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| **The Coming of the Faithful Shepherd**  *Promise: God Himself comes to us to rescue and care for us* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-56 (Fourth Sunday in Advent), 12/22/24)  *And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord.* – v 4  **Lead In –** When it comes to shepherding sheep, consider the contrast between the following two shepherds. One lies down inattentively on the plush grass. The other stands watchful on a high perch. The first stuffs his mouth with mutton and imbibes excessively with wine. The other scans the horizon, looking back and forth along the tree line at the edge of the meadow. The first snores. The other sees the lion emerge and makes ready to engage the predatory enemy. Micah, the 8th Century Prophet denounces the shepherds of Israel, even as he announces the coming of the faithful shepherd.   1. **Micah Calls Out the Rulers and Prophets of Israel**    1. They indulgence themselves at the people’s expense…    2. They mislead and don’t see the threats… 2. **Micah Prophesies the Coming of a Faithful Shepherd**    1. He will shepherd in the strength of the Lord…    2. And they shall dwell secure…    3. He Himself will be our Peace… 3. **Specificity Over 700 Years Before Its Fulfillment**    1. From a shepherd’s town of Bethlehem…    2. Whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days…    3. His coming will be by way of a mother’s childbirth…   **Final Word –** Returning to where we began, when it comes to shepherding the people of God’s pasture, and the sheep of His hand, nobody does it better than the Lord God Himself! That’s why He sent His only begotten Son to get the job done. He alone is truly good. He alone will search after the lost sheep. He alone will destroy the lion-like predator, our enemy, the devil. He alone will lead us through the valley of death, set a feast before us, anoint our heads with oil, provide us with overflowing cups, and make sure that goodness and mercy follows us always, even as we dwell forever in His house. And we are just two days away from celebrating the birth of our salvation…  **Mi 3:1-3** And I said: Hear, you heads of Jacob and rulers of the house of Israel! Is it not for you to know justice?— you who hate the good and love the evil, who tear the skin from off my people and their flesh from off their bones, who eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones in pieces and chop them up like meat in a pot, like flesh in a cauldron.  **Mi 3:5** Thus says the Lord concerning the prophets who lead my people astray, who cry “Peace” when they have something to eat, but declare war against him who puts nothing into their mouths.  **Mi 2:11** If a man should go about and utter wind and lies, saying, “I will preach to you of wine and strong drink,” he would be the preacher for this people!  **Jn 10:12-13** He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.  **Mk 4:41** And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”  **Mt 12:28** But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. | **Micah 5:2-5a ESV**  *The Ruler to Be Born in Bethlehem*  2But 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 of old,     from ancient days. 3Therefore 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. 4And 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. 5And he shall be their peace.  **Ps 23:4-5** Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.  **Is 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.  **2Co 5:18-19** All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.  **Ep 2:14** For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility.  **Mt 4:2-6** Assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, [Herod] inquired of them where the 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.’”  **Jn 1:1, 14** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. … And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.  **Is 7:14** Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.  **Ga 4:4-5** But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.  **Lk 1:41-43** And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? |