

THE COMING MESSIAH

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The TEXT:

"2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting."

3 Therefore He shall give them up, Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren Shall return to the children of Israel.

4 And He shall stand and feed *His flock* in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth;" Micah 5: 2-4

The KEY VERSE:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting." Micah 5: 2

The HOOK:

Today we will read from Micah chapter 5. The name Micah means, "Who is like Jehovah?"

Micah was a contemporary with Isaiah who was active in Israel in 737-696 BC, about 700 years before the birth of Christ. Even then, he and Isaiah foretold the coming of our Messiah, our Saviour! They were talking about Jesus long before HE was even born in the manger!

This is an exciting text! In a time of great moral and social calamity The LORD Jehovah is telling us about the coming of our Messiah! Let us read the key verse together, **"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *Though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth *are* from of old, From everlasting."** Micah 5: 2

The Magi quote this verse to King Herod when they meet him in their search for the Messiah! Herod is the one who should have been quoting this, telling them about the Messiah!

Oh, my friends, it is a sweet thought that Jesus that Jesus Christ did not come forth without HIS Father's permission, authority, consent and assistance! HE was sent of The Father that HE might be The Saviour of Men! **"For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe."** 1 Timothy 4:10.

Oh, the depths and mercy of love that reside in the Holy Trinity! The unfathomable love of The Holy Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **"may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."**

Ephesians 3: 18 - 19

As Mary looked down at her baby, trying to understand, Christ a child/infant, did not the Holy Spirit beget HIM? **“And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.”** Luke 1: 35.

Our LORD, speaking wondrously, did not The Father pour grace into HIS lips during all the days of HIS earthly ministry?

Our LORD, drinking the bitter cup of gall, was loved still, and remained “The Darling of Heaven”!

Think of it, “The Ancient of Days” became the “Infant of Days” there in the manger!

And HE was raised from the dead. **“5 Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? 6 He is not here but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee,”** Luke 24: 5 - 6

HE was received on High! **“Therefore, God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,”** Philippians 2: 9

Leading captivity captive! **“Therefore, He says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.””** Ephesians 4: 8

Friends, you can see the Holy Trinity involved at the manger of Bethlehem, the Cross of Calvary, and in Heaven above, all equally engaged in the work of salvation!

Friends, this is a significant text! “You shall come forth to ME.” Micah 5:2 Highlight this text in your Bibles!

Friends, put your confidence in the man Jesus Christ! There is only one object that can satisfy the heart of man. That object is Jesus, The Son of Man who is without sin, The Son of GOD with power! Rely solely on HIM!! Come and seek HIM today, as the magi did long ago.

In relationship, you will be linked with GOD Eternal and The Ancient of Days. “You shall come forth to ME.” Micah 5:2. Look at the depth of love there was in the heart of GOD when GOD the Father, equipped HIS Son for the great enterprise of mercy! **“for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”** Luke 19: 10.

Friends, The Father sent HIM!! Contemplate the Holy Subject! Let your soul get hold of it! Think of it, in every period of HIS life, HE suffered what The Father willed! Every step of HIS life was marked with the approval of The Great “I AM”! Hallelujah!! So, friends, let every thought that you have of Jesus be also connected with The Eternal, Ever-Blessed GOD, forever, for Jehovah says “HE shall come forth to me” Micah 5: 2.

Who sent HIM, then? The answer is, HIS Father!!

This morning we will explore 2 questions: 1. Where did The Messiah come?

2. What did The Messiah come for?

The BOOK, Part 1: Where did The Messiah come?

The answer is Bethlehem. A word or two about Bethlehem: GOD, drawing a new star to lighten its obscurity, drawing sages from the east, drawing the angel of the LORD, drawing the multitudes of the Heavenly Hosts, and remembered in all generations for more than 2000 years. It seemed right that our saviour should be born in Bethlehem, because of Bethlehem’s history, Bethlehem’s name, and Bethlehem’s position!

Let's look at Bethlehem's History. Dear to the heart of every Israelite was the little village of Bethlehem. Jerusalem might outshine it in splendour, for there stood the temple, the glory of the whole earth, and beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth was Mount Zion.

"Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, Is Mount Zion on the sides of the north, The city of the great King." Psalm 48: 2

Yet, around Bethlehem there clustered a number of incidents which always made it a pleasant resting place to every Jewish mind.

The first mention of Bethlehem is a sorrowful one. It was there that Rachael died. **"16 Then they journeyed from Bethel. And when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrathah, Rachel labored in childbirth, and she had hard labor. 17 Now it came to pass, when she was in hard labor, that the midwife said to her, "Do not fear; you will have this son also." 18 And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died), that she called his name Ben-Oni; but his father called him Benjamin."** Genesis 35: 16 - 18.

Interestingly, Ben-Oni means, "son of my sorrow", but his father called him Benjamin which means, "son of my right hand".

What an amazing incident! It is almost prophetic, for might not Mary have called her own son, Jesus, "the child of sorrow"? But what did GOD call HIM? "GOD with us!" **"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name "Immanuel", which is translated, "God with us."** Matthew 1: 23.

Ben-Oni was he as a man, Benjamin was he to his father and to the Godhead. He and Jesus, both born in the lowly town of Bethlehem.

Another woman makes this place celebrated. That woman is Naomi. She also lived in Bethlehem, perhaps while the stone Jacob laid had been covered with moss and it's inscription obliterated. Naomi, whose name means, "pleasant", was also a daughter of joy, and yet a daughter of bitterness (Mara). **"But she said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."** Ruth 1: 20

Naomi was not alone amid all her losses, for there she cleaved unto her mother-in-law, Ruth the Moabitess. **"Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" Ruth 2: 21, and so it was there at Bethlehem that Ruth went out to glean in the fields of Boaz. "Then she left and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.*" Ruth 2: 3 There Boaz looked with favour upon her. **"Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."** Ruth 2: 13. It was also there that her marriage to Boaz was celebrated in the streets of Bethlehem **"So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son."** Ruth 4: 13. Ruth also received a blessing there which made them fruitful so that Boaz became the son of Obed, who begat Jesse, who begat King David from whose line was born Jesus. (see **POST NOTES**: Lineage of Jesus).**

My friends, this last fact guilds Bethlehem with glory! Do you see the wonderful connections there?

Yes, Bethlehem was a Royal City because the kings were brought forth there! Beginning with David from whose line would come the King of Kings, Jesus. (Micah 5:2), **“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.”** Matthew 2: 6, **“Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?”** John 7: 42

Yes, the place of Bethlehem was very special to the Israelites, but even it's very name, Bethlehem Ephrathah, has a double meaning. First it means, “House of Bread”, second it means, “House of War”.

It is very fitting for Jesus to be born in “The House of Bread” as HE is the Bread of Life! As our forefathers ate manna in the wilderness, Jesus is our substance here in this life. Famished by the world, we feed upon HIS Word and HIS divine goodness.

Jesus, the blessed Bread of Heaven, was made of the bruised body of our LORD Jesus and baked in the furnace of HIS agonies and afflictions. It was here at Bethlehem, the House of Bread, that Jesus was given to Bethlehem, the House of War. For at the time of Jesus birth, Herod sought to subdue the Israelites and kill their king of whom the magi spoke. **“Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men.”** Matthew 2: 16

It is also fitting that Jesus should come from the House of War, for as Jesus is food to the righteous, HE causes war to the wicked. **“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.”** Matthew 10: 34. So it is very fitting that HE should be born there.

The meaning of the word Ephrathah is, “fruitfulness” or “abundance”. AH well, so Jesus was born in the House of Fruitfulness, for where does fruitfulness, any fruitfulness come from but Bethlehem?

Our poor, broken, despondent, wandering hearts never produced one fruit or flower until, please highlight this, until they were watered with the Saviour's blood. It is HIS incarnation which enriches and fattens the sails of our hearts. **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.”** John 1: 1-3. In the sails of our hearts lay the thorns and passions that HE perfumed with HIS grace and wonderful love!

HIS whole life gives us life and hope. HE was born of a virgin. **“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.”** Matthew 1: 18. HE is born with a purpose. **“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”** Isaiah 9:6. HE is born and we see something wonderful in HIM. **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”** John 1: 14.

Then Jesus reveals Himself to us. **“Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”** John 14: 9. HE bore our sins on the cross to redeem us. **“3 He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. 4 Surely, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed.”** Isaiah 53:3-5. HE was raised from the dead. **“and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”** Romans 1: 4. And was taken up into heaven to intercede for us. **“2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,”** Hebrews 1: 2-3.

If we are like trees planted by the rivers of water, bringing forth fruit, it is not because we are naturally fruitful, it is because of the rivers of water by which we are planted. **“He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.”** Psalm 1: 3 **“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.”** John 15: 7

So, glorious, wonderfully named Bethlehem Ephrathah! Faithful House of Bread!

Why is it that Bethlehem is considered “little among the thousands in Judah”? Micah 5:

2.

Well, because Jesus always goes to the little ones! HE, Himself was born a little one, among the thousands of Judah, not on the high plains, not on Hebron’s royal mountain, not in a palace in Jerusalem, born in the humble village of Bethlehem. Christ is always born in Bethlehem among the little ones, is HE not?

Big hearts miss him. Proud hearts overlook HIM. Mighty and haughty hearts omit HIM, fault HIM, and ignore HIM!

For Christ is among the lowly, those who are captive, blind, in darkness, maybe in a spirit of despair, or mourning and grief struck. Friend, you can see HIM! **“1”The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, 3 To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”** Isaiah 61: 1-3

Jesus is not just a way, a truth or a life. HE is THE Way, THE Truth, and THE Life!!

The BOOK, Part 2: What did the Messiah come for?

Micah 5: 2 tells us HE came to be a ruler in Israel. Jesus Christ was said to be born the King of the Jews. **“saying, “Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him.”**” Matthew 2: 2. That’s a racial king! HE is also the King of Israel. **“took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:”Hosanna! ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’ The King of Israel!”**” John 12: 13. That is a national king.

Men may be born as princes, but they are seldom born as kings. Someone may be born the Prince of Wales and may have to wait many years or even decades until they manufacture him into a king by putting a crown on his head and a sacred chrism (specially scented oil used for anointing) on his brow.

Friends, the moment Christ came onto the earth as an infant, HE was a king! (Matthew 2:2). HE was already a King, already fully inaugurated. HE did not need to wait for the majority to vote. HE did not need a senate sub-committee to deliberate the matter or wait for the outcome of a board meeting. From the first moment HIS little hand could grasp anything, they grasped a sceptre! As soon as HIS pulse beat and HIS blood began to flow, HIS heart beat royally, HIS blood flowed in a kingly current as the Lion of Judah forever! **“But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”**” Revelation 5:5. HE was born KING! HE came to be the ruler in Israel!

Even though the people despised and rejected HIM, **“He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.”** Isaiah 53: 3, HE was the King of Kings then, and still is today! No-one is able to take away HIS royal right and majesty!

HE is not the ruler of Israel after the flesh, but HE is the ruler of Israel after the Holy Spirit!

Many recognized and obeyed HIM. Did not the apostles bow down before HIM and own HIM as their King? Is HE not the King of the whole earth? **“And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be — “The Lord is one,” And His name one.”** Zechariah 14: 9

Friend, are you submitted to the sway of Jesus? Is HE ruler in your heart? Does HE command your will? Does HE guide your judgement? Do you seek HIS counsel? HE was called the Wonderful Counsellor! Do you desire to honour HIM? Is HE your ruler? Is HE your KING?

Christ should be the monarch of our hearts! We should glorify the Christ of Glory! We should honour the Christ of all!! HIS mission should be the impetus of our hearts and wills!! HIS songs should be our constant praises!

JESUS is the ONE, The HOLY ONE!!! HE is the ruler of our hearts and Israel!

The TOOK: **“Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.” Micah 5: 2**

Highlight this my friends, Christ’s goings forth are from everlasting! HE has not been a silent or secret person up to this moment. Jesus is the greatest phenomenon that ever crossed the horizon of this world!

That newborn child in the manger has worked wonders, miraculous wonders, incredible wonders, long, long ago. HE is the well-spring of wisdom, and the gateway to glory! There is no other than HIM, for HE was from everlasting...to Everlasting!!!!

That infant slumbering in Mary's arms was the Ancient of Eternity, The HOLY ONE, The Ancient of Days! HE was then and is now unparalleled, unprecedented, eternally steadfast, and impartially merciful!

Jesus made HIS appearance on the world stage, but HIS appearance has always been on the Awning of Eternity, the porch light of eternity is lit by HIM! Oh, glorious day!

Christ has always driven the hem of heaven's mission! HE has been active since before the foundation of the world! HIS light is matchless! HIS goodness is limitless! HE is invincible, and irresistible!

His goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting! It was from everlasting that HIS mighty fingers gripped the stylus of the ages and wrote HIS own name, The Name Above Every Name. HE wrote with the pen of heaven, when from everlasting, HE signed the compact with his heavenly FATHER, that HE would pay, blood for blood, wound for wound, agony for agony, hurt for hurt, suffering for suffering, and death for death, on a cross, on behalf of HIS people! Think of that! HE died for sinners, not for the righteous!

It was from everlasting that HE gave Himself as a ransom for all, without murmuring a word, silent and obedient as a lamb, **"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth."** Isaiah 53: 7, enduring mocking, suffering, torture, agonies of the cross. HIS goings forth as our payment were from everlasting. They were from everlasting, my friend!

Pause, my friend, and wonder! His goings forth are of old, and HE is going forth now, right now!!

HE will come to your heart. He will come to you even though you are in poverty, clothed in rags, destitute, in sickness, tormented, afflicted, wretched, naked or blind!

HIS goings are so awesome! HE will give you beauty for ashes! **"To console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified."** Isaiah 61: 3.

Yes, HE will do all this for you! YES! HE will do it all!!

Christ will, from everlasting until this present moment, proclaim liberty to the captive! HE cries out, **"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed;"** Luke 4: 18

From everlasting HE teaches and heralds the glad tidings of the Kingdom of Light, for it is the power of GOD unto salvation!! **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."** Romans 1: 16

HE will, from everlasting to eternity, proclaim the acceptable year of The LORD without reservation! Always!! Give HIM praise this morning!!

So, what should we do in response?

“He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?” Micah 6:8.

That is what we are to do. Walk with HIM! Start today!! Give HIM your heart! Fully give it!
If you lost the desire to be with GOD, find it again!! If you forgot your faithfulness, remember it now!! If you stopped loving HIM, start again now!!!

Fully give your heart to GOD, and you will say with David, **“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me All the days of my life; And I will dwell in the house of the Lord Forever.”** Psalm 23: 6. AMEN!!

Praise The LORD!!! Jesus is our sinless Saviour!!!

POST NOTES:

Lineage of Jesus: “5 Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king. David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. 7 Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. 8 Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. 9 Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. 10 Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. 11 Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon. 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. 13 Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. 14 Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. 15 Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. 16 And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.” Matthew 1: 5 - 16.

“Wonderful”: The word used is *pala* or *pali*. It has GOD as the subject, expressing actions that are beyond the bounds of human praise or expectations. Means, “incomprehensible, a marvel, a miracle, that which excites or calls forth wonder and awe”.