

**Pastor Paul Bawden**  
**Sunday, December 21, 2008**  
**"The Hope We Need" (Micah)**  
**Micah 5:2**

**I know around this time of Christmas and the New Year it is difficult to watch one's diet with all the good cookies, candy and food.**

**Perhaps the Norwegian Diet can help. Someone sent this to us this week.**

**Ole and Sven had really 'packed on the pounds' by overeating during Christmas and the New Year's celebrations, so their doctor put them on the same diet.**

**'I want you to eat regularly for 2 days, then skip a day, and repeat this procedure for 2 weeks. The next time I see you, you should have lost at least 5 pounds.'**

**When the Norwegians returned, they shocked their doctor by having lost nearly 25 POUNDS each.**

**'Why, that's positively amazing!' the doctor said. 'Did you follow my instructions?'**

**Then Ole and Sven nodded and said. . . .**

**'We want to tell you though, we taut we was gonna drop dead dat 3rd day.'**

**'From hunger, you mean?'**

**'No, yust from all dat skippin'!**

**Good old Ole and Sven. They provide some good humor at this time of year and at other times as well.**

**I don't think that Micah, the Old Testament person we are considering in this morning's message, knew about Ole and Sven.**

**But Micah had some very important things to say to his people Israel in his day as well as a major prophecy concerning the coming Messiah and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.**

### **I. Micah, the man (Micah 1:1)**

- Micah's name means "who is like Yahweh or Jehovah."
- He was a Judean from the small village of Moresheth in the Southwest part of Palestine preaching to the common people of Judah. Hosea prophesied to the northern tribes of Israel (710 B.C.), and Isaiah ministered to the court in Jerusalem, and Jeremiah later to Jerusalem as well.
- Micah preached to the common people in Judah. He was a contemporary of Isaiah.
- Micah, like Isaiah, was one of the pre-exilic prophets, ministering before the Babylonians exile

### **II. Micah's Time Of Ministry (Micah 1:1- 7).**

- He began his prophetic ministry around 742 B.C.
- Micah ministered during the reigns of Jotham (750-731 B.C.), Ahaz (736-716 B.C.) and Hezekiah (716-687 B.C) (cf. Micah 1).
- Jotham, although for the most part a good king, did not remove the idolatrous high places from his kingdom. Ahaz, who was a wicked king, developed a pro-Assyrian foreign policy, and during his reign the captivity of

the northern tribes took place. Hezekiah, one of Judah's best kings, was against Assyria and withstood the siege of Jerusalem that Sennacherib led in 701 B. C.

- During Micah's time, the political conditions could not have been worse. The rulers, the wealthy, the conniving priests and prophets in the capital cities, feeling secure within strong fortifications, made the most of their power to oppress the poor. The common people, the peasants, had no protection from the coming Assyrian invasion and those who took advantage of them in their daily lives.
- Though Micah lived and prophesied in the southern kingdom, he condemned the sins of the Northern Kingdom and prophesied and witnessed its downfall.

### III. Micah's ministry.

#### 1. Forttelling.

- Micah's message was directed toward the idolatry that was present in His day (Micah 1). Micah told the people that God's judgment was coming because of not worshipping Him. Micah also spoke against the rulers who were oppressing the people, telling them that they didn't know justice – they hated good and loved evil (Micah 3:1-2). Micah spoke against the false prophets who were leading the people astray telling them there was peace (Micah 3:5), when actually God's judgment was coming. Being from a small town, his sympathy was with the country folk who were being taken advantage of by the greedy rich and the nobles of the capital cities.
- Micah's message was one of God's judgment because the people had turned away from the LORD, while crying out for social justice.
- In the midst of calling the people to turn back to the LORD, Micah told the people that God didn't delight in their burnt offerings and sacrifices (Micah 6:6-7), but that the LORD told them what was good and that the LORD required of them, "To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with their God (Micah 6:8).
- In telling of God's judgment, Micah also told the people that God is one who pardons iniquity – He passes over the rebellious acts of His possession. He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. God will again show compassion and tread out their iniquities under foot, and cast all their sins in the depth of the sea (**Micah 7:18-19**).
- **God will remember His unchanging love to Abraham (going back to the eternal Abrahamic Covenant – Genesis 17:17 - 2000 B.C) –Micah 7:20 Micah ends His prophetic ministry with a message of HOPE!**

Which meant that Micah was not just giving a message to the people in their day – foretelling a message to repent and turn to the LORD, Micah was also foretelling a message.

#### 2. Foretelling.

- **This means that Micah had a dual ministry. In the midst of pronouncing judgment on those who had rebelled** against God and gone into idolatry, he was foretelling what would also happen in the future.
- **In Micah 4, Micah foretells the coming kingdom that Israel as a nation will experience when restored to her land at the second coming of Christ. Micah used the same words of Isaiah (2:2-4), when in Micah 4:3 Micah foretells them that when Messiah comes, "Then they will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hocks; Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they train for war."**
- In Micah 5:4, the prophet foretells that the Messiah will arise and shepherd His flock. There will be a remnant among the nations, referring to Israel (5:8).
- **As Micah ends his message, he foretells that Israel will be pardoned and the people will experience the unchanging love of Abraham, that is they will experience the promise made to Abraham of a land, seed, and blessing, looking ahead to reigning with the Messiah in the land of Israel.**

- In that foretelling of the kingdom promise to Israel in the coming of the Messiah the second time, at the end of the tribulation time on earth. Micah, is also used by the God, to foretell of the Messiahs first coming, His incarnation.
- **As with Isaiah, and Jeremiah, God used Micah to tell of the firsts coming of the Messiah and Savior of the World.**

#### **IV. Micah specifically foretold of the first coming of the Messiah and Savior of the world (Micah 5:2).**

**Note with me the particulars about Micah 5:2.**

##### **1. The time of this prophecy – (around 700 B.C.)**

**Seven Hundred years before Christ was born.**

##### **2. The environment for this prophecy-**

The poor were being taken advantage of by the rich. False prophets were saying there would be peace. People were involved in idolatry. The biblical God was not honored. Judgment was foretold by the prophet Micah, which judgment came in 701 B.C. when the Northern Kingdom was taken captive by Assyria.

**Obviously, the situation was bleak with no hope in sight.**

##### **3. The prophecy itself.**

###### **(1) About the place – Bethlehem – Ephrathah.**

Bethlehem means – place of bread. Ephrathah (ancient name for Bethlehem) means fruitful. This, of course, was the birthplace of King David ( I Samuel 16:1). People would know that, so the mention of this place would have significance to those who heard the message of Micah.

Note the phrase describing Bethlehem – “too little to be among the clans of Judah.” It could read, “too little to be mentioned among the thousands, or the families, of Judah.” This meant that Bethlehem didn’t get any recognition in the kingdom of Judah. Bethlehem? Where’s that? It doesn’t have any significance. That, however, was about to change, when the Christ would be born there. It was destined to be exalted in the world. At the same time, it depicts the humble little village in which Christ would be born, not in the capitol of Israel, Jerusalem, but about 5 miles south in the little insignificant town of Bethlehem.

###### **(2) About the Person.**

- **He would be a ruler in Israel – that stresses His humanity. He would have flesh.**
- **His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity – He would be God – deity.**

###### **What’s this telling us about the person prophesied in Micah 5:2?**

When the Messiah and Savior of the world would come, He would be God and man – the God man. Which tells us that in his deity he always existed. He was the eternal Son of God. Eternity coming into time.

**What did Isaiah say about the coming Messiah and Savior, Jesus Christ?**– He would be Immanuel – God with us – God and man! A child would be born (His humanity), and a Son would be given (referring to His existence as God in relationship to His Father). Isaiah told us that Jesus Christ would be God and Man – the God-man.

**What did Jeremiah tell us that Jesus would be?** He would be the Branch of David, referring to His humanity. Then Jeremiah told us that His name would be the LORD our Righteousness – referring to His deity. He would be God and man – the God-man.

The prophets who foretold the first coming of the Messiah/Savior agree that He would be the God/man. Of course that is what the incarnation of Jesus Christ is all about. The eternal Word, Jesus Christ, became flesh and tabernacled among us.

###### **(3) About the Person’s work**

He would go forth from ME (God the Father – stressing an eternal relationship with His heavenly Father), to be ruler in Israel.

Micah’s emphasis is that the Coming Messiah/Savior would be a Ruler, a King over Israel. This fits perfectly in the context of Micah 5: 1 where Judah would be besieged by the enemy Babylon, and there was needed someone to bring victory over the enemy and shepherd the people.

**Of course this is looking forward to Christ's second advent when He would set up His kingdom on earth for Israel. He would bring a righteous rule to Israel and the world bring peace to all.**

In Micah 5:2 the first and second advents of Christ are included, which happened in Isaiah and Jeremiah as well.

#### **4. The prophecies fulfillment (Matthew 2:1-12; Luke 2:1-20).**

Where was Christ born? Of course Matthew 2 and Luke 2 tell us that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem as the prophet foretold in Micah 5:2, some 700 years before.

**But the passage in Matthew 2 gives us the specifics as to how the verse in Micah 5:2 was used by chief priests and scribes when the wise men came from the east into Jerusalem asking "where is he born who is the King of the Jews, for we have seen His star in the east and have come to worship Him" (Matthew 2:2).**

When Herod heard this, he was troubled and called the religious leaders together to ask where the Messiah would be born.

**What did the religious leaders tell Herod? Of course, they told Herod what Micah 5:2 said.** They knew what the Old Testament prophet had said. When Herod told the wise men that it was in Bethlehem, they journeyed to Bethlehem to see the Christ-child. Child here can refer to a new born. So although Joseph and Mary had moved into a house, Jesus was probably still a baby. The wise men worshipped the Lord, and presented to Jesus, gifts, gold (could represent Christ's deity-His royalty), frankincense (could represent Christ's purity), and myrrh (could represent Christ's death, for it was used for embalming). The wise men were told by God in a dream to not return to Herod, so they departed another way. Herod, being very jealous, and full of hatred, thinking that another King might take his place had all the male children two years and younger slain in Bethlehem and the surrounding area. Before this, God had warned Joseph in a dream to take Jesus and flee to Egypt.

**An amazing fulfillment of Micah's prophecy in Micah 5:2 – a prophecy fulfilled some 700 years after it was given.**

**What are the lessons we can learn from this phenomenal prophecy of Micah in 700 B.C. and its fulfillment 700 years later?**

#### **V. Lessons we can learn from Micah's prophecy in Micah 5:2.**

##### **1. The Bible is more than just good literature.**

Someone has said that the Bible is not a book that someone would write if he could, or could write if he would. The various prophecies in the Bible that have already come true, verify that the Bible is truly a unique book not from men but from God. In fact there are some 300 Old Testament prophecies concerning Christ's first coming. Stoner did a probability of just eight prophecies coming true in one person and it was 10 to the 32 power.

##### **2. The Bible is reliable and accurate.**

For a prophecy to be made in 700 years before it happens, and then for that prophecy to be fulfilled accurately tells us that the Bible is completely reliable and accurate. Of course, as we just mentioned, there are many other prophecies about Christ's first advent given in the Old Testament. God's word is true. God does not lie. He can use men of old to pen a message from Himself that is totally reliable, accurate, and without error in the original manuscripts. This is a first class miracle, but the God of the Bible is the God of miracles.

##### **3. Both the Old and New Testaments are necessary for understanding God's complete plan for us and the world.**

What is in shadow in the Old Testament becomes substance in the New Testament. (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6)  
What is enfolded in the Old Testament is unfolded in the New Testament (Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:6).

It's like love and marriage and the horse and carriage. You can't have one without the other. So it is with the Old and New Testaments. You can't have one without the other. They fit together like a big puzzle bringing glory to God as the theme of the Bible is: "Christ is coming, Christ has come, and Christ is coming again." Yes the theme of the Bible is Christ.

#### 4. **Jesus is the One who deserves our worship.**

The Matthew 2 passage is filled with all kinds of unanswered questions.

The magi from the east coming into Jerusalem - Who were they, and where did they come from exactly?

The star that they saw in the east - How did they recognize that the star was the star of the King of the Jews.

Why were the magi coming to worship the King of the Jews anyway?

Why were they bringing the Christ-child gold, frankincense, myrrh?

Perhaps they were astrologers who had made contact with Jewish exiles or with prophecies going back to time of Daniel. Perhaps God had given them a special revelation of the Christ by using a specific star, for Jesus is the bright and morning Star.

**Somewhere, somehow, these men had received a special revelation from the true and living God and they responded in faith to that revelation about the King of Jews who had been born and they came on a long journey to find Him and worship Him. Knowing the Jerusalem was the capitol of the Jewish people, they came there looking for Jesus, born King of the Jews.**

**When they were told where Jesus was to be born, they asked no other questions, they had no doubts, but they started traveling south toward Bethlehem. As they went the star appeared as they journeyed, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. – They were going to get to see the KING of the Jews.**

**When they came into the house where the Christ-child was, they worshipped Him –**

Giving Him themselves.

Giving Him their trust.

Giving Him their treasures. – gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Yes, Jesus was truly the King of the Jews. He was also a prophet and a priest. The Jews had their King crucified. But it was not without a purpose. For Jesus could not be the King of the Jews, the King of the World, or the King of our lives without going to the old rugged cross, and there being made sin for us, to pay the penalty for our breaking God's law, which is death, being buried and rising again from the grave, to provide us forgiveness and eternal life.

#### 5. **Jesus is the One who gives us eternal HOPE.**

**(1) Back in Micah's day** in the midst of the oppression, idolatry, and wickedness of that day. I' sure that this prophecy about a ruler of Israel who would be born in Bethlehem gave those who listened a ray of hope in their dark world that was going to be judged by God. They may not have understood what it all meant, but I would think that it gave them a bit of hope in a dark world.

**(2) Jesus was born in Bethlehem as prophesied.** The announcement was made via a star to Gentiles living in the east, and they came to Jerusalem looking for the King of the Jews so that they could worship HIM. When they discovered where he was to be born, they went directly to Bethlehem, and on the way seeing the star that brought them to Jerusalem and they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. They worshipped the child, and then God told them to return home another way warned by God not to go back to Herod. We are not told, but I would imagine those magi returned home filled with hope – They had seen the KING of the Jews, who would be a ruler some day. **But they were filled with HOPE because they obeyed the LORD and did as He directed.**

**(3) For us today,** Jesus has died on the cross to pay our penalty for breaking God's law. He was buried, and He rose again. Through faith in Christ, believing that Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again from the dead, we have His forgiveness and eternal life.

**Now Christ lives in us spiritually. Christ in you, the HOPE of glory (Colossians 1:27).**

**Christ is our eternal HOPE!!**

**What is HOPE!!** Biblical hope is not like the worlds' idea of hope that perhaps something might possibly happen - a hope in mankind, who is here today and gone tomorrow.

**HOPE in Christ is the anticipation that God is going to do something good – that which is in His will for our good and His glory. Romans 8:28 – All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

**Christ's hope for us is always based upon His death, burial and bodily resurrection. That's why there is forgiveness in Christ for salvation, and for daily living when we sin (I John 1:9). That's why there is always a new beginning in Christ. True hope in Christ resides in Him, in His cross and the open tomb. That's why Christ has begotten believers unto a living HOPE not a dead hope.**

**But it is up to each of us to take hold of the HOPE as a believer in Jesus Christ, and go forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. Obeying the LORD as the magi did fills our lives with Christ's HOPE!!**

### **The NEGATIVE**

#### **The Religious Leaders**

**Think about the chief priests and scribes in Jerusalem at the time of Christ's birth.**

**Did they know in the Old Testament where the Christ would be born? Certainly, for they knew where the passage was and quoted from it when Herod asked where the Messiah was to be born.**

**Who went to Bethlehem to see and worship the Christ-child, the King of the Jews? The religious leaders? No. The Gentiles who heard where the Christ-child would be born and they found Him and their lives were changed, filled with HOPE.**

**The religious leaders didn't even go five miles south to Bethlehem to see the Christ- child and worship Him. No hope!**

**It's possible to read the Bible, and know what it says, but never have it transform one's life as one by faith accepts Christ as Savior and lives in the light and power of His indwelling person by obeying HIM who gives the believer an everlasting HOPE.**

#### **The Herods Of The Day**

**But the evil one is always around the corner, as well, trying to take away that HOPE, or cause us to doubt, or to give up on God. Herod is the picture of one who was used by the evil one to try and stamp out the HOPE that Jesus would bring.**

**There are Herods at this Christmas time trying to do away public recognition of Christmas. I heard of some trying to get people to say, "Merry Thursday," rather than Merry Christmas.**

### **THE POSITIVE IN CHRIST**

#### **In This Life.**

**The message of Christmas is that in this hopeless world, there is the true eternal HOPE in Jesus Christ for those who will accept Him as Savior and let His HOPE fill their lives.**

**And it's not always easy. But God is there with us to see us through here as we HOPE in HIM!!**

**In that process of growing in Christ's hope, we look for the blessed HOPE and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ.**

#### **For The Next Life**

**It also means that we have HOPE beyond this life.**

**We sorrow not as those who have no HOPE. We have a living eternal HOPE in Jesus Christ based upon His bodily resurrection!**

**We who have loved ones who have gone on before us who knew the Lord, we will see them some day, and we will all gather around God's throne - - -**

**And give Him praise that He is our eternal SAVIOR (Isaiah), He is our eternal LIFE (Jeremiah), and our eternal HOPE (Micah), to the glory of God.**