

O Little Town - Micah 5:1-15

Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

We have an all-to-early Christmas sermon this week. In the midst of the indictment on God's people and the pronouncement of judgment, God gives Micah a picture of a coming king, and Micah predicts the location of His birth. Of course, we will sing, *O Little Town of Bethlehem* in a month or so (it's a problem if you are already singing Christmas songs), as Mary gives birth to Jesus in the village of Bethlehem, and a feeding trough becomes the Messiah's first crib. As a result, we generally romanticize this town, picturing it in ways that probably make it more significant than it was.

Bethlehem really was a small redneck town. Nothing there other than a small shepherding village in the hills outside of Jerusalem, which was six miles away. With cars, six miles might seem like a suburb, but in days when the journey was on foot, six miles was a couple hour trip. The people who lived here were shepherds and their families, people who were basic nobodies in the culture. Those of importance lived in Jerusalem, the center of culture, government, religion, and commerce. Or in Jericho to the west, a town along the Jordan and on an important trade route. But nothing happens in Bethlehem. So its actually a bit absurd when Micah predicts the birth of this future promised King in Bethlehem.

This text is so rich. Remember, Micah is a 8th Century prophet, speaking to God's people in the 700's BC, or about 700 years before Jesus is born. While they are God's people, their story is of unfaithfulness, idolatry, and a litany of evil and horrible practices leading to oppression and injustice. God has been faithful and patient, yet, to defend His glory He must act. In Micah's day the Assyrians were the most powerful empire, coming from the northeast and wreaking havoc in their land. The northern kingdom of Israel had already fallen, and at the time of this prophetic word the Assyrians are in a second campaign working to take down Jerusalem and the whole nation. While God does intervene and rescue His people, they are reminded of their weakness and inability to stand against this foe (v. 1). Yet, in the midst of the warnings and woes, Micah joins the other prophets as he points us to the only true hope for Israel.

From the earliest pages of Scripture the story shows us the absolute mess of humanity, and our inability to remedy our problem or really change our ways. Yet, even in the Fall story about Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 the promise is that one seed of the woman would come crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15). This is the first prediction of a single person who will come in history to restore God's Kingdom and defeat sin, death, hell, and the grave. The further into the story the worse the human predicament becomes, and the identity and mission of this single person is more clearly revealed. In the Old Testament story this promise takes an entirely new shape when God makes a covenant with David that includes a future king from David's line who would take the throne as an eternal King ruling and eternal Kingdom on an eternal throne. When we speak of a Messiah, we are talking about this anointed king promised in the Old Testament. After David every prophet sent by God to His people is given further revelation about the identity as well as details about this singular human life. In fact, there is such a wealth of these prophetic predictions about the life of Jesus that it is possible to construct a fairly full biography of Jesus' life purely from these ancient texts. They give full details of Mary's pregnancy, Jesus' birth, their flight to Egypt, information about where Jesus would grow up, details about his life, ministry and teaching. And there are numerous passages that reveal the type of death Jesus would experience and the glory of the resurrection. Beyond this, there are also clues that this person living in history is more than merely a human. Isaiah tells of the virgin birth of

Emmanuel, which means “God with us.”

Here, Micah tells us that this King would be born in Bethlehem, but then tells us that the one born in Bethlehem is, “Whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days.” This language is used elsewhere in the Old Testament to speak about God’s eternity. So get this, Micah is telling us that One who has always existed will be born in Bethlehem. He then tells these people that the birth and life of this person will draw God’s people back to Him as the Messiah rules the Kingdom of God and serves the people of God as the Good Shepherd.

So two quick applications as we journey through life. First, prophecies such as this one in Micah confirm the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible. God is in the pages of Scripture making Himself known. No human could pull off these prophecies and the fulfillment that happens. Second, it affirms the identity of Jesus as this promised Messiah. He is worthy of our trust and praise.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Ezekiel 48	Judges 1	Judges 2	Judges 3	Judges 4	Judges 5	Judges 6

Reading from this past week: Micah 5:1-15

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Micah 6:1-15

Family Worship

Song - *King of Kings*

<https://youtu.be/QSnGYGr7sPg?si=PxawdOw7zG-gixMU>

Gospel Project

Unit: The Death & Resurrection of Jesus

Story: Jesus was put on trial

Big Picture Question: How is Jesus the perfect King?

Answer: Jesus perfectly rules over the universe as the King of Kings.

Scripture: John 18

New City Catechism

Question #45: Is baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?

Answer: No, only the blood of Christ and the renewal of the Holy Spirit can cleanse us from sin.

Verse: Luke 3:16

Scripture

Micah 5:1-15

- What are some of the other prophecies about the coming of the Messiah? Spend a little time this week as a family or C-group looking up some of these.
- What exactly does Micah prophecy here? How is this prophetic prediction fulfilled in the story we will celebrate at Christmas?
- How can a text like this give us assurance and help us in times of doubt?

Prayer

*Thank God for the wonder and beauty of the prophetic word and the promises of Jesus made hundreds of years before He came.

*Thank God for the amazing leaders God has given Genesis and pray for their leadership.