

The Sheperd King

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[0:00] Now muster your troops, O daughter of troops. Sieges laid against us with a rod. They strike the judge of Israel on the cheek.! But you, O Bethlehem, Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth me, for me, one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth. Then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, 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. When the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces, then we will raise against him seven shepherds and eight princes of men.

They shall shepherd the land of Assyria with the sword and the land of Nimrod at its entrances, and he shall deliver us from the Assyrian when he comes into our land and treads within our border.

[1:25] The next scripture reading is Matthew chapter 2, verses 1 through 12. Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men, from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose, and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them whether Christ was to be born. They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet.

And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah. For from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go and search diligently for the child.

[2:44] And when you have found him, bring me word that I too may come and worship him. After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Thank you. Thank you very much for reading today. Well, last Sunday was the last Sunday of Advent.

And so this morning is Christmas Sunday. And it's fitting that we, on Christmas Sunday, would remind ourselves as believers what we actually celebrate on Christmas.

[4:03] And we need this reminder because the celebration of Christmas is such that it's easy to forget what its central purpose is.

There's so many distractions, and our hearts are all prone to wonder. And so it's good that we remind ourselves about what we are celebrating at Christmastime.

So the goal that I have for this morning's sermon is just that. And I want to point us to three aspects of the character of God that we find in these two passages concerning the birth of Christ.

And what we know is that God's character is unchanging. And so we should always remember these aspects of his character, not just at Christmastime, but all the time.

But we especially consider them at Christmastime. Let me pray for us, and then we look to God's word. Heavenly Father, we bow our hearts in this moment because we need you.

[5:17] Lord, we need you in the preaching of your word. I need you to proclaim it, and we all need you to hear it.

And we need you to help us to respond to it. And so, Lord, would you draw near in the power and presence of your Holy Spirit? Would you speak to our hearts through your word this morning? Lord, you know what each one of us needs, and we thank you that you're all sufficient. Nothing is too hard for you to do.

So, Lord, in this moment, would you speak to our hearts for the glory of your great name? We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

For those who are taking notes, I'm going to be organizing this morning's sermon around these two passages. And I have three points that I want to commend to us this morning.

[6:20] The first two will come from Micah, chapter 5, verses 1 to 6. And then the third will come from the passage in Matthew, chapter 2.

Again, three points, and I hope that we would see in these three points God's unchanging character. The first aspect of God's character that we see in this passage in Micah is this.

God judges sin. It is something that is not repeated much today.

I think if we were to describe what it appears to be the view of God and sin, it would be that God condones sin.

But what we see in this passage in Micah 5 is that God judges sin. Micah 5, verse 1, opens with a continuing word of God's judgment against Israel.

[7:40] The prophet Micah started this judgment in chapter 1. And we are coming to the fruition of this judgment in chapter 5.

Micah was God's prosecuting attorney against the nation of Israel. As a matter of fact, all the Old Testament prophets were that.

They prosecuted God's case against an unfaithful people to whom he had been so good. And Micah, in this letter, is prosecuting God's case to an unfaithful nation and telling them that because of their sin and because of their unrepentance, God was going to severely judge them for their sin. If you look at the opening verses of the book of Micah in chapter 1, in particular in verse 1, you would see that Micah prophesied concerning God's judgment over the reign of three kings. Micah prophesied during the reign of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Now, we don't know how long he prophesied.

[8:58] We don't know exactly how long he prophesied. But what we do know is that the reign of these three kings was 64 years. And so I think it's fair to say that Micah prophesied and called Israel to repentance for at least a few decades.

He persistently told the nation of Israel that judgment was coming because of their sins.

Now, it's helpful to know that at this time that Micah is prophesying, the nation of Israel was divided. It was no longer a unified nation, but it was a divided nation with two kingdoms, one to the north, which was still called Israel, and one to the south, which was called Judah.

Now, you'll see in verse 1 of chapter 1 of Micah, that it says, the word of the Lord came to Micah of Moresheth in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Now, Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom Israel, and Jerusalem was the capital of the southern, sorry, the northern kingdom Israel, that was Samaria's capital, and Jerusalem was the capital of the southern kingdom Judah.

[10:33] And oftentimes what we see is that these two kingdoms would be referred to by their capitals, not necessarily by Israel and Judah, they'd be referred to by the names of the capital Samaria in the north and Jerusalem in the south.

But even though Micah is prophesying in the time of these northern kings, this message of judgment that God told him to prophesy against the whole nation applied to both kingdoms.

He was prophesying to this divided kingdom, both Israel in the north and Judah in the south. Look at what he says.

I want us to consider a few verses just to hear the severity of the judgment that God determined to bring against both Samaria and Jerusalem.

Look at what it says starting in verse 2. Hear, you peoples, all of you, pay attention, O earth, and all that is in it, and let the Lord be a witness against you.

[11:55] The Lord from his holy temple. For behold, the Lord is coming out of his place, will come down and tread upon the high places of the earth, and the mountains will melt under him, and the valleys will split open like wax before the fire, like waters poured down a steep place.

All this is for the transgression of Jacob and for the sins of the house of Israel. What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?

And what is the high place of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? Therefore, I will make Samaria a heap in the open country, a place for planting vineyards, and I will pour down her stones into the valley and uncover her foundations.

Her carved images shall be beaten to pieces, all her wages shall be burned with fire, and all her idols I will lay waste.

For from the fee of a prostitute she gathered them, and to the fee of a prostitute they shall return.

[13:16] And so God promises to bring judgment against both kingdoms and to bring them to ruins because of their sin and because of their refusal to repent concerning their sin.

So when we come to chapter 5 in the book of Micah, in verse 1, it's clear that God's judgment against Israel in the form of a foreign army that was going to invade them is now imminent.

And we know from verses 5 and 6 in chapter 5 that this army that is on the threshold of besieging them and making them slaves and taking them into exile, this army was the army of the Assyrians. Look again at what Micah says in verse 1 of chapter 5. He's a part of it.

Sieges lay against us. With a rod they strike the judge of Israel on the cheek. Micah indicates that there's a dire situation now facing the nation of Israel.

[14:43] The kingdom is under siege, and there are no troops to fight. In fact, the one who is responsible for protecting the nation, the king, he himself is being humiliated.

This reference, this term about being struck with a rod on the cheek, it's a term of humiliation.

A picture is like a man being with his wife and someone who believes that they can defeat him, and he pretty much knows he's defeated as well, goes up to him in the presence of his wife and slaps him.

And there's nothing he can do because he knows he's outnumbered. He knows that if he attempts to do anything, it's going to be worse for him. Micah is painting that picture. He's saying, siege is laid against us.

And our very king, who should be protecting us, he is humiliated. He can do nothing. They're humiliating him in the face of all of us.

[15:51] And why was this happening? This was happening because it was an expression of God's judgment against sin.

It was happening because God judges sin. When we persist in sin, we can sometimes think that God is slack concerning his judgment of sin.

Brothers and sisters, this passage reminds us that if we do not heed the warnings of judgment, if we do not repent, judgment will fall.

Judgment will fall, brothers and sisters. It will fall from a God who is, yes, patient, a God who is long-suffering, but who is not forever suffering.

And why is this? This is because, brothers and sisters, God takes sin seriously. Because sin is serious. God takes sin seriously, and we should as well.

[17:20] God does not overlook sin. Because he cannot overlook sin. Because he's a holy God. It is impossible for a perfectly holy God to overlook even the smallest sin.

And brothers and sisters, this is an important lesson that we all need to learn and we all need to remember. God takes sin seriously.

God judges sin severely. Israel was on the brink of going into a cruel captivity because they didn't take God seriously.

They didn't value his standards of holiness. They didn't value his call to repentance. They didn't value his call to obedience.

And they didn't believe the repeated prophecies that judgment was coming unless they repented. Friends, how well do we know this aspect of God's character?

[18:32] I'm persuaded this morning that we know God is love more than we know that God judges sin. The same God who is love is the same God who judges sin.

Yes, he is patient. Yes, he is long-suffering. But in the end, he severely judges sin if we refuse to repent. One of the things I love about the end of a year and looking to the new year is that every new year offers us the prospect for fresh starts and new beginnings.

Every new year offers us the prospect of leaving the old behind and embracing the new. If you're here this morning and you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and your personal Savior, I want to say to you, and some of you, no doubt, you have heard what I'm saying this morning again and again and again.

You have heard God call sinners to repentance. You have heard that God judges sin. And now it goes through one year and out of the next.

And you're prepared to go into a new year deaf and blind to what God calls you to. You're prepared to go into a new year with an unrepentant heart disregarding God's repeated calls to repentance.

[20:19] And that's you this morning. I called you to turn away from your sin. I called you to turn away from your sin.

If we were able to interview people in the nation of Israel at the time that this siege came upon them, they would tell us they weren't expecting it.

They thought they had a bit more time. Friends, none of us knows the time that we have. And that's why the Bible tells us that now is the day of salvation.

This moment that we have is the moment that we are to hear and heed God's call to repentance. repentance.

Let's repent before judgment comes because God judges sin and he judges sin severely.

[21:28] Now, after this dire state of affairs that we see in verse 1 of Micah chapter 5, we're met with a stunning in verse 2.

What we see in verse 2 is that in the face of God's judgment of sin, God offers mercy. That's what we see in verse 2.

That in the face of God's judgment for sin, God offers mercy. And this brings me to the second aspect of God's character that we see in this passage, which is also my second point.

God offers mercy. In the face of judgment, and not in the face of some other judgment, in the face of his own judgment, the judgment that he is bringing, he offers to the very people mercy.

Look again at what it says in verse 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 old, from ancient days.

[23:04] What we see in verse 2 is that the shift, the focus shifts in verse 2 from Israel in the north to lowly Bethlehem in the south.

In verse 2, the picture that Micah is portraying for us is the idea of someone who is in dire straits, in need of deliverance, and they are crying out in a lot of different directions to get help, but they're not crying out in the direction for help where help is going to come from.

The northern tribe of, the northern kingdom of Israel would never have been thinking to think down south to Judah with just two tribes.

In the north, they had ten tribes, and little Judah in the south had two tribes, and that's the last place that they would think deliverance would come from. And yet, what we see is that deliverance is not only coming from Judah, but deliverance is coming from an insignificant town, Bethlehem, in a nondescript district, Ephrathah.

And so God through the prophet Micah, in the face of this judgment that is at the doorsteps of the nation of Israel, he's telling them, I'm going to give you mercy.

[24:43] I'm offering you mercy. mercy. And this mercy is coming in the form of a king, a different kind of king, not the king like the one who is being humiliated, who is being hit with the rod on his face.

You need a different kind of king, you need a different kind of deliverer. And God sovereignly decided that this deliverer, he would not come from the north where all the other kings had come from with all the pomp and pageantry and all the showmanship that they had. He said, no, this king is going to come from lowly Bethlehem in nondescript Ephrathah in the land of Judah.

Now this location where this promised ruler of Israel was supposed to come from, this would immediately have rung a bell in the hearing of all the people, all of them, both the northern kingdom and the southern kingdom, all of them understood something about Bethlehem in Ephrathah in the land of Judah.

They knew this because this is where Israel's second king, David, was born. We see this in 1 Samuel 17 verse 12.

[26:09] 1 Samuel writes, Now David was the son of an Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah named Jesse who had eight sons.

David was the king that God raised up to replace Israel's first king, Saul. Saul had failed. Saul was a wicked king and God raised David up to replace Saul.

at the time of Micah's prophecy about 30 kings, about 300 years had elapsed and Israel and Judah combined had had a total of 30 kings and they all failed.

All of them failed including David. God announced to the prophet Micah God mercifully tells the nation of Israel I'm going to send you a replacement king.

I'm going to send you a different kind of king. I'm going to send you a king who is the true solution to the judgment that you face. He's a merciful solution to the judgment that you face because of your sin.

[27:27] the king that God was raising up from Bethlehem and Judah was the ultimate king. He was David's ultimate and true son.

He is the king that David was pointing to when God raised up David to replace Saul.

He is the king who is the ultimate fulfillment of all those kings the 30 of them who failed both kingdoms. He is the one that ultimately their failure was pointing to say we need a better king.

And the face of judgment God answers and God announces and God holds out this better king as an expression of his mercy.

And this is why verse 2 was so stunning and surprising. In the midst of this prophecy of judgment in the midst of the judgment at the front door of Israel God mercifully holds out this better king.

[28:37] This better king who is coming from Bethlehem in Judah. But he is no ordinary king. He is no ordinary ruler who is just coming from lowly Bethlehem as a human being.

Notice we're told in verse 2 that the coming of this ruler is from of old and from ancient days. And this language points to his divine nature.

This language points to the fact that he is more than just a human ruler. He's also a divine ruler. He's a divine king.

And he had to be. He had to be a different king. In his humanity, yes, he is born in Bethlehem. But in his divinity, he is from ancient days.

He is the ancient of days. He is the one who came from heaven to earth. And he's both God and man. He's human and divine. Because that is the king that they needed.

[29:49] Indeed, that's the king we need. We need a king who is like us, human, but we need a king who is unlike us, divine.

We need a king who is able to mediate between God and us because of our sin that separates us from him. And this king would come, and this king would enable God and sinner to be reconciled.

And Micah doesn't give us the details here, but we certainly know the outworking of this prophecy in the rest of scripture. As we have seen in the second scripture reading, this king did in fact come.

This king was in fact born. And as the gospel writers witnessed, this king lived and this king died. he sacrificed himself. He's a different king.

What was expected of the kings of those days was the king was supposed to go out before the people in battle. And he was supposed to kill his enemies and preserve his own life.

[31:00] That's the way you win. That's the way you won those battles.

This king comes and he gives his life. He sacrifices his life. And that's the way he defeats his enemies.

That's the way he defeated the arch enemy. Theirs and ours, Satan himself, through his dying on the cross.

Israel didn't have the wisdom to see that this is the king they needed. They didn't have the wisdom to see that this king could bring the deliverance that they needed.

They would never have chosen him. And brothers and sisters, we're no different. None of us would choose this king. None of us would look to nondescript Bethlehem, no name Ephrathah, in little Judah, to bring deliverance.

God, I must say right now that even for some of us who may be facing what we consider to be daunting circumstances, we're probably looking everywhere else than where we need to be looking to the God who delivers in this way, to the God who delivers in a surprising way, in a merciful way.

[32:35] That's the one we need to be looking to, than leaning to our own understanding and trusting our own wisdom. The king they needed was both human and divine from heaven and earth, and that is the king that we need as well.

God is not going to come. But God holds out this ruler in a merciful way in the face of judgment, what we see is that Micah says in verse 3 that this ruler was not going to come immediately.

There was not going to be immediate deliverance for Israel. Look again at what he says in verse 3. Therefore he shall give them up, he's going to give up the people of Israel, until the time when she who is in labor has given birth, then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel.

Again, what Micah is saying in verse 3 is that the deliverance that is promised in the form of this ruler will not happen immediately. Instead, Israel's defeat and the absence of a ruler will continue until the birth of the Lord's king, the Lord's ruler, whom he is going to raise up.

And as a result of this king, Micah also prophesied that there will be a conversion and a return of many to join God's covenant people.

[34:18] Now, here in verse 3, it's very easy to read this reference to the people of Israel as if it was referring to the natural nation of Israel, all those who could naturally trace their lineage to Abraham, the physical offspring of Abraham.

But to read that term in that way is to misread the text, because that is clearly not what Micah is prophesying in this passage.

The term people of Israel in this passage doesn't refer to the national nation of Israel. Instead, this term refers to the faithful remnant within the nation of Israel, the true people of God, not national Israel.

And there's a distinction, scripture makes that distinction. But not all who can trace descendency from Abraham are the children of Abraham.

But the children of Abraham are those who are his children by faith. This prophecy points to the fact that through the coming of this ruler, many in the nation of Israel who turned away from God during the times of the leaders who failed them, that they are going to be returning, that there would be a return of these ones who had fallen away to join the faithful remnant in Israel during the time of the Messiah.

[36:05] And Micah is looking well beyond this immediate period of the siege of Israel. And he's talking about this Messiah's coming and what it would result in, what it would produce.

We know from the New Testament that the true people of God, the true Israelite, is not based on human, physical, biological, natural lineage.

It's based on faith. We become the children of Abraham through faith, being saved by faith in this ruler, this Messiah, that God is promising.

In verse 4, we see the effect, the effect and the extent of the rule of this promised Messiah. Notice again what it says. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, 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. Micah tells us that this ruler who is coming will shepherd his flock.

[37:33] This coming ruler is not only a king, but he's also a shepherd. He's a shepherd king. And we need both functions in our lives. We need a shepherd who will care for us.

We need to be shepherded, but also we need to be governed. We need to be under a king. You see, our natural inclination is we love the shepherd because he provides for us, and he protects us. And we will welcome as much of that as would be allowed our way. But naturally we repulse against a king. Naturally every single one of us has a streak in us that rebels against authority.

None of us left to ourselves wants to be governed by anyone. And that's why we live in a world where people are turning their backs on God and turning their minds away from just a thought that there is an authority over them.

But this ruler who comes, he is a king and he is a shepherd, shepherd, and we take him as he is or we take him not at all.

[38:58] We don't have to choose to say he's going to be my shepherd, but he's not going to be my king. He is a shepherd king. He is all in one and we take him that way.

We take his care, but we also take his governance. We obey him. We live our lives according to what he says and not what we want. We recognize that we are not our own.

We recognize that we belong to him twice, both in creation and we belong to him in redemption, those of us who have come to trust in the Savior.

He comes as a shepherd king. Both of these functions, his shepherding and his governance, they're wrapped up in his messiahship.

Notice in verse 4 as well that the shepherd king doesn't come on his own run. He comes on the father's mission. The father's mission is to rescue sinners and he has come on the father's mission and he will shepherd the people of God in the strength of the Lord.

[40:12] He will shepherd the people of God in the name of the Lord, God. So we're told in verse 4. And what we also see in verse 4 is that he didn't just come to a particular nation, to a particular ethnic group.

He came to people of every nation and tongue and tribe and that is what we see that he will be great to the ends of the earth.

That's what it says in verse 4, to the ends of the earth, to New Zealand and Australia and to Antarctica, wherever on this earth, he will be great to the ends of the earth.

His kingdom will be a kingdom of all peoples and tongues and nations. His kingdom will be made up of believing Jews and believing Gentiles.

One people under one king. and outside of his kingdom will be unbelieving Jews and unbelieving Gentiles.

[41:20] We see in verse 5, this first sentence in verse 5, it communicates something that all of us need. It says, he shall be their peace.

peace. He shall be their peace. He is the one who is going to bring true and lasting peace. And the peace that he offers is not the absence of conflict or turmoil.

The peace that he offers is not easy peasy living. That's not the peace that he offers. The peace that he offers is ultimate peace. peace that he offers is a peace that comes from being reconciled to God.

That comes from knowing that my sins are forgiven. My conscience is cleansed. There's no condemnation to me because I'm in Jesus Christ.

And I will never hear a word of condemnation from God. Despite my many sins. Despite my serious sins. peace. I have peace with God knowing that I've been justified by him.

[42:35] I've been reconciled to him. And therefore I have his peace. This peace that Micah prophesies that this shepherd king will bring is a peace that will rule above all the turmoil and all the anxieties and all the strife of this life.

That peace will be above it. And there will be an awareness that that's a peace this world cannot affect. That's a peace this world cannot take away.

Christ achieved this peace not just by coming. He achieved this peace by dying. By going to a cross and giving his life and being resurrected from the dead.

The remaining part of this passage in Micah the remaining part of verse 5 and verse 6 Micah uses the imminent invasion of Israel by the Assyrians to point prophetically to the future and the result of this shepherd king's kingdom growing and advancing in the world.

If there's any confusion about what is meant in the remainder of verse 5 and verse 6 the last part of verse 6 makes it very clear.

[44:20] Micah referring to the shepherd king says he shall deliver us from the Assyrian. The Assyrian is representative of the enemies of God's people.

He also refers to Nimrod which at that time would have been representative of Babylon and right now what we're looking at is the imminent invasion of the Assyrians that was against Israel but later there's going to come the invasion of the Babylonians against Judah.

And this promise is that God's kingdom is going to advance in the midst of the hostilities in the midst of enemies and notice how it happens it says in verse 5 and he shall be their peace and when the Assyrian comes into our land and treads in our palaces then we will raise against them seven shepherds and eight princes of men.

That's prophetic poetic language to say that they will resist and overcome in the strength of the shepherd king not by their own ability and that is why Micah says and he shall deliver us.

The deliverance comes through him. How kind of God to offer mercy in the face of judgment. Let me conclude with my third and final point which is in the second passage Matthew 2 1-12 and I'll be brief on this point.

[46:21] This account of the shepherds shepherd king's birth in Matthew 2 teaches us that God keeps his word.

God keeps his word. God judges sin, God offers mercy, God keeps his word.

God to God to God to Jesus as recorded here in Matthew chapter 2 is taking place some 700 years after Micah's prophecy in Micah 5.

700 years. But this prophecy in Micah chapter 5 is not the first prophecy of the coming Messiah. The first prophecy of the coming Messiah we find in Genesis 3 15 when God said to Eve, he prophesied that the seed of the woman will one day come and crush the head of the serpent.

[47:33] And so that's a far longer period of time. Indeed, some 4,000 years. Some 4,000 years between when that was uttered to Eve and when it was fulfilled in Bethlehem.

And it's pretty astounding to see that even though 4,000 years had elapsed and the Messiah had not yet come, there's a lot we could say about the scribes and the Pharisees and the New Testament does not put them in a generally good light.

But they were still looking for and expecting the Messiah. And so when Herod inquired of them, and Herod called them and said, what is this about this king?

Where is he to be born? They were able to say, the prophets say, that he is going to be born in Bethlehem of Judah. Why? Because they were still holding on to that prophecy.

They were still holding on to God's word that he was going to fulfill his work. It's pretty impressive after 4,000 years. 4,000 years had gone by.

[48:51] And the faithful, the faithful over countless generations, the faithful from the time of that promise being uttered in the garden.

And when you think about it, there were only two persons in the garden. They repeated that promise. And that promise continued in the hearts of the faithful over generation after generation after generation.

There were those who believed that promise. It was never fulfilled in their generation, but it was passed on to the next generation. They believed it. They held on to it. And then finally you come to the time where God fulfills his promise some 4,000 years later.

Surprisingly, even wicked Herod believed God's word. If Herod thought that was just a myth, there was nothing to it, he would have gone about his business, but no, he set about to destroy all the babies born within a certain period of time because he believed that that promise, that word of God was true.

I don't know if you're familiar with Orthodox Jews, but Orthodox Jews do not believe in Jesus Christ.

[50:19] Orthodox Jews are still looking for the Messiah. And sometimes you might see pictures of them at the wheeling wall and they are praying and praying and they are praying for the Messiah to come.

Even though the Messiah has come in the person of Jesus Christ who they do not accept. But here's what's impressive about the Orthodox Jews, despite their misguidedness.

They are still holding on to an old promise. They are still holding on to a promise that has been uttered some 6,000 years.

They are still holding on to that. brothers and sisters, do we believe God's word that even when there is a delay, a lapse of time for its fulfillment, that he will fulfill it?

It's been about 2,000 years since Jesus said he's going to come back. Do we still believe him? do we still believe that he is going to come back and he is going to receive his people to himself and he is going to usher in a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells?

[51:47] brothers and sisters, the Messiah has come. The Messiah has come because God keeps his word.

And brothers and sisters, the Messiah will come again because God keeps his word. word. He doesn't sleep, he doesn't slumber, he's not forgetful, God keeps his word.

If you're here this morning and you have not trusted Jesus as your Lord and personal Savior, I want to say to you this morning that in the same way that God kept that first word, he's going to send his son, he's going to keep his other word, he's going to send his son again.

And between those two sendings, the mercy of God is being offered. Between those two sendings, the mercy of God is being offered to all who would believe, to all who would repent.

Christ came as a Savior. Christ would return as a judge, as a holy judge, who will judge by one standard, and that's perfection.

[53:22] And none of us, in and of ourselves, is good enough to stand that judgment. None of us. If you are 99.99% holy, and you're standing before that judge, based on that standard, you go to hell.

The only way that we can stand before that judge is not in our own righteousness, but his righteousness.

The righteousness that he gives, the righteousness that he clothes us with, the righteousness that he credits to us, the righteousness that comes from the shepherd king, who came and lived and died for sinners like you and me.

And so let us believe the word of God this morning. Let us leave this place meditating on these particular characters of God.

God, he judges sin, he offers mercy, and he keeps his word.

[54:45] He keeps his word. Amen. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that you sent us a shepherd king.

You sent us one who would care for us, and you sent us one who would govern us.

And I pray, oh Lord, that we would all submit our lives to the shepherd king. for those who do not believe this morning, have mercy on them, I pray.

Would you grant them faith and repentance, faith in Christ and repentance from sin. We ask that you would do this in Jesus' name.

Amen.