

He Shall Stand and Feed His Flock

by Richard E. Bieber

The gospel of Jesus applies to our troubled world, bringing hope and peace, and the Lord Jesus is gathering his flock to prepare them for the Day when he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord.

Scripture: Micah 5:2, Matthew 18:20, John 5:25, John 10:16

Topics: "Christmas Hope", "Gods Peace"

Description

Richard E. Bieber delves into the relevance of Christmas in our troubled world, emphasizing the hope found in Micah's prophecy of a future ruler bringing peace and God's will on earth. He highlights Jesus' ongoing work of gathering his flock, calling people to hear His voice and feel His power, ultimately preparing for a world at peace under His rule. Bieber urges to focus on the bigger picture beyond current troubles, anticipating the Day when all will join in the New Creation on earth under the one Shepherd.

Transcript

You pick up the newspaper and they tell you that there are only a few more shopping days left. So get crackin! You check over the headlines and are reminded that, Christmas or no Christmas, things are looking pretty shaking out there. Bombs going off in crowded cities, refugee camps filling up from Pakistan to Darfur. And, close to home, the economy is shaky. The price of oil is bouncing up and down. The dollar fluctuates.

So when we get to Christmas Eve and sing, "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come," are we ignoring the real world for a journey down memory lane, or is there something in the gospel of Jesus which applies even to this messy, troubled world as it is right now? Is it possible to see something in this gospel that will justify our singing, "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come"?

Back in the days of Hezekiah, the king of Judah, there was a man named Micah, who was not only gifted with a prophetic voice, he had prophetic eyes. Every once-in-a-while God enabled Micah to see far into the future. And Micah took what he saw and used it to create hope. Hope, at a time when things were looking bleak, in Israel, and in the world.

But you, O Bethlehem, who are little among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.....And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

Micah 5:2 and 4

Micah sees a time when this world will be at peace. No more war. No terror. No hunger and disease. A ruler "whose origin is from of old, from ancient days (eternity?) will stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God."

Micah sees a day when God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven, under the rule of the Messiah.

As we look forward to another Christmas, we need to see that the arrival of this baby in Bethlehem was only the beginning of the fulfillment of Micah's prophecy. There's more.

All we can see right now as we look around at our world, is a world so out-of-control that no king, no president, no dictator, no "international conference" can set it right. Only God can do that.

So as we celebrate the birth of this baby at a time like the one we're living in, it is important to see the whole picture: that we celebrate, not only what Jesus has already done, but what he is doing now, and, more important, what he is going to do.

Ever since Jesus rose from the dead he has been doing one thing here in this world: he has been gathering his flock. He is preparing for the day when he will "stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God," in a world at peace.

And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

John 10

Across the earth today, in thousands of places like this, the Spirit of the Lord is calling people out of their preoccupations to come into his flock. He is gathering his sheep.

The Lord Jesus gathers his sheep in two ways: 1. He causes us to hear his voice; 2. He enables us to feel his power. He gathers his sheep in no other way.

Sometimes our churches hinder what the Lord is doing by trying to help him gather his flock by other means. We try to fill our churches by entertaining the folks. Or we bribe them with promises of earthly prosperity. We even do market surveys to find out what the people want; and then we give them what they want.

Of course, we end up with numbers. But no vision. No life. We end up with a flock. But it's our flock, not his.

If we step back and let the Lord Jesus do it his way, he will gather his flock even in this place

For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

Matthew 18

If we are truly gathered in his name, and if he really is in our midst at this moment, the Lord Jesus will make his presence known to us the way he always does it:

He will cause us to hear his voice.

He will enable us to feel his power.

First, the Lord Jesus causes us to hear his voice.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me.

As we gather here, a word comes to us. It could be from a hymn, something someone says, a thought that comes into your mind. It's a word that cuts right into your heart. That word is a call to make a change....to get reconciled with someone....perhaps simply to have faith, "Trust me, don't give up. I'm with you." Maybe it's a call to repent of a negative attitude. A word... a living word!

Secondly, if we act on that word, the Lord Jesus then enables us to feel his power.

The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear shall live.

John 5

Jesus is not talking about those who are dead in their graves. He's talking about people like ourselves, when we're distracted, preoccupied with ourselves, burning with resentment, driven by fear --- spiritually dead. He causes us to hear his voice. If we perk up our ears and pay attention, and act on his word, we begin to feel his power. He raises us from our spiritual death.

His power may come to us as a touch of healing, or a rush of peace flooding our mind, a flash of insight that strikes like a bolt of lightning and turns us around. One way or another, we will feel his power, if we act on his word,

because the Lord is gathering his flock, lifting us out of our worries, our troubles our petty concerns, into the light of his kingdom. He is doing this to give us a sample of the glory which will one day cover this earth.

But the blessing we receive today as we call on his name is only the beginning. If we are touched with the life of heaven today, it is only a foretaste. He is trying to get us to look beyond the troubles of the earth at this hour and see what Micah saw: the Day when....

He shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

That's why he came.

That's why he died on the cross.

That's why he is among us now.

To get us ready....

Ready for the Day when wars and rumors of wars, pandemics, famines, earthquakes, and strife will end. This world will be at peace. And all who answered his invitation to walk the walk of faith will join him in his New Creation on this earth.

Those who belong to him on the other side of death will come with him.

Those who are scattered in the far reaches of this planet will be drawn to him.

And there will be one Flock one Shepherd.

And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.

This is what justifies our singing "Joy to the World, the Lord is Come!"

Only this.

Meanwhile, today as we read this message, this is his word to us:

(If it applies to you, you will know it.)

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me, and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.

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