> But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.
> — *Micah 5:2*

Book: Old Testament / Micah
Topics: Christmas, Jesus, prophecy

Interpretation:
Bethlehem was a small town located about 10 km south of Jerusalem. Ephrathah was a rural area near Bethlehem. The phrase *"Bethlehem Ephrathah"* refers to the specific location where the *Redeemer* was to be born.

It is notable that *Micah* does not mention any other major city, such as Jerusalem, as the birthplace of the messiah. Instead, a humble and remote location is given. This reflects the central message of his prophecy: God reveals himself through the small, the weak, and the vulnerable.

Micah 5:2 was quoted by the wise men who were looking for the baby *Jesus* in Bethlehem. In *Matthew 2:5-6* we read, *“And they said to him, ‘In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: “‘But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”* This quote shows that the Jews themselves considered *Micah 5:2* to be a messianic prophecy.

It is also interesting to note that the wise men were foreigners, not Jews, but they knew the Hebrew Scriptures and were looking for *the Messiah*. This indicates that God’s salvation is not limited to a particular people or culture, but is open to all.

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Attention! This is one of the possible interpretations based on the comments of famous theologians, which may differ from each other. If the interpretation is taken from other languages, then there may be a distortion of meaning when translating the language. *Matthew 7:7-8*

> He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.
> — *Micah 6:8*

Book: Old Testament / Micah
Topics: humility, law, righteousness

Interpretation:
Micah 6:8 is one of the most famous verses in the book, summing up the prophet's central message: God does not require outward sacrifices, but righteous and godly living. The verse is presented in the form of a dialogue in which God addresses the people and declares what is good and what He expects from them.

A Call to Justice

The first requirement that God requires of His people is to practice justice. This involves not only refraining from doing wrong, but also actively working for the welfare and justice of others.

Social justice is a recurring theme in the Hebrew Scriptures, and Micah emphasizes it strongly in his prophecy. For example, in *Micah 3:9-12* the prophet condemns the leaders of Judah for their injustice, and in *chapter 7* he expects God to judge the people for their lack of justice.

Justice is not an abstract value, but a concrete practice. To follow this divine command, we can make important reflections: sharing our time, resources, and gifts with those who need them most, offering emotional and physical support to those in need, and fighting against oppression and discrimination.

Love of Mercy

God's second call is *to love mercy*. This means paying attention to the misfortunes and suffering of others and doing everything in our power to alleviate them. God is merciful by nature, and He expects *His children to be merciful as well*.

Mercy is a core value of Christianity and a recurring theme in the Gospels. *Jesus* spoke many times about the importance of forgiveness, compassion, and showing loving respect to others as evidence of our love for God. We must remember that mercy is something we give to others not because they deserve it, but because it is an opportunity to become more *like our Savior*.

Humility Before God

The third requirement that God requires of His people is that we *humble ourselves before Him*. Humility is seen as a virtue in most spiritual traditions, and in the Christian faith it is often considered the foundation of a godly life. Recognizing our own limitations and dependence on God is an important part of humility.

Micah emphasizes the call to humility. It is not enough to practice justice and love mercy; we must also humble ourselves before God. Humility teaches us to recognize that we are not the center of the universe and that we must live our lives in light of God's love and the well-being of others.

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> Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.
> — *Micah 7:18*

Book: Old Testament / Micah
Topics: Forgiveness, mercy, sin

Interpretation:
This verse can be divided into two parts. In the first part, we see *Micah's* rhetorical question. There is no God like the God of Israel, who forgives his people and forgets their sins. Evil and rebellion deserve divine punishment and wrath, but mercy and forgiveness are a tangible reality in the life of the believer.

In the second part, we see the explanation of this fact. God does not hold back his wrath forever because he delights in mercy. Divine mercy is the quality that moves God to forgive sinners and restore them to right relationship with Him.

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> You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.
>
> — *Micah 7:19*

Book: Old Testament / Micah
Topics: compassion, Forgiveness, sin

Interpretation:
Micah 7:19 is part of the final chapter of the book *of Micah*, where the prophet describes the moral corruption and idolatry of the people of Judah. ??Despite the prophet's warnings, the people of Judah persisted in their wickedness and eventually fell into the hands of the Assyrians and Babylonians. However, in the final verses, Micah offers words of comfort and hope for the future.

Micah assures the people of Judah that God will once again have mercy on them despite their sins and shortcomings. The prophet uses a powerful image to describe divine forgiveness: God will bury all the iniquities of the people.

The highlight of this verse is that God will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea, meaning that they will never be remembered or spoken of again. In short, Micah assures the people of Judah that God is a God of mercy, offering redemption and forgiveness.

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> But as for me, I watch in hope for the Lord, I wait for God my Savior; my God will hear me.
>
> — *Micah 7:7*

Book: Old Testament / Micah
Topics: hope, listening, Salvation

Interpretation:
In *Micah 7:7*, the prophet invites us to keep our eyes on the Lord. Instead of looking at our problems and difficulties, *Micah* teaches us to look to the Lord and wait on Him. The prophet's trust in God is evident in his statements, and his faith serves as an example for us to follow in our own lives.

It’s easy to feel overwhelmed by life’s problems and get lost in our worries. However, trusting in God and looking to Him can help us find peace and strength to overcome any obstacle. By directing our prayers and thoughts to God, we trust Him to guide and support us in the midst of our struggles. The prophet’s promise shows that God is willing to hear our prayers if we choose to trust Him.

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