

Our INSIGNIFICANCE AND GOD'S PURPOSE

Micah 5:2 *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come the ruler over Israel,...*

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*M*icah 5:2 *But you, Bethlehem (House of Bread) Ephrathah (fruitful), 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.* (This Messianic prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 2:1-6)

Key Thought: God's plan is often revealed through the seemingly small and insignificant, declaring His prophetic glory and Sovereignty.

1. **Although Bethlehem was insignificant, it became the source of God's great promise of the coming Messiah.** Micah 5:2 emphasizes the insignificance of Bethlehem and its prophetic role in God's plan. Prominence is often connected to size, wealth, or political influence. Bethlehem's lack of these made it insignificant and was overshadowed by Hebron and Jerusalem.
 - **Interesting note** | The prophecy in Micah 5:2 was fulfilled when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, meaning "House of Bread." This perfectly fits with Jesus' identity as the "Bread of Life" (John 6:35). The connection between the location of His birth and His mission reveals the intentionality of God's plan, that every detail points to Him and His redemptive purpose!
2. **God's pattern of working through the overlooked and insignificant is found throughout Scripture.** Though small and socially insignificant, Bethlehem carried the promise of the Messiah's birth within it! This important principle reveals that God often chooses the small and humble to accomplish great things, magnifying His sovereignty and power.
 - 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 *But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise and the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly (feeble) things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*
 - Two examples include David (1 Samuel 16:10-13; 17:26-28) and Gideon (Judges 6:11-16)
3. **Bethlehem's smallness mirrors how God often works in our lives.** Just as insignificant Bethlehem played a role in fulfilling prophecy, we, too, have God-given potential and purpose.

Paul's Example

1. **No one exemplifies this more powerfully than the Apostle Paul** — the persecutor of the early Church who became *the* messenger to the Gentile world, declaring God's redemption through the sacrifice of His Son on the Cross.
 - In his encounter with the Risen Christ in Acts 9:4, Paul hears Jesus say: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting *Me*?" Jesus intimately identified Himself with His followers and made it clear that to attack them, he was attacking the LORD Himself!

2. **As Saul the Pharisee/persecutor became the Apostle Paul, his view of himself radically changed!** Paul was constantly amazed that God would use him and was quick to acknowledge his weaknesses and former sins openly. *However, he did not allow that to limit him.* Instead, he accepted God's grace and God's power at work in him.
 - Paul had it all (Philippians 3:5-6); he abandoned it all for Christ (Philippians 3:7-8); and gained it all through Christ (2 Timothy 4:8).
3. **Paul called himself the chief of sinners.** Paul realistically viewed himself as who he really was, a chief of sinners because of his past as a tormentor of Christ's Body!
 - 1 Timothy 1:15-16 *Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.*
4. **Paul did not consider himself worthy but called.** He acknowledged his unworthiness and obeyed God's will.
 - 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 *For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.*
5. **He called himself the servant of Christ.** Paul refers to himself as a servant (or bond slave) of Christ who had laid down his exalted past as a Pharisee of Pharisees. (Philippians 3:4-6)
 - Romans 1:1 *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.*
6. **In his weakness, Paul relied on God's grace.** Paul acknowledged his human limitations and gave glory to God's strength working through him.
 - 2 Corinthians 12:9 *But he said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ's power may rest on me.*
7. **Paul considered himself a simple vessel** filled with God's power and the great message of the gospel to the Gentile world!
 - 2 Corinthians 4:7 *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

Making It Real...

God has placed His divine purpose within each of us, though it may initially exist in seed form. **Our task** is to trust in His great power and allow Him to work through us, transforming what seems insignificant into something extraordinary!

1. **It all begins** by confessing our absolute inability to Him and then wholeheartedly embracing His plan and His power to accomplish it! When we make this a life habit, we position ourselves to experience Him and see Him perform extraordinary things *through our lives!*
2. His purpose is beyond our imagination! (Ephesians 3:20-21) However, faith *must* become action by doing what is right in front of us in expectant obedience. (James 2:14-26)