

NOTES FROM STEVEN DRIVER'S SERMON- Sunday 29th December 2024 am

TITLE: "Jesus is our Salvation" TEXT: Luke 2 verses 22-35

SERIES: "Christmas 2024 Scripture references from the ESV

Luke 2:22-35 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 Lord²³ (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 turtle-doves, 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 salvation³¹ 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 marvelled 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 opposed³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

The week between Christmas and New Year is a very odd time, in what is already the oddest time of the year. We do a lot of things that we would not do at any other time. For many, the oddest feature is the foundation of Christmas, the birth of Jesus. As Christians, it can seem odd too. We give a whole month over to the build up to celebrating something about Jesus that has happened to all of us – being born. So much focus on the one thing that he has in common with all humanity seems peculiar. Why not focus on all that Jesus goes on to do as he lives out the perfect life that we never can and performs miracles that show us not only his godliness but also his humanity? Perhaps we should spend time instead remembering when he became the substitute for us, bearing all the weight of our punishment for sin on himself? Maybe we should look at how we can live differently, as we consider a new code of conduct under our new King?

- There is a reason for our focus on the birth of Jesus as we will see from Simeon's song in the passage above.

We do not know much about Simeon, except that he was old, righteous and devout. We can assume he was at the Temple every day, as we are told he was waiting for the consolation of Israel (v25). The Temple was a massive structure, but was divided up into a number of separate parts, into which only a restricted number of people could go. At the very centre was the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest could go and even he could only enter once a year. The point of the Temple was to show that God was present in the midst of his people but at the same time, the most holy place emphasised God's holiness and his inaccessibility due to the sins of the people.

God was present but not personal in the Temple.

This sums up the problem for humanity. Although people might be aware of God, they could not see him or know him personally. Simeon had been waiting for years for the fulfilment of the promise that had been made to him that he would see the Lord's Christ. He anticipated not just being aware of him, but that he would actually see him with his own eyes.

One day, Mary and Joseph entered the Temple with the child Jesus, coming to perform the usual rituals for the firstborn child. There was nothing about Jesus that would have stood out. He was just a baby, and at this point, had done nothing. He would not even have been able to survive on his own. He could not talk, and certainly had not performed any miracles.

Yet Simeon interrupted their progress, and took the fragile baby Jesus in his arms, holding him close. Then the world stood still for him as he looked into the eyes of the one he had been waiting for, and gave thanks in the song above (v29-32). As he held the Prince of Peace, he received a heavenly peace in his soul and was ready to go home to be with the Lord.

- Yet Jesus had done nothing.

If he had waited 33 years, then Simeon would have had cause to recognise him in the light of his accomplishments. However, Simeon says:

for my eyes have seen your salvation (v30)

He declared that, in this baby, he beheld all of the Lord's salvation.

Salvation is not a 'what' or an action. Salvation is a 'who'.

To see and know Jesus is to see and know God's salvation.

The perfect life, the miracles and the atoning work of the cross are an overflow of who Jesus IS. They are **not** what makes him who he is.

Jesus IS salvation.

It is not what he does but who he is.

1. **Jesus IS salvation: a salvation of peace not of works.** The same peace that came to Simeon comes upon all who simply look upon and have a relationship with Jesus.

We can spend time thinking about how we must live differently in the light of the work that Christ has done. However, that makes it a reciprocal arrangement. He did his part and now I must do mine to earn that reward. That is all based on salvation by works and has nothing to do with simply who he is.

- When we see salvation as being who Jesus is, rather than what he has done, our response changes from being about works and is, instead, all about relationship.

When we truly look upon Jesus and build a real in-depth relationship with him, it displaces everything else and Jesus becomes the central reality of our everyday living. By knowing Christ and having a relationship with him, we naturally change, and change for the better.

Jesus' work on the cross is the overflow of who he is.

A transformed life of everlasting peace is the overflow of knowing Jesus.

Jesus IS salvation: a salvation of peace not works

2. **Jesus IS salvation: a salvation that was prepared (v31).** When we dwell on our relationship with Christ, we realise the depth of it in a way that has eternal proportions as we realise that he came for us. All of this was prepared and decreed since the foundation of the world. The possibility of having a relationship with God was not an afterthought or an accident. He pursued us because he has always known us.

It is striking that all this happened in the Temple, which held so many symbols of the separation between God and man. It was man who caused that separation, when we,

in Adam, rejected God. Still, in our hearts, we reject him. That rejection should result in a punishment of eternal separation from God.

Yet here we see God made man and in the arms of one of us (v28).

For the first time in the Temple, God is not only present, he is personal with his people, bringing consolation and comfort in relationship once again.

Jesus IS salvation: a salvation that was prepared

3. Jesus IS salvation: A salvation for all people (v32). The Temple walls are truly torn down for this salvation is not just prepared for the Israelites. It is for all people. Simeon's song was sung in the Temple, in a place where Gentiles were not allowed, but this prepared salvation of peace from the God of Israel is for all people. Later, when Jesus is crucified, the temple curtain will be torn in two from top to bottom, showing that God is no longer separate from the world, but that everyone can now have the same personal relationship with him. That action was a result of who Jesus is.

- Our salvation relies purely on having a living and active relationship with the living Jesus.

It does not depend on how good you are or how religious you are. Many of us live as if salvation is works based, or think that we are just not good enough. That is not the truth about salvation.

Jesus IS salvation: A salvation for all people

4. Jesus IS salvation: a salvation of light (v32). It does not matter how far away you think you are from God. Christ pursues you and offers you peace. How can we get to know him?

We can let Christ's light shine in our darkness

In really close relationships, there is a high level of openness. People know one another intimately and share life together in deep ways. It is the same with Christ.

Jesus IS salvation: a salvation of light

How do we look upon him and have a relationship with him?

We come to him by opening up ourselves fully to him. Instead of hiding our darkness behind a façade of religion, we open ourselves up to him and let his light shine in our dark places.

- We pray to him earnestly with all of our rubbish, all of our hurt, all of our unforgiveness and selfishness, bringing them to him and letting him speak to us about them.
- We read his word – all of it, not just the bits we like. We read it not like a textbook that we are studying, but seeing that it is all about Jesus and so we can get to know him more through it. Spend time engaging actively with what you read so that you get to know him as he longs for you to do.
- We think about who Christ is, having our vision widened and our hearts more deeply stirred by the salvation at whom we are looking.
- We receive his prepared peace in every circumstance, knowing we are infinitely loved by him even on our darkest day, as his light shines all the more strongly.

Jesus IS salvation: a salvation of light

The more we dwell on Christ and enjoy him, and the more we hold Christ in our arms and declare him Lord, the more we will sing and shout and overflow with joy as we are changed for the better. Our relationship with him needs to be built up so that he is truly Lord, and we are not just saying the word.

Jesus IS our salvation and we can know him personally.

Take time to consider whether

- you see Jesus just as a textbook figure or you actually know your salvation personally
- he is truly Lord or you are just saying it

Pray through these issues and spend time with your salvation and your Lord.

**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 Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)**