

## Exegetical Notes on Micah 5:2-4 (5:1-3 MT)

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The reading from the Old Testament which is assigned to the Fourth Sunday in Advent in Series C of *Lutheran Worship* consists in three verses of the fifth chapter of the Book of Micah. In the English Version of the Bible and, therefore also, in *Lutheran Worship*, these verses are counted, as already in the Medieval Vulgate, as verses 2-4 of Micah 5. The printed editions of the Massoretic Text, however, divide the Book of Micah into chapters differently at this juncture. The verse which begins chapter 5 in the English Version is counted as verse 14 of the preceding chapter. The verses, therefore, which are the object of this study are enumerated as the first three verses of Micah 3 in the Massoretic Text. (The exegesis of these verses below is, in answer to several enquiries, in no way designed to promote the use in the main service of the week of the three-year series provided in *Lutheran Worship* nor of any other modern selections from the gospels and epistles in such a context. This exegete, on the contrary, would continue to urge, on various grounds, fidelity to the pericopal tradition inherited from the ancient church by the church of the reformation and modified only slightly by the Blessed Reformer of the Church, if one is speaking specifically of the gospels and epistles to be read in the main (eucharistic) service of the week. No comparable series of readings, on the other hand, from the Old Testament was either handed down from the ancient church or bestowed on us by the Blessed Reformer; nor, indeed, is there such a program of readings from the New Testament to be used in all the possible additional offices of any given week. In such cases, therefore, even such a traditionalist as this exegete is able, with consistency, to make use of any pericope drawn from the region of Holy Scripture desired.)

### THE HISTORICAL AND LITERARY SETTING

The superscription identifies the author as Micah the Morashite (1:1). He was, then, the native of the small town of Morasheth in Judah. His ministry as a contemporary of Isaiah (although with a shorter period of prophetic service) results in some interesting verbal and conceptual parallels. The verses, certainly, before us currently, not only show familiarity with the contents of the "Book of Immanuel" (Isaiah 7-12), but also elaborate specifically on the famous messianic prophecy recorded in Isaiah 7 (especially verse 14).

The book in its final form came into existence *circa* 725 B.C. as the distillation of a prophetic ministry spanning a decade or so -- at the least, more specifically, seven years (735-728 B.C.) and possibly as many as seventeen (739-722 B.C.). For the superscription (1:1) restricts the prophetic ministry of Micah to the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah in Judah.

The *terminus a quo*, therefore, of the various prophecies of Micah is 739 B.C., when King Uzziah died and Jotham succeeded to the primacy. The *terminus ad quem*, on the other hand, of the book is 722 B.C. For the destruction of Samaria still remains in the future (1:6). Although, moreover, Hezekiah lived until 686 and, indeed, assumed the primacy, evidently, only in 719, he already became "king" in 728 (in a co-regency with his father Ahaz), which date consequently constitutes the *terminus a quo* of the book *per se*.

The place of composition was clearly Judah in view of the superscription citing Judahite monarchs alone. The addressees were mainly the people of Judah. To a lesser degree, however, also the populace of Israel (the Northern Kingdom) figure in the audience in view of the latter's inclusion in the superscription (Micah 1:1). The occasion was probably the apostasy of Judah in the reign of Ahaz.

The relationship between the three kings named in the superscription to Micah may be summarized as follows:

a. Jotham, whom Scripture classifies as a good king, seems to have served as *primus rex* only four years (739-735 B.C.). Thus, the majority of the twenty years which Scripture allocates to him he apparently spent in co-regencies under the jurisdiction of his father Uzziah (from 750) and, oddly enough, of his son Ahaz (until his death in 731).

b. Ahaz, whom Scripture depicts as one of the two most wicked kings of Judah, seems to have held the primacy sixteen years (735-719 B.C.) of the total twenty-eight assigned him in the historical books. The remaining years would fall into co-regencies which he evidently served under the control of his grandfather Uzziah (from 743), his father Jotham, and finally his son Hezekiah (until the death of Ahaz in 715).

c. Hezekiah, whom Scripture regards as one of the two best kings of Judah, seems to have served as *primus rex* for thirty-three years (719-686 B.C.) of the forty-two which are cited in Scripture. The earlier nine years evidently consisted in a co-regency under the jurisdiction of his father Ahaz. He would, of course, have been quite unable to institute his religious reformation in Judah until he assumed the primacy in 719.

The purpose of Micah in writing his book, as already in his preaching, was to bring the people of Judah (and even, were it possible, the people of Israel) to repentance (1:1) and so back to faith in the One True God. The theme, correspondingly, of the Book of Micah may be stated thus: Samaria and Jerusalem are doomed to destruction (noting, above all, chapters 1:6 and 3:12).

Aside from the superscription, the book consists completely in poetry of the oracular genre. The basic tripartite arrangement of the book appears from the threefold summons to attention: "Hear ye!" (*shim'u*) (chapters 1:2, 3:1, and 6:1). The "Divine Address to the Leaders of Judah" which comprises chapters 3-5, as the book has been divided since medieval times, consists in a series of ten oracles contrasting things human and divine and, in general, things contemporary and future.

Each of the oracles in chapters 3-5 of the Prophet Micah is distinguished from the one preceding by means of the following phrases: *wa'omar shim'u-na'* ("then said I: Hear now") in verse 3:1, which, indeed, introduces, as already said, a whole new section of the book; *koh 'amar YHWH* ("thus has the LORD said") in 3:5; *shim'u-na' zo'th* {"hear now this") in 3:9; *whayah b'acharith hayyamim* ("now will it come to be in the latter part of the days"), which can be seen to begin an originally separate (and, indeed, well known) oracle when compared with Isaiah 2 (verses 2-4); *ki-phi YHWH tzbha'oth dibber* ("for the mouth of the LORD of Hosts has spoken") in 4:4; *n'um-YHWH* ("the oracle of the LORD") in 4:6; *'attah* ("now") in 4:9, which, taken in conjunction with the recurrences of the same adverb in verses 11 and 14, clearly serves to introduce each

time a new oracle; *w'attah*, then, in 4:11 and *'attah*, again, in 4:14 (MT, 5:1 EV); and, finally, *n'um-YHWH* ("the oracle of the LORD") again in 5:9 (MT, 5:10 EV).

The following outline emerges, therefore, of the body of the Book of Micah with special emphasis on the section containing the verses currently before us:

I. A Divine Address to All Nation (1:2-2:13)

A. The Impending Doom of the Faithless Land (Israel and Judah) (1:2-2:11)

1. Its Nature: Invasion and Devastation (1: 2-16)

2. Its Rationale (2: 1-11)

B. The Future Salvation of a Faithful Remnant (2: 12-13)

II. A Divine Address to the Leaders of Judah (3-5)

A. Oracles 1-7: Prophecies Contrasting Doom and Blessedness Involving Jerusalem (3:1-4:10)

1. Oracles 1-3, Condemning the Wickedness of the Judahite Leaders to End in the Destruction of Jerusalem (3: 1-12)

1. Oracle 1: The Wickedness of the Political Leaders of Judah (3: 1-4)

2. Oracle 2: The Wickedness of the Religious Leaders of Judah (3: 5-8)

3. Oracle 3: The Wickedness of the Leaders of Judah in General (3: 9-12)

1. The Nature of the Wickedness (3: 9-11)

2. The Inevitable Consequence: The Coming Destruction of Jerusalem (3:12)

2. Oracles 4-6, Predicting the Blessedness of the Church to Originate in Jerusalem (4: 1-8)

1. Oracle 4 (4: 1-3)

2. Oracle 5 (4: 4-5)

3. Oracle 6 (4: 6-8)

3. Oracle 7, Contrasting in Itself the Doom and Blessedness of Jerusalem (4: 9-10)

1. The Impending Deportation to Babylon (4: 9-10a)

2. The Future Salvation by Divine Redemption (4: 10b)

B. Oracle 8, Contrasting the People of God and Its Enemies (4: 11-13)

1. The Seeming Potency of the Enemies of the People of God (4:11)

2. The Actual Potency of the People of God (4: 12-13)

C. Oracle 9, Contrasting the Contemporary Kingship of Israel and the Kingship to Come (4:14-5:8 MT; 5: 1-9 EV)

1. The Impending End of the Political Kingship (4:14 MT; 5:1 EV)

2. The Endless Kingship of the Messiah (5: 1-8; 5: 2-9 EV)

1. Its Basis (5: 1-2a MT; 5: 2-3a EV)

1. *His Birth in Bethlehem, According to His Human Nature (5:1a MT; 5:2b EV)*

2. *His Generation from Eternity, According to His Divine Nature (5:1b MT; 5:2b EV)*

1. *His Conception and Birth, According to His Human Nature (5:2a MT; 5:3a EV)*

2. Its Boundlessness (5: 2b-3 MT; 5: 3b-4 EV)

1. *In Terms of Beneficiaries (2b MT; 3b EV)*

2. *In Terms of Strength (5:3a MT; 5:4a EV)*

3. *In Terms of Geography (5:3b MT; 5:4b EV)*

3. *Its Boon to Man: Peace with God (5:4a MT; 5:5a EV)*

4. Its Pre-Incarnate Manifestation (5: 4b-5 MT; 5: 5b-6 EV)

1. *His Coming Destruction of Assyria (5: 4b-5a MT; 5: 5b-6a EV)*

2. *His Coming Deliverance of Judah from Assyria (5:5b MT; 5:6b EV)*

5. Its Empowering Effects (5: 6-8 MT; 5: 7-9 EV)

1. *The Spiritual Potency of His People in Dispersion (5: 6-7 MT; 5: 7-8 EV)*

2. *The Confounding of All the Foes of His People (5:8 MT; 5:9 EV)*

D. Oracle 10, Contrasting the Potency of God and the Impotence All Disobeying Him (5: 9-14 MT; 5: 10-15 EV)

1. *The Destruction of Rebellious Judah (5: 9-13 MT; 5: 10-14 EV)*

2. *The Destruction of All Rebels of All Nations (5:14 MT; 5:15 EV)*

III. A Divine Dialogue with Israel (6-7)

A. God (6:1-5): An Indictment of the People

B. Israel (6:6-7): The Contrition of a Remnant

C. God (6:8-16): An Indictment of the People

D. Israel (7:1-10): The Repentance of a Remnant

E. God (7:11-13): The Consolation of the Remnant

F. Israel (7:14): The Prayer of the Remnant

G. God (7:15): The Consolation of the Remnant

H. Israel (7:16-20): The Confidence of the Remnant

The three verses, then, currently before us all fall within the oracle which provides the dominating climax of the middle section of the Book of Amos. The climactic role of Oracle 9, as it is denominated in the outline above, appears from the centrality of its theme as well as from its length, which considerably exceeds that of any of the eight oracles preceding it and even the concluding one which follows it. The three verses under study, moreover, are the most pivotal of all eight which comprise this most pivotal oracle in chapters 3-5 of Amos and, indeed, in the whole of his sacred book.

## **A LITERAL TRANSLATION AND COMMENTS**

### **5:1 MT (5:2 EV)**

1. Yet thou, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,

that art little to be among the clans of Judah --

From thee will He go forth for Me

that is to be Ruler over Israel;

Yet His goings forth are from early time,

from days of eternity.

The placing of the pronoun of the masculine singular of the second person, *'attah* ("thou") at the very beginning of verse 1 (MT) lends it special emphasis. This verse provides, indeed, an example of the way in which, in many places, "the separate pronoun serves to give strong emphasis to a suffix of the same person which precedes (or sometimes even to one which follows), whether the suffix be attached to a verb (as accusative) or to a noun or preposition (as genitive)" [GKC, 438; III.I.III.135.2; 135.d]. In this specific case the separate pronoun *'attah* ("thou") is preceding and laying added stress upon the pronominal suffix, again the masculine singular of the second person, united with the preposition *min* to produce *mimmkha* ("from thee") [GKC, 438; III.I.III.135.2(c.); 135.g].

The latter's site, in turn, at the beginning of its clause again strengthens its force considerably. For specifications of place which utilize prepositions ordinarily follow the verb unless they are intended to be especially emphatic [GKC, 457; III.II.I.142.2.R.; 142.g]. The translation of the

clause above leaves the same emphasis on the initial position: "From thee will He go forth for Me" (or, equally well, "out of thee").

The proper noun "Bethlehem" occurs forty-one times in the Old Testament, referring in all but three cases to the small town located some five miles to the south of Jerusalem. The appellation presumably means "house of food" by virtue of conjoining the nouns *beth* (which is "house") and *lechem* [BDB, 111b], which means, at basis, "food" in general, but which usually denominates "bread" in particular, as the most common food of the ancient Hebrews [BDB, 536b-537b]. Possibly, however, the name could mean "house of fighting" by derivation from *beth* and the root *lhm* [BDB, 535a-536b]. There is, in any case, no biblical justification to attach some theological meaning to the name Bethlehem any more than to the proper name of any other person or place which was named by others than God Himself. The same name appertained, indeed, to at least one other site in Palestine and, quite possibly, to many more [BDB, 112a].

The proper noun "Ephrathah" occurs eleven times in the Old Testament, seven of them being geographical references [BDB, 68b]. The cognomen is attached to "Bethlehem" here in order to distinguish the town so designated from any others possessing the same name. There was, certainly, a larger Bethlehem in Zebulun, which is evidently to be identified with the modern Beit-Lachm seven miles northwest of Nazareth (Joshua 19:15; Judges 12:8, 10) [BDB, 112a].

Critical scholars, to be sure, regard *hu' beth lechem* ("that is, Bethlehem") as an erroneous gloss in Genesis 35:19 and 48:7, which was then responsible for the supposed "confusion" of Bethlehem with Ephrathah in Ruth 4:11 and Micah 5:1 (MT, 5:2 EV) [BDB, 68b and 112a]. *Despite, however, the critical assumption that Ephrathah was near Bethel and so, presumably, well to the north of Bethlehem [BDB, 68b], Genesis 35 says only that the family of Jacob was traveling southward from Bethel when Rachel died from giving birth to Benjamin and was buried "on the way" and "some distance" from Ephrathah, presumably within sight of the place (verses 19 and 16 respectively). Jacob applies the same phraseology to Ephrathah without mentioning Bethel at all in Genesis 48 (verse 7).*

*Evidently, then, Ephrathah was the original name of the town which by the time of Moses had come to called Bethlehem (Genesis 35:19 and 48:7). In succeeding generations, nevertheless, the term "Ephrathah" continued as the name of the district of Judah in which Bethlehem lay and certainly including the fields and woods thereabouts (Ruth 4:11; Psalm 132:6). It may, indeed, have included, indeed, a village or two even smaller than Bethlehem (1 Chronicles 2:24).*

The verse before us turns upon two phrases which feature the infinitive construct of the verb *hyh* (*lihyoth*, meaning "to be") -- namely, *tza'ir lihyoth b'alphey-yhudhah* ("little to be among the clans of Judah") and *lihyoth moshel byisra'el* ("to be Ruler over Israel"). Consistency in exegesis requires that, if it be grammatically feasible, these two phrases be understood in a parallel fashion.

The only possible way, in fact, in which the phrase *lihyoth moshel byisra'el* can only be connected with the preceding main clause is by construing it as a relative clause ("that is to be Ruler over Israel"). The same understanding, moreover, is, likewise, the most reasonable way of connecting the initial vocative "Bethlehem Ephrathah" with the ensuing *tza'ir lihyoth b'alphey-*

*yhudhah* ("that art little to be among the clans of Judah"). The absence of a relative particle (such as *'asher*) is very common in the poetry of the Old Testament [GKC, 485-486; III.II.II.155.1; 155.b). The relative absence of the relative particle is, indeed, one of the distinguishing characteristics of poetry as opposed to prose in Classical Hebrew (as is noted in the exegete's introduction to *The Poetical Books of the Old Testament*).

The phrase "among the clans of" in the translation above renders the plural construct of the masculine noun *'eleph* preceded by the prepositional prefix *beth*. Although, to be sure, "thousand" is the basic meaning of the word [BDB, 48b-49a], the numerical significance makes no sense in this verse. For every individual Judahite would figure among the thousands of Judah, so that no town of any size would be especially small. Theodore Laetsch, to be sure, thinks of *'eleph* as meaning a town with a thousand or more inhabitants [MP, 271], but there is no evidence of such a usage of the noun. In his grammatical notes, however, Laetsch closely approaches the actual significance of *'eleph* here when he speaks of its use to mean "a family or commonwealth of about a thousand more or less" and then "any tribe or family ... smaller than a tribe" of Israel [MP, 269b]. His conception, however, of *'eleph* as "synonymous with tribe" in several passages in Numbers and Joshua introduces an unnecessary complication [MP, 269b].

As a technical term, in any case, *'eleph* denominates, in fact, familial units of the tribes of Israel each of which had its own governing chief [BDB, 49a]. The origin of this usage was the organization of Israel in the wilderness into companies of a thousand men each under individual leaders, as Moses recounts in verses 13-26 of Exodus 18 (where *'eleph* is used in verses 21 and 25). One finds, in consequence, the specific significance of "clan" in various passages in the Book of Numbers (1:16; 10:4; 31:14; 31:5) and the early historical books of the Old Testament, namely, in Joshua (22:14, 21, 30), Judges (6:15), and Samuel (1 Samuel 10:19; 23:23; and 29:2). The scope of "clan" is broader and so more appropriate than the meaning "family" suggested by Brown-Driver-Briggs [BDB, 49a].

The adjective "little" in the translation above renders no derivative of *qtn*, but rather the less common *tza'ir*. The central conception of the root *tz'r* is insignificance [BDB, 858b], as appears from both the verb and the seven common and proper nouns deriving therefrom [BDB, 858b-859a]. Thus, "little" with the connotation of "insignificance" is the initial meaning of the adjective *tza'ir* as the chief derivative of the stem [BDB, 859a]. There is no reason to translate as "too little" in spite of the many versions which do so. The priests and scribes, certainly, who are quoted by St. Matthew understand the verse as including Bethlehem among the clans of Judah with governing elders (Matthew 2:6). The idea in Micah 5 is that the populace of Bethlehem, although a separate clan in the tribe of Judah, comprise a very small clan of little significance.

Originally, indeed, Bethlehem was too small to be mentioned among the more than a hundred towns allotted to the tribe of Judah (Joshua 15: 21-63). Both the Philistines and Rehoboam considered the location of some military value, but the fortifications there were presumably temporary (2 Samuel 23:14 and 2 Chronicles 11:6). The derivation of King David does not seem to have otherwise affected the size and status of Bethlehem during his reign or the remaining years of his dynasty. His primary purpose, after all, in making Jerusalem his city was to choose a national capital with no prior connection with his clan or even his tribe of Judah. Only in connection with the return from the Babylonian Exile does Bethlehem receive even fleeting

attention in the notation of a hundred and some members of its clan among the myriads of expatriates of Judah returning thither with Zerubbabel (Ezra 2:21 and Nehemiah 7:26).

The phrase "Ruler over Israel" in the translation above renders the qal active participle *moshel* and its object, the proper noun *yisra'el* with prefixed *beth*. The prepositional prefix *beth*, when following *mshl*, distinctively defines the area or people over which someone rules and not merely the area or people within which he rules. The Authorized Version and the New King James Version, therefore, fail to do justice to the phrase by calling the Messiah "Ruler in Israel" rather than Ruler "over" Israel. The "Israel" here, indeed, is to be understood in a spiritual rather than a political sense. The reference is to the church of the new testament consisting in believers both Jewish and Gentile.

The overarching theme which unfolds in the remaining lines of this verse and the first half of the ensuing verses is the birth of the Theandric King long promised to Israel outside the capital city of Jerusalem and, indeed, outside of any town large enough to be of importance to the world. He would, instead, in accordance with His contemporaneous state of humiliation, be born in a town of insignificance in human terms. Its historical connection with David, nevertheless, would serve, unlike any other place outside Jerusalem, to reassure the people of Judah of the Davidic ancestry of the Messiah which had been promised in numerous prophecies beginning with the oracle of Nathan (recorded in 2 Samuel 7 and 1 Chronicles 17).

The divine nature, nevertheless, of the Theandric King is simultaneously asserted by stressing His existence long before His incarnation and birth. The contrasting correspondence of the two natures in the God-Man is enhanced by constructing the feminine noun *motza'ah* from the verb *ytz'*. For the extremely common verb *ytz'*, which means "come out" or "go forth" in some way, is here applied contextually to the human birth of the Messiah, as appears again from the first half of the ensuing verse [BDB, 422a-425b]. The noun *motza'ah*, on the other hand, is a *hapax legomenon* designed to describe the eternal generation of God the Son (setting aside as spurious the euphemistic *qere* in 2 Kings 10:27) [BDB, 426a].

The plural form, to be sure, of *motza'ah* (with the masculine singular pronominal suffix of the third person, *motza'othayw*) is a source of much unnecessary mystification and speculation, but it is altogether reasonable. For the eternal generation of God the Son is by no means a discrete occurrence restricted to one point in time as was His birth in Bethlehem. He is, quite to the contrary, always receiving His being from God the Father from eternity to eternity.

In the final words, therefore, of this verse the divine existence of the Messiah long before His birth as a man-child is explicated by the use of *qedhem* and *'olam*. The noun *qedhem*, which (in this exegete's opinion) means basically "early time" when used temporally (as opposed to geographically), harks back already, in the absence of any qualification, to the very beginning of time with the creation of the universe. The phrase, however, "days of eternity" traces the "goings forth" of the Messiah back even further into a boundless preexistence, even as it thereby assumes a future which is equally boundless.

2. Therefore will He give them up until the time



when she who is to bear has borne,

When the rest of His brethren will return

unto the sons of Israel.

The words *yoledhah yaladhah* ("she who is to bear has borne") can only be connected with the preceding clause by construing them as a relative clause. The absence of a relative particle (such as *'asher*) is very common in the poetry of the TaNaK, as we have already observed [GKC, 485-486; III.II.II.155.1; 155.b). Another way, however, in which the main clause and the relative clause may be connected is by treating the relative clause as a genitive depending upon a noun in the construct state in the main clause. For nouns, in the first place, in the construct state frequently govern clauses which would otherwise be independent sentences) "which virtually stand to the construct state (as *nomen regens*) in a sort of genitive relation"; and such a phenomenon appears especially in determinations of time [GKC, 422; III.I.II.130.(4.); 130.d.]. It is, in addition, precisely "relative clauses which are governed by the construct state of a preceding substantive" which most frequently lack any "retrospective word" within the relative clause (a word with a pronominal suffix or adverb making explicit the relation between the main clause and the relative clause) [GKC, 488; III.II.II.155.2.(a.)(3.)R.1; 155.1]. This phenomenon obtains, above all again, with expressions of time [ibid.].

The predicate of the relative clause, *yaladhah*, provides an example of the use of the perfective aspect of the verb by which actions or facts are represented "as existing in the future in a completed sense" (called by some grammarians the *futurum exactum*) [GKC, 312; III.II.A.106.3.(c.); 106.o]. The reference, contextually, is clearly to the same woman of whom Micah's contemporary Isaiah had already prophesied that, while still a virgin, she would conceive and give birth to the God-Man Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). Micah, indeed, is here, as elsewhere in his book, assuming the early oracles of Isaiah as being already well-known in Judah and so is proceeding to rephrase and build upon them.

The conjunction *lakhen* ("therefore") at the beginning of the verse before us serves to bring together the two very disparate predictions made in the preceding two verses, namely, the prophecies respectively of the end of the political kingship of Judah (4:14 MT; 5:1 EV) and the eternity of the theandric kingship of the Messiah (5:1 MT; 5:2 EV). The masculine plural suffix of the third person attached to third masculine singular of the qal imperfect of *ntn* ("He will give them up" in view of negative action required at this juncture) can only refer back, contextually, to "the clans of Judah" in the preceding verse. According, then, to the first half of the verse now before us the preexisting Messiah would give the people of Judah up, until the time of His birth in Bethlehem, to kingships lacking any special foundation by God.

The second half of the verse, however, proceeds to the transformation of the people of God which was to follow the birth of the Messiah and the exaltation as King of Israel flowing from His propitiation of God by means of His temporary humiliation. Then the "rest" of those elected to be "His brethren" would "return to the sons of Israel" already in existence. The reference is, then, to the repentance of the believers of all nations who thereby become the members of the one church of the new testament.

The word "rest" in the translation above renders the masculine noun *yether*, which occurs ninety-four times in the Old Testament [451b-452a]. Its verbal root *ytr* means "remain over" in the niph'al (and in the one occurrence of the qal), with the several modifications in the hiph'il which are to be expected [BDB, 451a-b]. Although the Authorized Version and New King James Version read "remnant" here, *yether* is quite distinct from the noun *sh'erith*, which these versions translate as "remnant" in verses 6 and 7 of Micah 5 (MT, verses 7 and 8 EV).

This word lacks, in fact, the theological connotations so often attached to *sh'erith*. Brown-Driver-Briggs cites as examples of *yether* as "a rescued remnant of Israel (Judah)" only Zephaniah 2:9, where *yether* stands parallel to *sh'erith*, and Zechariah 14:2 [BDB, 451b]. The lexicon notes, in addition, several passages in the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah where *yether* is conjoined with forms of *sh'r*, namely, 1 Kings 22:47, 2 Kings 25:11 and its parallel Jeremiah 52:15, and twice in Jeremiah 39:9 (which is misprinted as 36:9) [BDB, 451b]. None of these instances, however, at all compromise the basic significance of *yether* as "rest" as so, frequently, as "the other part of" some group, even when this "other part" comprises the majority of the group concerned [BDB, 451b].

3. And He shall stand and He shall shepherd

in the strength of the LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD, His God;

And they shall abide.

For now will He be great unto the ends of the earth.

This verse connects the security of the church of all nations with the exaltation of the Messiah according to the human nature which He assumed in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. In His state of exaltation, beginning with His revivification and culminating in His ascension and session at the right hand of God the Father, the Messiah now always and constantly uses the divine attributes communicated to His human nature in His incarnation on behalf of His people, the church. For the subject of the prophetic perfect *yashabhu*, the common plural of the third person ("they shall abide"), can only be, in contextual terms, the same believers in Him who are called "His brethren" and "the sons of Israel" in the previous verse. These same believers are likewise the sheep of the Messiah which are implied here when the first clause of this verse describes the Messiah as doing the work of a shepherd.