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Two Who Got It Right at Christmas



We have come to this unique time of the end of the year in 2022 where we may prayerfully remember the first advent and the historic birth of our Saviour Christ, the Lord. We

know that the world may misuse this blessed occasion, and many will be caught up with fun and revelry in drinking and dancing rather than the sober reflection of Christ and His life and death for us. The Bible will be our reliable basis and guide on how we should commemorate Christmas. Paul says, "*But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law.*" (Gal 4:4-5).

Our main focus will be on 2 persons who celebrated Christmas aright and they are Simeon and Anna who were waiting patiently in the temple at this time. Both of them were righteous, God-fearing people whom God had sent as witnesses of this blessed occasion. Let us consider their devotion to the Lord, sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's voice and the meaning of the words of their prophecies.

The Godly Senior Man - Simeon (Lk 2:25)

Simeon is a Hebrew name, for which the similar-sounding genuine Greek name Simon is sometimes substituted. The name means "*hearing*" in Hebrew. We learn several things about Simeon:

- **He is "righteous" or "just"**. This is a common Greek noun *dikaios*, which means, "pertaining to being in accordance with high standards of rectitude, upright, just, fair." **He is "devout,"** translating the Greek noun *eulabes*, "devout, God-fearing, pious, reverent. "
- **The Holy Spirit rests upon him.** In the phrase "the Holy Spirit was upon him," the preposition *epi*, "upon," reminds us that among the Old Testament prophets. The New Testament teaching is the Holy Spirit dwelling permanently within Christians, rather than just sporadically for particular tasks as in a defective view.

Waiting for the Holy Spirit's Promise (2:25-26)

Simeon has been patiently anticipating this day in the temple for some time for the coming for the Lord Jesus Christ. "*Waiting*" is the Greek verb *prosdechomai*,

which has two senses, (1) "to receive favorably, welcome," and (2) "to look forward to, wait for. Probably the latter sense applies most to Simeon; he has been eagerly expecting to see the Messiah.

But what is the "*consolation of Israel*"? "*Consolation*" is the Greek noun *paraklesis*, "comfort, consolation." It comes from the root word *parakaleo*, "*call to one's side*" then "*help, encourage, comfort.*" The Holy Spirit is referred to in the Gospel of John as the Paraklete (*parakletos*), "*mediator, intercessor, helper.*" In our passage Simeon is eagerly looking forward to the time when occupied, weary Jerusalem receives her comfort and relief from the Lord, the Messiah.

The Holy Spirit has made Simeon a promise. Luke employs the word "*revealed*," the Greek verb *chrematizo*, "*impart a divine message, make known a divine injunction or warning.*" The message to Simeon is that he would not die until he has seen the Messiah. The phrase "*the Lord's Christ*" means "*the Messiah promised/sent/provided by the Lord.*" This important to the Jews as it is to us today

The Encounter with the Holy Family (2:27-28)

That day came. The Holy Spirit nudges Simeon, and Simeon is attuned to the voice of the Spirit. "*Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying....*" (2:27-28)

Simeon's prophetic hymn is called the *Nunc Dimittis*, after the first two words of the prophecy in Latin. First, Simeon addresses God as "*sovereign Lord*" or "Lord" in verse 29. The Greek noun is *despotes* (from which we get our English word "despot"), "*one who has legal control and authority over persons, such as subjects or slaves, lord, master.*" The absolute Sovereign has kept his promise to Simeon, who now asks the Lord to let him die in peace.

In the prophetic praise that follows, the child Jesus is equated with "*your salvation*" in verse 30. It is not accidental that Jesus' name, in Hebrew *Yeshua* (a form of the name "Joshua"), means literally, "*salvation.*" So, Simeon looks on the child named "*Salvation*" and says, "*my eyes have seen your salvation....*"

Simeon sees Jesus' salvation as extending to all people -- Gentiles and Jews alike. This is the same message the angel spoke to the shepherds on Christmas night: "*I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people*" (2:10). The concept of the Messiah and Israel being "*a light for the Gentiles*" was first developed by the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 9:2; 42:6; 60:1-3), especially in Isaiah 49:6: which says, "*And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.*"

Simon's Prophecy to Mary (2:34-35)

"*And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the*

thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (LK 2:34-35) Simeon now blesses the Holy Family. In verse 34 we see the Greek verb *eulogeo* that appeared in verse 28 as "to praise, extol." Here, directed toward humans, it means, "to ask for bestowal of special favor, especially of calling down God's gracious power, bless."

Simeon's prophecy to Mary has the following elements:

- **"This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel."** How people respond to Jesus and his message will determine their destiny. Many of Jesus' and some receive his message and are saved, but the religious community, did not believe that Jesus can be the Messiah.
- **so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.** "Thoughts is the Greek verb *dialogismos*, "content of reasoning or conclusion reached through use of reason, thought, opinion, reasoning, design." Here it seems to be used in a negative sense. Those who stumble at Jesus, who reject him and oppose his message, will finally be shown up for what they are. "Revealed" is the Greek verb *apokolupto* (from which we get "apocalypse"). It means, "to cause something to be fully known, reveal, disclose, bring to light, make fully known" (appearing here and at Matt10:26 with a connotation. Jesus Himself is to be the judge, sitting on the judgment seat of the Messiah: This will take place on the day when God judges men's secrets through Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16; cf. Acts 17:31; 2 Cor 5:10). **"And a sword will pierce your own soul too."** Though the Holy Spirit, Simeon could sense the deep anguish that Mary would feel as her son was rejected by the nation's leaders and ultimately crucified.

The Patient Elderly Woman - Anna (2:36-37)

Besides Simeon who recognized Jesus as the Messiah, but so does an 84-year-old woman, a pious fixture in the Woman's Court of the Temple. "There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying." (2:36-37) Consider an old lady, a widow for many years, committed serve and to worship God. She practically lives in the Court of the Temple, day and night. And she is a faithful servant of God.

The Hope of Jerusalem (Lk 2:38)

This consist of inspired thanksgiving to God and the speaking about the child to other believing people who are present. Both of the verbs here employ the Greek imperfect tense, indicating continued action in the past -- that is, she kept on thanking God and telling people. The word translated "gave thanks" is *anthomologeomai*, which indicates to publicly express praise or thanks.[21]

She speaks about Jesus to particularly to those in the Temple whom she knew also looked forward to (Greek *prosdechomai*) the redemption of Jerusalem. The word "redemption" (Greek *lutrosis*) seems a curious one in this context. The

Greek word is often used in a commercial sense as "redemption of something for a price." But here the meaning focuses on the result, "experience of being liberated from an oppressive situation," also used in Zechariah's prophecy in 1:68. Like Simeon, who looks forward to the "*consolation*" or comfort of Jerusalem, Anna looks forward to the time when Jerusalem will once again be free from Roman oppression and so shall we today, yearning to the second coming of our Lord.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit speaks to some today and show us Christ as God did to 2 persons of old. To heed God's will, we need to prepare ourselves to study His Word and to do His Will by living in righteousness and devotion. Devout people are full of praise, as were Simeon (2:28) and Anna (2:37-38). Worshipping God will be the worthy full-time occupation of his people one day. Jesus' coming offers hope, light, and salvation to all people (2:29-32). When we are really convinced of that, we will not be so afraid to speak about it to others and share Christ to the saving of souls. Will you emulate them and live a godly life of service and worship before the Lord's second coming, waiting patiently upon Him and making an effort to tell others of Jesus who alone can save us?

Jack Sin

(Adapted and Edited from **CHRIST OF CHRISTMAS** by James Montgomery Boice; P&R Publishing and consulted the Linguistic Key to the Greek new Testament http://www.jesuswalk.com/lessons/2_21-38.htm and <http://www.joyfulheart.com/xmas/shepherds.htm>)



Lord's Day Programme for January - March 2023

The Deliberate Christ-Centred Church in Action

(Book of Ephesians)



JANUARY

- 1 Divine Calling of a Believer (1:1-12)
- 8* Character of the Church (1:13-23)
- 15 Changed from Darkness to Light (2:1-10)
- 22 Progress of the Church (2:11-22)
- 29 Fullness of the Church (3:1-12)

FEBRUARY

- 5 **5th Anniversary Thanksgiving**
The Witness of the Church in Dangerous Times (Acts 5:29-42)
- 12* Functions of the Church (3:13-21)
- 19 Conduct of the Church (4:1-16)
- 26 Steps for Effective Witness in our Lives (4:17-32)

MARCH

- 5 Divinely Transformed Living (5:1-21)
- 12* Guidelines for Healthy Marital Relations (5:22-33)
- 19 Rules for Family Relationships (6:1-9)
- 26 Divine Protection for Spiritual Combat (6:10-24)

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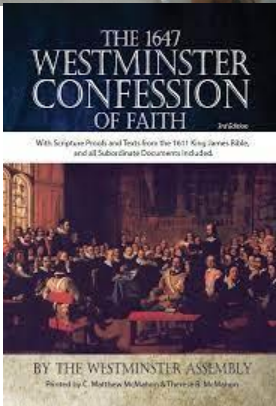
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Thank God for an Edifying Christmas Gathering at the home of Albert & Janet.



Rev Heng was our guest speaker at the pulpit last Sunday. We also welcomed Geok Pin to our church.



Westminster Confession of Faith class on every Sunday after service with deeper studies in the Reformed faith.

Christmas Love Gifts to Myanmar Missions



With grateful thanks from the Eld Habakkuk and children of **Gilead Balm Home, Yangon**.

Hi Pastor, thank God for the opportunity to evangelize these unbelievers here at the same time, giving the gospel traces to them as well. 🙏 Thanks to Sovereign Hope BPC for the love gifts that she sent for this work n my family. Thanks, Pastor 🙏 God bless. **Fm Benjamin, Yangon**.



I received your love gift. (750000 ks)

1. 250000 ks will be used for Christmas Outreach
2. 250000 ks is used for my church Evangelism outreach
3. 200000 ks is for my new baby.
4. 50000 ks is to buy some light or generator.

Thanks, Pastor, for your love and help.

Fm Pr Myitta, Yangon

Memory Verse

1 Tim 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

Announcements

1. Welcome to our Christmas Day Sunday Worship Service! Pastor speaks this morning on "***When the Heavenly King Condescended (1 Tim 3:1-16)***". Brother Alvin shares his salvation testimony. Steven and Joseph minister to us in a Christmas song and carols. All are invited for our Christmas lunch fellowship after the worship service. For our visitors, do leave us your contact numbers in our guest book before you leave.
2. Chinese Fellowship meets on every Sunday night at 7pm via Zoom with both local and overseas brethren. **Tonight is a special Christmas Outreach that includes a testimony.** Join us for a time of profitable learning
3. **Saturday is New Year's Eve. Come and join us at our Watchnight Service on Sat 31 Dec 2022, 8pm.** Pastor will preach on "***Guidelines for End Times Living (Mk 13:20-37)***". End the year with worship, thanksgiving and reflection of the past year and heart preparation for the new year 2023
4. On next Sunday 1 Jan 2023, Pastor will preach on "***Divine Calling of a Believer (Eph 1:1-12)***", the start of a new quarterly series on "***The Deliberate Christ-Centred Church in Action (Book of Ephesians)***". "
5. Do send your prayer items to Pastor and join us for Church Prayer Meeting on Wed at 8pm via Zoom. The prayer list is available in church.
6. Monthly Neighbourhood Bible Class will next meet on **Fri 6 Jan 2023, 7.30pm in church** on the study of 2 Samuel. Come and join us!
7. Do kindly observe the safety measures of the church and assist with the weekly cleaning of the premises.
8. Love gifts, Offering and Tithes to the Lord can be given in the following ways:
 - **Cheque** payable to **Sovereign Hope Bible Presbyterian Church** and mail to church address. (Kindly write the full name of the church as indicated.)
 - **Fund transfer** to Church **UOB** Account **392-308-825-1**
 - **PayNow** to Church UEN: **T19SS0116FSOV**