

ANCIENT WHISPERS PART TWO
BETHLEHEM GRACE
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MICAH 5:1-5 2 AND MATTHEW 2:1-6
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During this Christmas season we are looking for contemporary relevance in several Old Testament Prophecies predicting the advent (coming) of Jesus Christ. We are calling the Christmas series "Ancient Whispers." Today we will profit from the prediction that the Messiah would one day be born in Bethlehem.

THE ANCIENT WHISPER

MICAH 5:2: "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."

MATTHEW 2:1-2: After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

THE BETHLEHEM PRINCIPLE: Strength For The Weakest Of The Weak.

The Bethlehem principle is the hope of Christmas: If the Messiah can come as a little baby from one of the weakest villages on earth, then He can come for me.

THE CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10: 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. 10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

If this kind of Grace was sufficient for Paul, then it can be sufficient for us. Let's examine Paul's weak to strength experience and find contemporary relevance.

2 CORINTHIANS 11:21-12:10 describes the unbelievable weaknesses of the Apostle Paul.

The "AH-HA!" moment: God promises to us the same Grace Power for our weaknesses that He poured into Paul in his great weaknesses.

GRACE POWER

Grace = God's Riches At Christ's Expense

Grace is experienced at the moment of our spiritual New Birth when God gives us forgiveness of our sins and peace with God.

Grace is experienced as a deep-inner strength and peace that carries us through the most difficult of circumstances.

Grace refers to God's matchless-overpowering love and favor. It means all the resourcefulness of a great God.

Grace is strength in times of suffering, help in times of need, comfort in times of hurt, courage in times of fear and sustenance in times of despair.

(By the way, grace is when Jesus gives us what we don't deserve. Mercy is when Jesus does not give us what we do deserve.)

The potential for experiencing great grace is built through Prayer, Bible Study, and Previous Life Experiences with Christ. In other words, the foundation for experiencing grace comes out of a deep-trusting relationship with Jesus Christ.

GRACE IS MORE EXPERIENCED THAN TAUGHT. SO, LET'S DISCUSS WHAT GRACE MIGHT LOOK LIKE IN OUR LIVES.

- No Matter Where We Are In Our Spiritual Journey, We Can Experience God's Grace.
- The Power Of Grace Enables To Live On A Higher Plane.
- Grace May Be Experienced As A Second Chance.
- Through Experiencing Grace We More Easily Extend Grace To Those Less Fortunate Than We.
- Grace May Be The Only Thing That Enables Us To Handle The Most Difficult Experiences Of Life.

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