

Deliverance King Jesus Micah 5:1-15

Bethlehem

To Micah Bethlehem meant "house of bread" and was a symbol of encouragement since it was also the home town of David

But Bethlehem was so small and insignificant that it was not mentioned as one of the 115 towns and cities in the list of place names in Judah, when the land was divided and allotted through Joshua. (Joshua 15:20-63)

When Samuel was sent there to find a king, he needed more than an AA map to find the place.

Yes that theme again, the small weak, despised, insignificant - matter in the eternal work of God.

700 years in advance, God gave notice that Messiah would come from this obscure town called Bethlehem.

Micah 's thoughts may have gone back many centuries to King David of Bethlehem but only the son of God dates from ancient times (or from the days of eternity - NIV footnote) and still keeps this continuity with the line of David. Jesus stepped out of eternity into time to save mankind from their sin.

This was not good news for a Jerusalem that considered that it was already the centre of the universe. The metropolis rules, not a small

insignificant provincial town, too small to be found on most maps of the day.

This scripture was also well known by the priests in Jesus day, when the Magi were sent from Jerusalem the six miles or so to Bethlehem. They too ignored its significance.

The shepherd king

He will "shepherd his flock" (4) The good shepherd-. The Messiah and yet another link to the shepherd boy who became king.

A shepherd, is strong, fit, unflinching, and courageous. Feeding the sheep and protecting them from predators.

In this case a strength derived from his personal relationship with "the Lord his God" (4)

Not only will he bring peace. He is peace (5) to all who are weary and heavy laden (Matt 11:28)

"He himself is our peace" Eph 2:14

But as Jesus said to Pilate in John 18:36 his kingdom was not of this world but in the hearts and lives of men and women. His kingdom is wherever he is allowed to reign as king, (is within you) Luke 17:21

Security is not found in wealth, technology or status, but in trusting the shepherd. It is not limited geographically but to "the ends of the earth" (4)

There will be no need*to fear the mightiest world power of the day, Assyria or even Nimrod when God is in control. Nimrod stands for any mighty force, he was Noah's grandson "the first on the earth to be a mighty man." The first totalitarian absolute tyrannical world dictator. His first city was Babel (Babylon) which was the first city to have a public folly, and he also takes Assyria, building cities such as Nineveh. (Gen 10:8-12)

And for us even the gates of hell cannot prevail against us ! Matt 16:18 With God is victory.

What did the promise of a Messiah, the Son of God do to the people - awaken their responsibilities in the present; to repent ? was it entertainment for the curious ? No, it was ignored, but over the years gave encouragement to those serious about God and His word.

Micah's second message ends with two brief oracles.

Oracle 1 vs 7-9

The first deals with the role of God's remnant (the survivors of God's judgements) in the world.

Not a small number huddling in a corner for self protection; but a force in the open among

the nations, "in the midst of many peoples" (7)
like salt and light.

Like dew or rain - a sign of God's blessing,
and refreshment. The fragrance of life.
And like a lion or young lion (8) a sign of his
judgement upon the nations, the fragrance of
death (2 Cor 2:16). His justice, purity and
hatred of all forms of sin including pride and
self sufficiency.

God's people shall stand over it's enemies.
Our presence as God's^" people in the world will
bring either blessing or condemnation, but us
just being there and smelling makes a
difference !!

Who do you want behind you in a supermarket
queue? Someone who has not washed for many
weeks, or someone clean and smelling of perfume ?

When God puts his spirit within us and his words in
our mouths we cannot help but affect the lives of
those around us.

Oracle 2 vs 10-15

Deals with God's activity within the remnant.

The power of God is greater than power of men.

1 Machines of war - horses, chariots,

2 Urban self sufficiency – walled cities, and strongholds; Strongholds had been virtually impregnable. Safe for all within the walls – until Assyria developed "The siege" and security became a prison and a graveyard.

3 Occult practices – secret "intelligence" from charms or fortune tellers.

4 Idolatry - powerless "local" gods. Whether in the hands of the enemy or the remnant. No compromise was written in the law of God concerning the occult practices and the worship or tolerance of the gods of the Canaanites. As leadership grew lax some and gradually all the pagan practices of Canaan infiltrated the worship of the people of God. What carried the death penalty was permitted and later approved of in high circles. Worship of the idols of the day, Baal and Asherah, was blatantly erotic and sexually explicit, preaching a message of fruitfulness in field or womb, i.e. prosperity theology. Where there is idolatry there industry thrives, making idols in wood, stone, metal etc, servicing idols, insuring idols Just as Paul saw in Ephesus (Acts 19:11-41)

With the same four evils of the day Urban self sufficiency, military might (pride and sense of invincibility), occult practices and idol worship, there can be no compromise. Any dependence other than in God must be destroyed.

God will save a remnant that trust solely in him, as we saw last week.

And he will hold the whole world accountable. Just as the nations will come to Jerusalem for teaching (last week) God promises at the end of this second message "I will take vengeance in anger and wrath upon the nations that have not obeyed me." (15)

"Nothing impure will ever enter it (new Jerusalem), nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood."
Rev 21:27, Rev 22:14-15

Will we take God seriously ?

Will we take him at his word ?

In what or whom do you really put your trust ?

Is God adequate enough for you ?

The answers are not just of academic importance, but of eternal importance - for seemingly small insignificant individuals like you and me !

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