

Advent 2024, Long Foretold: The King, Micah 5:2-5, 12/15/24

Week 3 of Advent in our series **Long Foretold**. We are looking at 4 OT portraits of the coming Messiah, and of course as Christians, we believe the Messiah is Jesus born that first Christmas. We saw in the first portrait the Bridegroom coming with unconditional love, desiring a relationship with us. Last week, he will come like the Good Shepherd who would pursue his lost sheep to bring them home, even at the cost of his own life. Today from Micah 5 we are going to see a portrait of the Messiah as **the King**. Now, as Americans we have an interesting relationship with Kings. Generally, we are fascinated by them at a distance, but don't want them ruling us. Many Americans love to watch royalty across the pond in England- people were obsessed with the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton (2011), or when King Charles III, he was officially crowned in May last year. And we love kings in books and movies like King Arthur of Camelot, or King Aragorn in Lord of the Rings, or T'Challa, King of Wakanda in Black Panther...it seems we love kings and monarchies at a distance, but we don't want them too close. In fact as the land of the free, we don't want anyone ruling over us, that's what democracy is all about! And maybe when we think about a king, maybe we think oppression, subjugation, servitude, and loss of rights and freedom, and rightly so because of the history of flawed kings with that much power.

But maybe the reason we are so fascinated with kings is because we were actually made to have a good king, one unlike all the flawed kings of history to reign over our hearts and lives...maybe it's the King we are longing to restore this broken kingdom of earth and bring the ultimate peace and prosperity. That's the king who we will read about from Micah 5 is all about.

Micah 5:1-5a

Marshal your troops now, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod.

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel,

*whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. **3** Therefore Israel will be abandoned until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,*

*and the rest of his brothers return to join the Israelites. **4** He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD,*

in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they will live securely, he will be great unto the ends of the earth.

5 *And he will be our peace.*

Outline today from Micah 5 **When will the King come? What will the King be like? How do we respond to the King?**

When will the King come?

I want to start here because often it's difficult to read prophetic books like Micah and understand the timeline of prophetic events. Is this happening now? Is this happening in 10 years, 200 years? 1000 years? And sometimes it seems jumbled up. Let me help unjumble it for us a little with an illustration. If you have ever hiked a mountain range, you know it's challenging to judge distance between peaks. From some angles, it messes with your depth perception, it looks like the peaks are almost right on top of each other like **this guy in the Tetons, in Wyoming**. I've been hiking and thinking I'm at the peak, only to realize the actual summit is still miles away, or another 1000 vertical feet. The only way to get a proper perspective **[Picture]** is getting far enough away to see the whole range, and realize just how far the peaks are from each other.

This is how it is with the prophets, and specifically our prophecy here in Micah 5. Micah is like that hiker, the peaks of prophecy are spoken as if they are on top of each other but they may be many hundreds or thousands of years away. Take a look at this **[simple drawing]** As Micah is prophesying, some of what he says is about the current or near situation. V. 1- Micah says, "Get prepared Judah because Jerusalem is about to be set to siege." This is the **first peak**, exactly what happened in 588BC, the Babylonians came and sacked Jerusalem, two years later it fell, Judah's King Zedekiah was subjugated as he predicted. But, in verse 2-3 he looks out at the **second peak**, and says there is hope because of the birth of a king who would come to save his people, not only Israel but the world. This speaks of the 1st Advent of the King at Christmas centuries later. And then verses 3 and following he looks out at the **third peak**- the reigning of the King, some his reign was inaugurated at the victory of Jesus at the event of Easter, death, resurrection and ascension where he is ruling at the right hand of the Father. And some of which won't happen (the gathering of all the brothers v.3 (Israel) and the judgment of wickedness, the forever reigning on earth) until his second advent, when Jesus returns. This is where we get the preacher phrase "Already/Not Yet". But from Micah's perspective they are lined up, on top of each other, as if they are consecutive events, but in reality from the distance of time, we can see their separation.

What will the King be like?

Micah 5 tells us that this coming King will be utterly unique from any king who has ever ruled on this earth. Let me show four things Micah tells us about this King.

1. He is a King of Humble Origins

V.2 *"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, (There were two Bethlehems in the Holy Land, Bethlehem Ephrathah was an old name for this town, it's the town where David came from) **though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel,*** Of course Bethlehem is famous for us (we have songs about it), but back then, it was an insignificant town, it's barely even mentioned in the Bible, just fields and pastures. This was like my village growing up- Molino, PA. If you Google Map it, there won't be any street view pictures. They didn't even bother. When people ask, "Nate where are you from?" I start, do you

know Reading? Ok, how about Pottsville? OK, do you know Orwigsburg? That's usually where people tap out. That's what Bethlehem Ephrathah was like.

Even though the land of Israel is the size of New Jersey, most Israelites wouldn't have been able to find Bethlehem on a map, and certainly never had been there. But the people who knew their Bibles knew one thing about this place, it had a disproportionately significant role in the coming of the Messiah. Certainly the religious leaders knew. **Matthew 2:3** *When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.*

4 *When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born.*

5 *"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:*

6 *"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."*

But this prophecy isn't just about humble geography. His humble origins of the town he is born in exemplifies the kind of king he would be. Not born in a palace, but an animal pen, not born to royalty but to poor teenage peasants. Not growing up with a silver spoon, but the wooden spoon of a blue collar carpenter. Not seeking to be popular among the elites, but associated with the common, lowly, needy and sinners. Not seeking power, but giving up his power for us. Not coming to be served but to serve. What king is like this? There is no king like the humble King Jesus.

2. He is a King of Eternal Origins

V.2. *out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.* Hebrew- *Olam*, this is the word in the Bible for everlasting, eternal. The only way to understand this, is that this ruler to be born in Bethlehem will be preexistent. John 1 opens- in the beginning was the Word (Jesus) he was with God in the beginning. This is exactly what Jesus claimed about himself in **John 8:58** **58** *"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"* **59** *At this, they picked up stones to stone him.* Why? Because these religious leaders knew Micah 5! Jesus was claiming to be this Eternal King and they just did not want to bow down to his rule. Not only does he have ancient origins but the Bible tells us this king will reign forever. Does anyone know the longest reigning King in history? **King Louis XIV of France [Picture]** (I will resist comments about his outfit). He reigned for 72 years and 110 days. Some people are really excited Donald Trump is about to be President, and some people are terrified...but it's only 4 years. But whether it's 4 or 72, friends, it's a drop in the bucket compared to the eternal reign of peace and prosperity when King Jesus. Jesus is not just a king, not even just a good king that we should submit to, he's the God-King, the eternal king who reigned with the Father in heaven in eternity past, is reigning now from heaven, and will one day come again to reign forever on the renewed Earth. That is King Jesus.

3. He is a Shepherd King

v.4 He will stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. We won't go into this one, because that was last week's entire message, but just to say, unlike many power hungry leaders of our day, Jesus is the good shepherd king. V.4 live securely and v.5 he will be our peace. He is the shepherd who leads, feeds, cares for and protects his people, he will lead us to the green pastures for our souls forever. No king is a good shepherd King like Jesus.

4. He is a Universal King

V.4-5a And they will live securely, and he will be great unto the ends of the earth. 5 And he will be our peace. The largest kingdom ever was the **Mongol kingdom of Genghis Khan** (slightly more terrifying than King Louis XIV)...At its peak the empire covered approximately 9.27 million square miles and stretched from Eastern Europe to East Asia. Wow, and yet it didn't last, and it didn't cover the whole earth. In fact, no King has reigned over the whole earth...yet! Micah says he will be great unto the ends of the earth. This aligns with what the prophet Zechariah says, **9:10 He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.** Here's where we say "already and not yet." Because, while he has not yet returned to earth as the universal King, his worldwide kingdom has already begun through the church- we are an outpost of the kingdom.

And King Jesus gave us his marching orders. **Matthew 28:18-20** *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." And this is what has happened. From Jerusalem it began to spread, now every continent, being made available into every language. Christians make up a significant portion of the population in over 190 countries. But there is still so much work to be done around the world, and in our own backyard. But one day, King Jesus will return and when he does, his Kingdom will be worldwide, every tribe, tongue, nation.

How do we respond to the King?

There were two very opposite responses to the baby born king. There were shepherds, and the wise men, the three kings...who recognized this was the King they had been looking for their whole lives. And the 3 kings bowed down, worshipped him, and presented gifts to the King. And then there was King Herod and the Pharisees (religious leaders) who tried to kill him. And the tragic irony is that the religious leaders, who knew all these prophecies about the Messiah, and in fact quoted the Micah 5 prophecy as we read in Matthew 2. It's shocking that they knew this king would be of humble origin, of eternal origin, that he would be a shepherd king and universal king... and yet refused to bow down and worship the king. This is why Jesus said to them- **John 5:39-40** *"You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life.*

These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life." Why? The same reason King Herod refused to bow to him and wanted to kill him, they didn't

want to submit their lives to the true King. They had become accustomed to power, prestige, their way of life, their control...in reality, they didn't want a king because they had become their own kings.

It's easy to scoff at King Herod and the religious leaders, and yet many of us struggle in the same way. Don't we want to be our own kings? Like the William Ernest Henly Poem Invictus- "I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul." We may want to be the captain of our soul through religion like the pharisees- "I want everyone to see how good I am. I can do enough good things to earn my way to heaven on my own." There are a lot of religious people, just like the Pharisees who have never bowed down to the king of their souls, Jesus. Or like King Herod, we refuse to bow down because we want control, power, to make our own decisions, live for our own passions, our own sense of morality. What is the mantra of our day- "You do you." "You do what is right for you and don't let anyone else tell you otherwise." We have attempted to become little kings of our own little kingdoms. How's that working out?

See, the reality is, we were made to be led by the King of kings, Lord of lords, King Jesus. All the flawed kings and leaders throughout history just point to our need for King Jesus and his reign is what the world and our hearts were made to bow down to- the King who doesn't abuse his power, but uses it to lead us to life everlasting, and serve us. Who says come to me all who are weary...

If that baby born 2000 years ago in O little town of Bethlehem really is the King of Kings, are we resisting his rule, or are we bowing down in worship, making him the Lord of our lives, allowing him to reign on the throne of our hearts? Simple (hard) ways to bow down to the King.

1. Accept the King's sacrifice. I don't know about you, but I resist wanting to follow any leader who says one thing but then does another, someone in power who tells me to do something but they aren't willing to do it themselves. But Jesus talked the talk and walked the walk. He said no greater love...and then he did it. John 10- he has the power to lay down his life and pick it up again. And that's exactly what he did. He laid down his life for us so that we can be forgiven of our sin. And he picked it up again, raising from the dead that Easter morning, and opening the door of eternity to us. That's a King you can trust. He offers salvation to all...

2. Obey the King's Word, in Everything. We can't do that perfectly, although the Holy Spirit helps us obey. But if he's really our King, there shouldn't be areas of our lives where we just resist his command. We should do what he says, whether we like it or not, or understand it or not. Parents, have you had a child say, "I'll obey you if I understand it." Tim Keller says, "That's not obedience, that's agreement! I want you to obey, not because you agree, understand, or like it...but because I'm 40 and you are 6. If a 6 year old lives his or her life on the principle "I will do it if it makes sense to me, they will be dead in two hours!"¹ You can't eat Captain Crunch for every meal your whole life and be healthy. God tells us to do certain things and avoid certain

¹ Tim Keller Sermon https://gospelinlife.com/sermons/?ep_filter_book-of-the-bible=micah-5

things morally and spiritually for the same reasons as good parents. He loves us and knows best. Obey him, even when you don't understand it.

3. Stop worrying about your life and trust the King. Stopping worry has everything to do with making him King. Worry is, "I know what has to happen in order for everything to work right." That means you think you are the king. See the difference between us and God when it comes to wisdom and understanding is infinitely greater than a 6 year old and a 40 year old. Remember Mary- "you will be with child..." "How can this be?" "Gabriel- don't worry! Everything is possible with God."

Let's pray... where does King Jesus need to reign in your life? Decisions? Finances? Job? Desires? Sex life? Parenting? Marriage? Singleness? Grief?

Resources Consulted:

John Constable- Sonic Light Commentary

Skip Heitzig- <https://calvarynm.church/teachings/#/series/288/sermon/3755>

John Piper- <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/from-little-bethlehem-will-come-a-ruler-in-israel>

Tim Keller- https://gospelinlife.com/sermons/?ep_filter_book-of-the-bible=micah-5