to it.

As bad as things were in the days of Micah, the prophet looked to a better day. The people of God faced imminent exile. They would be ripped from their land and taken captive to Babylon. They are described as *lame, scattered, and injured*. They were injured by the judgment of God, but that same God would gather a remnant from among them to continue the line of David. God would assemble the people back in Jerusalem and *make the lame into a remnant*. This emphasizes God's grace. All Christians have first found themselves in the position of the lame, scattered, and injured prior to experiencing the grace of God in their lives. The ones *far removed* referred to those who would be exiled in Babylon. God would gather them again and make a *strong nation* from the weakened exiles. How could Micah say that the *Lord will reign over them in Mount Zion from this time on and forevermore*? Obviously this statement must be read in light of the promises to come in Micah 5 about the birth of a Messiah in Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2). God regathered the people, and through that group of helpless people brought forth a Messiah who would reign forever, extending the line of David into eternity. In verse 8, the Lord switched from saying what He will do for them to what will happen to *you*. The recipient of this poetic, direct address was Jerusalem. David established it as the capital of Israel. Through Micah, the Lord promised that the Davidic kingdom will be restored under the rule of the Messiah (see Luke 1:32-33).

How does the promise of a future bring hope when enduring God's discipline?

Day 2: Micah 5:1-3

Consider why God chose Bethlehem to be the birthplace of Jesus.

Verse 1 says God's people would come *under attack and siege*. This could be a reference to the attack of Assyria when Sennacherib laid siege to Jerusalem in 701 BC, but it more likely refers to the coming siege by Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in 588-586 BC. From one of the least likely places, *Bethlehem Ephrathah*, God was about to send His Messiah to reverse the fortunes of His people and send a better David, who would establish the line of the former king forever. This person would be the *ruler over Israel*, not just Judah but the entirety of God's people. His origin was said to be *from antiquity* and *from ancient times*. The use of the term ancient times indicate His origin was in eternity, meaning that this Messiah was not only man but also God.

What is the significance of this promised deliverer being born in a humble setting?

Day 3: Micah 5:4-6

Notice God's promise to His people.

The Messiah, Jesus, *will stand and shepherd them in the strength of the Lord*. He Himself will be their *peace* or *shalom* (see Eph. 2:14). This means more than the absence of war. It connotes both external and internal satisfaction and sufficiency. Jesus would provide the ultimate victory for Israel over its enemies. The land of *Nimrod*, mentioned in verse 6, was a reference to a person in Genesis 10:8-11 who inhabited the land of Mesopotamia. The Assyrians were not the only enemy Israel would face from that region. The Babylonians would soon ascend to power, but the Messiah would offer protection from all the enemies of Israel. In a world where people are measured by their might, this ruler mentioned by Micah was different. He came from a small, insignificant location. He was known more as a shepherd than a warrior. This humble ruler would shepherd God's people, instituting peace throughout the whole earth and would rescue the people of Israel from their invaders by securing the land. Israel would need to hold to this message of hope as dark days descended on the horizon.

How do God's promises and actions reinforce God's sovereignty?

Day 4: Micah 5:7

Contemplate why the remnant was important.

God would establish a remnant from among the scattered exiles. This would be a double-edged sword, as it would mean salvation to some and judgment to others. For some, the *remnant of Jacob* would be *like dew from the LORD* or *like showers on the grass*. Moisture of any kind was welcome in the land of Israel, bringing refreshment and renewal. The remnant would refresh the land as God established them again in the promised land. Neither dew nor rain were controlled by humans but were sent by the providence of God. This is seen in the words, *which do not wait for anyone or linger for mankind*. The descendants of Abraham would finally fulfill their purpose in being a blessing to the nations (see Gen. 12:1-3). Further, just as the dew and the rain come independent of human manipulation, so these magnificent events would happen by the gracious hand of God and not by human effort.

What role does trust in God play for the remnant? How does the remnant point to God's grace and justice?

Day 5: Micah 5:8-9

Note the power that God promises to the remnant.

In addition to dew and rain, Micah compared the remnant to a *lion among animals of the forest*. They would be powerful among the *nations* and the *peoples* of the world. Like a lion overcoming His prey, the remnant would destroy the foes of Israel in the power of the Lord. Peace and security would come to the people of God, but it would come through their obedience as the remnant returned and took its place in God's story.

The gospel is a double-edged sword to those who believe and those who do not believe. For the person who believes, eternal life is given and abundant life on earth is promised (John 3:16; 10:10). It is not so for the unbeliever. Those who perish outside of faith in Christ must expect judgment and eternal separation from God. Those outside of the faith will be thrust into a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth (see Luke 13:28). The double-edged sword divides believers from unbelievers, bringing salvation to some but judgment to others. The message of salvation can either bring refreshment like dew or the judgment of a lion's attack. The linchpin that decides which way a person will experience God is whether that person trusts Jesus. Has he or she repented of sin and turned to Christ? Or is he or she persisting in unbelief?

How do you describe the difference between those who receive God's blessings and those who receive His wrath?

APPLY THE TEXT

How do the promises listed by Micah bring you peace and security? To what extent are you being obedient to God and His promises? What actions do you need to take in anticipation of the promises given?

