

## The Christmas Gifts of God:

### Peace and Revelation

Luke 2:22-39 NKJ <sup>22</sup> Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD "), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." <sup>25</sup> And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> So he came by 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, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: <sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation <sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, <sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." <sup>33</sup> And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." <sup>36</sup> Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; <sup>37</sup> and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. <sup>39</sup> So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth.

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

Christ's Birth Brings us Peace

Hoping for a peaceful Christmas this year? Did you get it? Or did you get screaming kids and relatives arguing about politics? Christ does bring us peace at Christmas it just isn't that type of peace.

**Simeon rejoiced not because he found the secret to a peaceful life but because he had found the secret to a peaceful death. Many desire a peaceful life, but few find it. Jesus comes not to give us a peaceful life but a peaceful death.**

Scripture has many things to say about this life. It gives us guidelines for marriage which if followed will give us happier marriages. It gives us guidelines to finances, guidelines for politics and education and family. God's word has something to say about almost every aspect of life on this earth and listening to these warnings will provide us with a better life on this earth. However, these things are all secondary. They are not the primary goal of Scripture.

The primary goal of scripture is not to prepare you for life on this earth, but life in the world which is to come. The primary goal is to give you not a peaceful life but a peaceful death.

How does that hymn go?

**"Teach me to live that I may fear the grave as little as my bed."**

This is the peace which causes Simeon to rejoice. Having seen the salvation of God he may lay down his head in death with peace and confidence that he will raise in life. Here is the salvation which the Lord has prepared, a Savior to wash away my sin and present me holy and gloriously before the Lord.

Peace in this world is difficult to be sure, but still easy compared with peace on the day of your death. But this is the peace which Christ gives to us.

**Psalm 23:4 <sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me;**

**Hebrews 2:14-15 He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.**

Without Christ we would be forced to live our lives afraid not only of what will come at the end but of what will come tomorrow. But having our sins washed away in his blood we have nothing to fear.

**Romans 8:34 <sup>34</sup> Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.**

**Christ brings peace with God**

**Luke 2:34-35 "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."**

**Revelation**

With the coming of Christ what is hidden in our hearts can not be kept hidden. The light has shined in our hearts, and the filth of our hearts is clearly seen. This, however, is reason for joy, because the light is there to clean our hearts and not to destroy them.

What is the desire of your heart? There are many different attitudes towards Christ's birth. Some love the presents and the lights. Some continue with the ritual but have forgotten its meaning.

Simeon prophesied that this child would reveal the hearts of many. And right away here the heart of Anna is revealed.

There is a story told about a bookstore owner who when he was young married his sweetheart. However, his wife grew restless and discontented working in a bookstore in a small town and was determined to leave her husband and travel the world. Since he could not persuade her otherwise the bookstore owner put a candle in the window and told her he would keep it lit in the hope of her return. Many years later the wife did return and there was the candle waiting for her in the window however when she went into the bookstore the man did not remember her. Although he continued to light the candle every evening, he had forgotten the one for whom he lit it.

There are two dangers in our service to God. One is that we become bored with the Word. We think we know it all already and that we don't really need to come to church. We like the wife run off and follow things we think are more exciting and adventurous than going to church every Sunday.

The other danger is that we stay and go to church and do all the things we are supposed to do, outwardly. Yet inwardly we have forgotten what we are waiting for. And when Christ comes to us, in His word, in His sacraments we do not recognize him. Like the book store owner we continue the ritual but forget the one we are waiting for.

Jesus' coming was a light that shone into the hearts of many people and revealed what was hidden there. There were many in Israel like the bookstore owner. Many who diligently went through the motions but did not recognize the one for whom they supposedly were waiting. For example the high priest, for whom the lighting of the candle, the ceremonies of the temple, had become the all-important thing, they opposed Jesus and spoke against him. For others, like Zachaeus, who had wandered away and gone astray He was the bright morning star calling them home. And yet there were still many others, like the apostle Nathanael, who had neither wandered nor forgotten but recognized Christ for whom he was and rejoiced greatly to see him.

Anna also was one of these. She did not run away, nor did she forget whom she waited for. She only had seven years of marriage and then lived alone for 84 years. But for the entirety of that 84 years, she faithfully served the Lord, and never forgot what it was she was waiting for. The Lord granted her this gift then that her eyes were open to recognize the Lord when he was before her and she rejoiced to see Him.

Christ is the light that reveals what is in our hearts. Yet He shines into our hearts not for the purpose of judgment but to cleanse the sin there. If we have wandered away, He is the light to bring us home. If we have forgotten Him, He has not forgotten us. If we are faithful in service, He is a light to our path and the joy of our heart.

The gifts of God are the light which reveals our hearts and the revelation that brings peace through forgiveness.