



GRACE

HAPPENINGS

A WORD FROM PASTOR STEVE:

Do you ever wonder of the prophesy of Christ's coming?

Let's look at the connection between Micah 5 and Jesus Christ. It is really crystal clear. In Matthew 2:1-6 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? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 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.'"

The chief priests and the scribes knew that Micah 5 was a reference to the Messiah. So they told King Herod: He will be born in Bethlehem. God saw to it that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, even though His mother and Joseph were living in Nazareth when she got pregnant. He had to be born in Bethlehem, because He was this ruler of Micah 5.

This was the popular understanding among the people as well, because in John 7:42 they ask, "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So both the leaders and the people knew that Micah 5 predicted the coming of the Messiah-the ruler who would be king in Israel. And so much more than king in Israel.

Micah 5:4b says, "Because at that time He will be great to the ends of the earth." The coming Messiah--the coming King--was not just a tribal king. He would be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. He would be great to the ends of the earth, not just in Israel.

Now let's look at what Micah tells us about Jesus the Messiah.

First, is the contrast between the insignificance of Bethlehem and the great significance of the one born there.

Micah 5:2 - "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."

Bethlehem is scarcely worth counting among the clans of Judah, yet God chooses to bring His magnificent Messiah out of this town. Why? One answer is that the Messiah is of the lineage of David and David was a Bethlehemite. That's true, but it misses the point of verse two. The point of verse two is that Bethlehem is small--not great because David was born there. God chooses something small, quiet, out of the way, and does something there that changes the course of history and eternity.



Why? Because when He acts this way we can't boast in the merits or achievements of men, but only in the glorious mercy of God. We can't say, "Well, of course He set His favor on Bethlehem, look at the human glory Bethlehem has achieved!" All we can say is, "God is wonderfully free; He is not impressed by our bigness; He does nothing in order to attract attention to our accomplishments; He does everything to magnify His glorious freedom and mercy."

December 2017

Here am I. Send me!

Isaiah 6:8 – Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"
Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

God chose a stable so no innkeeper could boast, "He chose the comfort of my inn!" God chose a manger so that no wood worker could boast, "He chose the craftsmanship of my bed!" He chose Bethlehem so no one could boast, "The greatness of our city constrained the divine choice!" And He chose you and me, freely and unconditionally, to stop the mouth of all human boasting. This is the point of Micah 5.

The deepest meaning of the littleness and insignificance of Bethlehem is that God does not bestow the blessings of the Messiah--the blessings of salvation--on the basis of our greatness or our merit or our achievement. He does not elect cities or people because of their prominence or grandeur or distinction. When He chooses He chooses freely, in order to magnify the glory of His own mercy, not the glory of our distinctions. So let us say with the angels, "Glory to God in the highest!" Not glory to us. We get the joy. He gets the glory.

Notice the second thing Micah shows us about Jesus, the Messiah. He makes clear that Christ secures for us the promises of God. Christ is the "yes" of all God's promises. If you trust Christ, you will inherit the promises. How does Micah show us this?

Any Jew in those days, hearing Micah predict the coming of a ruler out of Bethlehem who would feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, would think immediately of two people: David the King and the coming son of David, the Messiah. There are at least three links with David in this text. 1) David was from Bethlehem--that's why it was called the "city of David." 2) David was a ruler in Israel--he was the greatest ruler, a man after God's own heart. And 3) David was a shepherd as a boy, and later he was called the shepherd of Israel (Psalm 78:70-71).

"He also chose David His Servant, And took him from the sheepfolds; From the care of the ewes with suckling lambs He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people."

The point of these three links with David is this: Micah is reasserting the certainty of God's promise to David. The amazing thing about Micah is that he reasserts the certainty of this promise not at a time when Israel is rising to power, but at a time when Israel is sinking toward oblivion. The northern kingdom is destroyed and the southern kingdom will come under the judgment of God.

The coming of Christ was the confirmation of the promises of God. Here's the way Paul put it in Romans 15:8, "For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises given to the fathers." Or as he said in 2 Corinthians 1:20, "For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us." If you are in Christ by faith, you will inherit all the promises of God. Christmas is God's great nullification of all human boasting, and confirmation of all divine promises.

Now, Micah shows us that Christ will protect his people and give them peace.

Verses 4-5a tell us, "And He will arise and shepherd His flock In the strength of the Lord, 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. This One will be our peace."

First, He will arise. He won't lie around waiting for us to serve Him. He will be on the alert, working for those who trust Him as their shepherd.

Second, He will shepherd his flock. He will not leave us to find our own food. He will lead us in green pastures and beside still waters. There will be no need unmet in Jesus Christ.

Third, He will serve us "in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God." His good intentions for us will not be hindered by lack of strength. The strength of the Lord is omnipotent strength. Therefore, if you are trusting in Christ, omnipotent strength is on your side. Walk behind Him like a trusting sheep and He will overcome every obstacle to your purification and joy forever.

Fourth, notice that He shall be great to the ends of the earth. There will be no pockets of resistance unsubdued. Our security will not be threatened by any alien forces. Every knee will bow and confess Him Lord. The whole earth will be filled with His glory.

And finally (at the beginning of verse 5) He will be our peace. And, yes, in this context that includes final, earthly, political peace. One day the ruler--the King of Kings and Lord of Lords--will return and make that a reality!

The great Christmas carol will finally be fulfilled:
He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love.

Let me end this writing talking about a deeper peace. A peace that must happen before there can be peace on earth. There must be peace between us and God. Our unbelief and His wrath must be removed. That is our deepest need at Christmas and every day when we do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Micah knew it was coming. He had experienced it personally. He describes it beautifully at the very end of his book.

This was the great work of the Messiah yet to be done. Yes, there are enemies on earth that must be defeated if we are to have peace. But, the great enemy called sin and judgment—that is the greatest and worst enemy. The gospel at Christmas is this: This enemy Christ has trampled underfoot at the cross. So, for everyone who trusts in Him, their sins are cast into the depths of the sea. Therefore we say, not glory to us, but glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased! Amen.

REMEMBER OUR SHUT-INS

Pray for our shut-ins, send a card, make a phone call, pay a visit, pick up groceries / medicines. Addresses and phone numbers are in the directory or put cards of encouragement in the box above the mailboxes in the library and they will be delivered on a regular basis.

Wilma Davidson
Julie Lindsey
Gerry Kline
Russ Hearton
Roland Brooks

Carol Sarver
John Gay
Nina Johnson
Gerry Gladfelder
Wanda Buttrey



A Children's
Musical
by Kathie Hill and
Melody Morris

Presented by Grace Notes Children's Choir
Sunday, December 3, at 6:30 p.m.

"Let's start at the very ending, a very strange place to start.
But to understand Christmas, each chapter and verse, let's look
at Christmas in reverse.

If you wanna know why the Lord came to earth, we're gonna
show you Christmas in reverse. If you wanna know why the
Lord came to earth, we're gonna show you Christmas in
reverse, Christmas in reverse.

When Christmas is reversed, what remains is the Savior whose
love brought Him to earth!"

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Sunday: 8:15 Contemporary Worship
9:30 Sunday School
10:45 Traditional Worship
6:30 Against the Flow Youth
6:30 Evening Worship Service
Wednesday: 7:00 Bible Study & Prayer for Adults /
Pioneer Clubs / Against the Flow Youth

Rev. Steve Warner
Senior Pastor

Rev. Jon Barrett
Assistant Pastor

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

Sunday, December 10
6:30 p.m.

DECEMBER COMMUNION SERVICES SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17 DURING BOTH MORNING SERVICES

WHILE SHEPHERDS WATCHED THEIR FLOCKS

(Christmas in Reverse Version)

While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated on
the ground we got dirty, filthy dirty. Wouldn't you get dirty
seated on the ground?

While shepherds watched their flocks by night all seated with
the sheep we got smelly, stinky, smelly.

We were not the kind of company you'd keep. How unlikely,
in the night the glorious message came to these filthy, dirty,
stinky, smelly shepherds; the last of the least?

While shepherds watched their flocks by night an angel in the
sky scared us silly. Willy nilly, we ran around and found a
place to hide.

While shepherds watched their flocks by night an angel
brought good news "For on this day is a Savior, born in
Bethlehem for men like you." Angels We Have Heard on
High. While shepherds watched their flocks by night and left
to find the Babe.

We found hay bales, prickly. Hay bales around the manger
where the Baby lay. While shepherds watched their newborn
King they knew this Promised One came for shepherds, stinky
shepherds and so our sheep joined us in this song. They sang,
"Ba-ba-ba". While shepherds watched their flocks by night.



CATALOG WISH BOOK?

How many LL Bean, Land's End, Vermont Country Store and dozens of other catalogs, are mailed out from September to Christmas day? These alone should keep the USPS out of the red for the final quarter.

Speaking of the color red: I am reminded of the red blood Jesus shed on the cross for the salvation of sinners like me. How many Gospel catalogs do we share with others at this time of year? God's catalog comes with a marvelous story . . . John 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

The greatest gift ever! Comes with a lifetime guarantee! Best of all, it's FREE! No retailer can match that. Think about placing a salvation tract in all the gift's you hand out this Christmas season. Wish, hope and pray for the salvation of your family and friends. Share the real reason for the season.

(AND BACK TO CHRISTMAS IN REVERSE)

It came to pass, it came to be, a humble couple from Galilee went to Bethlehem and that is when Christ is born on Christmas.

It came to pass at the inn; the owner had no room for them, so he offered up a cozy cave, where Christ was born on Christmas day.

It came to pass, each fabulous fact; it came to pass, each awesome act.

It came to pass, but here is what stayed: the joy of Jesus on Christmas Day.

It came to pass, an angel sang good news to boys below. And this awesome sight caused such a fright when Christ was born on Christmas.

It came to pass, the shepherd's fear when they found the Baby dear sound asleep upon the hay when Christ was born on Christmas day.

(Chorus)

It came to pass, each fabulous fact; it came to pass each awesome act.

It came to pass, but here's what stayed: the joy of Jesus on Christmas Day

It came to pass, in the night, a marvelous star shone its light on the stall and the Lord of all, when Christ was born on Christmas.

It came to pass, the super star led some kings from afar. The Wise Men came on a camel train when Christ was born on Christmas day.

It came to pass, each fabulous fact; it came to pass each awesome act.

It came to pass, but here's what stayed: the joy of Jesus on Christmas day.

It came to pass, each fabulous fact; it came to pass each awesome act.

It came to pass, but here's what stayed: the joy of Jesus, this boy named Jesus,

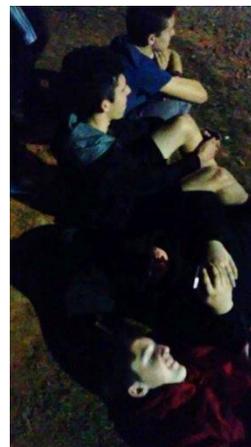
The joy of Jesus on Christmas day!

Do you know the JOY only JESUS can give?

During the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, what a better time to accept His free gift



**CHRISTMAS PARTY
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20
7:00 P.M.**



Against the Flow Youth enjoyed a day finding their way out of the Corn Maize



"Living Loved - The Journey Continues"
Women's Bible Study
Saturday, January 20
9:00-11:00 a.m.

All women and senior high aged young ladies are encouraged to attend as the journey continues!



