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Micah 5:2

Read Micah 5:1-6

Baby Jesus Foretold: An Ancient-Humility Foretold

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Website: Micah 5:2 prophesies the humility, royalty, and eternity of the coming Messiah, all fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who gave his life as a ransom to set the captives free. Listen to learn more.

If you'd like to read *The Little Prince*, one of the sermon illustrations Pastor Jonathan used, you can find an [online edition here](#).

Introduction: **(S1)**

1. Last Sunday, Monica and I went to Faith ev Free's *Journey to Bethlehem: A Living Nativity*.¹
2. We began by hearing about King Herod's decree of a census and meeting Mary and Joseph.
3. Then a host family led us from Nazareth stage by stage to the little town of Bethlehem.
4. Along the way we meet a map-maker, poor beggar children, and Romans guards who called us dumb.
5. We met some magi who pointed out a star in the trees signaling the birth of the Messiah.
6. As we got closer to the end, I kept looking to spot the nativity, but couldn't see it in the dark.
7. When we finally found it, I saw Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus, who had just woken up.
8. They were in a little stable-shed with a simple manger; and I felt... **underwhelmed**.
9. With all that growing anticipation of the journey, I expected something grand, something big.
10. As we end our series, *Baby Jesus Foretold*, maybe your anticipation has grown too.
11. Each week we've seen signs that anticipate the birth of baby Jesus (**Signs of Jesus**).

A. **(S2)** In **Numbers 24:17**, we looked at the sign of the **star** and of the **lion**.

- a. The star prophesied a king would come who brings *hope*.
- b. The lion told us a king would come who brings *victory*.
- c. We saw these promises fulfilled in Jesus; *King Jesus is the light and lion of Christmas*.

(As we discover the signs of Jesus's birth, our anticipation grows, we get excited.)

(Numbers reveals the Messiah (anointed one) will be a king and Isaiah says he will be God and man.)

B. **(S3)** In **Isaiah 7:14**, we looked at the sign of the **virgin birth** and of the name, **Immanuel**.

- a. The virgin birth tells us Jesus' birth is a miracle, his mother is Mary, but his father is God.
- b. *God entered into our story through the virgin birth of baby Jesus*.

12. These are miraculous signs!... But if you were at the birth of Jesus, you'd probably feel underwhelmed.
13. This is because the prophet Micah tells us God's plan for the Messiah's birth is not grand, but humble.

(S4) Micah 5:2 But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." (NIV®)

(The Messiah will be born, not with thunder or lightning, but quietly, insignificantly.)

(Where the Messiah is born is less like Beacon Hill and more like Dracut.)

I. **(S5) Bethlehem.** The Messiah will come from a humble but royal beginning. (Micah 5:2a)

A. The Messiah will be born in the least-likely of towns.

1. Being "small among the clans" isn't about size, but stature—Bethlehem is insignificant.
2. Bethlehem literally means "house of bread"—this is a town for bakeries, not palaces.
3. In Micah's day, Jerusalem has Solomon's palace, the hall of pillars, and the temple of God.
4. Kings are born in Jerusalem; they begin royally... but the Messiah's birth will be different.

B. Despite his birth, the Messiah will be more royal than all the rest.

¹ <http://www.faitheefree.org/nativity.html> (accessed 12/8/2016).

1. There was a king, the greatest king of Israel, who wasn't born in Jerusalem, King David.
2. **(S6) 1 Samuel 17:12a** Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah... (NIV®)
3. God called David “a man after his own heart” and he wasn't born royally (1 Samuel 13:14).
4. Jesus was born like David, “Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea.” (Matt 2:1)
5. When the wisemen (the magi) come searching for the king of the Jews, they look in Jerusalem.
6. They ask King Herod where he is; and Herod's “chief priests and scribes” quote Micah.
7. **(S7) Matthew 2:6** “ ‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’” (NIV®)

(The Messiah will come from a humble but royal beginning.)

C. **(S8)** Have you ever picked out a new puppy? What did you look for?

1. Did you search for the softest fur, the pinkest tongue, the cutest face?
2. Maybe you looked for the strongest and healthiest puppy.
3. If you want a show dog, you look for the best pedigree.²
4. Pedigree is a genealogical record that shows a dog is a purebred animal.
5. In other words, the dog comes from ancestors who have winning traits.
6. Jesus comes from a royal blood line with a winning pedigree.
7. But when Jesus is born in Bethlehem, he looks like the runt of the litter.
8. Yes, he's royal, but his birth is that of a peasant, of the poor, of the outcasts.

D. Jesus is the runt of the litter who came to die for runts of the litter.

1. I don't know about you, but I want a king like that! I want one born humbly not pridefully.
2. This king invites any who recognize their own weakness and frailty to join his kingdom.
3. Do you recognize your brokenness? Your sin? The lost feeling in your gut?
4. Christians aren't the best or smartest, we're the most sinful, the most broken.
5. *If you're the runt of the litter, Jesus can save you and he can use you for good.*³
6. The word “Ephrathah” means “fruitful”—God used Jesus to bear fruit.
7. Jesus' fruit isn't fame, riches, and power but humility, dependence on God, and faith.
8. How might Jesus use you in your weakness to bear fruit this Christmas?
9. You could come sing *Christmas Carols* with us to bless our neighbors tomorrow night.
10. You could invite someone to our next *bring a friend day*, next Saturday or Christmas Eve.

(**Bethlehem** teaches us the Messiah will come from a humble but royal beginning.)

(We can only understand how much Jesus humbled himself by looking further back.)

II. **(S9) Ancient Days.** The Messiah comes from eternity past. (Micah 5:2b)

A. The Messiah has an eternal origin; he is conceived, but not created.

1. When you and I are conceived, that's when we come into existence, into being.
2. But when Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, he only came into his “human being.”
3. Before his birth, Jesus shared his “God being” with the Father, fully God, but not yet fully man.

² Thank you to the preaching breakfast for coming up with this illustration!

³ “God [chooses] the weak things of the world to shame the strong.” (1 Cor 1:27)

4. The NIV explains it this way, his "...origins are from of old, from ancient times." (NIV®)
5. The ESV says he is one "...whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." (ESV)
6. Over 100+ years later, Daniel uses "Ancient of Days" to show the Messiah is God's eternal son.

(S10) Daniel 7:13–14 ¹³ "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed. (ESV)

(Jesus calls himself the "son of man" who will come with "the clouds of heaven".)

(S11) Matthew 24:30 Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (ESV)

7. Jesus is the Son of Man; he is the son of the Ancient of Days, he is the Ancient Prince.
8. **Big Idea:** The Ancient Prince humbled himself to rule our hearts.

(Micah prophecies he will "shepherd his flock" and "rule the land of Assyria with the sword")
(Jesus has come to shepherd your heart and deliver you from sin. But how?)

B. The Ancient Prince is stricken in our place.

1. Hezekiah was the king of that time, he was surrounded by Assyria, and he should have died.
2. **(S12) Micah 5:1** Marshal your troops now, city of troops, for a siege is laid against us. They will strike Israel's ruler on the cheek with a rod. (NIV®)
3. But God spares Hezekiah because he knows another king will come and take his place.
4. **(S13) Matthew 26:67–68** Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said, "Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?" (NIV®)
5. We're the ones in captivity, we're besieged, but Jesus takes our blows.
6. Do you feel like your heart is held captive by the world this Christmas?
7. *If you want to be free, our Ancient Prince will come and rescue you. *intensity+*
8. Christ takes broken runts of the litter and transforms them into princess and princesses.

(The Ancient Prince humbled himself to rule our hearts.)

(S14) Conclusion:

1. This week I read *The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (antwan de sant-exu peree).⁴
2. *The Little Prince* is an imaginative children's book that seems like it's written for grown-ups.
3. It's the story of a little golden-haired boy, a prince, who lives alone on a tiny asteroid.
4. On that asteroid there's a talking flower, a rose, who he waters and cares for day by day.
5. But the rose uses her words to lie and hurt the little prince, so he leaves and eventually comes to earth.
6. While on earth, he meets a talking fox who loves the little prince and asks him to "tame" him.

⁴ *The Little Prince*. <http://www.hilpro.com.br/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Pequeno-Pri%CC%81ncipe-Ingle%CC%82s.pdf>

7. The fox explains that “tame” means “to establish ties...” and “...if you tame me, we’ll need each other. You’ll be the only boy in the world for me. I’ll be the only fox in the world for you . . .”
8. It’s at this point in the story that the prince realizes the rose has tamed his heart, that he is tied to her.
9. In order to be with her, to get home, he has to die, because his body weights to much to fly to her.
10. So a yellow, poisonous snake, bites him in the ankle and his spirit flies home to be with his rose.
11. God created this world and everything in it but we broke that relationship in the garden.
12. We’re the rose who introduced mistrust, brokenness, and hurt into our relationship with God.
13. But even after all of that, God allowed his heart to be tamed for you and me.
14. He loved us so much he sent his Son, the Ancient Prince, to rescue us.
15. It’s like you’re the only rose in the world for Jesus, like his heart is tamed for you.
16. In order to rescue you, that evil serpent struck Jesus in the heal, wounding him on the cross. (Gen 3:15)
17. But it’s through Jesus’ defeat, his death, that he actually restores the broken relationship.
18. *Jesus invites you to give him your heart...*
19. *And if you do, you’ll find he gave you his heart long ago.*
20. **(S15) The Ancient Prince humbled himself to rule our hearts.**

Preview: Come back next Saturday for our kick-off to the book of **Exodus!**

2 Corinthians 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (NIV®)