

People have pondered over these words and tried to figure what they could mean.

A few years ago the modernist Bible, the Revised Standard Version, was published and the translation was changed in such a way as to make the passage seem easier to understand. Instead of saying "goings forth," the word "origin" was substituted, meaning that the coming king is to have a pedigree that will go far back into early history. Unfortunately this is not a very good translation of the Hebrew word, which literally means "goings forth." In no other case in the Bible is it translated "origin." Moreover, it is plural --- not "going forth," but "goings forth." It seems to indicate that one has gone forth on many occasions, not just once. The most natural way to interpret the phrase is in a sense that is so remarkable that it cannot be accepted at all, unless one believes that this coming king is absolutely unique. It is to consider that He, even before He was born, was busy going forth and doing things.

Matthew tells us that when wise men came from the East in order to bring homage to the coming king, whose sign they had seen in the stars, Herod consulted students of the Old Testament who assured him, on the basis of this very verse, that Bethlehem was the place where the coming king would be born (Matt. 2:4-6). The king who was born in Bethlehem is described by Matthew as one who was actually the Lord of Glory, the second person of the Trinity. Jesus Christ was active long before His birth. His "goings forth" had been "from of old, from everlasting": He went forth to create the worlds -- Colossians 1:16 tells us that by Him all the worlds were made. He went forth to speak to Abraham. He was the Angel of the Lord who did so many wonderful things in Old Testament times. The pre-existence of the Lord Jesus Christ is a standard doctrine of Christian theology. This doctrine may not be clearly stated here in Micah, but it is very definitely implied. His "goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Verse 3 ties together Verses 1 and 2. "Therefore will he give them up." Because the Messiah, the coming king, is to come from obscurity, from little Bethlehem, God gives up His people for a time. He allows them to go into Babylonian captivity. He