

## *The Bethlehem Declaration*

*“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” (Micah 5:2).*

What is a prophet? From a general perspective, the Old Testament prophet was one chosen and called of God to deliver His message to the people. More specifically, it was essential that a true prophet speak in the name of Jehovah (see Deut. 18:22), not contradict other divine revelations or prophecies (see Isa. 8:20), and prophesy without any possible error or inaccuracy (see Jer. 28:9).

A general analysis of Micah’s prophecy will reveal the validity of his ministry. For sure, he spoke “the word of the LORD that came” to him (1:1), and he identified with “the name of the LORD” (4:5). The prophecies of Micah were in line with other revelations (compare 4:1 with Isa. 2:2), and time has revealed that his prophecies were accurate and trustworthy. The Lord Jesus was born in “Bethlehem.”

Three other prophecies declared by Micah were: (1) Jerusalem would “be plowed as a field” and “become heaps” (3:12); (2) Jerusalem would become a very important worship center in the world (see 4:1); (3) the land of Israel would rise again with prominence and extended borders (see 7:11). All of these prophecies have come to pass and still have future implications. The prophecy before us, however, relates to Christ, the Messiah, and declares several major truths about Him.

*The existence of the Christ of Bethlehem is declared!* While we understand the importance of “Bethlehem” and its place in history, the focus of the prophecy is on Christ. He is the centerpiece of this revelation. Micah said, “Out of thee shall He come forth.” Jesus is not a mere figment of religious imaginations. He is not the invention of the church world. He is a real Person, and He was born in and introduced to the world from Bethlehem.

*The exaltation of the Christ of Bethlehem is declared!* Not only was the Person to come forth from Bethlehem, but He was also “to be ruler in Israel.” It has been suggested that this ruler was Hezekiah or Zerubbabel, but neither king was born in Bethlehem. The reference is to none other ruler than the Lord Jesus Christ, “King of the Jews” (Matt. 2:2), the “only Potentate, King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15).

*The eternity of the Christ of Bethlehem is declared!* The ruler Who was coming to Bethlehem would never claim Bethlehem as the place of His beginning. His “goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.” Bethlehem was only a comma in Christ’s eternal existence. He always has been, He is, and He always will be. Thus, He is called the “the King eternal” (1 Tim. 1:17), and calls us to “eternal life,” only found in Him (1 Tim. 6:12).