

Sermon Series: Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery

Sermon: Simeon

Scripture: Luke 2:22-35

Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church

December 24, 2017

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It's my hope that this ADVENT season you've been able to publicly and privately spend some time seeing and savoring Jesus Christ...that you've been able to behold the wondrous mystery of the incarnation.

What a wonderful time of the year it is.

It's the only time of the year that the church and the world are at least thinking of similar things.

It's only this time of the year that you can hear '**songs about Jesus**' in the most unlikely of places and ..see '**Happy Birthday Jesus**' in languages all across the world, even if it is just to advertise.

Well, as we come to Christmas and the end of another year, maybe we can pause a bit and remind ourselves of what is really important in life.

So many concerns in the world today.

-The threat of nuclear war on the Korean Peninsula.

Is our country safe?

-Financial collapse of the economy and all our dreams along with it.

Is our money safe?

-Terrorist attacks popping up in many places.

Is our city safe?

-Violence on the rise.

Is our family safe?

-Sexual assault and harassment.

Am I safe?

Yet, the biggest concern in the world is not any of those things- though they are all very important.

The biggest question that exists from the Bible's perspective is this:

Am I eternally... safe?

*And that depends on Jesus Christ and what you will do with him.

Let's pray....

Turn in your Bible to **Luke 2:22-35**.

22 And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord")

24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” **25** Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. **26** And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **27** And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, **28** he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

- . **29** “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
- . **30** for my eyes have seen your salvation
- . **31** that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
- . **32** a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. **34** And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,

“Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed **35** (and a sword will pierce through

your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

So, let's set the scene here.

What was the reason for their coming to Jerusalem?

They had come to 'kill 2 birds with one stone' so to speak.

They came for (1) Mary's purification from child birth and (2) for Jesus' consecration as the firstborn son. They're going to handle these at the same time, while they're there.

Joseph and Mary, Jesus' parents..are really faithful to keeping the Old Testament law.

In the previous verses they had kept the Law and circumcised Jesus on the 8th day.

And the Law in **Leviticus 12** said that a mother was considered 'unclean' until 33 days after the baby had been circumcised- which means Jesus is 41 days old here.

For Mary's cleansing they are to offer 2 things: (1) a lamb a year old for a *burnt offering*. (2) a pigeon or turtledove for a *sin offering*.

-Sin offering was a transferring of the sinner's guilt to the substitute, which is the turtledove.

-Burnt offering was a transferring of the virtue or the goodness of the substitute, which is the lamb
-> to the sinner.

According to the Law, if you didn't have the money for a Lamb, you could use 2 birds. So, we assume Joseph and Mary didn't have much money since they didn't bring a Lamb. Oh, but they did...have A lamb.

We also know the Wise Men and their rich gifts came later, so there was no trading of the gifts to purchase a lamb.

That was Mary's purification.

For Jesus' consecration..., as the firstborn...seen in **Exodus 13**...he was to be offered to the Lord. God said, **“Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.”** and it seems according to Numbers 3, that Joseph and Mary were to pay 5 shekels to the temple for the consecration of Jesus as the firstborn.

So, that's the reason they were coming...and something happens....when they arrive...

This man named Simeon...who we know nothing about in scripture at all...comes up to them, takes Jesus in his arms and starts blessing God..maybe even singing.

Simeon is a righteous man.

A devout man.

He's a Spirit-filled man.

He's waiting on God's salvation...even God has told him...that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Messiah face to face.

But, it's what he says....that is so important.

He declares some things about the baby Jesus that **(1) FIRSTLY, makes his parents marvel....**

What is it that makes them marvel?

This baby is God's salvation for all peoples.

This is plural, not singular. It means all people groups. Including Jews and every people group on the planet Earth.

A light for the Gentiles. Gentiles, which means the ethnic groups. People from every tribe, nation and language. Han Chinese. Uzbek. Japanese. Sindhi. Arab. French. Tajik. Masai. Korean.
And the glory of Israel.

Listen to **Isaiah 42-**

5 Thus says God, the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people on it and spirit to those who walk in it: 6 "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness; I will take you by the hand and keep you; I will give

you as a covenant for the people, a light for the nations, 7 to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. 8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

or Isaiah 49

5 And now the LORD says, he who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him; and that Israel might be gathered to him— for I am honored in the eyes of the LORD, and my God has become my strength— 6 he says: “It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

This baby is God’s answer to man’s problem.

Man needs saving. Saving from what? Our scripture passages tells us.....**Darkness**. He is the “light” for the nations....and the light is needed in darkness.

Darkness of sin. Not seeing. As the prophet Isaiah said, the world is blind to the truth of God. The people of the world are prisoners in a dungeon. Enslaved to self and sin and unable to escape. And he says the world is giving praise to idols. Man is worshipping idols and not God.

So, man needs a **Savior**.

Jesus is the one to save us and that's why we celebrate his birth.

How did he save us?

By being the substitute Lamb.

Remember I said that, 'Joseph and Mary did have a Lamb!'

This baby would grow up and at the age of 33 he would give his life willingly on a cross to be an offering for sinners.

(Mary's bird sacrifices she offered when Jesus was a baby were a picture of this.)

-The true and real Sin offering was a transferring of the sinner's guilt, which is ours, to the substitute, which was Jesus.

-The true and real Burnt offering was a transferring of the virtue or the goodness of the substitute, which is Jesus.. to the sinner, which is you.

He took our sin on the cross and he gives us his goodness; his righteousness.

And this salvation is available to all people's and all ethnic groups of the Earth.....if they believe.

But that's not all Simeon said about Jesus....he also told them a hard saying about this baby.....

This baby....this Savior....this Jesus would be like a sword.

Luke 2:34-35

“Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

He will make you choose sides.

You have to decide for or against him.

There will be some who *oppose* him and some who *embrace* him.

Some will fall and some will rise.

[Luke is writing to a guy named Theophilus to explain who Jesus is...and I believe here he inserts a note to Theophilus- “and a sword will pierce through your own soul also”. Not to Mary...but to the one he’s writing to... saying, “You’re gonna have to choose too.” **“You’re gonna either embrace him or oppose him.”**]

Listen to what Jesus himself said in Matthew’s gospel:
34 “Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. 36 And a person’s enemies will be those of his own household. 37 Whoever loves father or mother more

than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39 Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Jesus Christ was born for this purpose:

To die on the cross as an offering for sin.

God the Father, accepts his death as a sufficient substitute in the place of all who trust in him for salvation, from whatever people or ethnic group they come from.

God the Father raised him from the dead on the 3rd day. He is alive and is coming again, not to die.. but to rule and reign.

The biggest question this Christmas is....

What you will do with this Jesus Christ?

Embrace him or Oppose him?