

Sermon – Then and Now, John Chapter 7 – Part 6

The challenge of believing in Jesus. People are having a problem believing in Jesus as the Messiah. I want to be on the right side of the division.

⁴² Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" ⁴³ So there was a division among the people because of Him. ⁴⁴ Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him.

The people are correct. The scripture in Micah 5 indeed states that the Messiah will come from Bethlehem. This is a problem for them. The scripture points to Bethlehem but they think he came out of Galilee.

Micah 5

***"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth are from of old,
From everlasting."***

Questions: Why did they not know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem? What do the people need to do to make the connection between Jesus and the scripture? Do I really need to know where Jesus came from in order to start to believe?

The question of why the people and Pharisees did not recognize that Jesus was born in Bethlehem -- several possible explanations based on historical, cultural, and scriptural contexts. They did not believe in Jesus as the Messiah for several interconnected theological, social, and political reasons:

- **Circumstances of His Birth:** Jesus was born in a humble setting (Luke 2:7). His birth was not widely publicized.
- **Flight to Egypt:** This sudden departure might have obscured the details of Jesus' origins.
- **Association with Nazareth:** Jesus was raised in Nazareth, which led to His common identification as "Jesus of Nazareth" (Matthew 2:23, John 1:45–46). This likely created a widespread assumption that He was born there. Nazareth is in the lower region of Galilee.
- **Prejudice Against Galilee:** Many in Judea looked down on Galilee as an unlikely place for the Messiah to come from.
- **Misunderstanding Prophecy:** While Micah 5:2 explicitly identifies Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah, some Jewish leaders may have been focused on other aspects of Messianic prophecies and overlooked this detail. They focused on passages emphasizing the Messiah's

kingly and victorious aspects, often overlooking those describing suffering and rejection (e.g., Isaiah 53). They skipped some steps in the process.

- **Focus on Political Power:** Many expected the Messiah to be a political or military leader. Jesus' humble beginnings and ministry did not fit their expectations, making them less inclined to investigate His origins.
- **Different Expectations of the Messiah:** The Pharisees and many other Jews expected the Messiah to be a political and military leader who would liberate Israel and restore the kingdom.
 - Jesus, however, emphasized a spiritual kingdom rather than a political one. His teachings about humility, suffering, and serving others contrasted with the prevailing expectation of a conquering king.
 - I thought he would show up here like this.
- **Jesus' Criticism of Pharisaic Practices** Jesus openly criticized the Pharisees for their legalism and hypocrisy, particularly in their emphasis on external observance of the law while neglecting its deeper principles. This put Him in direct conflict with their authority and interpretation of Jewish law, making it hard for them to accept Him as the fulfillment of the law.
- **Perceived Threat to Their Authority**
- **Jesus' Association with Sinners**
 - Jesus' practice of associating with tax collectors, sinners, and others marginalized by society offended the Pharisees, who valued strict adherence to purity laws and social boundaries.

These factors combined to create a situation where many people, including the Pharisees, were unaware or dismissive of Jesus' true birthplace.

Leaving ChapGPT, why today would we rely upon assumptions and not dig deeper into the background of a person or concept?

What is the application for us today? Why should I care that they didn't believe? We may not believe in Jesus as the Messiah for similar reasons.

- If we don't see the need, we will not look to Jesus.
 - Everything is going fine in my life, this is not a break glass situation; when I need him, I'll call then.
- I already know all I need to know about Jesus.
 - I may have grown up knowing about and believing in Jesus, but I may not believe he is the Messiah in the situation I'm in right now.
- I don't have time to sit down and learn more about Jesus.
 - Too busy with my life, my job, my kids, so there is not enough time to add him to my list of things to do.
- I don't know where to go to find out how Jesus can fix it.

- I got a Bible but don't know how to use it. Where can I go and who can I ask to believe in Jesus?
- I got information about Jesus from an unreliable source now I can't see how Jesus can fix it.
 - Social media said I should do this; saw a YouTube video and it said this about Jesus.
 - My friends said I don't need church to find the answer and if I look inside myself, the answer can be found through exercise, meditation, etc.
- Prejudice. I don't need a white Jesus to solve my black and white issues. I see others using Jesus the wrong way so I can't turn to him, because some of his followers are nuts or hypocrites.
- My politics is more important or I can only understand Jesus based upon my politics and fears.
 - My hope is found in political leaders and politics rather than Jesus.

They missed Jesus as the answer. That was then, this is now. We can still miss the fact that Jesus is still the answer today. Don't miss Jesus as the Messiah or you may be left behind. You can know him, be around him and still not believe he is the truth.

⁴⁵ Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" ⁴⁶ The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" ⁴⁷ Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? ⁴⁸ Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? ⁴⁹ But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed."

⁵⁰ Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, ⁵¹ "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" ⁵² They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." ⁵³ And everyone went to his *own* house.

The Pharisees still don't believe regardless of the signs and wonders because they see him as a threat. They don't believe because they think they are right. They think their way is the right way. Since Jesus doesn't meet their expectations and do things like they think it should be done, they are having a very hard time believing that Jesus is the one answer.

That was then, this is now. People today are still having a hard time believing in Jesus for similar reasons. Pride can keep you from trusting in Jesus in your situation. Your order of worship can keep you from truly understanding and knowing about Jesus. Your religion can cause you to miss it. Your self-righteousness can cause you to not understand or believe.

He did come out of Galilee, by way of Bethlehem, by way of heaven. They missed some steps along the way. They jumped to Galilee and missed the first step of Jesus coming from heaven.

That was then, what about now. We need Jesus to be born again!

- Some of the crowd believed, but many others missed the arrival of Jesus.
- What can we do if we missed him the first time or the last time?
- We need Jesus to be born again, so we can believe again, so we're ready when he comes by again.
- I need Jesus to be born again, to revive my hope again.



- I didn't believe he could fix it the last time. I missed the signs and miracles the last time. I didn't make the connection the last time...so I need Jesus to be born again this time around.
- Everyday, I need for Jesus to be born again and show up on the scene in my life. I cannot make it without him.
- Christmas season is not just a time of historical remembrances, it also outlines a process for how the Messiah is to come.
- I believe that Jesus is the One answer then and now. I believe he was born in the right place and came from heaven to see about us. Where is he born today?
- I believe that he still shows up in humble places where people are in need and turn to him.
- I still believe in the signs and miracles back then, and the signs in my life today.
- I believe that Jesus is the One answer and I still need him today in order to be born again.
 - Hope for my impossible situations.
 - The answer to the questions I have.
 - The Messiah that delivers me in time of need.
 - I believe he will show up again, right now, when I follow the steps.

Sermon – Micah 5- I Need Jesus to Be Born Again

Micah 5

“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
Though you are little among the thousands of Judah,
Yet out of you shall come forth to Me
The One to be Ruler in Israel,
Whose goings forth *are* from of old,
From everlasting.”

³Therefore He shall give them up,
Until the time *that* she who is in labor has given birth;
Then the remnant of His brethren
Shall return to the children of Israel.

⁴And He shall stand and feed *His flock*
In the strength of the Lord,
In the majesty of the name of the Lord His God;
And they shall abide,
For now He shall be great
To the ends of the earth;

⁵And this *One* shall be peace.

What does this prophetic Old Testament scripture have to do with me?

David Guzik :

Micah announced that Israel will be humbled by foreign powers. God would raise up a great **Ruler** from a humble place — **Bethlehem**.

- That was then, this is now, God will still raise up a great ruler within us but He starts from a humble place.

Bethlehem was well known as the hometown of David; yet it was never a great or influential city. It was truly **little among the thousands of Israel**. Yet God chose it as the birthplace of the Messiah.

Bethlehem means *House of Bread*, and Jesus is the Bread of Life ([John 6:35](#)).

This glorious promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, though Jesus came from Bethlehem, He did not *begin* there. His **goings forth** are from eternity past.

- That was then, this is now. My previous goings I was in control, it was my plans, and I was my own defender. I need not start with me in control....I need to leave my lofty place. Jesus being born again in my life starts always in a humble place where I'm in need.

The Bible tells us that Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End ([Revelation 22:13](#)).

He shall give them up, until the time: Micah anticipated a future time, one that was partially fulfilled in the Babylonian exile and return, but will be ultimately fulfilled in the Great Tribulation and restoration of Israel. In both those eras, when the LORD will seem distant from Israel **until the time** for restoration is ready.

- That was then, this is now. Sometimes like Israel, we need to be reminded that God is God. That we need Him and cannot be successful on our own. He still allows storms and difficulties to appear until that time when we recognize we need Him again.

After the time of Israel's trial the LORD will restore gloriously. The *Ruler* born in Bethlehem will tenderly care for **His flock in the strength of the LORD**.

- That was then, this is now. When Jesus is born, he will restore and strengthen us. How since I haven't seen him lately. It is through the power of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. This where we receive the strength of the Lord.

The greatness of the *Ruler* from Bethlehem becomes the standing of His people. They **abide** because of His greatness.

This One shall be peace: It isn't just that the *Ruler* from Bethlehem *brings peace*; He *is peace*. As Paul wrote of Jesus in [Ephesians 2:14](#), *He is our peace*.

- That was then, this is available now and will be experienced again in the future. If we abide in him and his word abides in us, then when we ask for peace we shall receive it.

That was then, is there a right now application from all this today?

Yes there is!

I see the process steps at work here. If I follow these steps, I should get the same results.

My hope and my salvation will come from an unlikely and humble place. That humble place may seem insignificant but it comes from God. If the answer is coming from God, it must be awesome. Jesus is awesome and he comes from heaven but he looked for a humble start down here.

It is starting out little, but it will be large in the end.

The answer from God has been in place from the very beginning. He was always there. But we haven't always known.

God will allow certain things to happen. Tough times and labor are a necessary part of the process.
(Step 1 – the need)

Many will give up and not wait on Him, but there will be a remnant who will turn to the One. (Step 2, repent)

If I turn to the One, I believe and trust in the One to lead me out of this trouble. (Step 3, new hope)

Then he shall feed me and provide for my needs. (Step 4, fills and provides for me)



I will be strengthened because he is the One and He is the Lord. In His name can help feed the flock and I will have received His mercy (Step 5, mercy)

- Oh my, I sometimes still today I want to let some people have it. But in those times where I desire revenge and payback I remember that in those times I need Jesus to be born again in my life.

To dwell with Him and He with me. Greatness is coming out of this relationship (Step 6, victory)

I have peace which comes from the One. (Step 7, peace).

I believe that the process brings peace.

This is not just about the tough times Israel faced historically. It is not just about how ends times prophecy will unfold. God throughout history is just practicing the process of deliverance. I need Jesus to be born again so He can practice the deliverance process in my life today.

I need Jesus to be born again. I can't get my mind right, get my life right, get my hope back, get my peace back, get my strength back....I can't recover without Jesus. He is still the answer for the world today.

AI Response:

People today may not believe in Jesus for a variety of reasons, influenced by personal beliefs, cultural backgrounds, philosophical perspectives, and religious affiliations. Here's a general overview:

1. Religious Differences

- People from non-Christian religions (e.g., Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) often do not view Jesus as the divine Son of God or the Messiah, as their faiths have different teachings about divinity, salvation, and the role of religious figures.

2. Secularism and Atheism

- View Jesus as a moral teacher but reject supernatural claims about His divinity or resurrection.

3. Cultural and Societal Influences

- Societal trends toward individualism and relativism may encourage people to prioritize personal spiritual exploration over adherence to established religious doctrines.

4. Philosophical or Logical Objections

- They may see Christian teachings as inconsistent or unconvincing based on their worldview.

5. Historical and Scientific Skepticism

- Belief in miracles, including the resurrection, may conflict with a modern, scientific worldview.

6. Personal Experiences

- Negative experiences with religious institutions or individuals may lead people to reject Christianity or belief in Jesus.
- A lack of personal spiritual connection or perceived relevance of religion in daily life may also contribute.

7. Moral or Ethical Disagreements

- Some reject Jesus or Christianity due to disagreements with certain teachings or the behavior of some Christians, particularly if they perceive hypocrisy, exclusivity, or judgmental attitudes.

8. Freedom of Belief

- In today's pluralistic world, people are exposed to a wide variety of belief systems and philosophies, leading some to explore other spiritual paths or to simply remain undecided.

Question: So, why do people today believe in Jesus?

AI Response:

People believe in Jesus as the Messiah for a variety of spiritual, theological, historical, and personal reasons. Here's an overview of the key motivations:

1. Fulfillment of Prophecies

- Many Christians believe that Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah, such as:
 - Being born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:1).
 - His suffering and death aligning with Isaiah 53's "suffering servant."
 - His lineage tracing back to King David (2 Samuel 7:12-16, Luke 3:31).
 - They interpret these fulfillments as evidence that Jesus is the promised Savior.
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2. Belief in the Resurrection

- Central to Christian faith is the belief that Jesus rose from the dead three days after His crucifixion, as described in the Gospels.
 - The resurrection is seen as proof of His divine nature and victory over sin and death, validating His claim to be the Messiah.
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3. Teachings and Moral Authority

- Jesus' teachings on love, forgiveness, humility, and compassion resonate deeply with believers.
 - His life is seen as a perfect example of selflessness and obedience to God, inspiring followers to emulate His character.
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4. Personal Spiritual Experiences

- Many people report personal encounters with Jesus through prayer, worship, or a sense of His presence in their lives.
 - These experiences often lead to a transformative relationship with Jesus, reinforcing their belief in Him as the Messiah.
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5. New Testament Testimony

- The New Testament, particularly the Gospels, documents Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. Many view these accounts as reliable historical evidence for His messianic identity.
 - The writings of the apostles and early Christians, such as Paul, emphasize Jesus as the fulfillment of God's promises to humanity.
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6. Promise of Salvation

- Jesus is seen as the Savior who offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to those who believe in Him (John 3:16).
 - This promise of redemption and reconciliation with God provides hope and purpose for believers.
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7. Global Influence of Christianity

- The widespread and enduring impact of Jesus' teachings and the growth of Christianity over 2,000 years are seen by many as evidence of His divine mission.
 - The lives of saints, martyrs, and ordinary Christians who have demonstrated profound faith and love are often cited as testimony to Jesus' transformative power.
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8. Miracles and Signs

- The miracles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels, such as healing the sick, calming storms, and feeding multitudes, are seen as signs of His divine authority.
 - Modern believers sometimes point to answered prayers and miraculous events as evidence of His continuing presence and power.
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9. Community and Tradition

- Growing up in a Christian family or community often provides a strong foundation for belief in Jesus.
 - Church teachings, rituals, and fellowship help reinforce the idea of Jesus as the Messiah and provide a sense of belonging.
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10. Faith in God's Plan

- Many Christians see Jesus' life, death, and resurrection as the central part of God's plan to redeem humanity.

- Believing in Jesus is viewed as trusting in God's promise to bring salvation and restore creation.

The blind man who was healed in John Chapter 9, didn't know where Jesus was from, but he believed. It doesn't say he knew he was born in Bethlehem. The power of his testimony is that he recognized the miracle that Jesus performed in his life and that was enough to get him started in believing until Jesus shared with him additional information.

- want to know him in the power of his resurrection....Philippians 3, do we desire to know him like that?
- What is the risk if we don't find out more about Jesus? We might miss his coming in our life situations and not believe that he is the Messiah in our right now situation. Do you want to believe in him like that?

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