

December 27, 2015
Salvation Revealed

Read Luke 2: 29-32 – Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.

Merry Christmas!!! I hope that your own unique celebration of Jesus' birth was a huge success and rather relaxing for you. Today, you will hear (or perhaps have already heard) about Simeon. The story is probably familiar by now so I will spare you the details, but what exactly has happened in our reading for the day? What is it that Simeon is exclaiming in what we now call his song?

The Holy Spirit revealed to this man of God that the 40-day old bundle of joy in Mary's arms would be the salvation of the people of the world. Note that Simeon includes the Gentiles (thankfully, because that's us). This notion of his wouldn't have been a very popular idea, and is probably further evidence that his recognition of Jesus was Spirit-led.

With this in mind, I have a question for you. Was your Christmas celebration a Spirit-led recognition of Jesus as the salvation of the world? I have another question to follow that one up. What in the world was I talking about with my first question?

Let me try to answer the second question so you can answer the first one yourself. What I was hoping to get at was not whether or not you prayed or read the bible before opening your presents (though I hope you did). I wasn't trying to make you feel guilty if your thoughts were primarily on family, food and the familiar, fuzzy feelings that Christmas brings rather than being piously on the lowly birth of the Most High God.

Roots

I was trying to get you to think about where your devotion, both conscious and subconscious, was focused.

In our text, Simeon was clued into the fact that he would see God's salvation come to Israel before his death. With that in mind he was able to devote his actions and attitudes to the fact that God's salvation was coming for him and for the rest of his people. So my first question should not make you feel guilty, but should rather help to focus you on the reality of what Jesus' birth was all about. It was all about your salvation. The nativity that we remember so fondly was not about thousands of years of cutesy remembrance of the baby Jesus. It was and should still be about the unfathomable fact that God, *GOD* became man, *MAN* in order to rescue you. "What is man that you are mindful of him, O God?" How incomprehensible is that?

Furthermore, my first question should push you into understanding and (hopefully) living the fact that Christmas isn't just to be celebrated at Christmas, but our hearts and minds should be centered on the message of Christmas all year round. Simply put, you should be devoted to the fact that in his being born as a human, Jesus was bringing you salvation! In his swaddling clothes and stinky diapers (if they used something like that), Jesus was ushering in your victory not only over sin, but over Satan and death and pain and rejection and all of the other bad stuff we face while on earth. This is what the Spirit showed Simeon in that little gurgling boy. I pray that is what He shows you at Christmas too.

Pastor Carl J. H.

