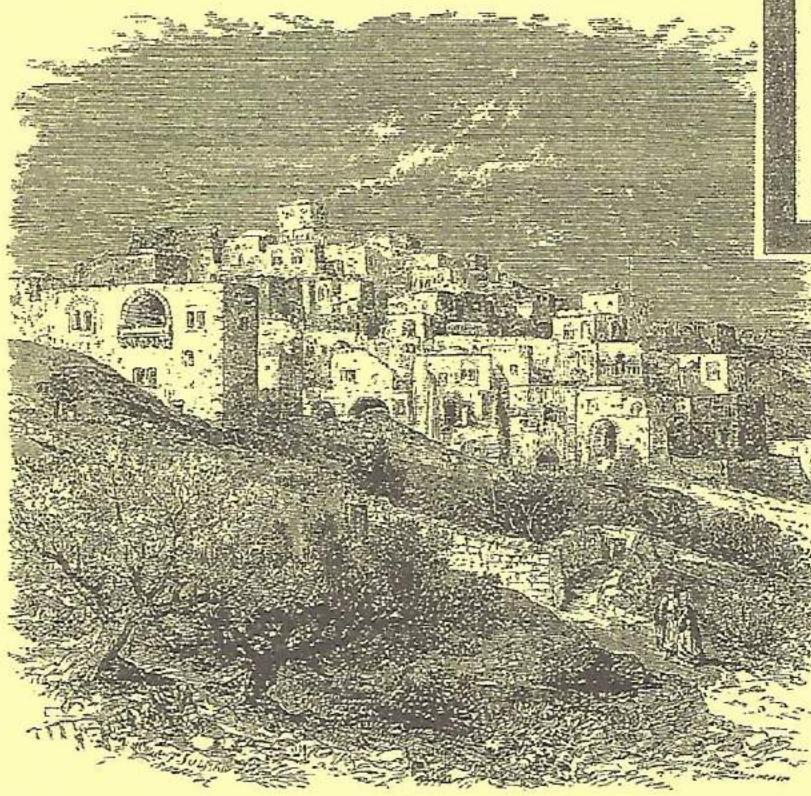


A Most Amazing Prophecy

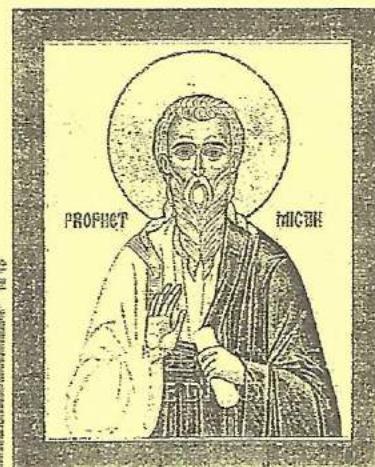
Micah 5:2

But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah, 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 the prophet foretold that the Messiah, the eternal One, would come forth from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Why is this prophecy so amazing?



BETHLEHEM FROM THE EAST.





"WHO IS LIKE YAHWEH?"

KEY VERSES 4:3; 6:8

MICAH

C. 735-700

LAWSUIT: YAHWEH vs. JUDAH

INDICTMENTS
AGAINST THE
PEOPLE CH 1-2

GATH SHAPIR
BETH-LEAPHRAN
ZADON BETH-EZEL
MAROTH MORRSUETH-GATH
LACHISH ACHZIB MARESHAH
ADULLAM

4:2 HEAR ALL YE PEOPLE - 2:1
3:1 HEAR, HEADS OF JACOB ISRAEL - 2:1
6:4 HEAR YE ISRAEL
7:14 HEAR YE ISRAEL

GOD DEALING
WITH ISRAEL

CH. 1
"LAST DAYS"
"END TIMES"
COMPARE WITH:
ISAIAH 2, DANIEL 2,
HOSEA'S ROSY-TINTED
PROPHECIES

COMPARE WITH
END-TIME
PASSAGES
OF THE N.T.

CONFIDENT EXPECTATION
OF SALVATION

CH. 7
"I WILL WATCH EXPECTANTLY
FOR THE LORD, I WILL WAIT
FOR THE GOD OF MY SALVATION
... HE WILL AGAIN HAVE
COMPASSION ON US"

CH. 5

BIRTH OF THE KING
BUT THOU BETHLEHEM...

INDICTMENTS
AGAINST THE
LEADERS CH 3

COUNTS OF
INDICTMENT
CH. 2

ANIMAL	100000
MAN	100000
WOMAN	100000
RELIGION	100000
HUMAN	100000
MAN'S SON	100000
WOMAN'S SON	100000
MAN'S DAUGHTER	100000
WOMAN'S DAUGHTER	100000

VULTURES 1-4
FALSE PREACHERS 5-8
MERCENARIES 9-12

CH. 6
ANOTHER J. CONTROVERSY

YAHWEH IS NOT PLEASED WITH
EXTERNALITIES - SACRIFICES
HAVE BECOME AN OBJECT OF
MISPLACED TRUST.

GOD INSPECTS THE MAN

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Chart of Micah.gif (961x583)

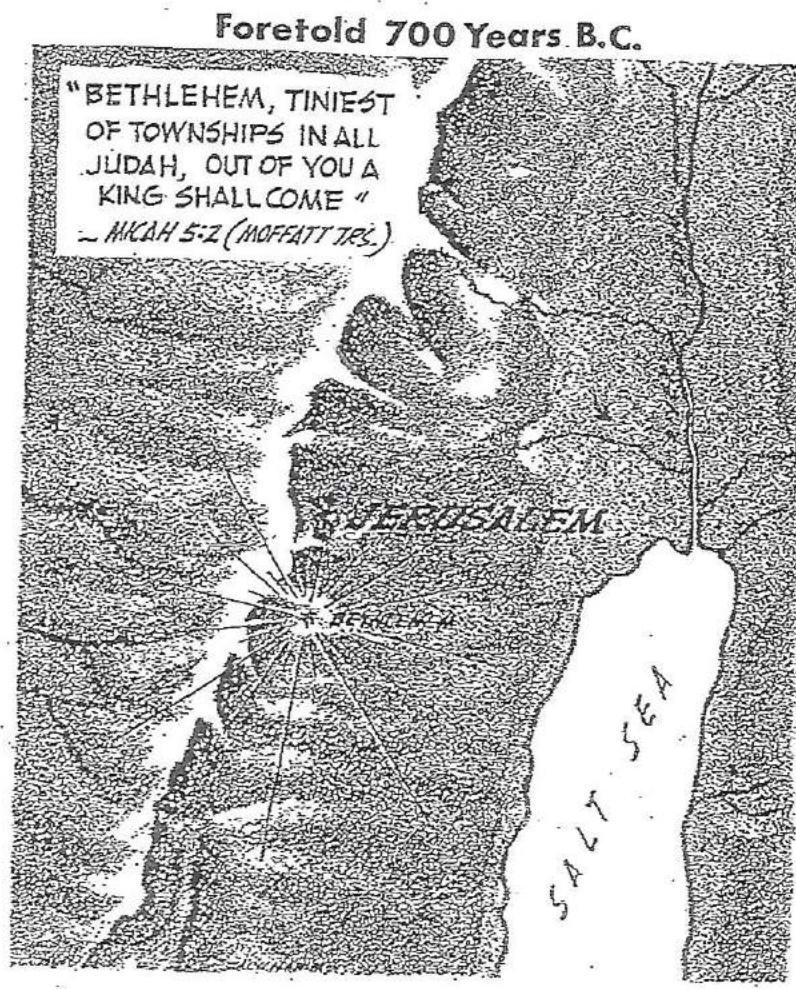
The Book of Micah

Focus	Coming Judgment			Coming Justice			Coming Comfort		
Divisions	Condemnation of Judah's People			Condemnation of Judah's Leaders			Controversy Between Judah & Jehovah		
Topics	1			2 3			5 6		
	Sin & Its Outcome			The King & His Kingdom			The Lord & His Justice		
Place				Judah & Israel			Incurable		
Time				About 25 Years (735-710 B.C.)			Inevitable		
Author				The Prophet Micah					

- 1) It is amazing because of the long time span between the prophecy and its fulfillment.

Micah penned these words about 700 years before Christ was born. He was guided by the God who knows the end from the beginning. This is comparable to someone living 175 years before Christopher Columbus predicting that President Donald Trump would be born in Queens, New York. Incredible!

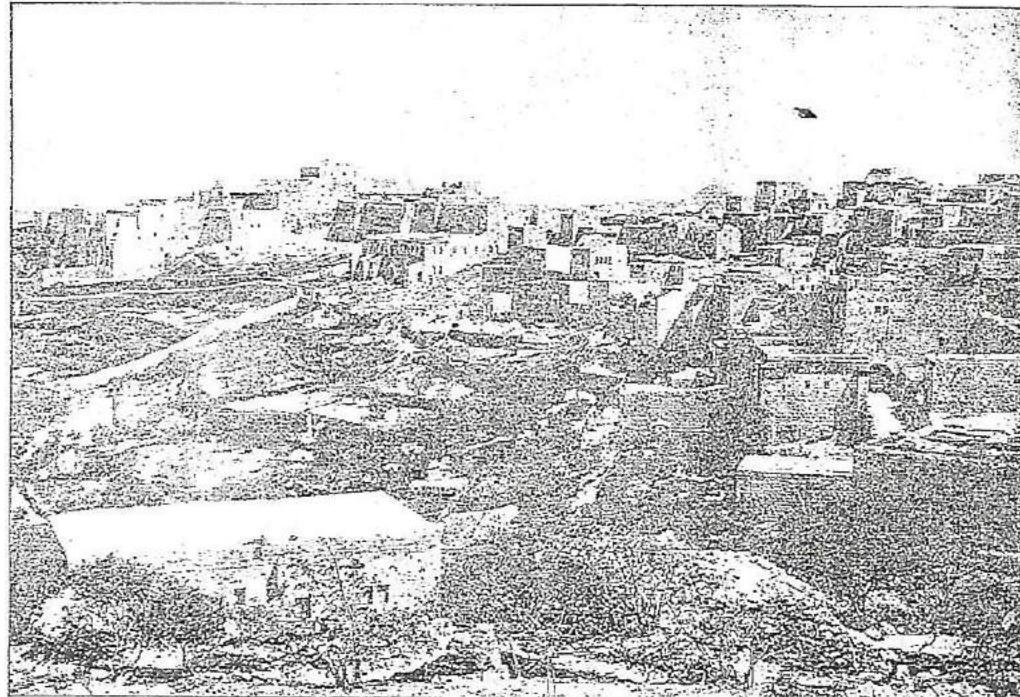
Micah prophesied in the eighth century B.C., as did Isaiah and Amos. Israel and Judah had reached economic affluence but had fallen to depths of spiritual and moral decadence. These evils and the social injustices elicited God's angry response. The practice of Canaanite idolatry threatened the very existence of Jehovah worship. The Assyrians were about to capture Jerusalem (722/721 B.C.). Amid impending doom came the amazing prophecy of Micah 5:2, which spoke of a divine ruler who would eventually rescue Israel.



2) It is amazing because of the great odds against choosing the correct birth town.

Bethlehem was an insignificant shepherding village, just one town out of thousands in the Holy Land, and yet Micah pinpointed the exact birthplace.

Bethlehem of Ephrathah, is designated as the birthplace. Ephrathah is the ancient name of Bethlehem (Gen. 35:16, 19; Ruth 4:11) and is used here to distinguish it from other towns named Bethlehem, such as the one in Zebulun (Josh. 19:15). Its use further identifies Bethlehem as the town in which David was born and establishes a connection between the future King and historic David.



ISRAELI ARCHAEOLOGIST SAYS JESUS CHRIST WAS BORN IN BETHLEHEM... OF GALILEE?

GLENN BROCK

There's a groundswell of people accepting that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, just not the one we've known for years.

The International Business Times is reporting that Israel archaeologist Dr. Aviram Oshri believes that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem of Galilee, nine miles west of Nazareth, and not where Christians for centuries have believed Christ's birthplace to be: about 100 miles from Nazareth, near Jerusalem.

Part of Oshri's argument lies around Mother Mary herself.

"How would a woman nine months pregnant travel 175 kilometres on a donkey all the way to Bethlehem of Judea? It makes much more sense that she would travel 14 kilometres," Oshri states.

Oshri has been excavating near what he calls the second Bethlehem for over a decade now, and has discovered a Byzantine-era underground.

"Underneath the church, where the holiest of holies usually is, there was a natural cave," he added.

Some Christian theories have Jesus being born in a manger located in a cave

Oshri's site shows what could have been a two-story inn underneath the recently found church. Another interesting fact is that historical records show a fortifying wall being built in biblical Bethlehem. Though no such wall appears in Bethlehem, there are signs of one in Oshri's site.

Earlier in the last century, groups of German Christians colonized Bethlehem of Galilee in 1906 under the name of the Templers. The Templers felt Bethlehem of Galilee would be where the second coming of Jesus Christ would occur.

The Mirror is reporting that the Templers, who had no connection to the Knights Templers, were ostracized from the Lutheran Evangelical Church in the 19th Century. The Templers felt the Holy Land would be theirs to inherit, and would help save them from their sins, and not the Jewish people.

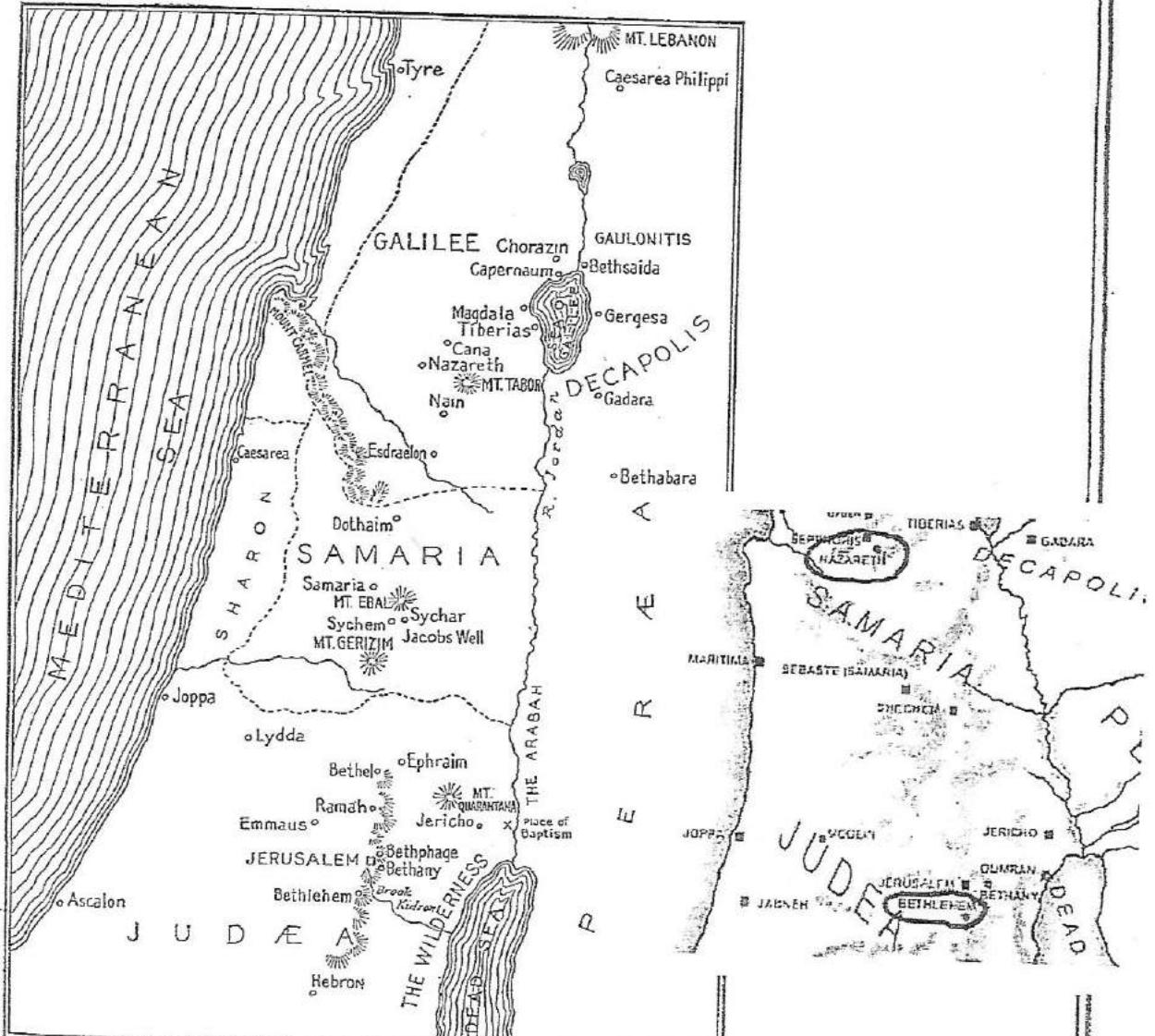
Many people have claimed Dr. Oshri's work to be erroneous. The Israel Antiquities Authority denounces his work as "worse than a joke."

Oshri remains undeterred. "As I dig deeper and deeper, I am more convinced," he says.

INQUISITR
NEWS WORTH SHARING

3) It is amazing because of what had to happen in order for Christ to be born in Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph did not live in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth. To get them to the right place at the right time required nothing less than a decree from the Roman Emperor, resulting in Joseph traveling to his ancestral town (Luke 2:1-4).

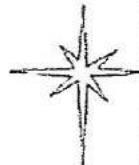
The difficult journey of some 65 miles over the most rugged terrain imaginable in the final days of Mary's pregnancy took place under the watchful care of a sovereign God. The Messiah could not be born along the way. The heavenly Father arranged details; not just of timing and travel, but of suitable lodging, allowing privacy for the Holy Family.



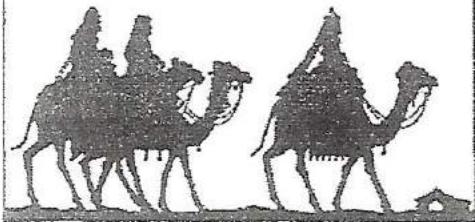
4) **It is amazing because it is so simple to understand.**

There is nothing complicated about this prophecy. Seven hundred years after the prophecy was given, certain Hebrew chief priests and scribes were asked where the Messiah would be born (Matt. 2:4-6). Even though these men were unbelieving, yet they knew the correct answer based on Micah's simple and clear prophecy.

Though the prophecy was simple, there were few individuals in Israel who expected the unique event in Bethlehem at the time. Anna and Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel and encountered the Christ Child in the temple (Luke 2:21-38). Unfortunately, the simplicity of a prophecy does not guarantee its acceptance. Daniel clearly predicted the very time of Christ's sacrificial death (Dan. 9:26) and yet not even the disciples acted upon the clear revelation of the time of His death.



BETHLEHEM

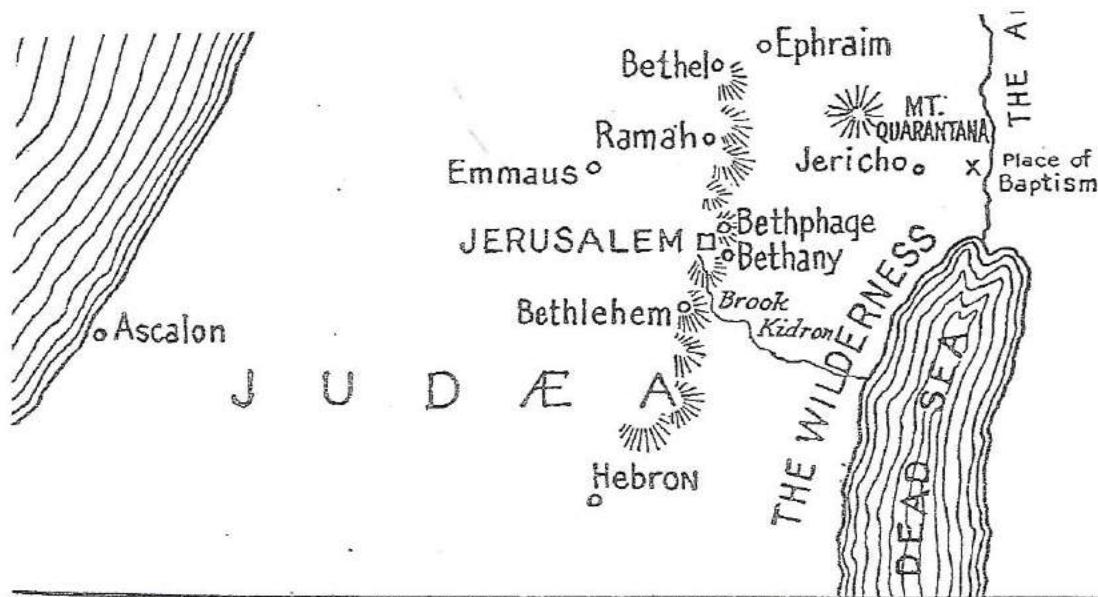


"See how far upon the Eastern road
 The star-led wizards haste with odours sweet.
 O run, present them with thy humle ode,
 And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
 Have thou the honour first thy Lord to greet,
 And join thy voices with the angel quire
 From out his secret altar touched with hallow'd fire."

—John Milton

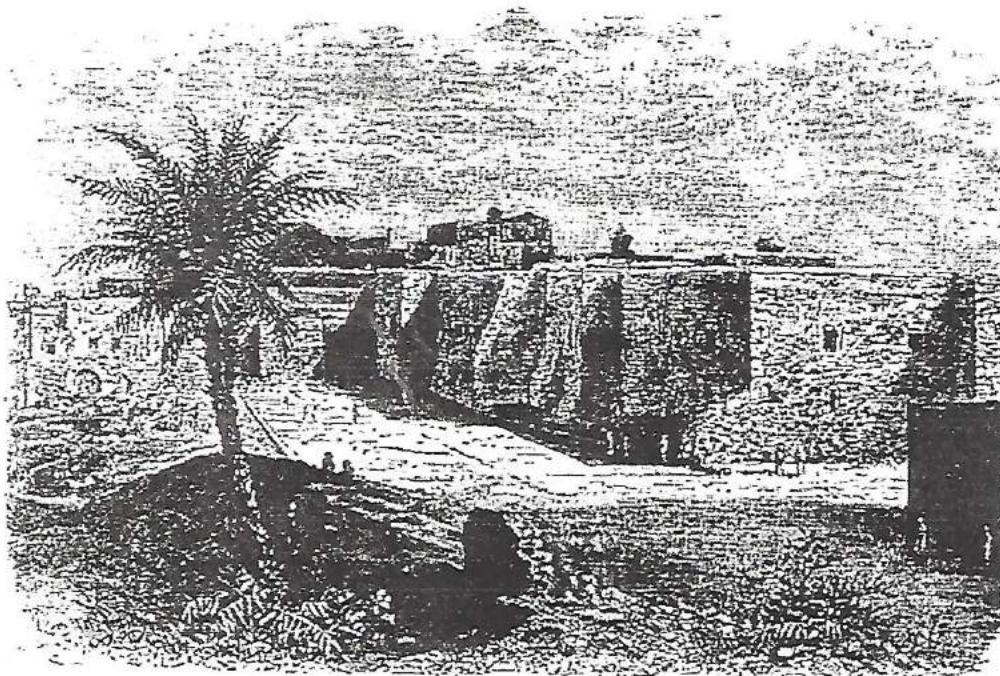
5) It is amazing because the chief priests and scribes, hearing of the birth of the King of Israel and knowing of the prophecy of its location (Mat 2:1-6), made no efforts to travel the five miles south to Bethlehem to ascertain what might have occurred.

Unlike the wise men who traveled hundreds of miles from their Persian homeland and the shepherds who came from nearby, the religious leaders of Jerusalem showed a callous disregard for the greatest event in human history (1 Tim. 3:16).



6) It is amazing because the prophecy is of an individual who existed eternally but became man in history. Micah's prediction forcefully underscores the deity and humanity of Christ, as does Isaiah 9:6-7, which speaks of a child born and a son given. And this future King is called God.

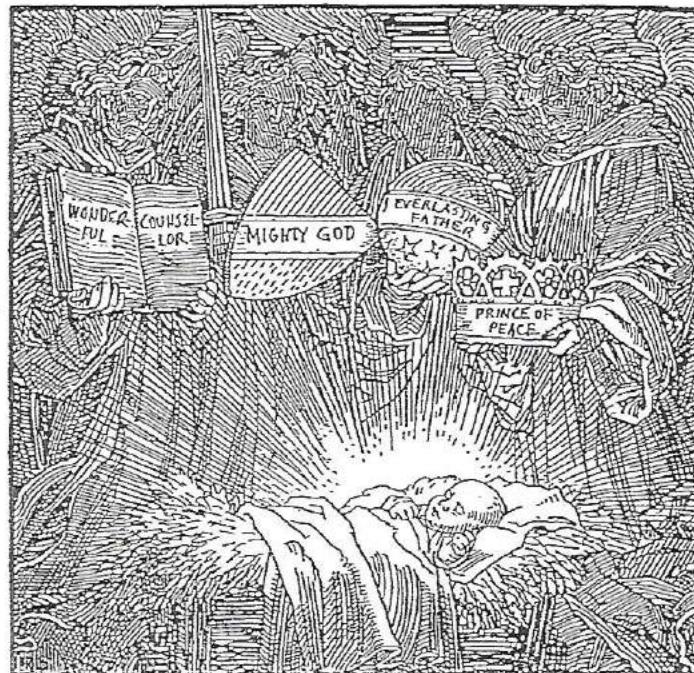
Micah speaks of an individual "whose origin" or, literally, "his goings forth" is from everlasting. He is also said to be from "ancient times" or "of great antiquity," a term that also refers to His eternity. In this miraculous union eternal God is joined to man, a union of perfect humanity and undiminished deity forever.



7) **It is amazing because it is so ignored today.**

Jewish scholars rarely speak of Micah's stunning prophecy, nor does it receive much attention from the Gentile world. This spectacular prophecy gives undeniable evidence of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, and yet it is largely ignored by an unbelieving world. Yet to us, "This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:23).

Sadly, the full meaning of this marvelous prophecy is denied by a number of our evangelical friends. Many accept most firmly the literal reference to Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah, but then spiritualize the future ministry of the Messiah, that He would rule over Israel. We are confident that as the first part of the promise was fulfilled, so will the second part. The babe of Bethlehem will someday be the ruler of the world.



While I was meditating upon the text of Micah 5:2 for a Christmas message, my friend George Zeller at Middletown Bible Church sent me his devotional thoughts on the same passage, which I have incorporated into my message.