



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Micah 5:3-6

"The Shepherd King and Our True Destiny"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Again, Father, we turn to Thee with anticipation as we think about the reading and pondering of the word of God. We thank Thee for the great Prophet Micah and for the things that Thou didst reveal through him for the effectiveness of his message down through the centuries, for the many who have fed upon his words and been strengthened and encouraged in the faith, for those, too, Lord who have been convicted by the things that he has said. We give Thee thanks for that, too. And we pray that tonight, as we look again at a section of that wonderful prophecy, that Thou will give us the proper response to it. So that we may, as a result of our study together, be in a relationship that is more pleasing to Thee. We ask, Lord, that Thou will deepen our spiritual lives, enable us to draw closer to Thee through the Scriptures, and we pray that when we leave we may leave with a sense of the greatness of our great sovereign Shepherd King, the Lord Jesus Christ. We ask these things in his name. Amen.

[Message] We're turning again to the 5th chapter of the Prophecy of Micah, and our subject for tonight is really something of a continuation of last week, but I've given it a different title, "The Shepherd King and Our True Destiny." And we're looking at verse

3, 4, 5, and 6 tonight of Micah 5. Let's read through these verses, and we'll again look at them in a moment in more detail. Remember, Micah writes out of the background of the Assyrian invasion. He writes out of very difficult days in which it appears that the Assyrians are going to be successful in their attempt to take the whole nation for themselves. They have already taken the northern kingdom. They are evidently right at the gates of the city of Jerusalem, the Prophet Micah has been seeking to turn the people's attention to the Lord God in order that they might turn to him and find some measure of deliverance. And so he writes his prophecy out of a very difficult situation in which those in Judea found themselves.

In the 1st verse we read, "Now gather thyself in troops, O daughter of troops: he hath laid siege against us: they shall smite the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek." And then in the well known prophecy he reminds them of the fact that the time is coming when someone is going to come out of little Bethlehem who is going to be the ruler in Israel. And then in verse 3 he continues his words to them. He writes,

"Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel. And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth. And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. (Incidentally those expressions "seven shepherd and eight principal men," this is an instance of a figure of speech which was well known in the particular near eastern background in which Micah arose, and this same expression, seven and then eight is found in Eucharistic literature. So we are not to look for a specific seven shepherds and eight principal men, but the emphasis of the text is simply upon the fact that when the Assyrian comes in, then there is going to be sufficient force to defeat him. Now the

6th verse,) and they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof: thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."

Well, Micah has just announced that amid the storm clouds of the Assyrian threat, deliverance shall come by a majestic Shepherd King, promised since ancient times, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." And we said last time that while it's likely that this expression "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" may refer simply to the fact of the beginning of the prophecies concerning the Davidic covenant, it is also possible that the expression is to go back on into the ages of eternity. And we are rather to look at this as being an expression of the eternal character of the Lord Jesus Christ. And if that is so, then these goings forth are likely to be references to the ministries that the Lord Jesus had in Old Testament times as the Servant of Jehovah and in other ways in which he made covenant with Israel and then delivered them in their experiences.

Then further details follow in verse 3 through verse 6 of this ministry of this Shepherd King, this one who is to be born in Bethlehem. And the indications that one gets from these verses that we are to look at are simply these, that the individual referred to here, while he is a Shepherd King, and while he ministers in the strength of the Lord and in the majesty of the name of the Lord God, he himself is more than a human being. In fact, he is a divine person, and Micah is not talking about any new personality who comes into existence in the future, but someone who has been in existence in the ages past.

The important themes that appear in these verses are simply these; he will talk about the regathering of Israel after the virgin birth. And then he will speak of the greatness of the Shepherd Sovereign. And finally, he will lay a great deal of stress upon

the defeat of the Assyrians. Now, the Assyrian defeat, we learn not only from this passage, but from the passage in Isaiah, when compared with the passage in Daniel chapter 11, that this defeat of the Assyrian is a typical event. That is, there was an Assyrian king in the days of Micah and in the days of Isaiah, but that Assyrian king, wicked and brutal and opposed to the nation Israel, is only a simply illustration, a type of the anti-Christ, who in the last days will seek to overtake and to destroy the city of Jerusalem, and will be defeated by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in his Second Advent. In other words, these 8th century events in the days of Micah are events that look on to the events of the 20th Century plus whatever years we may have before the time of the tribulation and the time of the Second Advent of the Lord Jesus.

Now, in verse 3 he speaks of temporary rejection so far as Israel is concerned, Judah particularly, but eventual restoration. And what he is doing now, in these verses, is simply making application of the prophecy that he's just given in verse 2. "Therefore will he," that is God, "he will give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." Here is a passage then, in the 3rd verse that speaks of temporary rejection or abandonment but eventual restoration or return. "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." Now, one doesn't have to read much of the Old Testament to catch in this expression, "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth," a reference to the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, remember that Micah and Isaiah were prophets that prophesied in the same age. They were both prophets who, as Micah says in the first chapter prophesied in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, things which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem." So the very fact that they were prophets who ministered in the same time, and when one remembers that Isaiah has probably written the most magnificent set of prophecies of all of the prophets, it's not surprising to see that Micah is familiar with the prophecies of Isaiah or Isaiah is familiar with the prophecies of Micah, or

they are both familiar with prophecies which they obtained from some other source. Most feel in the light of the fact that Isaiah was a person associated with the court, and Micah was a countryman, that it's likely that Micah got the things that he learned from the prophecy of Isaiah himself. So that here we see some acquaintance with the famous word of Isaiah the Prophet in chapter 7, in verse 14 of his prophecy when he says in the days of Ahaz, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

Now, Micah is writing about the fact that the Assyrian is at the gate of Jerusalem. He's besieging the city, and he gives a prophecy to the effect that God is going to give them up. In other words, they are going into captivity. He's already said that once in his prophecy, remember. They are going into captivity, and they are going into captivity at least "until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth." In other words, he prophesies a period of time in which the nation will be in captivity at least until the time of the birth of the babe that comes from the woman. Then they may have hope of the return of a remnant.

Also in that prophecy of Isaiah, in the same section of Isaiah in the 11th chapter, in the 12th verse, incidentally, chapters 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the prophecy of Isaiah are called the Book of Immanuel, because it is a series of prophecies that climax in the revelations concerning Immanuel, or the one who is "God with us," the Messianic King. Well, in the 12th verse of the 11th chapter, as he draws near to the end of the Book of Immanuel, he says, "And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth." In the preceding section he's spoken about the Second Advent of the Lord to the earth, and one of the results of the Second Advent will be the gathering of the remnant of Israel and Judah back into the land.

Well, that's what he's speaking about in verse 3, "Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his

brethren shall return unto the children of Israel." So the Judeans, in the besieged city of Jerusalem, in fact in an occupied country, are the long representatives of the covenant. But the brothers, who make up the whole of the nation, but the brothers, the remnant of his brethren, are ultimately going to return so that the nation will again have its place among the nations as the nation of the great Davidic covenant. So here in verse 3, we have temporary rejection prophesied but eventual restoration.

Then in verse 4, the prophet goes on to speak about the Shepherd Sovereign, and his flock. Verse 4, "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide: for now shall he be great unto the ends of the earth." The key to the eventual position of the nation as the covenant nation, blessed with the blessings that flow out of the covenant is, of course, the royal brother. And the royal brother is the Lord Jesus himself. And so when he writes in verse 4, "And he shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord," we are to look back at verse 2 where he said, " But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel." "And he," that is the ruler in Israel; "He shall stand and feed in the strength of the LORD."

Now, when we read in the Authorized Version "feed in the strength of the Lord," that might be a bit confusing if you didn't realize that the term feed really means something like "to shepherd." So "He will stand and he will shepherd in the strength of the Lord." He will perform the work of a shepherd. So he's a Shepherd King. He's a ruler, who is going to stand, and he's going to shepherd, and he's going to shepherd in the strength of the Lord. Now, putting together what Micah is saying, it is evident that this individual is the person who is to inherit the Davidic promises, because he comes from Bethlehem Ephratah. And Bethlehem Ephratah is little among the thousands of Judah, but out of Judah is to become the ruler. Well, that was prophesied in the Old Testament, that the Messianic King would come from Judah. In fact, he would be of the family of David.

It's to this family that God gave the Davidic covenant, and so what we have here then is a statement that this Shepherd King, this one who inherits the Davidic promises is the one who is going to stand and shepherd in the strength of the Lord and in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God in the future. He's the greater David, who as Yahweh himself, for he is called that, shall nevertheless rule for Yahweh during the kingdom of God upon the earth.

I wish it were possible for us to look at all of those passages in which the Davidic covenant is outlined, but we don't have time to do that. I think that what I would like to do, however, is to at least read a few of the sections in order for you to see that what Micah is doing is building upon revelation which they themselves knew very well. And if we understand very well these passages, we'll understand a great deal more about the prophecies of the prophets.

Now, let me say this, that in the Old Testament there are three outstanding presentations of the Davidic covenant. Many years ago I read an exposition of the Davidic covenant by a Bible teacher. I'm not exactly sure now the source of this illustration. I think I know, but I better not repeat his name, because it might not be the one. He likened these three passages to lights. Now the first passage is the passage in 2 Samuel, chapter 7. And this passage he likened to a flood light, in the sense that this is a passage in which the prophet or the prophecy, in effect, looks over the whole line that comes from David down to the Davidic king of the last days. Let's turn and read a few of the verses from 2 Samuel chapter 7, and verse 1. We read here,

"And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies; That the king said unto Nathan the prophet, See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains. And Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the LORD is with thee. And it came to pass that night, that the word of the LORD came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell my

servant David, Thus saith the LORD, Shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in? Whereas I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle. In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar? Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: (You notice, by the way, that David was a person who entered into his kingship from shepherding. That's why the future King is to be a Shepherd kind of king.) And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great men that are in the earth. Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more; neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as beforetime, And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. (In other words, David's not going to make the Lord a house, the Lord's going to make David a house.) And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. (This, by the way, is one of the great prophecies of the Bible and is repeated in the New Testament more than once.) If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: (Now, you can see from this that this is not a sole prophecy of the Lord Jesus Christ, because it says, "If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men. He's looking over the whole line from David on composed of all of the Davidic kings, ultimately to find, of course, climax in the one who does not sin.)

But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever. According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David."

2 Samuel 7 is the great chapter on the announcement of the Davidic covenant. Now, turn over to 1 Chronicles chapter 17. If 2 Samuel chapter 7 is a kind of flood light over the whole of the Davidic line down to the fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ, in 1 Chronicles chapter 17, verse 11 through verse 14, we have what might be called a spot light. And this time the spotlight is placed upon the climactic Son of David. Notice there is no reference to sin in 1 Chronicles 17:11.

"And it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to be with thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons; and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build me an house, and I will stablish his throne for ever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son: and I will not take my mercy away from him, as I took it from him that was before thee: But I will settle him in mine house and in my kingdom for ever: and his throne shall be established for evermore."

That's the spotlight. Now, the third passage in which the Davidic covenant is expounded in some detail is Psalm 89. This entire Psalm, which contains fifty-two verses, is devoted to the Davidic covenant. It arose out of the period of time when it began to appear that Israel, because of their apostasy, might have so sinned that God was not really going to fulfill the covenant any longer. And so, someone might have thought, "Well, we have sinned so badly that perhaps the covenant has been cancelled. Perhaps it was a conditional covenant depending on our obedience." Now, the purpose of the author of the 89th Psalm and specifically the purpose of the Lord is to show that this covenant is an

unconditional covenant. Just like the Abrahamic covenant, just like the new covenant, it's a covenant that does not depend upon man's faithfulness ultimately, but upon God's faithfulness through unfaithful men.

Now, of course, if you believe that man has free will, then you don't understand anything like this at all, because this wouldn't make any sense. But this makes great sense if you realize that the Scriptures teach that God gives faith to his covenant people and brings them, in grace, to himself. Now, we really ought to read the entire Psalm, but it's fifty-two verses, and then I wouldn't be able to finish the passage. So, I'm just going to try to settle and center our attention on verse 19, and a few verses following that, so sometime when you get a chance, read through the whole of that 89th Psalm. It's a very beautiful Psalm, very comforting Psalm, because you see, those principles are principles upon which our salvation depends. We are saved by grace. We are saved because we are given the gift of faith. Our salvation does not rest upon us, but upon the objective work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the in grace application of that work to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. That's enough to make a man say Hallelujah, even in Believer's Chapel.

"Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him (Notice he said David was elected, chosen. Verse 21,): With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as

the days of heaven. If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. (In other words, I'll discipline them.) Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. (Do you get the point? Discipline comes for people who are the object of the covenant, but faithfulness to the covenant is guaranteed by God.) My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven."

Now if you look at the in the Hebrew text it really says, "And the witness in the heavens is faithful." That's a magnificent statement. Well, that has been called the search light, or the x-ray light, in which we look into the principles that govern the establishment and continuation of the Davidic covenant.

Now, with that in the background you can see that what Micah is prophesying is details of further steps in God's plan to bring the Lord Jesus Christ on the scene. The Son of David, who is the Seed of David to whom those promises ultimately belong. So he says, "And he shall stand and shepherd in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God; and they shall abide." He talks about his work and his authority. There is perhaps an allusion in this word "stand, he shall stand," to the installation of an ancient king. They were ordinarily crowned in a ceremony just like kings today enter into their rulership by virtue of certain ceremonies. And so, he shall stand and be crowned as king over the kingdom of God upon the earth. But notice that his role is to shepherd. "HE shall stand and shepherd in the strength of the Lord." See, that's the ideal of a king. We think of a king as an autocratic ruler, who whatever he says

goes, and whatever we think who are citizens of the kingdom, it doesn't matter one bit. But the ideal king is one who is a shepherd of the people.

Now, the Lord speaks of himself in the Old Testament as a shepherd king. And the Lord Jesus Christ who is going to come is Yahweh, and it's not surprising that he should come as the Shepherd King. Because what does a shepherd do? Well, the concern of the shepherd is not for the establishment and continuation of his authority. The concern of the shepherd is for the people who are within his kingdom. So then what does a shepherd do with his sheep? Well, he guides his sheep to places of pasture. He protects his sheep from the wolves and the lions and the other fierce animals. He is the one who is the protector and the feeder and the sustainer, and when they're injured he binds up their wounds. And when they are lost he goes out and finds them. These are the things that a shepherd does. So the great Shepherd Sovereign of Israel is a shepherd like that. He will stand and he will shepherd.

And furthermore, he's not like earthly shepherds who lose their sheep occasionally, shepherds who cannot help their sheep who are wounded, or shepherds who give false guidance to the sheep, shepherds who take them out when they ought not to be taken out and many lose their lives from the weather and the cold. But he shall shepherd in the strength of the Lord and in the name of the Lord his God. Therefore, we are not surprised that the next clause reads, "And they shall abide." Why, of course, if you have a shepherd who shepherds in the strength of Yahweh, in the name of the Lord God, of course, they will abide.

Now, David is said to have been a shepherd and at the end of the 78th Psalm reference is made to David as shepherd. And it's said that David was a person who shepherded with an upright heart and with a skillful hand. Well, this Shepherd is one who shepherds with an upright heart and with a skillful hand. Of David, in 2 Samuel 5 we read that "Yahweh was with him." Yahweh is with this shepherd. Of course, when

we read here "He will shepherd in the name of the Lord his God," one might ask, "How can Yahweh, the Lord Jesus, speak of Yahweh as his God?"

Well, remember the God of the Bible is a triune God, Father, Son and Spirit. And remember also that the second person of the Trinity took upon himself the work of mediation. He's the one who took to himself human nature, came into this human scene to carry out the provisions of the agreement that the Trinity had made among themselves in ages past, so that he took upon himself mediation, the responsibility of obeying the first person in the power of the Holy Spirit. So while the Lord Jesus Christ was here on the earth it was Yahweh his God, even though he himself may be called Yahweh. He surrendered the voluntary use of his divine attributes, came here subjected himself voluntarily to the Father, was guided by the Father all the steps of the way to the cross, through the death, burial, and resurrection. And at the right hand of the Father he still waits in subjection to the Father, waiting for the time when the Father says, "Go forth in the Second Advent and finish what is to be done then." He will rule through the millennial kingdom, then Paul says he will ultimately as the mediatorial Messiah turn over the kingdom to the Father that God may be all in all, not the Father, but that God may be all in all; God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That's why we read here he will do his work as shepherd in the majesty of the name of Yahweh his God.

Their safety naturally results and they will abide, because their security is grounded in him. That's why we do not have anything to worry about so far as our future is concerned, because our security is grounded in the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus Christ. And finally, in the 4th verse Micah says the reason for this is that he's great. "He shall be great unto the ends of the earth." In other words, there is a time coming when men are going to recognize that the Shepherd King is universal and all-powerful and yet the Shepherd of the nation Israel.

Now, with that, Micah turns to discussion the Shepherd Sovereign and the Assyrian, because after all in Micah's day the Assyrians were at the gates of Jerusalem

besieging the city. They were concerned about the Assyrians and about the Assyrian king. This is the background against which he gives his prophecy. He says, "And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land." What he is saying, in effect, is that conquest of the Assyrian is ultimately promised and prophesied by the Lord God. It will be by the King who comes out of Bethlehem, and it will be through the generals who are appointed by the people, those seven shepherds and eight principal men that we raise up. So you can see that in the battle, the battle which the Lord Jesus Christ will carry on against the enemies, the anti-Christ and his foes, at his Second Advent will be a battle in which he and others will be engaged.

Now, it has been suggested by some of the commentators that these words in verses 5 and 6 represent a national war song which the children of Israel had, but which Micah has taken and has changed and made to refer to the future. What they were saying was, "If those Assyrians come in here, they're going to be sorry for it. We're going to make mince meat of them." Now, we've seen a lot of that in recent days. We have the PLO saying, "If they come in here, well, they're going to really catch it." And then the Israelis saying the same thing, "If they come at us, they're going to really catch it." Or if the British go in, the Argentines say, "They're going to catch it," or vice versa. It may be that verses 5 and 6 arose out of a situation in which it was sort of a national war song. But what Micah does is to take these words and refer them to the future. When he refers it to the future, of course, it lets them know that in the immediate present there is not going to be any deliverance from the Assyrian. So he talks about the future, therefore this nationalistic, jingoistic fervor is something that they discover is not really going to be for their good.

I guess probably the best illustration of this is the Iraq-Iran war, in which Iraq made a lot of foolish statements about what they were going to do to Iran. They attacked them. They had initial success. In fact, they had a great deal of initial success, but then the tides of the battle have turned, and now the Iranians have chased the Iraqis out of

Iran. And it looks as if they are just about ready and strong enough to go on into Iraq. And so, what happens here is something similar to that. We read, "And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land: and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds, and eight principal men. And they shall waste the land of Assyria." In other words, the Assyrians are going to attack us, be we're going to raise people up, and we're not only going to defeat them when they besiege us, but we're going into their own land and destroy them. "And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod in the entrances thereof." That's a reference to Babylon, and Babylon, of course, and Assyria were closely related at one time. That was the capital. "Thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders."

Well, the theme of these verses, as you can see, is the Messianic victory and the resulting peace as accomplished by the Deliverer, the Messianic King. Now, notice in verse 5A we read, "And this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land." What Micah is telling them indirectly, of course, is armor does not win battles. Material is not the secret of success. Wealth is not the secret of success. In fact, strategy is not the secret of success. The secret of success lies in the name of the Lord God, and the fact that God is on our side is the thing that will determine the outcome of the battle. What these words are are words of hope in very grim days for the children of Israel, but they are pointed to the Lord himself as their only hope. That has so much practical application for us that it's sad that you have to mention it. But this is really the secret of Christian living, is to realize that our hope is in the Lord in all of the experiences of life. It is not in our wisdom. It is not in our wealth. It is not in our strength. Our victory is always located in the strength of the Lord. We cannot ever expect to be successful in the Lord's work, in living the Christian life apart from the whole armor of God. So this man shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into the land.

Now, he's again laying hold on tradition of prophetic ministry that Isaiah also gave. Remember in the 10th chapter of the Book of Isaiah, Isaiah pictures the coming of the Assyrian down into the land in a very vivid chapter in which he speaks of each place that he comes, and where he bivouacs, and where he sets out his forces. And as he's coming closer and closer to the land, he names all the places, he has them, "Lift up thy head, O daughter of Gallim: cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee." The Assyrians coming, everybody is fleeing before the Assyrian and suddenly we read in verse 34 of the 10th chapter of Isaiah, "And he shall cut down the thickets of the forest with iron, and Lebanon." You see, the Assyrian was from that part of the country. "And Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one." In other words, there is going to be someone, a mighty one, who is going to destroy that great massive tree, the Assyrian king. Who is it? And there shall come forth a twig out of the stem of Jesse, a branch shall grow out of his roots. That's the one who shall strike down the massive oak of the forest, the Assyrian.

Now, all of that, of course, is a picture of the future and the Assyrians stands, as Daniel puts it in the 11th chapter of his book, for the anti-Christ and the hoards that he shall gather together in the last days of the tribulation period to besiege the city of Jerusalem. And here Micah prophesies, just as Isaiah did, that the victory is going to come by someone who might seem to be of no great significance. The twig, you'll notice too that Isaiah links it again with David. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse and a branch shall grow out of his roots," Jesse, David's father, of course. So what we have then again is the Davidic, he's a Shepherd King. And as a result of that, Israel shall be delivered. Isaiah and Micah both then show the Messiah to be the heir of the Davidic covenant that the birth of the Messiah is the signal for divine intervention, and that in the Messiah is the embodiment of the divine might. Well, Israel then attains her true destiny only by the coming of the Shepherd King.

And I might say the church of the Gentiles also attains its true destiny only in the two comings of the Lord Jesus. The first coming, when he is linked with the Old Testament promises and atones for sin. Remember in Ephesians chapter 2, the Apostle Paul says that he is "our peace." In fact, Paul's language is related to this, "this man shall be our peace. He is our peace who has made both one." So in his first coming he has accomplished the work of confirming the Davidic covenant in the shed blood of the cross. And in his second coming, he shall overthrow the Assyrian, the anti-Christ and his forces. What a tremendous thing it is to have a Shepherd King.

You know there are three places in the New Testament, I know you know this, in which our Lord Jesus is called a Shepherd. In John chapter 10, in verse 11, he's called the Good Shepherd, and he says himself, "The Good Shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." The Good Shepherd accomplishes atonement. Then in Hebrews chapter 13, verse 20 and verse 21, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks about the Lord Jesus as the Great Shepherd of the sheep, and he talks about the fact that this great Shepherd of the sheep will be the means for the perfection of us in every good work to do his will, and that God will work in us that which is well-pleasing to him through Jesus Christ to whom be glory for ever and ever. So the Great Shepherd is the shepherd who accomplishes our sanctification. And then Peter, in the 5th chapter of his first epistle, in the 4th verse says, "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away." So he's the Good Shepherd, who atones for the sheep. He's the Great Shepherd who sanctifies the sheep. And he's the Chief Shepherd who, when he comes shall give rewards. It's great to have a Shepherd King. And the thing that Israel had is what we have ourselves. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these ancient words which speak so similarly the message of the apostles. We thank Thee for the assurance that we have that Jesus Christ is the peace. That he has made is possible for the Davidic covenant to be

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fulfilled. We look forward to that great day. Glorify Thy name in his conquests and in his government. In the mean time, Lord, enable us to lean more...

[RECORDING ENDS ABRUPTLY]