

plan to bring Jehoiachin back, but that the Babylonian oppressor would be even more successful in the future than in the past (Jer. 22:24-30). Zedekiah is here not called "the king" but "the judge of Israel." When the time came that these events occurred, the people would have seen this one more small indication that it was a true picture of what would happen, even though written so long before.

When Zedekiah was taken captive, the Davidic kingship seemed to come to an end. There was no successor upon the throne. The land was subject to the Babylonians. Later they were succeeded by the Persians and then by the Greeks. Even after the land secured its independence under the Maccabees, the Hasmonean priest-kings who ruled were not considered by the people as real successors of the ancient kings of Judah. Eventually the Romans seized the land and it looked as if the promise to David that he would always have a son to sit upon his throne had come completely to an end. Micah, however, declares that this is not to be the fact. After telling of the downfall of Zedekiah, he goes on to state that God will fulfill His promises to David, and that a new king will arise out of Bethlehem. This is so important that we shall give it a special heading.

#### 4. The Coming King — 5:2-5a

It is interesting how this section starts. It refers back to Bethlehem, the place from which David came. David had begun in obscurity. His descendant who will become king, will also come out of a background of obscurity. He will not come from Jerusalem the capital, but from little Bethlehem, which will again, as before, be a small city, hardly large enough to be ranked among the thousands of Judah.

As the description of the coming king continues, a statement is made which seems quite strange in view of what has been said of the apparently insignificant background from which he comes. He is not only one who comes from little Bethlehem, but he is one "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."