

Jesus – the King of Kings Salvation Brings
December 24, 2014
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Luke 2:22-32

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 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” 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. 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. 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, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

“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.”

The ancient prophets had proclaimed it and angels announced it with rejoicing at the moment of His birth. Forty days after the birth, Simeon, a man anointed by the Holy Spirit declared to the Father as he stood in the presence of the Christ, “My eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples...” That’s the heart of the Christmas story. The Christmas story is the story of salvation. It’s the story of how God saved mankind. It’s the story of how God loved the world so much that He sent His only Son to save it.

My wife and I just returned from Washington, D.C. where we celebrated our fifth anniversary. The trip to D.C. has become a sort of tradition and we always try to see the play *A Christmas Carol* at Ford’s Theater if tickets are available. One of the prominent songs sung at various moments throughout the play is *What Child is This?* It was written in England in 1865 and is a song that most everyone in the United States and Great Britain has heard. At a close listening you realize that it’s about the birth of Jesus and what that birth meant for mankind.

The song begs the question, “What Child is this, who laid to rest, on Mary’s lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet, while shepherds watch are keeping?”

The song continues and answers that very question. “This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.” It goes on to say, “Why lies He in such mean estate, where ox and ass are feeding?”

Good Christians, fear, for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.

Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, the cross be borne for me, for you. Hail, hail the Word made flesh, the Babe, the Son of Mary.”

As that song was sung over and over again with elegance and harmony, the hair on the back of my neck stood up, and I couldn’t help but to think about the people surrounding me. No one was grimacing at what was being sung. No one stood up in protest. Did they know what they were hearing? Many were singing along with the actors and I wondered, did they know what they were singing?

The prophets knew the message they foretold was a message of the coming Salvation for the world. The angels knew the very moment Salvation had come into the world and Simeon knew Salvation the moment he laid eyes on the Christ child. I’m not so sure that everyone knew the Salvation, about which they were singing, at Ford’s Theater this past Sunday.

So, for us, the Christmas story continues. The message of salvation isn’t over tomorrow. The message of salvation is the message we’ve been charged with sharing every day so long as there’s one person who needs to hear it. So, may we continue sharing the Christmas Story whether through conversation or song. And let us pray that those who hear would not merely smile and nod their heads with approval, but rather would receive the “King of kings salvation brings,” and that their “ hearts [would gratefully] enthrone Him.”

Merry Christmas.