

## He Shall Be Great – Micah 5:2-5a

Welcome to our Christmas services; My name . . . Glad you’ve chosen to worship with us  
That said, I can’t wait to open up the word with you, as we focus on the one who’s great  
this Christmas; So let’s do that by turning to Micah 5:2-5a (p.779; **Intro**)

This was written by a prophet named Micah, who lived in Israel around 725BC  
And he starts in v1 with this – *Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops* [he’s  
speaking to the people of Israel at that time]; *siege is laid against us; with a rod they  
strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.*  
IOW you’re going to be attacked, and your leader struck; It’s not going to be good

*[2] But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is  
from of old, from ancient days. [3] Therefore he shall give them up until the time when  
she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the  
people of Israel. [4] And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the  
LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for  
now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. [5] And he shall be their peace.*

- Before we get into the thick of the passage, I want to give you a bit of background, so  
you can connect the dots and see for yourself how it applies  
The first part of which is this reference to *Bethlehem Ephrathah*

*Bethlehem*, of course, referring to the village near Jerusalem, in the area of Judah . . .  
And *Ephrathah* referring to one of the families who lived there  
The *same* family from whom King David came; That’s **1 Sam 17:12**  
*Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah*

And that’s important, b/c it connects the future deliverer of whom *Micah* writes, to the  
one with whom God made an everlasting covenant – David\*\*\*\*\*  
A covenant, or promise, to place one of David’s offspring on the throne of his kingdom,  
and establish it forever and ever (2 Sam 7:14)

So with one obscure reference to lineage, Micah was suddenly talking about the *Messiah*,  
the Christ, *the* deliverer  
The one from David’s lineage, promised by God, 300 years earlier  
The one God’s people were looking for, praying for, longing for, and calling for

- And though *Micah* couldn’t have known it, what I want *you* to see, is that Jesus is the  
one; That’s what Matthew, an eyewitness to his life, wrote some 800 years later . . .  
When the one who fit Micah’s description, actually showed up  
It’s found in Mt 2:1-6 (p.807) as part of the Christmas story, and I want you to see it

*[2:1] Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king,  
behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, [2] saying, “Where is he who has been  
born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.”*  
*[3] When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; [4] and  
assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the  
Christ [the Messiah] was to be born. [5] They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it  
is written by the prophet: [6] “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no*

*means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd  
my people Israel.’”* [they quoted Micah 5]

Which Matthew records, in order to connect it to Jesus, and identify him as the one of  
whom Micah spoke; So the . . .

### • “He” in Micah, is Jesus in Matthew

After 700 years of waiting and suffering, he was born; The very thing Micah prophesied  
in v3 – *He* [God] *shall give them up* [them referring to his people; he would subject  
them to suffering and hardship] *until the time when she who is in labor has given birth*  
A prophecy we understand, with the benefit of hindsight, to speak of Mary, the *mother*  
of Jesus; And when he came, he began relieving suffering and hardship . . .  
And doing a work of reconciliation, just like he says in v3b

All of which means that Micah isn’t just *prophetic* for us, but historical; IOW some of  
what he describes has already happened in the *past*; Jesus has already come  
But the *effect* of his coming, is a reality of the *present* – b/c he’s still at work

### • So he not only *shall* be great, but he is great

It’s not just a thing of the past, or a prophecy of the future; But a reality of the present  
He *is* exceptional and awesome and impressive and important

And Micah lays out 3 main reasons for it, that apply directly to us; Starting with the fact  
that . . .

### Jesus is our much-needed Savior (v2-3)

Or *ruler* as God says it in v2 – *from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in  
Israel*; One who would supersede, overshadow, and overthrow the powers that be  
One who would save his people from their suffering and oppression; An offer we find  
out in v5, is extended to the *world* – *the ends of the earth*

And we need it just like they did; B/c we too suffer; Sometimes it’s strife; Sometimes  
hardship; And sometimes sickness  
Often due to the fallen, sin-tainted world in which we live; And sometimes due to the  
enemies who hate us, physical *and* spiritual  
Either way, we suffer, and need a Savior; And Jesus is the one

- But it doesn’t stop there; More importantly, He’s our much-needed Savior b/c of our *sin*  
Sin that fills us with regret and remorse; Sin that leads to guilt and shame; Sin that  
comes with unavoidable consequences  
Like a life without purpose, or meaning, or peace; Or a future without hope, or blessing,  
or God; Or an eternity of death, and separation, and torment  
All unavoidable consequences of our sin; And *for* which, we need a Savior

And not just any Savior, but one *whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days*  
Micah says; That is, one who’s eternal; one who’s wise; one who knows  
One who’s *capable* of saving us from our sin and suffering; We *need* that; We need *him*

- The problem, is that we insulate ourselves *against* him  
From our self-sufficiency and self-absorption, to our busyness and rebellion – we turn a  
blind eye, and fail to even see our *need*; Or at least try to ignore it

Not unlike what Peggy did in this video of her testimony (**McGranahan Video**)

It's a feeling you too can have – if admit your sin like Peggy, and receive Jesus as your much-needed Savior  
Have you done that? If not, I'm going to give you an opportunity before we're done

Second, the second reason he's great, is that . . .

#### **Jesus is our mighty shepherd (v4)**

He not only saves you from the consequences of your sin, but cares for the needs of your life; That's right; Look at v4

*He shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD* [i.e. with all the power in the world], *in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God* [i.e. with all the authority in the world].

With might and right, Jesus is our shepherd

Now, the idea of a shepherd would have conveyed a whole lot to those in Micah's day, but not so much to us, does it?

You just don't see it very often, let alone live the life

So I want to highlight 6 different aspects of it, especially as they relate to Jesus

The first of which, is leadership; Jesus is our mighty shepherd . . .

#### **• Who leads**

I think that's the idea of *stand* at the beginning of v4 – *he shall stand*

That is, he shall present himself and make himself known, as the one who's in charge;  
As the one who's anointed to carry out such a task

Like a king *stands* for a coronation ceremony; Or a president who *stands* to be sworn into office; They're presenting themselves as the one appointed for the role

And the same is true of Jesus; When he came into the world as a baby, he was presenting himself as the Great Shepherd who would lead us; The one worthy of following

The one who knows the way – the way to life, the way to heaven, the way everlasting, the way to live; In fact, he's the one who *is* the way, the truth, and the life

He leads, and beckons us to follow, just like a literal shepherd does with his sheep

Second, he guides; He's our mighty shepherd . . .

#### **• Who guides**

Which is implied here, b/c that's what shepherd's do; They not only lead from the front, but guide from the rear and sides; Hence the curved staff they often used

With one end they could hook a sheep to abruptly change its course . . .

Or use it to gently nudge them as they wander along the way

And with the other end, they could give a sharp poke, to keep it on the straight/narrow

Not unlike what Jesus does to abruptly change *our* course in life (hook) – sometimes through people, and other times through events

Or confronts us with a sharp sense of conviction (poke) when we're headed for trouble

Or gently nudges us with encouragement from time to time

He's our mighty shepherd who guides our every step – right into eternity if we'll let him

Third, he's our mighty shepherd . . .

#### **• Who watches**

Again, implied, b/c that's what shepherds do; They watch over their sheep; They watch over those in their care

Like the shepherds that *first* Christmas who kept *watch over their flock by night* (Lk 2:8); And the same is true of Jesus, day *and* night

Never sleeping, and never caught off guard; Sometimes blocking the things that come our way, and sometimes allowing them – but always using them for good

If we'll let him; And look for it

Fourth, he's our mighty shepherd . . .

#### **• Who provides**

The best and most famous example of which, comes from David, a shepherd boy turned king, in **Ps 23**

*[1] The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want* [he provides]. *[2] He makes me lie down in green pastures* [he provides]. *He leads me beside still waters* [he provides]. *[3] He restores my soul* [he provides]. *He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake* [he provides]. *[4] Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me* [he provides]; *your rod and your staff, they comfort me* [he provides]. *[5] You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies* [he provides]; *you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows* [he provides]. *[6] Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life* [he provides], *and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever* [he provides].\*\*\*\*\*

Jesus is our mighty shepherd who provides all of that and more

Is he yours? I hope so; B/c he's also the one . . .

#### **• Who loves**

Like Isaiah wrote in **40:11** of *his* prophecy

*He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.*

That's love; Tender, merciful, compassionate love

And Jesus took it to a new level in **Jn 10:11**, when he said – *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

As in – God so loved the world, he gave his one and only Son; Just like Peggy mentioned; He loves; And he loves you; B/c that's what good shepherds do\*\*\*\*\*

And last, he protects; Jesus is our mighty shepherd . . .

#### **• Who protects**

Which brings us back to Micah where he says in v4b – *they shall dwell secure*; Referring to God's people; They'll be protected; They'll be safe

Safe from what? Physical injury? Sickness? Disease? Not always; Sometimes maybe, but not always; How about emotional hurt, or stress? Does he protect us from that?

Perhaps, but neither is that guaranteed on all occasions

Then what? What *does* he protect us from? *Spiritual* harm

Sometimes physical harm, sometimes emotional harm, but *always* spiritual harm

B/c that's what Jesus asked of the Father in **Jn 17:15** – *I do not ask that you take them out of the world* [referring to those that are saved, those who know him as Lord], *but that you keep them from the evil one.* That you protect them from *spiritual* harm

That's what Jesus prayed for those in his care; With the assurance God would answer

In which case there's no need to fear injury, sickness, trauma, or stress – b/c the most important aspect of your life is secure  
Or as Jesus said it – there's no need to fear those who kill the body, b/c they *can't* kill the soul (Mt 10:28); He protects\*\*\*\*\*

- Guaranteed? Guaranteed; No matter what? No matter what  
B/c *now* [in our day, Micah said] *he shall be great to the ends of the earth*  
IOW his influence and protection extends *everywhere*  
Like David said in Ps 139 – [9] *If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, [10] even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me. [11] If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night," [12] even the darkness is not dark to you* (Ps 139:9-12) (**Summ**)

Jesus is our mighty shepherd who leads, guides, watches, provides, loves, & protects – everywhere; And he can be *yours*, your mighty shepherd . . .  
If you'll entrust your life to his care

And then finally . . .

### **Jesus is our source of peace (v5a)**

That's v5, where Micah says – *he shall be their peace*; The peace of his people  
Affirmed by the Apostle Paul in Eph 2:14, where he says Jesus *himself is our peace*  
Once again, a present tense reality

Meaning that where he is, and b/c of what he does in our hearts and minds and lives . . .  
We can be *free* of strife; We can rise *above* the chaos; We can be at rest in our soul; We can be in harmony with God; We can be at peace with others  
It's the word *shalom* in the OT, used no less than 237 times – to convey everything from goodwill, to a lack of fear, to perfect tranquility

- And here's the thing – *Jesus* is the source; And the only source  
It's his presence and his presence alone that puts us at rest  
It's his work, and his work alone that removes hostility

So much so, that peace can prevail even when violence rages; Even when death threatens;  
Even when relationships are strained; It's like the Apostle Paul said in **Phil 4:7**  
When you're a child of God – *The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*

But apart from Jesus, it doesn't matter how good your life is, your soul will be a constant churn of turmoil; You know what I'm saying?\*\*\*\*\*  
Sometimes it's better, and sometimes it's worse, but it's always there  
Always burning; Always seething; Always simmering

- But it doesn't *have* to be; You too can have peace, and *be* at peace – if you tap into the source; If you receive Jesus into your life, and trust him *for* life; That's the key (**Summ**)

And if you're ready to do that – if you well know that Jesus is your much-needed Savior, and you desire him to be your mighty shepherd . . .  
And you want the peace that comes with his rule and reign in your life – you pray with me right now to trust him forever

Pray – “Lord Jesus, I need you; I admit I'm a sinner, and need a Savior; I'm tired of wandering, and need a Shepherd; I'm sick of the turmoil, and need your peace; So please forgive my sin, restore my soul, and be my Savior; I trust you, and want to follow you, from now on” (show of hands)

Father, thank you for drawing these men and women to yourself, and giving them life; I praise you for their humility, their trust, and their commitment; Find them faithful to love you and live for you, just as you are faithful to them, all the days of their life

And God, receive our tithes and offerings now, as an expression of our hearts; We overflow with thanks and praise, and want your name to be great among the nations