

## Micah 4:6-5: Why Herod Understands Christmas Better than Some of Us

his text gets at the heart of what Christmas is about!

- **Unbeliever** – if you’ve ever wondered why Christmas? Whats the reason? This text gets at the heart!
- **Prayer** – *warfare... sign to the powers put them to flight!*

**Opening Illustration: Facebook** – Wasn’t an early adopter (*Not really an early adopted of any social media*

- **But Facebook seemed really silly to me (story of how heard about it)** – does that not seem a little like passing a note to a cute girl in class and saying do you like me, check “yes” “no” or “maybe?”
- **I did eventually get on FB (tell story... main aim was putting up pictures of me with her children)** – one of the most intriguing things when I do finally befriend someone on FB is to check what they say their religious beliefs are!
- **One of my friends religious beliefs said – I love the sweet Baby Jesus** – at the time I did not realize that was actually a line from a movie called Talladega Nights and was spoken by the legend Ricky Bobby! (**Tell the scene... whatever version of Jesus I want to... 8lb 6oz**)

**It struck me though that this is how many (even in the church) view Jesus as one we can control, who’s safe and cuddly – Just consider the pictures of Him** – *immaculate white robe (no dust in the Middle East), His hair is flowing, straight teeth, blonde hair, or He’s sitting there nuzzling sheep*

- **We domesticate and minimize Jesus and we miss that Christmas (this prophecy) isn’t about a babe who doesn’t cry – but instead it is a warning to His enemies that this sweet baby is coming to wreck shop – Herod gets this, do we?**
- **Bethlehem is not a tranquil scene** – *Bethlehem is a war declaration against those that would oppose the Messiah and a proclamation that He is coming to establish a Kingdom that will be unrivaled!*
  - o **This reminds me of CHRONICLES... is he safe?** *Mr. Beaver... Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King” AND LATER he’s “...Not like a tame lion.” People who have never been to Narnia cant imagine that something can be GOOD AND TERRIBLE at the same time!*

**Main Idea:** *There is a coming Shepherd-King who will redeem, re-gather, Shepherd, rule, protect, cleanse, and unleash His people to the ends of the earth!*

**Transition to the Text:** Now don’t misunderstand me, the babe in a manger is also kind and humble and meek, and is coming to save His people, but at the same time this a prophecy written **700 years** before the coming of Christ is about Him ruling as a conquering King! **We have one who is both good, kind, but also to be feared!**

**Background:** As we have seen Micah has been hammering the nation for their wickedness and disobedience displayed in *idolatry, leadership failures, corruption, empty ritualism, corruption by the wealthy, bribery and injustice!* (And as Matt pointed out last week we shouldn’t too quickly say those aren’t our same sins)

- **God’s people, whom He delivered out of Egypt, have turned their back on Him** – And He will now through the prophet Micah let them know that judgment that will fall, but also of the salvation to come through a new Davidic Shepherd-King

I. (4:6-5:1) The coming Shepherd-King will redeem and re-gather His people... So Hope!

**(READ 6-7)** – *In that day* – This usually refers to the Messianic Era began at 1<sup>st</sup> advent and consummated at the 2<sup>nd</sup>

- God Himself (*I WILL*) will re-gather His people and make them a faithful remnant that He will reign over forever – **And Who is He assembling back?** *The very ones He judged/afflicted, those injured by His judgment will be reassembled in a forever Kingdom* (Echoes of the Davidic promise)

What mercy – salvation through judgment – *making the limp walk, bringing the outcast close* – (in the 1<sup>st</sup> century a son of David would take up that kind of ministry of healing the lame!)

- They should expect to suffer for their sins for a time, but then redemption – **and one must think of the church, God’s assembly** – Assembling the lame and the outcast into a people whom He is king over!

**(READ 8)** – He is saying that the Davidic Empire will be re-established to it’s former glory – *The shepherd imagery is now coupled with royal language as a new Davidic King will shepherd His people from Jerusalem*

**(READ 9 -10)** – **Micah now taunts and sort of mocks the people asking where has your King gone ()** – *but its mocking out of love not cruelty for the purpose of awaking them to the gravity and seriousness of their sin and situation so they will repent*

- **The throne of David will be cut off** (*Zedekiah taken captive and humiliated*) **and the people will be exiled from the promise Land into a foreign country (Babylon)** – *Micah is reminding them of the something that we have known since Eden that punishment for disobedience is exile (separation from God, a picture of death)* as he predicts **100 years** before it happens that God will use Babylon as an instrument of His judgment in leading off the people into an exile!
- **The pain of this is so intense that it is compared to a woman in labor (painful... so I hear – any time I back talk my mom she reminds me of it)** – yet in the midst of it hope! **There He will redeem them and keep His covenant promises** (but even that deliverance would be temporary until the final Ga-al shows up to lead a final Exodus)

**(READ 11-13)** – The nations will gather against Israel hoping to see her humiliated (possibly speaking of Assyrian Siege or their exile) – *but they don’t see that the script is about to get flipped on them as they think they are coming to rejoice in Israel’s humiliation but God is drawing them in* (example???)

- **This is how God operates** – He defeats the strong with the weak, He turns affliction in to Salvation
- **Those that devastated Zion will now be devastated** – *God turns a weak, frail people into a mighty army* (giving them iron horns and bronze hoofs a sign of strength) and turning them into a strong, unstoppable ox that treads its enemies like grain... literally pulverizes them and then devotes the spoils to the Lord!

This passage has short-term fulfillment (Sennacherib is humiliated as he is pummeled at the gates) but this is only temporary – **there is a greater deliverance and eschatological fulfillment to this promise** – *in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the nations aligned themselves against God’s anointed one to defile Him and it looks as though they got their way and the powers Won... Satan must have thought he has won*

- **But on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day the tables are turned and his plans come crashing down on him** – *as his greatest weapon (death) comes falling down on his head and he is crushed... beat to pieces!*
- **Application** – Live with hope because the Shepherd-King will Redeem and Re-gather His people! God is in control and nothing will thwart His promises! Just as they lived with Messianic hope we do too knowing the King will return and beat our enemies to pieces!

## **II. (5:1-5a) The coming Shepherd-King will rule and protect His people... So Trust!**

**(READ v. 1)** – **Micah returns to the judgment to come with a play on words meaning gather yourself as a Troop** – Micah is again taunting them and letting them know they cannot in their power accomplish chapter 4 you can muster all you want and get only one troop out of it showing their puniness against the nations

- **In the midst of this faulty attempt by Israel to save themselves with a troop, the ruler of Israel will be humiliated** – he may be again speaking of Zedekiah who is humiliated by a foreign army – the King who is supposed to rule with a Rod is now struck with the Rod. *"The venerable judge has become but a whipping boy."*

**How will chapter 4 then take place?** *Micah tells us in a New David who will come and re-gather a faithful, penitent people who are not devoted to religious rituals but to this Messiah-King*

- **Put yourself in Israel's shoes (hear this as they were for the 1<sup>st</sup> time)** – Assyria and Babylon loom as threats and in the midst of this chaos, and oppression comes an oracle of hope! **(Bush on 9/11)** – *in order for the good news to be GOOD have to know what you are being delivered from*

**(READ V. 2)** – And here in the midst of chaos an oracle from Yahweh focuses in on a little town called Bethlehem and the region of Ephrathah – **We are alerted that a ruler will come from a tiny, insignificant town – Essentially all the promises of 4 and 5 will come about through one born in... Bunn!** *(You better get ready Kim-Jong Un cause Bunn, NC is coming after you!)*

- **God always operates like this because it demonstrates WHO will make this happen** – *weak shaming the strong* – and from this tiny, unlikely town will come the one to deliver from siege and captivity
- **And this calls to mind the everlasting covenant given to David, that one of His sons would establish an eternal kingdom** – and just like the unlikely choice of David as King from Bethlehem, this new son of David will come from lowly, unlikely beginnings to rule for Yahweh and establish Shalom on the earth – a leader who is strikingly different than the one mentioned in v. 1 (but ironically not so much)
- **Herod gets the threat that this baby will pose (in a promise given 700yrs in advance) – do we?**

**This Ruler will be unique – (from Ancient Days) – There is debate what this means – is it meant to say from Davidic line or from Eternity** – in some ways it doesn't matter, because even the promise to David implies eternity – but I think the text is intending to prophesy the incarnation of the Son of God

- **The language could be translated from “days of eternity” or “Everlasting” (NKJV)** – so we see this one to be born will have Eternal origins!
  - o **We see both divine and human origins** – as for human a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Jew born in Bethlehem as to divine – eternity (no beginning) – the only way that 2 Sam. 7 is possible!

**Consider the staggering magnitude of the Incarnation** – The Eternal God with us (not some distant clock maker) – God does not stay distant from His people, but enters in.

- Yahweh will so humble himself during the incarnation that the Creator of the universe will need **milk** to live, **the Sovereign of all creation will have to have His diapers changed – entering in for the rescue of His people**

*"Christ who in eternity rested motherless upon the Father's bosom and in time rested fatherless upon a woman's bosom, clasping the Ancient of Days who had become the Infant of Days...What deep descent—from the heights of glory to the depths of shame; from the wonders of Heaven to the wickedness of earth; from exaltation to humiliation; from the throne to the tree; from dignity to debasement; from worship to wrath; from the halls of Heaven to the nails of earth; from the coronation to the curse; from the glory place to the gory place at the cross! In Bethlehem, humility and glory in their extremes were joined. Born in a stable. Cradled in a cattle trough. Wrapped in swaddling clothes of poverty. No room for Him who made all rooms! No place for Him who made and knows all places! Oh, deep humiliation of the Creator—born of the creature, woman! But in His descent was the dawn of mercy. Because we can not ascend to Him, He descends to us." RG Lee*

**And no wonder Queen Lucy can say in the Last Battle** *"Yes, In our world too, a stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world."* (n. 140)

- **Oh I hope our affections are drawn to this Eternal Son who stepped into History taking on all it means to be human:** “*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*”

**(READ v. 3) – Again this King will allow for a time of judgment and affliction (connected with being struck on the cheek) – Until eventually from Israel at the proper time God’s chosen one will come to make things right**

- **There is debate if this is an allusion to Mary (possibly an allusion to virgin birth like Isaiah 7:14 which was 30 years earlier) or Israel –** Either way from the chosen people will come the Messiah at the designated time (Galatians 4:4) "*when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman*" (just so happened that Rome would call a census and Mary and Joseph would be in Bethlehem)
  - o **And this coming will signal the beginning of the reversal of exile – *This began to happen in Babylon but as next verses make clear true return from Exile and true deliverance won’t come until the Messiah comes***

**And at this time there will be a great return of the brothers and re-gathering to the land begun ultimately at the birth of the New David who will restore the brothers (some prophecies can have short term fulfillment but then ultimate fulfillment)**

- **You see Israel will survive Babylon, but they will not survive their greatest enemies of sin and slavery and even in the first century they will still be occupied and the cycle of oppression continues until the birth of the coming One**
- **The beginning of fulfillment of this promise is seen at Pentecost as Jews from every nation under heaven are re-gathered to the nation in the church as a foretaste of the day when all nations will be around this King’s throne!**

**(READ v. 4-5a) – This King will rule and lead like a shepherd not a tyrant who feeds, leads, and protects and takes good care of His wounded sheep**

- **He is like the Shepherd of Psalm 23 who makes war on His peoples enemies and loves and protects – *Let’s not get it twisted about Shepherds***
- **Question: *So is He your King? Or is He your enemy? The cuddly baby knocks the teeth out of wolves***

**But here is the message of Christmas – in a troubled world (hear this like 9/11) – hear this like if you were besieged citizen in Jerusalem there is a prospect of deliverance and security through this Messiah!**

- **This King will rule with Yahweh’s Power and Majesty bringing lasting Peace – for the one sent For Yahweh rules with Yahweh’s power because as we have seen He is Yahweh Himself!**

**(Dwell Secure) And His Kingdom will be unrivaled, His sheep will be secure and his reign is to the ends of the earth, not an isolated or tribal Kingdom – *But a universal one with all of his enemies under His feet and no pocket of resistance left (Jesus doesn’t bring peace by retreat but by cutting off His enemies)***

- **Herod clearly understood that verses 3-4 followed the prophecy of verse 2 – he understood that this coming one was coming to bring peace by defeating enemies and that’s why Herod does what he does in trying to kill the male babies – REMINDS me of Terminator: terminator-like fashion tried to cut off the child before He became mighty**
- ***Do we understand this? Or is our Jesus safe and cuddly and controllable? He has come to bring war on our internal and external enemies!***

**This calls to mind the GC as we seek the advance of His Kingdom under the command of our Shepherd-King to all nations – *Began in Jerusalem and extending to ends of the earth for those who would willingly bow to this King***

**And what a statement at beginning of v. 5 – He shall be their (our) Peace – Though just verses before the ruler of Israel will be struck on the cheek, now This Israelite ruler will rule to the ends of the universe in a reign that brings Shalom/Rest brought about by His COMING – *when this true King comes there will be an end to injustice, poverty, pain, and suffering, all things made right***

**Illustration: do we ever really feel peace or feel safe? We live in a world where men walk up to policemen and shoot them, where young men walk into schools and shoot children!** At this return we will! Never nervous! Never Fearing! Not worrying about enemies (NYC, Pakistan, Australia)

**Question: How beautiful is this line – He will not just bring Peace, He will be there Peace and Peace will reign!**

- Here we see the good news – one day we will be back in Eden where perfect Shalom (REST) reigns from sea to sea – *Where we are restored and at peace with God and one another!*

**Paul picks up this language in Ephesians 2:14 – He is our peace: *For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility***

- **And this helps understand Verse 3 more clearly as well – Paul sees this return of the brothers as ultimately being fulfilled in a New Israel made up of Jews and Gentiles from all nations in a Kingdom of Peace where people don't walk up and shoot police or stab their children!**
- **Application – Trust... God has kept all of His promises!**

### **III. (5:5b-10) The Coming Shepherd-King will unleash His people... So be Zealous!**

**(READ 5b-6) – Now Micah talks about the people that will follow this Shepherd and identifies them with His reign by identifying them as shepherds – *Though the work is done by the Messiah, they will rule under Him as He establishes security to the ends of the earth!***

- **Babylon (Nimrod) and Assyria represent here the enemies of Israel throughout all ages – we know this because Assyria is used even after they fall as example of threat to Israel and because true fulfillment doesn't come till later (so though true fulfillment doesn't come till after Assyria, Micah sets in this context for His people to understand that there will be salvation from exile and judgment and enemy armies Ultimately!)**
- **And God will raise up ample undershepherds to defend His people – though in verse 6 it is clear that only He will deliver! This phrase is a song or formula to denote complete ruling under the authority of this Messiah (**one more than the #7 which means complete**) – the triumph over the nations is accomplished as his rule extends through his people led by undershepherds who rule with the Sword**
  - o **We see this in NT Fulfillment (Eph. 4):** As Christ **raises up Apostles, Prophets, and Shepherd-Teachers** to lead His people by feeding and **protecting them with a two-edged sword (The Word of God).**
  - o **The Kingdom of the Shepherd-King advances as His people take this sword into battle against the powers in our GC – *And see His rule extend as outposts of the Kingdom are planted throughout the World by the power of this Sword all the way to the gates of Hell!***

**(READ v. 7-9) – As we see the results as the Shepherd-King's people are unleashed among the nations – they will be blessing to some (*Dew on Grass – Brining forth life and renewal that cant be controlled*) and a curse to others (*Lion among lambs – bringing fort judgment*) – this recalls the Abrahamic Covenant and His body will have the same effect**

- **God through His Shepherd-King has made a people once frail like Dew to some and a mighty Lion to others as they advance among the nations!**
- **Application – *We are not to be idle in this Mission of the coming Shepherd but to seek His rule's extension to the ends of the Earth through gospel Word (the Sword) and Gospel Deed (Beating iniustice to nieces)***

- And here is the promise – to some the church (People of God) will be *an aroma of life unto life and to some an aroma of death unto death* – (*The Gospel will do something – this sweet baby grows up and He divides those that are His from those that reject Him and His rule!*)
- Those that hear – **Blessing!** Those that refuse the rule of this King – **Curse, cut off** – The Word says this clearly because the Word is hoping to provoke you to repentance, it's a loving thing!

So Christian join in this Mission with confidence and zeal to tell the world about the Prince of Peace – and realize that we will face suffering but in the midst of this we know that our King wins and He isn't dead anymore, so what do we have to fear?

- **Until He returns He is not calling us to a safe life but one of Mission as we desire to see our King's name made famous and for others to have what we have:** "*Christianity is the story of how the rightful King has landed... in disguise... calling us to take part in His great sabotage*" CS LEWIS – Kingdom language in enemy territory (v. 6)
- **Question to consider: How might you best be used in this mission?**

Getty's Sum up our Mission well and really hear echoes of these verses – *Our call to war, to love the captive soul, But to rage against the captor; And with the sword that makes the wounded whole We will fight with faith and valor. When faced with trials on ev'ry side, We know the outcome is secure, And Christ will have the prize for which He died— An inheritance of nations. Getty's*

#### IV. (5:10-15) The Coming Shepherd-King will cleanse His people... So Repent!

(READ Verses 10-15 – *Hit this very quickly*) – **Micah now turns to let the nation see that the Lord will cleanse their internal enemies** – *Cleansing their sin because He desires for them to be a holy people who promote and don't profane His name among the nations!*

- **The Lord cleanses His people from:**
  - (10, 11) **Military idols** – They trust in Chariots but He will wreck them
  - (12) **Cultic idols** – They are dabbling in the occult and trusting false leaders (fortune tellers), He will cut them off
  - (13, 14) **False Idols** – They are bowing down to gods they made with their own hands (*Romans 1 – how silly and yet we do it, we just don't carve them out usually – fame, success {may even seek horoscopes to tell us}, but in end worshipped ourselves {Created things} rather than Creator*) – and So the Lord is going to clean house of all the sins Micah has been hammering the nation on!

**The Messiah will cleanse them of anything that they depend on other than Him** – He will have no rivals and He will not compromise the holiness of His people who are to put His name on display in the earth!

- **Those that submit (blessing) and those that don't (Curse/cut off)** – *you cannot stand against God's chosen one and not give Him His due and select lesser gods in His place!*
- (15) **Any nation that stands against God's chosen one or depends on anything other than Him will face His wrath** – *Israel had relied on forces, defenses, witchcraft, fortune-telling, and created gods but in the Messianic reign they will be purged* – **So lets REPENT and flee these weak, puny idols that cannot deliver!**

**Christocentric conclusion** – **We all have sins like this in our lives (trusting in lesser gods), so where can we turn? Turn to the one from Bethlehem who stood in your place and took the wrath and vengeance our sins were due!**

- **We can only turn to the Shepherd-King who would lay down His life for His sheep** – *Taking their sins though he was perfect, the only one who could perfectly do Micah 6:8. The Great Shepherd who knows and is to be known by His sheep!*
- **Turn to the Judge of Israel that was struck on the cheek as the nations aligned themselves against Him seeking His defilement** – *And He in grace though sinless would go into exile/abandonment at the cross so that we would not ultimately have to be exiled! (FORSAKEN)*
- **Micah 6:8 gives a small glimpse at why Jesus was born and His work on our behalf:** *“Tower of the flock.” This was a watchtower from which shepherds guarded their flocks of sheep. Interestingly, Luke 2 tells us...the phrase “keeping watch” may well mean “to guard from a watchtower.”... Although other shepherds in other parts of Judea raised their sheep for their mutton and for their wool, the Bethlehemite shepherds...only raised sheep to be sacrificed on the holy altar of the temple in Jerusalem in a plea for forgiveness from God for their sins...The animal suffered death, the penalty of sin, in the sinner’s place... Jesus’ birth was announced to the shepherds of sacrifice because he was the prophesied sacrificial lamb who would provide true atonement for sin... The presence of the shepherds at the birth scene of Jesus reminds believers today that Jesus was not born merely to incarnate Deity and reveal God to us, though He certainly did that....The little child who was wrapped in strips of swaddling cloth at his birth was born to be wrapped in strips of burial cloth after his crucifixion. The summons of the shepherds of sacrifice to Jesus’ birth reminds us that Jesus was born for the knife and the altar, the nails and the cross, and that only by his shed blood can sinners have peace with the Holy God. – we Cant have Christmas without the Cross!*

**But that’s not the end of the story on that Sunday morning He turned the tables as our Shepherd King woke up** – *and an ex-corpse walked out of a tomb cutting off our greatest enemies: Sin, Satan, and Death (as the 1<sup>st</sup> fruits)*

- **And what Does Christ our Shepherd-King say to Mary that morning? *Go get my brothers*** – the beginning of the faithful remnant being restored, beginning here at and at Pentecost pointing us to a day when all the nations will gather around the *Messiah’s throne in a Kingdom that makes the Kingdoms of this World seem as nothing!*

### Response:

**Unbeliever** – **It’s possible you’ve got an image of Jesus that you can control but when He returns He wont be a cuddly baby not crying, He will be a tattooed Warrior!**

- **But we hold out to you wonderful news today** – *He is a great shepherd who brings wounded sheep into the fold. Are you wounded?* There is a Shepherd-King saying come to me and I will give you rest! Shalom! Repent (admit) and trust in Him alone, depend on Him alone!

**Believer** – **Our first response should be adoration and worship of this Great King who became Man** – who took on everything that it means to be human and stood in our place!

- **And God kept His promises to Israel and He will keep His promises to us – so live with Hope, Trust, Zeal and Repentance because our enemies don’t stand a chance** – *realize that one day all our struggles, all our enemies, strife, racism, war, persecution, demonic opposition will cease as there is an exploding Eastern Skyline and a triumphant Crucified man who will say no need for swords boys I can handle it from here! One little word shall take down that ancient serpent*
  - o **For a time we live in a world where it seems its always winter and never Christmas but not for long** – *SOON the King will once again put His feet on Earth’s soil and on that day everything will be made RIGHT – but until then we give a glimpse of the future of what this Kingdom will look like as seek the advance of His gospel in Word and Deed to the ends of the Earth!*

**Conclusion** – *in light of all the chaos in our world (Pakistan, NYC, Australia) I was reminded of something I read after the Newtown shootings and I close with that:*

*Jesus was not born into a ...sentimental winter wonderland...He was born into a war-zone... Herod vowed to see him dead, right along with thousands of his brothers...Satan hates children because he hates Jesus. When evil destroys...the most vulnerable among us, it destroys a picture of Jesus himself, of the child delivered by the woman who crushes the head of our reptilian overlord (Gen. 3:15). The demonic powers know that the human race is saved, and they're vanquished, by a child born of woman (Gal. 4:4; 1 Tim. 2:15). And so they hate the children who bear his nature... The satanic powers want the kingdoms of the universe, and a child uproots their reign. Let's not offer pat, easy answers to the grieving parents and communities in Connecticut. We don't fully understand the mystery of iniquity. We don't know why God didn't stop this from happening. But we do know what this act is: it's satanic, and we should say so. Let's grieve for the innocent. Let's demand justice for the guilty. And let's rage against the Reptile behind it all. As we do so, let's remember that Bethlehem was an act of war. Let's remember that the One born there is a prince of peace who will crush the skull of the ancient murderer of Eden. Let's pray for the Second Coming of Mary's son. And, as we sing our Christmas carols, let's look into the...eyes of Satan as we promise him the threat of his coming crushed skull. The mystery of evil is a declaration of war on the peace of God's creation. The war goes on, but not for long. And sometimes the most warlike thing we can say, in an inhuman murderous age like this one, is "It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas."*

**So brothers and sisters as we turn to our shepherd's table – Let's understand Christmas better than Herod:**

- **Know that when He returns we all will come face to face with the Judge of all nations – *And on that day we will either be looking in the eyes of one who wars against us or on our behalf... who said anything about safe! But He's Good!***

**Pray Romans 16**