

Approaching the Nature of Yeshua from the Tanach

<p>25:31).</p> <p>“Let the nations be aroused and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations” (Joel 3:12).</p> <p>“But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same <i>yourself</i>, that you will escape the judgment of God?” (Romans 2:3).</p> <p>“But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God” (Romans 14:10).</p>	<p>“[O]n the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Messiah Yeshua” (Romans 2:16).</p> <p>“For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, <i>but wait</i> until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of <i>men’s</i> hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God” (1 Corinthians 4:4-5).</p> <p>“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Messiah, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).</p> <p>“[A]nd <i>to give</i> relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Yeshua will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire” (2 Thessalonians 1:7).</p> <p>“I solemnly charge <i>you</i> in the presence of God and of Messiah Yeshua, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom” (2 Timothy 4:1).</p> <p>“And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds” (Revelation 2:23).</p>
--	---

It can indeed be properly recognized that **unless Yeshua the Messiah were integrated into the Divine Identity as the LORD or YHWH Himself, that He would not have the inherent ability or right to judge the entire world and the eternal destiny of people.** A created supernatural being, such as an angel or archangel, might be expected to be authorized by God to go to Planet Earth and perform specific actions of judgment or vengeance; a created supernatural being would not be expected to be responsible for the decision of who essentially winds up in either the Kingdom of Heaven or in the Lake of Fire.

Micah 5:2

“Messiah Originating from the Days of Eternity”

“But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *too* little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”

The statement of Micah 5:2 is important for recognizing the Messiahship of Yeshua of Nazareth, given its direct quotation in Matthew 2:5-6: "They said to him, 'In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'" While there are useful and important examinations to be conducted on Micah 5:2 in terms of the Messiahship of Yeshua, both those who hold to either a high or a low Christology affirm that this has been properly applied to Him.

A significant statement about the origins of this ruler of Israel who will come from Bethlehem, is, *u'motza'otayv m'qedem mimei olam* (וּמוֹצְאָתָיו מִקְדָּם מֵיְמֵי עוֹלָם), which the Kohlenberger interlinear renders with, "and-goings-out-of-him from-of-old from-days-of ancient-time."¹⁷² That there is some variance among Christian examiners is witnessed in how this statement appears in the RSV, which has, "whose origin is from of old, from ancient days," a similar translation also appearing in the NIV, with, "whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." This can be slightly contrasted with the venerable KJV, which had, "whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting," and the NASB/NASU which has the similar, "His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity." Which is the best approach to what is decreed by Micah 5:2?

The statement that the Messiah originates *mimei olam* is commonly taken, by default, to represent "from ancient days" (RSV/NRSV/ESV). This time would be taken as representative of various Davidic Kingdom promises, a concurring prophecy like Amos 9:11 stating, "In that day I will raise up the fallen booth of David, and wall up its breaches; I will also raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old [*kimei olam*, כִּימֵי עוֹלָם]." Various commentators have concluded that the ancient, Earthly origins, of the Davidic Kingdom and its restoration, is what is in view in Micah 5:2.¹⁷³ Christian examiners, who would properly affirm that Yeshua the Messiah is God, can recognize how *mimei olam* in Micah 5:2 may be thought to convey a pre-existent, uncreated origin for Him coming to the Earth, but then conclude that that is not the intention of the prophecy. Gary V. Smith is among those who asserts, "The reference to his origins 'from ancient times' has been connected to the eternal preexistence of Christ the Messiah, but the parallelism with the preceding line suggests Micah is probably pointing back to the ancient line of David."¹⁷⁴

There are examiners on Micah 5:2, who precisely believe that *mimei olam* speaks of a pre-existent, eternal origin for the birth of the Messiah, a strong proof of His Divinity. Kaiser summarizes,

"Out of lowly Bethlehem would come a 'ruler' 'whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting' (v. 2c). The prophets usually avoided the word 'king' because of its pagan connotations. Thus the Messiah was called a 'Ruler.' 'To me' (in the emphatic position [v. 2b]) He was to come. In other words, the Messiah was to be first of all for the Lord's benefit and His plans, and only secondarily in response to Israel and her distress. But this Ruler was not a recent creation, for even though He would be born in Bethlehem, He had existed from eternity. When the Hebrew word for 'everlasting,' *'olam*, is used in connection with God, it can only mean 'from eternity on' (cf. Pss. 25:6; 90:2). That can be its only meaning here if the Ruler is none other than the Son of God, the Messiah."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Kohlenberger, 4:537.

¹⁷³ Ralph L. Smith, *Word Biblical Commentary: Micah-Malachi* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1984), 44.

¹⁷⁴ Gary V. Smith, *NIV Application Commentary: Hosea/Amos/Micah* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 524.

¹⁷⁵ Walter Kaiser, *Mastering the Old Testament: Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Dallas: Word, 1992), 64.

Approaching the Nature of Yeshua from the Tanach

There are theologians, weighing the options from Micah 5:2 as to whether *mimei olam* is (2) indicative of a pre-existent, Divine Messiah, or (1) whether the ancient Davidic Kingdom promises are in view—who recognize the merits of both—but who demonstrate a preference for the Davidic Kingdom promises, while not ruling out the possibility of a pre-existent, Divine Messiah being spoken of.¹⁷⁶

Textually from Micah 5:2, it does have to be recognized how there could be an intended association between *mimei olam*, and Davidic Kingdom prophecies such as Amos 9:11 employing *kimei olam*, with terrestrial-bound time in view. Yet textually from Micah 5:2 readers have to weigh the fuller intention of *m'qedem mimei olam* (מִקְדָּם מִיָּמֵי עוֹלָם), the term *qedem* (קֶדֶם) often involving “temporal: **before, earlier, ancient times**” or “**antiquity, primeval times**” (*CHALOT*).¹⁷⁷ When *qedem* appears alongside of *olam* (עוֹלָם), “long duration, antiquity, futurity” (*BDB*),¹⁷⁸ important questions about the nature of the Ruler of Israel are raised, which go beyond His prophetic fulfillment of Davidic Kingdom promises. Michael Rydelnik astutely concludes in his book *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Messianic?*,

“...Micah predicted that this king’s origins would be from eternity past. The two Hebrew temporal nouns used can speak of eternity when they stand alone, although this is not always the case. Used chronologically, *qedem*, ‘antiquity,’ can refer to ancient times as in ‘long ago,’ to the earliest imaginable times as when the mountains first came to be (Deut 33:15), or to the ‘eternal’ God and His eternal dwelling place (Deut 33:27; Hab 1:12; Pss 55:19; 68:33). The second term ‘*olam*, ‘eternity,’ usually refers to the distant or unending future (although sometimes within the context of one’s lifetime). But it is also used of ancient times in the past (Ps 24:7) or of the beginning of creation (Ps 25:6; Joel 2:2) or before. According to Ps 93:2, God’s ‘throne has been established from the beginning [lit. ‘from then’]; / You are from eternity.’ And Ps 90:2 declares, ‘Before the mountains were born, / before You gave birth to the earth and the world, / from eternity to eternity, You are God.’ When *qedem* and ‘*olam* are used together, however, as in Prov 8:22-23, they always denote eternity past (cf. Deut 33:27). In Mic 5:2, these words are placed together to emphasize the ruler’s true origin, being far earlier than his arrival in Bethlehem or even antiquity. Rather, he comes from eternity past.”¹⁷⁹

There are good reasons for Micah 5:2 to not just be translated with, “One whose goings forth are from of old, from days of eternity” (TLV), but to also recognize *m'qedem mimei olam* as representing the pre-existent, Divine origins of the Messiah who would be born as a baby in Bethlehem.

Psalm 2

“Messiah as the Lord’s Anointed King”

“Why are the nations in an uproar and the peoples devising a vain thing? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers take counsel together against the LORD and against His Anointed, saying, ‘Let us tear their fetters apart and cast away their cords from us!’ He who sits in the heavens laughs, the Lord scoffs at them. Then He will speak to them in His anger and terrify them in His fury, saying, ‘But as for Me, I have installed My King upon Zion, My holy mountain.’ I will surely tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to Me, ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will surely give the nations as Your inheritance, and the very ends of the earth as Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron, You shall

¹⁷⁶ Raymond C. Ortlund, Jr., “The Deity of Christ and the Old Testament,” in Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, eds., *The Deity of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), pp 57-58.

¹⁷⁷ *CHALOT*, 313.

¹⁷⁸ *BDB*, 761.

¹⁷⁹ Michael Rydelnik, *The Messianic Hope: Is the Hebrew Bible Messianic?* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2010), 98.