

Our Glorious Shepherd-King - Micah 5:1-6

Introduction – Micah 4-5 is a lengthy description of the rule of the Messiah, our Lord, Jesus Christ. His name is never mentioned here, but we know without a doubt this is the case because of Matt 2:6. These two chapters describe for us many of the details of the reign of Zion under the King of kings. This passage in particular, however, gives us several details of the personal character and public dominion of our glorious Shepherd-King.

Another Contrast (v1) – As with so many of these oracles, we begin with another picture of complete weakness. The siege upon this strong city of Jerusalem points out the failure of those kings to lead and protect the people. God humiliates these kings in His ‘eye for eye’ justice. Before we feel too sorry for Jerusalem, remember, God is simply bringing upon them what they brought upon the weak and less fortunate (2:8, 3:2-3, 9-10, 7:2-6).

We were told to “*Be in pain*” in 4:10, and to “*Arise and thresh*” in 4:13. Here, the command is to “*Gather yourself in troops*”. The idea of not losing hope remains, and in the next verses, is explained. What the mighty Jerusalem cannot produce, little Bethlehem will.

A Foretelling of Christ (vv 2-6) – What is the nature of this coming King? And what will His dominion look like?

Origin – Little Bethlehem Ephrathah is His hometown. This was the birthplace of David, son of Jesse, the Ephrathite (1 Sam 17:12). Out of the root of Jesse would come the Messiah (Is 11:1). At the time of Christ’s birth, this town is known as ‘the city of David’.

Another Origin – “*Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting*”. This is not simply harkening back to the promise of One coming as the Son of David. The language is like that of the eternal existence of God (Ps 90:1-2). Jesus said of Himself “*Before Abraham was, I AM*” (John 8:58). In this Messiah, we were chosen “*before the foundation of the world*” (Eph 1:4).

Born of a Woman (v3) – Mary is not the antecedent directly. Bethlehem is being spoken of metaphorically. But Isaiah gives a more direct prophecy (Is 7:14). Galatians 4:4 teaches us that this is fulfilled in the ‘fullness of time’. This doctrine of the humanity of Christ allows Him to fully call us ‘His brethren’ (Heb 2:11).

His Remnant – Thousands of His own brethren, the Jews, are converted at Pentecost, and then beyond (Acts 2:41, 47). This religion was so Jewish in its origin that it was considered a sect of the Hebrew people.

He Shall Stand (v4) – This verb designates perseverance, durability and permanence. This Ruler is established and will not be moved.

He Shall Feed – This verb means to tend to, to pasture, to care for, or to shepherd as to a flock – just as a true Son of David would. Jesus was not blazing new paths when He said that He was the good shepherd (John 10:11-21). As King, He is no despot or tyrant as the other kings had been. He cares for His flock.

Strength and Majesty – He rules in strength, and our response is to rest (Psalm 23). He rules in great majesty, and our response is to mix great reverence with our familiarity to Christ. “*Let all the angels of God worship Him*” (Heb 1:6).

To the Ends of the Earth – These small insignificant beginnings are the stuff of God’s world conquest. Little stones become great mountains (Dan 2:44-45).

Peace (v5) – He is the Prince of Peace (Is 9:6), and by His kingdom, His children will experience general peace and welfare over the enemies of God. Whatever our plight, He will deliver us (v6).

Seven and Eight – These numbers illustrate that God will raise up plenty of leaders, undershepherds empowered by His Spirit to rule on His behalf and to accomplish these promises (Eph 4:11-16, 1 Pet 5:1-4).

Implications –

Christ, our King – Christ is simply the Greek translation of Messiah. Both are titles, not originally names. They mean ‘annointed one’, and with regard to a ruler, it is the activity that inaugurates a king to his office. We speak of Christ as our Shepherd easy enough, but what of our King? Old Testament prophecies of Christ abound over His kingship – “*Once I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever, And his throne as the sun before Me*” (Psalm 89:35-36).

While this is not manifest in the world today, is this any excuse that it is not manifest in His people now? We lack the majesty in our worship and in our devotion because Christ is our Savior, but not our Lord. We would not be described as in Acts 9:31 – ‘walking in the fear of the Lord’.

A Lowly Mindset – He came to be King, but He washed His disciples feet. He is a servant-king. Having all the glory of God, He humbled Himself and became a servant (Phil 2:5-10). During His ministry on earth, He was always given to prayer, displaying His faith in His Father, so that He served “*in the strength of the Lord.*” (Mic 5:4).

And so we should wash one another's feet. We should find our places as leaders to be places of chief-servants. And how much more, if the Son of God was driven to pray, should we be given to prayer? Our Shepherd-King is our great Teacher and we are to imitate Him.

Sharing the Load – While all the work of the salvation of the world has, in one real sense, been accomplished in Christ already, there is another sense in which we are to participate in the work of the salvation of the world. We are the seven shepherds and eight princely men. We are that remnant, and our call is to the ends of the earth. Who was born in Bethlehem? Jesus Christ our Savior – yes. And Jesus Christ, our glorious King.

Dave Hatcher – December

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