

Peace on Earth

Luke 2:22-32

The birth of Jesus Christ is packed with significance and adorned with imagery. One may spend a lifetime analyzing and dissecting the themes and nuances of this grandiose event, but it does seem that *Peace* would consistently surface as an overarching motif. Peace is wrought by God Himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and the pinnacle of this ancient story begins to unfold when God declares “Peace” from the mouths of angels and men.

Luke 2:22 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” [Ex. 13:12]) 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.”

▪ **Paupers (both literally and spiritually) offer a sacrifice to the Holy God**

- **Leviticus 12:6, 8** – “When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering... But *if she cannot afford a lamb*, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, *one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering*. In this way the priest will *make atonement for her*, and she will be clean.”

○ **2 Things are clear here:**

1. Jesus was born to poor, insignificant parents.

The God of the universe has not only condescended to take upon Himself human form, but He has done so in further humility.

- Mary is offering the lesser sacrifice for her “burnt” and “sin” offering.
- Joseph and Mary are both descendants of King David, but the terrestrial kingdom of their forefather was all but obliterated.
 - “The old kingdom of David had been dismembered, conquered, and devastated. The people had been led away into a captivity from which few, comparatively speaking, ever returned. All that the house of David had preserved were its bare family records.”¹

¹ See the *Pulpit Commentary* on Lk 2:4 (<http://biblehub.com/commentaries/luke/2-4.htm>)

2. The “Law of Moses” and the “Law of the Lord” are heavy burdens upon sinful people.

The Moral Law of God (as distinct from the particular ceremonial laws of God mentioned here) is good, but sinners are hopelessly unable and unwilling to submit to the sovereign rule of another – even if the other be their Creator and Sustainer.

- Notice, from Leviticus 12:6 and 8, that a “priest” is necessary and so is an “atonement” to make Mary “clean” (v8). And this is only after “the days of her purification” (v6).
 - [Leviticus 12:2, 4](#) – “If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days... She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed.”
- The Apostle Paul provides insight to the reality of universal moral failure and guilt – as is affirmed and illustrated in a particular sense by the ceremonial law named above.
 - [Romans 3:19-20](#) – “Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.”

[Luke 2:25](#) 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.**

- **Simeon was waiting for the Redeemer – the One who provides riches to the poor in spirit and righteousness to the guilty – just as we should be.**
 - Anna, a prophetess worshiping in the Temple, and an unnumbered group of others were also waiting for the “redemption of Israel” (Luke 2:36-38).
 - Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man who loaned his gravesite to Jesus for a time, was also said to be one who was “waiting for the kingdom of God” (Mark 15:43).
 - These awaited the coming of the Messiah, the Comforter, the promised Anointed One of God!

- One prophecy pertaining to this One is found in **Isaiah 40** – “verse 1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. 2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned... 3 A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD [Prophecy fulfilled in John the Baptist – Matt. 3:3; Mk. 1:3; Lk. 3:4; Jn. 1:23]; make straight in the desert a highway for our God... 5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

9 Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news [Prophecy repeated in Is. 41:27, 52:7 and fulfilled as Christians became heralds of this news – 1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11; Rom. 10:15]; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, “Behold your God!” 10 Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him [Christ is the ruler bringing reward – Rev. 22:12], and his recompense before him.

11 He will tend his flock like a shepherd [Christ is the ‘Good Shepherd’ – Jn. 10:11, 14]; he will gather the lambs in his arms [All those who trust in Jesus Christ are His sheep, the flock of His hand – Matt. 25:33; Jn. 10:14-16; Ps. 95:7]; he will carry them in his bosom...

18 To whom then will you liken God, or what likeness compare with him [There is none like the LORD – Ex. 8:10; 1 Sam. 2:2; 2 Chron. 14:11]?... 21 Do you not know? Do you not hear? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is he who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and spreads them like a tent to dwell in; 23 who brings princes to nothing, and makes the rulers of the earth as emptiness [God ordains and sustains kingdoms, and He destroys or establishes their power according to His good pleasure – Ps. 75:7; Dan. 4:32; Rom. 13:1 – God finds the poor in the dust and sets them among princes – 1 Sam. 2:8].

25 To whom then will you compare me, that I should be like him? says the Holy One. 26 Lift up your eyes on high and see: who created these? He who brings out their host by number, calling them all by name, by the greatness of his might, and because he is strong in power not one is missing.

27 Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel, “My way is hidden from the LORD, and my right is disregarded by my God” [Not a sparrow falls to the ground that God does not know – how much more so is He aware of each one of you! He is intimately acquainted with even the smallest most insignificant detail of our lives – Matt. 10:29-31]?

28 Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable [His power is beyond comprehension, His understanding and wisdom are limitless – Ps. 147:5 – His mysteries are unfathomable, His might is immeasurable – Job 11:7 – He alone is to be feared and praised – Ps. 96:4].

29 He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. 30 Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; 31 but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint [Jesus says to the weak and weary, “Come to Me and I will give you rest... My yoke is easy and My burden is light.” – Matt. 11:28-30 – To the slave in bondage to sin and death, Jesus says, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free! – Jn. 8:32].”

Luke 2:26 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 [Despota]**, now you are letting your **servant [doulon] 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.**”

- **Creation recognizes its absolute sovereign and embraces the promised peace.**
 - Simeon uses the low form of “slave” or “servant” and the highest form of “Lord.” Simeon understands his relationship to his Creator, and he knows that trust in Him is well founded – for He is the Sovereign over all.
 - Despot, the English derivative of the Greek word *despota*, refers to one who is absolute dictator and authoritarian.
 - A *doulon* is a slave who is owned completely by another – he has no rights whatever.

- “I may depart in peace, for I have seen Your salvation, and He is ‘light’ and ‘glory.’”
 - Christ is LIGHT:
 - Isaiah prophesied (9:2), “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.” And Matthew confirms that this was about Jesus near the beginning of His earthly ministry (Matt. 4:16-17).
 - John 1:4-5, 9 – “In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.... The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.”
 - John 8:12 – Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”
 - Christ is the GLORY of God:
 - Hebrews 1:3 – “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature...”
 - 1 Timothy 3:16 – the Apostle Paul says, “Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He [Jesus Christ] was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.”
 - Christ is the PRINCE of PEACE:
 - Isaiah 9:6-7a – “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end...”
 - Ephesians 2:14a – “[Christ Jesus] is our peace...”
 - Christ is the Promised SALVATION:
 - Jesus is the source of eternal salvation for all who trust in Him (Heb. 5:9).
 - Hebrews 9:24-28 – “24 For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf... 26b But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the

end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27
And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that
comes judgment, 28 so Christ, having been offered once to bear
the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin
but **to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.**”

Takeaway:

Simeon exemplified what it is for a sinner to see himself impoverished before God, and awaiting the promised redemption that can only come from Him.

This Christmas, are you more like the Jewish nationalists who saw the arrival of Jesus as a chance to make their own kingdom great again? There were many who looked for land, wealth, and power, and they believed that Jesus might be the vehicle to these things.

Are you more like King Herod, who perceived Jesus as a threat to his own kingdom? Herod saw Jesus as an opponent, and he was willing to do what it would take to eliminate the competition. We too may have kingdoms established to which Jesus poses a real threat.

Are you more like Simeon? Do you recognize your own lack of righteousness? Do you know that you are owned by Another? Do you admit your inability to perfectly love and obey the Master of your soul? Are you anxious to see the joy of salvation? Have you considered the promise that God made to save sinners? Does your heart cry out for deliverance, peace, and freedom?