

December 7, 2023  
5th Day of Advent

*But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.  
Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labour has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.  
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 live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;  
and he shall be the one of peace.*  
**Micah 5:2-5a**

In one of the most clear and most important prophecies of the Old Testament Micah pinpoints the birthplace and the eternity of the Messiah 700 years before the birth of Jesus. The town of Jesus's birth Bethlehem Ephratah translates to house of bread (Bethlehem) and fruitful (Ephratah). Is there any symbolism here? Why or why not?

Micah's words "whose origins are of old, from ancient times" tells us that the Messiah and His coming have been known from days of eternity, i.e., forever. How did he know?

Luther writes about Micah: "In short he denounces, he prophesies, he preaches, etc. Ultimately, however, this meaning is that even though Israel and Judah have gone to pieces, Christ will yet come to make all things good". Has the world of today (USA included) gone to pieces? Why? What can be done to make all things good?

Here are questions to ask ourselves and do our best to answer and live out:

How did Micah know a Messiah was coming? What let him know the Messiah's birth would be in Bethlehem Ephrata? Why is that significant?

Regarding verse 5, "And he will be their peace". What does that mean? Are we experiencing that? If yes, why? If not, why not? Is the USA and the world experiencing that peace? What is needed to realize that peace? What is my role?

*Dear Heavenly Father,*

*In this season of Advent, help us to provide peace to all, the old, the young, the challenged, the healthy, the sick, the unborn, the infant, the grieving, the happy, our neighbors, our friends, our families and those torn apart by war. In Jesus' name we pray.*

*Amen.*

Scott Johnson  
St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church