

## **Christ is Born to Reign**

Micah 5:1-5a - NCBC, December 22,  
2019

Main Point: **Christ's birth brings hope to hearts suffering in sin.**

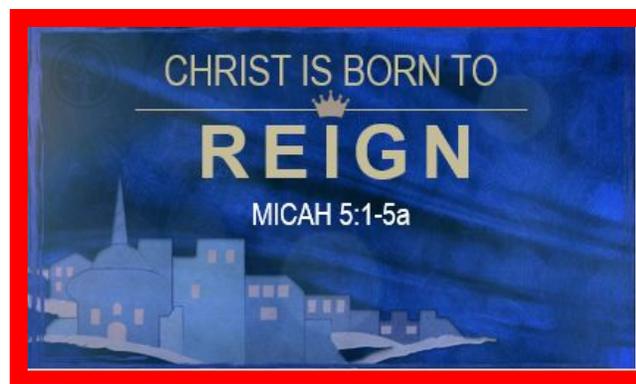
- Christ's birth silences human pride (1-2)
- Christ's birth serves God's plan (3)
- Christ's birth secures eternal peace (4-5a)

Application: **Believe Christ came to conquer your sin!**  
(7:18-20)

### **Opening Announcements:**

- **Welcome to Tom Felix** as our new full-time Facilities Director! Tom will continue to serve as our interim worship leader until God provides our new Associate Pastor of Music and Worship. Thanks Lord!
- **Christmas Eve Service** this Tuesday afternoon (12/24) at 4pm. Come enjoy a special hour of singing, Scripture, and celebration of our Savior's birth as our own Matt Miller leads us through Luke 1:26-38.

<<Joy Has Dawned>>



What a privilege to come and adore Jesus Christ as our Lord on this Sunday before Christmas! To prepare our hearts for Christmas this week, our Scripture for today comes from **chapter 5** of the prophet **Micah**.

So I invite you to continue your worship now by opening your copy of God's Word to **Micah chapter 5**.



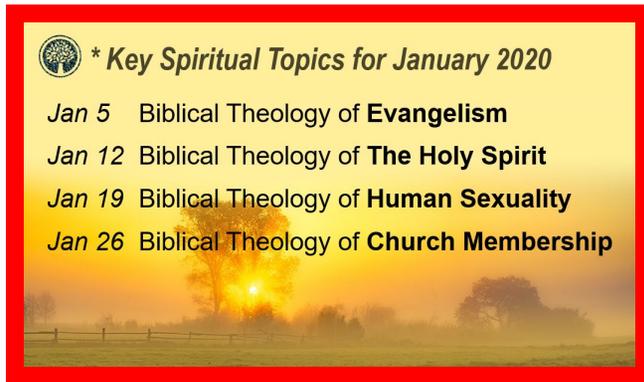
If you don't have a Bible with you this morning, please just raise your hand as we'd love to give you a Bible as an early Christmas gift today!

Micah is usually found in the clean pages of our Bibles which are still stuck together! Towards the end of the Old Testament in the middle of the Minor Prophets. **Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah.** Micah comes right before **Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah.**

So while you're preparing to read from **Micah chapter 5**, let me just highlight our upcoming Sunday morning plans:

Next week Pastor Phil Somers will be in our pulpit helping all of us purple people prepare to enter a new year together.

Then in January, with God's help I will preach 4 messages on key spiritual themes. (Each January we take a break from our normal pulpit series to focus on key spiritual topics that are especially relevant for us.)



On January 5<sup>th</sup>, I will preach on a Biblical theology of Evangelism, followed by sermons on the Holy Spirit, Human Sexuality, and Church Membership. Please pray

that God would bless these topical messages for His glory and our joy.



But please note ... that January 5<sup>th</sup> will be an extra special day for all of us. Because on January 5<sup>th</sup> during the 9:30 Sunday School hour, our elders are hosting a special time of vision-casting and prayer for the next 12 months of our ministry together here at New Castle Bible Church. You don't want to miss this! We believe God is calling us into a season of supernatural dependence and spiritual sowing together. We can't wait to share our 2020 vision with you. So please plan to attend. If you can't be here, make plans to watch the livestream. And start praying now that God would give us all the needed faith to delight in Him as we follow His call together.

Now are you ready to study **Micah** this morning?

Today we are jumping right into the middle of Micah's prophecy to better understand the significance of Jesus being born in Bethlehem. But before we read our text, let's set the table a bit.



The book of **Micah** neatly divides into 3 sections. Each section begins with the prophet’s command to “Hear” or “Listen.” And each of the three sections follow the same pattern: Judgment, followed by Hope. First hear God’s accusations and warnings, then hear hope for future restoration. So there are three oracles of Judgment and Hope presented in the book of Micah.

We’re going to be reading from **chapter 5** today, which along with **chapter 4** is the hope or restoration portion of the 2<sup>nd</sup> oracle. But to help us get the big picture before we dive in, we’re going to watch a 6-minute overview of the book of Micah put together by *The Bible Project*.<sup>1</sup>

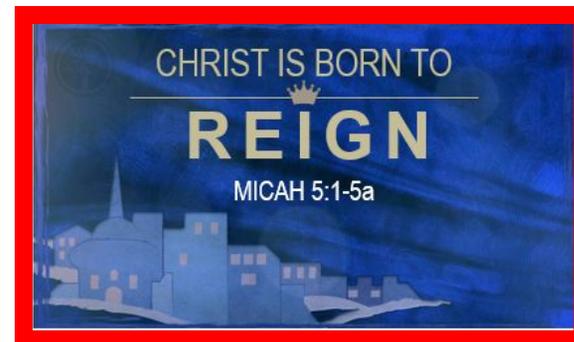


Please direct your attention to the screens, and pay careful attention to where **chapter 5 verses 1-5** fall into Micah’s overall argument in this prophecy:

<<Play Video, afterwards return to this slide below>>



I’m very thankful for these overview videos from *The Bible Project*. There are printed posters available on the back table today along with the sermon manuscripts. So please take one to help your further study of **Micah**.



<sup>1</sup> <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/micah/>  
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**Now with that background**, please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word. From the English Standard Translation, I'm reading from **Micah chapter 5, verse 1**:

*Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> And he shall be their peace.*

This is God's Word. Please be seated.

### Let's Pray.

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Try to put yourself in the sandals of Micah's original audience. You are a Jew – a descendent of Abraham, and you are living in the holy city Jerusalem. It's been over three hundred years since your people forced the prophet Samuel to give you a king so that your people could be ruled by a king just like all the other nations.<sup>2</sup>

Just 300 years before Micah's prophecy, your people received their first king – a humble man named Saul.<sup>3</sup> But

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<sup>2</sup> 1 Samuel 8:5-7

<sup>3</sup> 1 Samuel 9:21

it wasn't long before power corrupted King Saul, and God gave the kingdom to David – a humble shepherd boy from Bethlehem.<sup>4</sup> And God made a covenant with King David – that *his house and his kingdom and his throne would be established forever.*<sup>5</sup>

That all happened around the year 1000 BC. But now it's almost 700 BC...and the last 300 years of your people's history tells a devastating tale of ruin and division. Not only is the kingdom now divided between Israel in the North, and your Judah in the South... but king after king has shown themselves weak, cowardly, and unfaithful to God's covenant.

You and your people are starting to doubt... will God's promise to King David ever be fulfilled? Is there any hope for a King to come and forever establish David's house, kingdom, and throne?

And now ... to make matters worse... the most powerful earthly kingdom of your day – the Assyrians have conquered Israel – your relatives to the north...and are even now holding Jerusalem under siege. This looks like the beginning of the end. What about God's promises? Loved ones, can you relate to Micah's original audience? Do you ever feel like your life is under siege? Like you are surrounded by trouble – some of which you may have deserved, and some of which you may not have deserved...but regardless... you feel trapped and without hope – unable to see how God can bring any good out of your present distress?

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Samuel 16:1; 17:15;

<sup>5</sup> 2 Samuel 7:8-16, especially verse 16

Micah is prophesying to Judah some 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ – and yet His words offer assurance and hope that final restoration will still come. And as we consider these obscure verses at the beginning of **chapter 5**, we will see this morning that



Christ's birth brings hope to hearts suffering in sin.

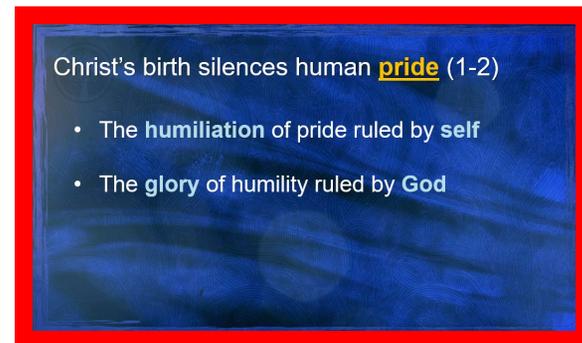
Christmas brings hope – for Micah's first audience surrounded by the Assyrians, and for us today as we suffer in this world and all of its sin. Let's walk through this text together and observe three ways that Christ's birth brings hope to hearts suffering in sin.

First, in **verses 1-2**, we must understand that,



Christ's birth silences human pride (1-2)

Our hope for deliverance or a successful life must never be in our own human abilities. Christmas is a profound reminder to all of us that all human boasting is foolish.



**Verse 1** shows us **the humiliation of pride** contrasted with **verse 2** that portrays **the glory of humility**. **Verse 1** teaches that God is opposed to the proud while **verse 2** teaches that God pours out His grace on the humble.<sup>6</sup>

Look at **verse 1**,

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<sup>6</sup> James 4:6; c.f. 1 Peter 5:5-6

*Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops; siege is laid against us; with a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.*

Due to all her soldiers and constant warfare, Jerusalem was considered “the city of troops.” So Micah is crying out to the strongest city – the capital city of Judah –marshal your troops! You Jews are a proud people who rely on your own resources and your own armies... so gather all the power you can humanly muster together.

But know this... your strongest days are no match for God’s judgment that surrounds you! Your sins have you surrounded... enemy armies are all around you, and notice what will happen:

*With a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.*

Your human king, the judge of Israel will be humiliated. For a king to be struck on the cheek with a rod is not only painful – it is humiliating.<sup>7</sup> And while this actually literally happened to Judah’s last king, Zedekiah, when Jerusalem was taken into exile by the Babylonians in 586 BC,<sup>8</sup> I believe Micah was trying to contrast the foolishness of relying on human kings more than God.

Because notice the strong contrast of **verse 2**, as God Himself speaks through the prophet, saying:

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for*

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Kings 22:24; Job 16:10; Lamentations 3:30; c.f. Luke 22:64

<sup>8</sup> 2 Kings 24-25, especially 25:7; c.f. Jeremiah 39:6-7; 52:10-11

*me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.*

Jerusalem is a capitol city with a weak ruler. Bethlehem is a small city with a strong ruler.

Bethlehem was just a small insignificant farming town in the hillsides approximately 5 miles to the south of Jerusalem. *Bethlehem* literally means “house of bread,” and *Ephrathah* means “fruitful.” This was a very productive place to raise wheat and sheep. Yes Bethlehem was the birthplace of King David... but the emphasis of **Micah 5:2** is how insignificant Bethlehem was compared to Jerusalem. To compare small little Bethlehem with Jerusalem would be like comparing Mackinaw IL to New York!!

So notice ... out of Bethlehem ... out of a town too little to be included in any official listing of Judah’s villages,<sup>9</sup> out of humble Bethlehem shall come forth the long-awaited shepherd King of glory.

By the way, we know that this ruler in **Micah 5:2** is referring to the Messiah...to Jesus Christ...because remember when King Herod asked the chief priests where the Messiah was to be born in **Matthew chapter 2**, they quoted this exact prophecy.<sup>10</sup> God’s people knew Micah – they looked forward to the promised restoration after judgment.

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<sup>9</sup> Joshua 15:20-62; c.f. Even though King Rehoboam fortified Bethlehem in 2 Chronicles 11:6, it was still not significant enough to be included in Nehemiah’s list of Judean villages after the Babylonian exile in Nehemiah 11:25-35.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 2:3-6; c.f. John 7:42

So Christ's birth to a poor teenager from no-name Bethlehem is a powerful reminder that God chooses what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chooses what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chooses what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are. All so that no human being might boast in the presence of God!<sup>11</sup>

Church – Bethlehem reminds us never to trust our own family reputation, or our own education, or our own accomplishments. We are too prone to look to wise or powerful human leaders for hope. But Christmas humiliates all such idolatry. God brings forth His king in a manner that silences all human pride.

Notice the phrase, *from you shall come forth for me*. You might underline the two all-important words “for me.”

Remember, God is speaking. And God says that the Messiah will come from humble insignificance – *for me*. For God Himself.

The King will come forth for the praise and glory of God! In other words,



Christ's birth serves God's plan (3)

Jesus was born to save sinners<sup>12</sup> ...but our salvation finds its ultimate purpose in what's in it for God Himself!<sup>13</sup>  
Jesus was born in Bethlehem to glorify God!

Christ's birth serves God's plan – in a way that nullifies all grounds for human boasting and magnifies the fact that God is a sovereign promise-maker who works through all of history to bring Himself glory and praise!!

Look at the end of **verse 2**. Notice how God says the origin of Israel's true king is “*from of old, from ancient days*.”

Thirty years before Micah the prophet Isaiah had given royal names to the future Messianic King. According to **Isaiah 9:6**,

*His name shall be called, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

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<sup>11</sup> 1 Corinthians 1:27-29  
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<sup>12</sup> Matthew 1:21

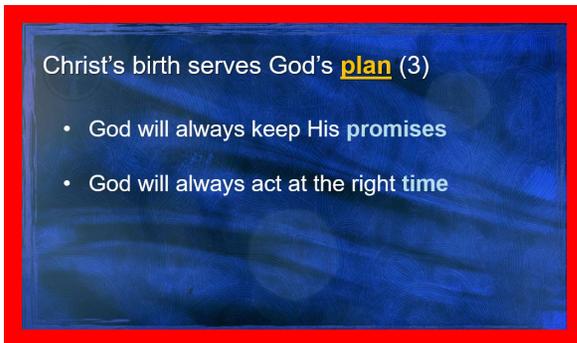
<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 1:6-14 Our salvation is entirely for the praise of His glory!

So it is possible that Micah was referring to the everlasting nature of Israel's king here.<sup>14</sup>

But more than likely, the phrase “from ancient days” simply refers to the reality that the Messiah will come from the old line of David<sup>15</sup> and the tribe of Judah.<sup>16</sup>

Remember Micah's audience had endured 300 years of weak rulers from David's line...only now to be surrounded by judgment... questioning the likelihood of God's promises for a Davidic ruler who would reign over the entire earth.

And so Micah says, out of weakness, God is going to show His power. So that your pride will be silenced, and God's plan will be served. There's a better King coming!



<sup>14</sup> The KJV translates the phrase “from ancient days” as “from everlasting” due to the influence of Isaiah 9:6. However the Hebrew is best understood as “from ancient times/days.” And the eternal preexistence of Christ is taught more clearly in other Scriptures like Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-3, 8:58; Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:17; and Revelation 1:8, and therefore is not dependent upon Micah 5:2.

<sup>15</sup> 2 Samuel 7:12-16

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 49:10

Micah is giving hope! **God will always keep His promises**...even though you've already waited 300 years... **God will always act at the right time.**

*Therefore, Micah says in **verse 3**, He (or God Himself) shall give [His people] 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.*

Now let me try to make this as clear as I can. **Verse 3** is a verse of hope...Micah is saying that although you are besieged by judgment – and you are about to be exiled and removed from your land – God's judgment is temporary. It will only last until a woman gives birth to the Messiah...for after the Shepherd King is born in Bethlehem, then there will be a time of restoration for all of God's children again as they return to the land under the reign of this long-awaited King.

Notice how the prophet is connecting judgment to hope – just like the anguish of birth-pains are connected the joys of a newborn child!<sup>17</sup>

Now how many mothers here know what it's like to experience labor pains for way longer than you would prefer? Labor pains are not fun...but they are productive.

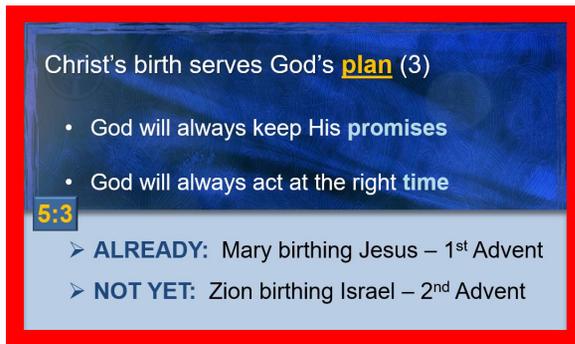
And as God's people are facing judgment, Micah wants them to know – that their exile will not nullify the promises of God. God always keeps His promises and He will always act at just the right time.<sup>18</sup>

Now when I first read **Micah 5:3** I assumed that the woman in labor was referring to Mary – and Jesus' first

<sup>17</sup> C.f. Micah 4:9-10

<sup>18</sup> Galatians 4:4

advent in **Matthew 1**. However, I think there's even more to this promise than the King's birth in Bethlehem.



Like most Old Testament prophecy, **Micah 5:3** has both an “already” and “not yet” fulfillment. Already, this promise was fulfilled when Mary gave birth to Jesus.<sup>19</sup> But if you consider **Micah 4 verses 9-10**, along with **Isaiah 66:7-11**, it becomes clear that the woman giving birth is actually referring to Jerusalem, or Mt. Zion herself, anguishing in the labor pains of judgment until the time of the Gentiles is fulfilled,<sup>20</sup> and Israel is supernaturally brought forth as a believing nation living under the Messiah's Millennial Reign.<sup>21</sup> Only when Israel believes and receives Jesus as their Messianic King, will all of Israel, the rest of the King's brothers mentioned in our verse, return to the land to be ruled by their Shepherd King.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> C.f. Isaiah 7:14

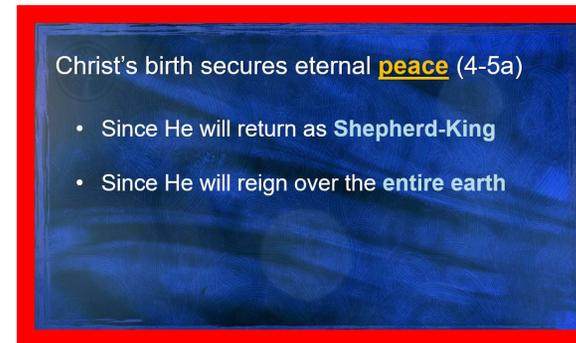
<sup>20</sup> Luke 21:24; c.f. Romans 8:22

<sup>21</sup> C.f. Romans 11; Revelation 12:1-6

<sup>22</sup> Micah 2:12-13. This will occur after the Tribulation period when Christ comes to establish His kingdom for 1,000 years on earth according to Revelation 20:1-6. C.f. Isaiah 10:20-22; 11:11-16; Zechariah 10:8-12

So then listen to this! Just as Christ birth was the first fulfillment of **Micah 5:3** some 700 years after Micah spoke, so likewise we can be confident that Jesus is coming again to receive the obedience of faith from Israel!

In other words, Christmas is just the “first fruit” of what is still to come! Micah goes on in **verses 4 and 5** to make sure we understand that,



**Christ's birth secures eternal peace (4-5a)**

In context, **verses 4 and 5** are speaking of the future Millennial Kingdom – what will happen when **Jesus returns as Shepherd-King** to rule over His church and believing Israel all dwelling together in peace.

**Verse 4** says,

*And He shall stand* - meaning The Messiah will rule over all in fulfillment of God's promises to David.

*And shepherd His flock* – again note that King Jesus is a shepherd – a true shepherd, who lays down His own life for His flock.<sup>23</sup>

This recalls the promised restoration brought about by the King Shepherd after the first oracle of judgment in **Micah 2:12-13**. King Jesus will feed, and lead, and protect, and care for all of God's people ... how does **verse 4** say it?

*In the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God!*

Listen friends... King Jesus' ability to rule comes from the fact that He is God Himself – He has all power, and all authority to exercise that power – He is the majestic *Mighty God, Wonderful Counselor, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace!*<sup>24</sup>

No wonder Micah exclaims,

*And they shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth. And He shall be their peace.*

It's not just Judah and Israel who will be part of the Shepherd-King's kingdom. **He will reign over the entire earth.** It's people from every tribe and tongue and nation – He shall be great to the ends of the earth!!<sup>25</sup>

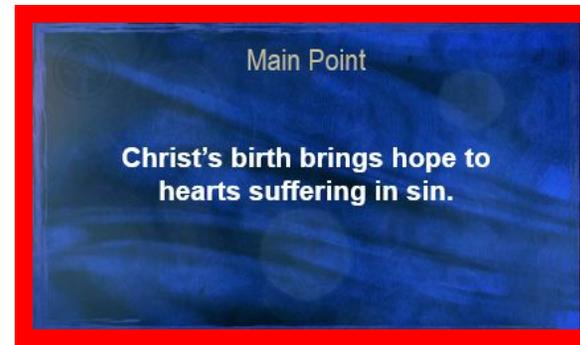
So listen friend... if you feel trapped and surrounded by sin and all of sin's consequences... hear God's promise:

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<sup>23</sup> John 10:11-18

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 9:6

<sup>25</sup> Revelation 5:9-10



**Christ's birth brings hope to hearts suffering in sin.**

Why? Because the 1<sup>st</sup> Advent isn't all there is. Christmas is just the beginning!! He's coming back someday to set everything right – to establish His kingdom of peace and security to the ends of the earth!!

Therefore, as you prepare to celebrate His first coming, let your self-reliance be silenced. See how God is patiently yet perfectly fulfilling all of His promises to bring His own name glory, and establish peace and security for all who would believe on Him!



And make sure to **Believe Christ came to conquer your**

sin!

We celebrate Christmas with such joy and anticipation because the essence of Christmas is that God sent His own Son to be born so that people under the siege of sin would be delivered and rescued.

Jesus came, and was born of a virgin, to set you free from your sin!!<sup>26</sup> To silence our pride. To glorify our God. And to bring peace and good will to all men!<sup>27</sup>

Will you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ today and be saved from sin? **Verse 5** says clearly – the Messiah will be their peace.

Not that He will *give* them peace... but that He Himself *is* their peace. Remember, for a Hebrew mind, peace is much more than feeling calm. Peace is *shalom*. Peace is the experience of righteousness – everything being just right - as God intended without any influence of sin.

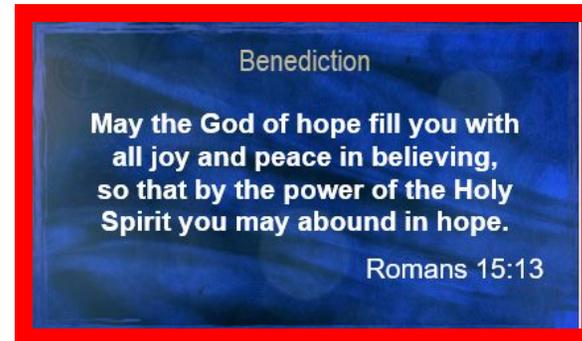
Turn from your self-reliance and self-trusting idolatry today. Hear Micah's prophecy...believe that Jesus is Lord, and submit to your Shepherd-King. For Christ is the only king who was born to reign forever!



**Let's pray.**

<<Joy to the World>>

**Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.**



*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.*  
**Romans 15:13**

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<sup>26</sup> Matthew 1:21

<sup>27</sup> C.f. Luke 2:14



## Recommended Resources on Christ is Born to Reign:

- Genesis 49:10
- 2 Samuel 7:12-16
- 2 Kings 25:6-7
- Isaiah 7:13-14; 9:1-7; 10:20-22; 61:1-2; 66:7-14
- Micah 2:12-13; 4:3-4, 8-10; 7:18-20
- Zechariah 14:9-11
- Malachi 3:1
- Matthew 2:3-6
- Luke 1:30-33
- John 1:14; 7:42
- Romans 11
- 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
- Galatians 4:4-7
- Ephesians 2:14
- Revelation 12:1-6
  
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/if-god-show-up-bethlehem/>
- <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/micah/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/books/good-news-of-great-joy>
  
- *Come Let Us Adore Him*, Paul Tripp
- *The Dawning of Indestructible Joy*, John Piper
- *Hidden Christmas*, Timothy Keller

## Discussion Questions for Growing Deeper:

1. Watch the 6-minute *Bible Project* video on Micah (<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/micah/>). Note how all three oracles of judgment begin with the word “hear” in 1:2, 3:1, and 6:1. How does this repeating cycle of judgment and hope for restoration affect your understanding of God and His latter prophets?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. How does God’s grace nullify all grounds for human boasting? How should Christmas humble us?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 1:18-20. How does Christmas remind you of God’s faithfulness? What promises in Micah 4-5 still await final fulfillment in the future? How does Micah’s concluding reference to the Abrahamic covenant give hope (7:18-20)?
4. Read Micah 5:2. Explain the meaning of “for me” in this verse. How is the glory of God Himself the shining center of His entire kingdom program?
5. Review Micah 5:4-5a. Which of these promises most delight and inspire you? Share together what you most look forward to in Christ’s future millennial reign on the earth.