

# Our Shepherd-King

When I try to recall the earliest days of my life, I find that I can only remember a very faint vision in my mind. My earliest memory is of lying on the floor, wrapped in a blanket. I saw mom and dad in the distance. I have no idea what they were doing or why I was there. I have no idea where the room was. When I think about my birth, I realize that I did not choose my parents. I did not choose my country or the year in which I would be born.

When Christ was born, He had chosen His parents. They were Mary and Joseph, a poor couple, descendants of King David. Both Matthew and Luke tell us they were both in the kingly line of David. Luke 2:1-2 tells us the year of Jesus' birth was roughly 3 to 2 B.C. The early Church fathers

amazingly attest that Jesus was born about 3 or 2 B.C. People often say Christ was born about 4 or 6 B.C. But if you read the historical data, many early Church fathers say His birth occurred somewhere between 2 B.C. to 3 B.C. That is important because we

know that Jesus started His ministry when He was about thirty years old.

We believe His ministry was three to four years long—and then He died. Amazingly, if you read Daniel 9:24-26, you discover that these prophetic verses actually tell us the year in which Jesus would die. This prophecy requires that the reader does some computation. If we carefully do the math, we learn that the Messiah had to die in A.D. 33. That

means that no one who died after A.D. 33 or before A.D. 33 could fulfill the prophecy. The Messiah had to die in the year A.D. 33. If we then work backward thirty years from the start of His ministry, we arrive at 3 to 2 B.C. for the birth of Jesus Christ. What that means is that Jesus Christ is really the only candidate we have to fulfill these prophecies.

**DATE OF THE BOOK OF MICAH.** One of the prophecies that we are very interested in today is Micah 5:2-5. The prophecy of Micah is important because it pinpoints the city in which Jesus would be born. Micah was written about 700 B.C. That makes this an incredible and true prophecy. For those with doubts about Micah, consider the following. The book of Micah is contained in the Dead Sea Scrolls,

which are dated about 150 B.C. Then Micah is also contained in the Septuagint, which was compiled in 270 B.C. That means Micah existed at least by 270 B.C. The next fact is that Micah is quoted in Jeremiah 26:8. There is widespread consensus that Jere-

miah was written about 586-570 B.C. That means that the book of Micah existed at least by 600 B.C. So a date of 700 B.C. for Micah is very credible, indeed, right on the mark.

What is even more interesting is that the prophecy is recognized by Jewish scholars as referring to the Messiah. In the Jewish book, Targum, Jonathan states that Micah 5:2 is about the Messiah. Here is the actual passage.



Traditional Place of Messiah's Birth - Church of Nativity in Bethlehem

Out of thee shall proceed in my presence the Messiah, to exercise sovereignty over Israel, whose name has been called from eternity, from the days of the everlasting.

We agree that this passage is talking about the Messiah and that He is going to rule over Israel. Therefore, we are going to examine this passage carefully.

**PROPHECY OF MICAH 5:2-5.** Micah 5:2 says,

*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.  
His goings forth are from long ago,  
From the days of eternity. Micah 5:2 (NASB)*

This is an incredible passage, an unbelievable passage. There are two things that I want you to see immediately in this verse. The first is that it names a city, and then speaks of the characteristics of the Messiah. The city name is very simple. Micah says,

*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah . . .*

You might believe that you know where that city is located. But did you realize that there were actually two cities named Bethlehem in the land of Canaan at the time that this was written? One city was down in Galilee and one was up in Judea. The one in Judea is five miles from Jerusalem, and the one in Galilee is not too far from Capernaum, the headquarters for Jesus' ministry. The Bethlehem Micah 5:2 refers to is the Bethlehem near Jerusalem, because that Bethlehem bears the name Bethlehem Ephrathah. Let us examine what the prophecy says.

*But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,  
Too little to be among the clans of Judah . . .*

This prophecy pinpoints the city in which Jesus Christ would be born. The prophecy could have just said Bethlehem, and then left it up to whoever is reading the passage to figure it out. Instead, Micah is precise. He does not leave anything to

the imagination. This is so specific that only one city in all of Canaan qualifies, and that is the city of Bethlehem five to six miles south of Jerusalem. 1 Samuel 17:12 tells us that King David was born there.

Next we are told that the city is very small. The scripture reads "too little to be among the clans of Judea." The city was so small it was insignificant. In a number of lists of cities in the Old Testament, this city is missing; it is not even mentioned.

**MESSIAH WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM EPHRATHAH.** Now if we jump to Luke 2:1-7, we find that Jesus was born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. Jesus was born in Bethlehem because Mary and Joseph made a trip from Nazareth South to Jerusalem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, Jesus was born.

Mary and Joseph were poor at this point. Luke 2:4-7 says,

*Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:4-7 (NASB)*

Now if you read down to verse 21, you learn that eight days later Jesus was circumcised. Verse 23 tells us that a number of days passed by before they brought Jesus for dedication at the temple. In verses 23 and 24, they offered a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. This tells us that Mary and Joseph did not have a lot of money. Leviticus 12:8 helps us to further understand this. There Moses gave a provision for poor people. When a poor couple is dedicating a child, they could offer either two turtledoves or two young pigeons. That is exactly what Mary and Joseph did. That means this couple was insignificant from the world's perspective. Our world typically considers poor couples to not be very important. Those in our culture and around the world who are considered to be important are the rich people. That was also true in the days when Jesus was born.

Do you understand what Jesus the Messiah did? Not only

did Jesus choose to be born in Bethlehem, an insignificant city, but He chose to be born to an insignificant, poor couple in the eyes of the world. Now think about it from the couple's perspective. We know that in Luke 1 the angel Gabriel visited Mary and told her that she was going to have a child who would grow up to be the Messiah. Then in Matthew, the angel visited Joseph in a dream. This couple was given the greatest Christmas gift or blessing possible!

Since Jesus was God, He chose His parents. He chose poor parents. He chose an insignificant city. It is important to realize what God did. He could have chosen to be born in Jerusalem, which would have been a wealthy, big city. He could have chosen a rich family. But He did not do that. Do you know what that tells me? It tells me I have a God who is concerned about us. Our majestic, great God was willing to humble Himself on our behalf. When He came to earth and took on human flesh, He demonstrated that humility. That is why we read in Scripture that He is opposed to the proud. He gives preference to the humble. In fact, Jesus said He was humble, gentle and meek. Therefore, the prophecy in Micah 5:2 communicates that He came to be born in an insignificant town to a poor family the world would have considered of little importance.

**THE MESSIAH WILL RULE FOREVER.** Now let us look at the characteristics of the Messiah, of this One who was going to be born.

*From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel.  
His goings forth are from long ago,  
From the days of eternity.  
Micah 5:2b (NASB)*

Now I want you to notice that it says "from you One will go forth for Me." When it says "for Me," that implies the verse is a prophecy. That is, Jesus is going forth for God. God is the one who is speaking here. "He is going to go forth for Me." One might ask, "Why is He going forth for Me?" Genesis 49:10 helps to answer the question in part. The prophecy states,

*The scepter shall not depart from Judah,*

*Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,  
Until Shiloh comes,  
And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. Genesis  
49:10 (NASB)*

The last part of this verse makes it very clear He is talking about the fact He is going to rule. It refers to a scepter, the implement a king held in his hand as a symbol of his authority. The verse is talking about a king, One who would come and rule, to whom the people would submit.

Now there is another prophecy that is also important to read. It is in Numbers 24:17. It says,

*I see him, but not now . . . Numbers 24:17 (NASB)*

Of course they did not see Him now—it is a prophecy! So it is talking about One who is going to come.

*I see him, but not now;*

*I behold him, but not near . . . Numbers 24:17 (NASB)*

It was not near; it was a long ways away. It is a prophecy.

*. . . A star shall come forth from Jacob . . . Numbers 24:17  
(NASB)*

And that is exactly where He came from.

*. . . A scepter shall rise from Israel. Numbers 24:17 (NASB)*

This is the same prophetic idea as Genesis 49:10. Numbers 24:17 is talking about the Messiah, about a ruler, about a king who would come.

In 2 Samuel 7:16-17, we have another prophecy. This is a promise from God given to King David. We call it the Davidic Covenant. I like to call it the Davidic Promise. God told him,

*Your house and your kingdom shall endure before Me . . . 2  
Samuel 7:16-17 (NASB)*

How long? ... a short time. We know that the kingdom did not last very long. By 722 B.C., the northern kingdom disappeared. The southern kingdom disappeared approximately in 605 B.C. But the covenant said the kingdom would continue forever! How can it be forever if both the northern and the southern kingdoms ceased back in the B.C. era? The only way that can happen is that there is One from David's line who is going to reign forever in the future. The verse says,

... forever; your throne shall be established forever. 2 Samuel 7:16-17 (NASB)

This is a prophecy about One who will come and rule forever.

Notice the rest of Micah 5:2 says "from you One will go forth for me to be ruler in Israel, and His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." That is a long ways back. When it says that He is from long ago, the word "long ago" has the idea of antiquity. When we read Proverbs 8:23, we find that the Hebrew word translated as "long ago" is actually used to refer to the earliest times of the earth. That is antiquity! That is a long time ago!

Then Micah 5:2 tells us the Messiah is "from the days of eternity." "Eternity" comes from the Hebrew word, *olam*. *Olam* has the idea of "everlasting" or "eternal." That means this individual is from eternity. Who qualifies? What does that mean about the person if He is both from antiquity and from eternity? That means this person is deity or is God. God is the only person who qualifies because we humans do not live forever. There is no human who has existed since the beginning of the earth. There is no human who has existed from eternity past. There is only one person who qualifies — God. Do you realize what this passage tells us? He is going to be born in Bethlehem. That means the One who is born in Bethlehem has to be both human and God together at the same time. This unbelievable prophecy was written at least 700 years before it actually occurred!

**THE MESSIAH IS BORN.** In Luke 1:26-32, the angel Gabriel came to earth and visited Mary. Verses 26-27 read,

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God

to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. Luke 1:26-27 (NASB)

So we are told that this angel came to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, a descendant of King David. Where was King David born? He was born in Bethlehem. The virgin's name was Mary.

And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." Luke 1:28-33 (NASB)

The Angel Gabriel came in and told Mary that this child that was going to be born in Bethlehem was going to reign forever! That agrees with the prophecies. Why can He reign forever? Because He is God, He can reign forever!

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35-36 (NASB)

Previously we made the point that the phrase "Son of God" just means God. That was an alternate phrase for the second person of the Trinity. Jesus makes that point in John 10. So we are talking about an incredible individual. We are talking about a person who enters this world as a man and He is God. He is Jesus the Christ.

**MAGI WORSHIP THE MESSIAH.** Matthew 2:1 is a passage with which most of us are familiar. It is an account about the Magi. The Magi, or the wise men came. They are often depicted as appearing with Jesus at the manger along

with Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. The only problem is that is not true. It is a nice sentiment, but it is not true. In reality the Magi actually came about two years later. In Luke 2 Jesus is in a manger; but in this chapter in Matthew, Jesus is in a house. So the magi actually came later, not at the same time as the shepherds. But that is not the part I want you to see. Look at verse 1 in Matthew 2. It says,

Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"  
Matthew 2:1-2a (NASB)

Now what were they looking for? They were looking for the king of the Jews.

... for we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, ...  
Matthew 2:2b-3a (NASB)

The reason King Herod was troubled was that he did not want competition.

... and all Jerusalem with him. Matthew 2:3b (NASB)

Verse 4 adds,

Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people ... Matthew 2:4a (NASB)

That is, the religious leaders.

... he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born.  
Matthew 2:4b (NASB)

Now this is unbelievable. Herod was the ruler in Judea and he did not know where the Messiah was going to be born! That tells us the political class was totally disconnected from the religious class. He had no idea where the Messiah was going to be born, so he brought all the religious leaders together and asked, "Where is the Messiah going to be

born?"

**THE SHEPHERD-KING.** Verses 5-6:

They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet:

'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,  
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS  
OF JUDAH;  
FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER  
WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'"

Matthew 2:5-6 (NASB)

The first part of this quote is from Micah 5:2. At the very end of the quote, 2 Samuel 5:2 was added. What is important about that passage? It tells us that the One who was going to come and be born in Bethlehem would also be a shepherd. The Messiah would be a shepherd-king.

**MESSIAH'S CAPITAL WOULD BE DESTROYED.** Verses 3 through 5 tell us exactly what He was going to do. There are two things that I want you to see that He was going to do. Verse 3 says,

Therefore He will give them *up* until the time  
When she who is in labor has borne a child.  
Then the remainder of His brethren  
Will return to the sons of Israel.  
Micah 5:3 (NASB)

In order to understand this verse, look at the second phrase. It says, "When she who is in labor has borne a child." This is talking about Israel giving birth to the Messiah. It makes sense, if you stop and think about it. "When she who is in labor has borne a child." Who was in labor from a prophetic viewpoint? The prophecies have all been saying that the Messiah is going to come and be born. Who was going to bring the child into the world? The child would be born in Bethlehem and would come from a Jewess living in Israel. That is exactly what this verse is saying. So "she who is in labor has borne a child."

Let us return to the first part of the verse and look at the way it reads. Notice the little word "up" is in italics. Italics

are used in our Bibles to communicate that a word or words have been added that are not in the original Hebrew. Therefore, I am going to remove the word “up” and read it like this:

**Therefore He will give them until the time when she who is in labor has borne a child.**

Now if we read it that way, it says that He gives them up after the child has been born. We know that when Jesus was born, He was born in Bethlehem. We know from Luke 21:20-24 that Jesus prophesied Israel would be destroyed because they would kill Him. That occurred in A.D. 70. The Romans invaded Jerusalem, utterly destroyed the city and slaughtered the people. God gave them until the time the child was born and then Jerusalem was destroyed. That is what the first part of that verse says.

Why is that important? Because this prophecy is incredible. This prophecy is stunning. Not only does it tell us the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Not only is He God; He is man and God. It tells us that He abandons the people and they are destroyed or eliminated.

**MESSIAH’S PEOPLE WILL RETURN.** Now look at the last part of the verse.

**Then the remainder of His brethren  
Will return to the sons of Israel.  
Micah 5:3b (NASB)**

Israel is coming back to the land! When did they come back? They started coming back in 1948. That is when the State of Israel was recreated in the Middle East. We know that in the tribulation period they are going to continue coming back. We also know that in the millennial kingdom, the Messiah will actually reign or rule when all of the Jews have returned. Why? That has to occur because the kingdom will be worldwide. It will be everywhere. All of the Jews then will be part of the kingdom. Therefore, the last part of this verse is saying, “then the remainder of His brethren will return to the kingdom.” They have already started coming back. In the tribulation period, they are going to come back even faster, and in the kingdom they will be completely back.

After it says “borne a child,” and then “a remainder,” there are actually several thousands of years, perhaps more, sandwiched in the middle of this verse. It is not uncommon in Scripture to see such lapses of time.

**MESSIAH WILL REIGN AS KING.** Verse 4 tells us that the Messiah is going to shepherd Israel—His flock. Verse 4 says,

**And He will arise and shepherd His flock . . . Micah 5:4a  
(NASB)**

That means He is going to begin His reign as king. He is the shepherd-king.

**In the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.  
And they will remain,  
Because at that time He will be great  
To the ends of the earth. Micah 5:4b (NASB)**

The kingdom will be worldwide. Why does it say ‘in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God?’ The only way that He can be God and also have a God is that a Trinity must exist. This verse assumes the existence of the Trinity. In Isaiah 43 God says, “I am God and there is nobody else.” “I am the Savior and there is no other.” Then He repeats it. He says, “I am the only God, and there is no other God.” Then He repeats this thought over and over and over. When we arrive at Isaiah 48:16, God has been speaking all the time. He has been saying, “I am God. I am the only one, and there is nobody else. I am the only Savior. I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end. I am God and there is no other God.” In verse 16 we read,

**And now the Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit. Isaiah  
48:16 (NASB)**

Now if God has been speaking the whole time and has been declaring that He is the only God—there is no other God—why all of a sudden does He say, “And the Lord God has sent Me,” and the “Me” has been speaking the whole time? Remember the Old Testament says there is only one God.

The New Testament says there is only one God, but yet there is God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. So when we read this passage and it says the Lord is God, you have to think Trinity.

We are reading about God reigning as king here on earth. He is going to reign for eternity. Verse 5 is the end of the prophecy,

**This One will be our peace. Micah 5:5a (NASB)**

The Messiah is going to establish peace here on earth. Read Isaiah 9:6. There we are told that He is the Eternal God, the Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace. This Messiah was promised to be God who would come in human flesh, would be born in Bethlehem, would reign forever and fulfill the Old Testament prophecies.

**OUR SHEPHERD-KING.** This One who was born, and who we celebrate this week, is God in human flesh, Jesus Christ. I want you to think about something we do not normally contemplate. We think about Jesus being a baby. We think about Him coming and reigning as a king. But did you know He was a shepherd? Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd.” Have you ever wondered what God thinks about when He thinks about a shepherd? When we think about a shepherd, we think about a person who cares for his sheep or other animals. Go to Psalm 23. I want you to see what God thinks about when He thinks about a shepherd. The message is that the King is a Shepherd-King. He is not just a ruler like our politicians. He is a Shepherd-King who cares for people. Verse 23 says,

**The LORD is my shepherd,  
I shall not want. Psalm 23:1 (NASB)**

Right there, if you were not sure who the shepherd is, God says, “I am the shepherd.” The Lord is my shepherd. Actually, David is speaking. He says, “I will not want.” That means God our shepherd will provide for us. When I was a child, I used to read this passage as, “The Lord is my shepherd and I do not want Him.” That is how I used to read it and what I thought it meant. Finally as an adult, I was

reading and thinking, “Wait a minute, I had it wrong. The Lord is my shepherd.” So as a result I am not going to want. That tells us this ruler is going to be a shepherd and a king. He is going to take care of us in the millennial kingdom and into eternity.

Look at verse 2,

**He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
He leads me beside quiet waters.  
Psalm 23:2 (NASB)**

Now if I am a lamb, this is important to me because that means He provides—something to eat, something to drink.

Verse 3 says,

**He restores my soul;  
He guides me in the paths of righteousness  
For His name’s sake.  
Psalm 23:3 (NASB)**

I want you to notice what He guides you into. He does not guide you down to a great brook, He guides you into righteousness. That is the kind of shepherd we have as our God.

**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I fear no evil, for You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.  
Psalm 23:4 (NASB)**

Why are we at peace and not fearful according to this verse? Because He is with us. Think about the shepherd-king being with us. We are reminded that He is relational. He is not distant.

**You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;  
You have anointed my head with oil;  
My cup overflows.  
Psalm 23:5 (NASB)**

Talking about blessings, watch this! He is our provider, He is our guide. He is our protector. He is the one who blesses.

He is also our Savior.

Verse 6 is next,

Surely goodness and loving kindness will follow me all the  
days of my life,

And I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

Psalm 23:6 (NASB)

There is only one way we can live with Jesus Christ forever.

He tells us,

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten

Son . . . John 3:16a (NASB)

He is the unique Son, the one and only Son.

. . . that whoever believes in Him shall not perish . . . John

3:16b (NASB)

That is promise 1. Promise 2 is you will have eternal life.

That is your shepherd-king. That is a different kind of king.

That is what we look forward to.

**CONCLUSION.** I trust that you enjoyed the prophecy. The prophecy is unbelievable and precise. It is exact. It was written 700 years before it actually came about. In fact, we are still waiting for parts of the prophecy to be fulfilled. It has not all been completed. I hope that it encourages you during this time of the Christmas season.