

The leader who won't let you down

Micah 3:1-12; 5:1-5; Matt 1:24-2:12

Before the Assyrian empire started causing trouble, Israel and Judah had flourished economically. The rich were getting richer but at the expense of the poor getting poorer. So God sent his prophet Micah to call these nations, and her rulers, to account.

At the same time, Assyria besieged Jerusalem, but God miraculously delivered Jerusalem. However, Micah did not celebrate: he knew the hearts of the leaders were unchanged.

Micah 3:1-12

When leaders fail

Jerusalem's civil, business and religious leaders have failed, and Micah reads out God's charge sheet against them. Their sins were hidden by a cloak of religious respectability. So Micah warns them that Jerusalem will be besieged again and this time, it will be destroyed. This was fulfilled in 587BC, when the Babylonians captured and destroyed the city.

What has that got to do with Advent? It's this: it's in this context that God brings, not just a word of judgment and of destruction, but one of hope.

Micah 5:1-5

God will raise up His Ruler

Alongside the coming judgment God is going to begin something in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was a no-where place. Its one claim to fame was that King David was born and anointed as king there. From this place, God would raise up a ruler who will rule for him; whose lineage went back to David, and even further into eternity. Rather than fleece his people, this ruler would shepherd them. As a result his people would be secure and know peace. The sign that all this would happen was v3: "when she who is in labor has given birth." The tide was going to turn when a baby was born in Bethlehem.

Fast-forward 700 years. Wise-men, most likely in Babylon, have seen something in the stars that tells them the long awaited Messiah had been born. And so they make the journey to Jerusalem, thinking to find the king there.

Matthew 1:24 - 2:11

And Jesus is His Name

Rome was the new superpower and had installed Herod as king. He wasn't a descendant of David and he would stop at nothing to prop up his rule. When the wise men come, seeking the true king, the religious leaders quote Micah's prophecy. Jesus is the fulfilment of everything God foretold through Micah. He is the ruler whose origins are from of old, from everlasting. He is the Shepherd King who rules in the strength and the majesty of God, and He is, and will be, great to the ends of the earth. And it's in him that we can find true security and lasting peace.

We can either respond to that like Herod and reject it. Or like the religious leaders and ignore it. Or, like the wise men, we can bend the knee to him in worship. This Christmas, don't be unmoved by the coming of Christ.