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The Coming Ruler

Key Passages

- Micah 1:1, 5:2–4, 7:18–20; Genesis 49:10; Luke 2:10–12; John 1:1–2, 10:11; 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 5:5

What You Will Learn

- How the prophecy in Micah connects to the person of Jesus.
- How God deals with our sins.



Lesson Overview

God had always planned that He would send a Savior to redeem fallen man. This plan is seen throughout the Old Testament and included Jesus Christ, the Son of God, to be born a man, live, die, and rise again so that all who would believe would be saved.

Memory Verse

Isaiah 53:6

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, everyone, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.



Prepare to Learn

SCRIPTURAL BACKGROUND

The gospel—the good news of the redemption of sinners through the promised Messiah—is woven like a scarlet thread throughout the Bible, like an arrow pointing to something wonderful that would surely come to fulfillment. As we look at the prophet Micah, we will see that he was one of the prophets of God who had the privilege of announcing the coming Messiah.

Micah was a contemporary of Isaiah, ministering to both Israel to the north and Judah to the south. He preached in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. His message concerned what he saw regarding Samaria and Jerusalem (Micah 1:1). He prophesied from around 760 to 710 BC. His proclamations and warnings were being sounded as Samaria fell to the Assyrians to the north in 721 BC.

Although Micah pronounced judgment on the people for their mistreatment of the poor (Micah 2:2), for false teachers (Micah 2:6), and for idolatry, he also spoke with hope of a light that would shine brightly into the future—a time when people would walk in the name of the Lord God forever and ever (Micah 4:5). His message of the future included revelations of the Messiah, the Savior—who He was and how He would be identified.

Let's look specifically at Micah 5:2. We see four characteristics here regarding the coming Messiah. First, the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Second, the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah. Third, the Messiah would be eternal. And fourth, in Micah 5:4, the Messiah would act as a shepherd who would feed His flock. These prophecies were all fulfilled, and God confirmed the fulfillment of them in other parts of Scripture.

The first part of the prophecy, that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, is confirmed in several places in the New Testament writings. We read that Joseph went up from Nazareth with Mary, his betrothed wife who was with child, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (Luke 2:4–5). Luke also recorded that the angels brought good tidings to the shepherds that a Savior was born in the city of David—Bethlehem (Luke 2:10–12). So 700 years after Micah foretold the Messiah's birthplace, the Savior was born in Bethlehem.

The second thing Micah told about the Messiah (Micah 5:2) was that He would be from the tribe of Judah. We'll go back in the Old Testament to see one confirmation of this prophecy. When Jacob blessed his sons and grandsons, the connection between this coming Ruler and the tribe of

Judah was made. Jacob spoke of the scepter—a sign of kingship—not departing from Judah until Shiloh comes, the Ruler who will bring peace (Genesis 49:8–10). The author of Hebrews declared that the Lord arose from Judah (Hebrews 7:14). Looking forward to the book of Revelation, we read that Jesus the Messiah is referred to as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David (Revelation 5:5). And finally, both genealogies of Christ show that He was from the tribe of Judah (Matthew 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–38).

The third characteristic described by Micah is the Messiah's eternity—His “goings forth are from old, from everlasting.” Micah, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, revealed that the Messiah was and is eternal. This is surely a difficult concept to grasp. Jesus, as part of the Trinity, did not begin to exist when He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He existed in triune communion with the Father and the Spirit before the universe was created—before there was time. The Apostle John opens his Gospel with confirmation of this truth about the Messiah. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God” (John 1:1–2). Micah understood that the Messiah would be from everlasting to everlasting.

Fourthly, Micah described the Messiah as a shepherd who would “stand and feed His flock in the

strength of the Lord” (Micah 5:4). The shepherd imagery of God and Jesus is found throughout Scripture (Psalm 23). And Jesus even referred to Himself as the “good shepherd” who gave His life for His sheep (John 10:11).

All of these characteristics of Jesus the Messiah are wonderful, and the Bible's confirmation of them gives us the assurance that Jesus Christ is the one prophesied by Micah.

One final truth from Micah about the Messiah is truly remarkable and very personal. Micah proclaimed that God would pardon iniquity and pass over the transgressions of His children. He would not retain His anger forever. He delights in mercy. God would have compassion on His children and cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Micah 7:18–20). How would this be accomplished? Only through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Peter described this in the New Testament when he said that Christ “bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24).

While Micah was looking forward to this Messiah and prophesying of Him by the power of God, we are able to look back and observe His finished work on the Cross—salvation and forgiveness for all who will repent, turn from their sins, and trust in this precious Messiah, Savior, Jesus Christ.

HISTORICAL/APOLOGETICS BACKGROUND

As we consider the role of the prophet, we often come across the word “predict.” What comes to mind when you hear that someone made a prediction? Maybe you have made a prediction about who would win a contest or about when it would rain. What was that prediction based on? Would it be accurate to say that Micah made a prediction about the birthplace of Christ?

If we look up the word *predict* in Webster’s Dictionary we find: “to declare or indicate in advance; *especially*: foretell on the basis of observation, experience, or scientific reason.” The root of the word simply means “say before,” but the common usage today would align itself more with foretelling based on an observation or experience, like forecasting the weather.

While Micah’s statement about the birthplace of Christ was a prediction in the first sense of the definition above (declaring in advance), it cannot be explained by the second definition (“foretell on the basis of observation,

experience, or scientific reason”). This is because Micah was not analyzing patterns or basing his prophecy on his personal experiences and knowledge of the Messiah. He wasn’t thinking that Jesus would *probably* be born in Bethlehem in Judah. No. It was the omniscient God who cannot lie who told Micah what was going to happen. Micah was merely passing the true Word of God along. The fulfillment of what Micah said was sure, not just probable. This was not a message from a weatherman, but from the God who controls the weather. And this surety is true of ALL the prophecies we find in Scripture.

Be aware that many modern Bible translations use a form of the word *predict* when talking about the sure proclamations of God. While this is not technically wrong according to the definition above, the wording can be misleading to many hearers if it is not carefully defined and explained as a sure foretelling of God’s Word and His plan.

For more information on this topic, see the Online Resource Page.



Studying God's Word

Did Micah predict the birthplace of the Messiah?

Take notes as you study the following passage.

Micah 5:1-9



Micah's Prophecies

The prophet Micah offered hope to the Jewish people amidst his proclamation of judgment. These statements were made 700 years before the one he prophesied of was to come.

Use the following verses to connect the prophecies to their fulfillment in Jesus. Read each verse, identify which part of the prophecy it fulfills, then write the reference under the correct heading. Write a short description of how it is fulfilled. Be sure to read each verse in context. If you can, identify other passages that would confirm the fulfillment of the prophecies.

Genesis 49:10; John 10:11; John 1:1-2; Luke 2:10-12; Revelation 5:5

1. Out of Bethlehem shall come the one to be Ruler in Israel.
2. The Ruler will be from Judah, bringing peace to Israel.
3. The Ruler's nature is from everlasting (eternal).
4. The Ruler will feed His flock.

Take notes as you study the following passages.

Micah 7:18-20
