

# Peace in the King

Micah 5:1-5

Listen to that line in verse 5, ***“And he shall be their PEACE.”*** The ruler who was to be born in Bethlehem is the One who would finally and fully bring Shalom - harmony, rest, reconciliation, peace - In HIMSELF. HE shall be their peace. Not just the source of peace - He IS peace.

Oh, how desperately we need this peace, and how much our world needs the peace of Jesus Christ. \*

- The ***violence and war*** in the world is entirely because people reject the rule of Christ the King and instead do what is right in their own eyes.
- The ***political unrest and simmering racial tension*** in our country are entirely because people reject the teachings of Jesus and the unifying peace that only He can provide.
- The ***injustice and oppression*** in the world - including the abomination of abortion and the flourishing slave trade that buys and sells human beings for the pleasure of others (both things happening every day in our own city of Tampa) - this injustice is entirely because people exalt themselves as kings and queens and refuse to surrender to Jesus, the only One who could set them free.
- The ***divorce rate***, even among Christians, is entirely because people refuse to let Jesus reign the details of their lives and instead worship their own desires and happiness.
- The ***suicide rate*** among teenagers and young adults is entirely because these teens and the people around them are failing to come to Jesus to BE THEIR PEACE and instead place their faith in medicine or psychology or education.

Every single problem in the world today stems from the very first rebellion in the garden of Eden, and the mini rebellions that all of us stage every single day against King Jesus. **Only Jesus can give you peace, since He is the Almighty, Eternal King.** Only Jesus. There is no other source of peace because there is no other king.

Look again at Micah 5:2 - ***“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.”***

Here is a prophecy from 700 years before Jesus' time, naming the very specific and very obscure village in which the Messiah and King of Israel would be born. Bethlehem was so small and insignificant it wasn't even mentioned in the list of 120 cities that Joshua led God's people to conquer when they came into the promised land. But it was the hometown of David, the greatest king of Israel ever.

Remember David? Just like Bethlehem, he was the least likely candidate - the youngest of 8 brothers. Samuel showed up at the house of Jesse, looking for a king, and the little shepherd boy wasn't even on the list of candidates! But that little boy was God's choice for King just as Bethlehem was His choice for the birthplace of Jesus, the King.

God loves to use humble, small, insignificant things to do the miraculous. Why? Because then there is no question about who gets the credit!

- Why choose **Abraham and Sarai** to start the nation of Israel? Precisely because they were so old and beyond the age of child-bearing - only God could take that couple and build a great nation!
- Why choose **Israel** to be the chosen people of God? Precisely because they were so small and weak, especially in contrast to the Empire of Egypt at the time. But by delivering the powerless Jews from the almighty Egyptians, God showed it was HIS power at work!
- Why choose **fishermen and a tax collector** and a traitor for the 12 men who would change the world for Jesus? Precisely because the miracles they would do could only be explained as direct acts of a gracious and almighty God.

And so, in Bethlehem - an almost totally unknown village - the King of Kings was born. And the King didn't show up with great military fanfare and a royal celebration in line with His glory. No - the King arrived as a messy, bloody, purple baby boy - just like every other baby that has been born. That moment was not the one you put on the Christmas Cards. The stable in that moment of birth was filled with screams of agony and the shrill cries of a just born baby drawing his first desperate breath of air and testing his totally human lungs and vocal chords for the very first time.

But in that moment, as the Wise Men from the East realized, **the King had arrived.** And with Him came the hope and promise of peace. Only Jesus can give you peace, since He is the Almighty, Eternal King. We see His power in v. 4 that **"he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord and in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God."** And we see His eternity at the end of v. 2 this one "who is to be ruler in Israel," His "coming forth is from of old, from ancient days." This certainly refers back to King David around 300 years before the time of Micah but it also points much further back than that - to eternity past, which is what the phrase "from ancient days" more literally means: **from ages past.**

Jesus is the Almighty, Eternal King. As the Creator and Lord of the Universe - **Jesus owns you and rules the universe, deserving your full allegiance.** Listen to Colossians 1.

**"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent."**

Jesus IS preeminent. He does reign supreme. He rules over you and He rules over me. He is the King. Since He is the King, **he deserves our full and undying allegiance.** To pledge our loyalty to anything or anyone else is treason.

But, brothers, sisters, friends, that is precisely what we have done and what we all do. We constantly turn to other things and put them in charge of our lives. Our work, our families, our money, our

possessions, our reputation, our comforts, our plans, our desires... on and on. We give our love to these things and, ever so subtly, nudge Jesus off to the side.

"Excuse me there, King - your High Exalted One - could you just move over, just a little, to make a squeak more room for my materialism? Could you slide over, Lord, so I can take back control over this one relationship? Could you let go of this one area, or just turn away for a few minutes, maybe?

Treason. Rebellion. Idolatry. **Jesus is the King who deserves our full allegiance but we have rebelled against him and therefore deserve his just condemnation.** Romans 6:23 says, "the wages of sin is death." The punishment for treason against the king or against the country has always been death.

As C.S. Lewis helpfully points out: **"Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms."** Mere Christianity p. 59

We can have peace but only by coming to Jesus, the King against whom we have rebelled. No one else can give us peace. Only Jesus can. Listen to the rest of Colossians 1.

**For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.**

Only Jesus can reconcile all things to Himself - and He can do this by the blood of his cross. Only Jesus can give you peace.

And the second part of the message today is that **only Jesus WILL give you peace.** There is no other religion or leader out there who WILL give you peace.

- **Islam** has been advertised as a religion of peace but it is an act of deliberately deceptive marketing. Islam is a religion of fear, pure and simple. In Islam, Allah is power so your only sensible response is to submit to him. Allah does not offer peace, he offers fear.
- **Buddhism** tries to appear peaceful with its quiet meditation but we know from the Bible that to empty your mind is to invite in demons who may well come in with the appearance of angels of light. Buddhism does not promise peace but spiritual slavery.
- **Humanism** is the religion of America and its key word is TOLERANCE which does constant gymnastics to look like peace but this is actually the angriest and most violence-stirring religion of them all, for the one thing that secular humanism cannot and will not tolerate is Christianity in its actual form. Humanism preaches tolerance and peace but delivers censorship and persecution.
- **Liberalism** is the form of Christianity that secularists like because the core of truth has been cut out, and liberal theologians love to preach about peace, side by side with the humanists and universalists. But theirs is the peace of the Antichrist that must first deny Christ and historic Christian truth - there is no peace with the unenlightened. So Liberalism, while it presents a new and friendlier Jesus of pure love and peace, speaks empty words and hollow promises. When you look inside liberal theology, there is nothing there.

Yes, only Jesus WILL give anyone peace. In the end, everyone else who does not belong to Jesus will belong to the devil and he will torture and torment them in this life and then they will suffer with him in the just punishment he and his demons deserve for all of eternity.

Only Jesus can give you peace because he is king. And **only Jesus will give you peace because He is the merciful Savior**. Look again at v. 4 ***“And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord and 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. And he shall be their peace.”***

Jesus came, not as a conquering warrior to destroy his enemies, but ***as a merciful savior to pardon rebellious sinners***. **He came in humility with an offer of grace**. There is a full royal pardon available to all traitors and rebels - that's all of us. Now is the time of God's favor! Today is the day of salvation! For all who will come to King Jesus, lay down their arms in surrender, confessing their rebellion and treason, He has already promised to forgive them, to reconcile with them, to give them terms of peace.

And look at what that peace entails: “he will stand and shepherd his flock.” **Jesus is the good shepherd**. He will accept you into His flock, paying the price for your adoption as a son or daughter of God, “so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” If you hear Jesus, the Shepherd, calling your name, please come to Him! He knows his sheep and he calls them by name. They hear his voice for they know him as their shepherd.

Maybe Jesus has been calling your name for years now and you have been putting it off, finding this excuse or that reason to delay. ***Why delay another moment?*** Come to Jesus today! Come and behold him, born the King of Angels! Oh come, let us adore Him! He is Christ the Lord! He is the King!

**He will protect you** as your shepherd - he will shelter you from the wrath of God, he will guard you from the attacks of the devil, he will set you free from your slavery to sin and your coming punishment of death. He will not only protect you, **he will care for you forever**.

Only Jesus can do this. And only Jesus will do this.

But he will not force it on you. He will call your name, but you have to come. He will reach out his hand, but you have to take it. He has paid the price, but you must accept it. He is offering the gift, but you must receive it.

I don't say receive HIM - I say **receive the GIFT he is offering you IN HIMSELF**. For he cannot give this gift apart from Himself. If you come to Jesus and commit yourself to Him in faith, then you will have his peace, his life, his power, his grace. “He himself shall be their peace.” To again quote C.S. Lewis:

***“If you want to get warm you must stand near a fire: if you want to be wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. They are not a sort of prize which God could, if He chose, just hand out to anyone. They are***

a great fountain of energy and beauty spurting up at the very center of reality. If you are close to it, the spray will wet you: if you are not, you will remain dry. Once a man is united to God, how could he not live forever? Once a man is separated from God, what can he do but wither and die?"

Jesus is the almighty, eternal King AND he is the humble, merciful, gracious and loving Savior. Come to him this Christmas and you will find that He indeed IS your peace.

Let me close with a story to illustrate this. In 1962 a young couple left their home and family and moved, with their seven month old baby, to a remote part of what is now Irian Jaya or West Papua to work among an unreached and violent tribe called the Sawi. Their names were Don and Carol Richardson, and they are still active in mission work today.

The Sawi had been at war with two of their neighboring tribes for generations, and at times violence would erupt. ***The Sawi prized treachery*** and the most glorious victories came through the greatest betrayals of trust. Inevitably, therefore, peace was always tenuous and temporary. Because of this mindset, the gospel story did not make sense to the Sawi when Don shared it with them. As they heard the story of Jesus, they laughed at him as a sucker and ***they praised Judas*** who outsmarted him with a clever betrayal that got Jesus killed.

When more violence broke out, the Richardsons told the Sawi they had to leave to minister somewhere else. But since Carol in particular had brought them much needed medical attention, the tribes decided to come together and make peace. And the way they made peace provided the opening for the gospel that Don had been laboring for years to discover.

There was an ancient tradition among the Sawi - one not practiced in recent generations - called the Peace Child. The warring tribes came together, their chiefs and strongest warriors lined up. At first the chiefs went forward, each with an infant son. But in his turn, each of the two chiefs turned away, refusing to give up his son to the opposing chief. It seemed that peace would not happen after all.

But then a young father named Kaiyo ran forward with his first and only son who was six months old. Kaiyo stood with his only son in front of a line of enemies and called to his main enemy, ***“Mahor! Will you plead the words of Kamur among your people?”*** When Mahor stated he would, Kaiyo continued, ***“Then I give you my son and with him my name!”***

Taking the baby gently in his arms, Mahor then announced for all to hear: ***“It is enough! I will surely plead for peace between us! Those who accept this child as a basis for peace, come and lay hands on him!”*** The men, women and children of Haenam eagerly filed by, each placing his or her hands on the Kamur infant. From then on Mahor went by Kaiyo's name.

By giving his son to his enemy to raise and care for, it was a promise of peace and an unbreakable bond between the two tribes. Don jumped on the opportunity and said - listen, all of you! Jesus is the peace child! You have been at war with God and He is at war with you, threatening great judgment and wrath. But He sent His Son to earth as a peace child so that we would no longer be at war with Him. Won't you accept Jesus as the peace child so you won't be at war with God anymore?