

CHILD OF CONSOLATION

Luke 2:21-35

After the birth of Christ Mary and Joseph remain in Bethlehem. (v.21) According to Jewish custom on the eight day the *male* child was circumcised. It appears that Jesus was officially named on the eight day as was John the Baptist (1:59); *although His name was given by the angel, as was John the Baptist, before His birth, (v.21b).*

(v.22, 23) “...*days of her purification...*” This was according to the Law of Moses (Leviticus 12:2, 3) “*Speak to the children of Israel, saying: “If a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days; as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.”* On the eighth day Joseph and Mary journey 9 kilometers or 6 miles north to Jerusalem; to present Jesus to the priest in accordance with Leviticus 12:6; Exodus 13:2, 12, 15. (v.23).

(v.24) indicates that Joseph and Mary were *poor*. The mother of the child was to bring an offering to the priest (Leviticus 12:6b, 8a) “...*she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering, to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons — one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering...*” Following Jewish custom Mary would lay hands on the pigeons; then a priest would take them to the southwest corner of the altar, wringing one bird’s neck as a *sin offering* and burning the other as a whole *burnt offering*. The irony on this day is that Mary is bringing to the Temple, the “**One**” *destined* to be an *everlasting* offering for not only her sins, but the sins of the world. (1 John 2:2) **And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.** There are two individuals who bear *witness* in the Spirit concerning the *consolation* this child would bring; one is **Simeon** and the other is **Anna**.

(v.25-35) **Simeon or Simon** his name means, **“Hearing.”** He was a man who lived his life tuned in to the Holy Spirit. He lived by the **“power,”** (v.25b); **“revelation”** (v.26a); and **“guidance,”** (v.27a); of the Holy Spirit. **Notice:** what the Lord promises in the Spirit He fulfills by the Spirit. **(Isaiah 46:11b)** **“...I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.”** In the Spirit of God he sought the **“consolation of Israel”** *the Messianic hope!* God promised he would see the Messiah before his death; and **“now”** the promise has come to pass! He *first* blesses the Lord, (v.29-32); known as the **“Salvation Hymn.”** **“For my eyes have seen your salvation...”** after seeing Jesus Simeon was ready to die. Only after we have seen Jesus are we truly ready to leave earth. **Jesus...Don’t leave earth without Him!**

I. *The first reason why the Christ-child will be our consolation:* **He was destined to be the fall and rising of many.** Simeon **“blesses”** the parents of Jesus (v.33-35). Joseph and Mary **“marvel.”** The word **“marveled”** means: **admiration.** Simeon spoke so **“glowingly”** about Jesus; but he then **prophecies** to Mary; (v.34b, 35). The **“tone”** of his blessing goes from **“marvel”** to **“martyrdom.”** Simeon declares the **“destiny”** of Mary’s baby; *words she did not want to hear;* (v.34b, 35a); *and “grief she did not want to share.* Jesus was **“destined”** to be the **fall** and **rising** of many. These words **“refute”** any attempt today to make Christ **palatable** to the world. **(Isaiah 53:3)** **“He is despised and rejected by men...”** *(Tibetan Buddhist leader, Dalai Lama – airport poster; Christ “hate crime”).*

The world sees Christ as an **“agitator.”** The word **“agitate”** is defined in the dictionary: **to stir violently; to move back and forth with a quick motion; to shake or move briskly.** They find Him an *agitator* because He dares to *reveal* the **true nature** and **condition** of our hearts, (v.35b).

(Jeremiah 17:9, 10) **“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man**

according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.” (*washing machine*) But the “reality” is; ***God loves us too much to leave us like He found us.***

The Greek word for “**fall**” is **ptosis** (pto'-sis); ***a crash, i.e. downfall.*** The Greek word for “**rising**” is **anastasis** (an-as'-tas-is); ***a standing up again, i.e. (literally) a resurrection from death.*** The idea here is, as with the Paul the Apostle, we have to “fall” in order to “rise” in newness of life. **Often times there has to be a crash before we can see Christ!** You may be at a low point today for that very reason, God in His infinite love sent His Son to ***agitate, to “awaken” us to our need for a Savior. (house on fire).***

II. The second reason why Christ-child is our consolation: **He is a sign to the world.** The word “**sign**” (v.34b) means: “**miracles,**” as a revelation of ***divine truth.*** (**John 10:37, 38**) “**If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.**” According to **Matthew 16:1-4** the ultimate sign is ***Christ’s resurrection*** from the dead. (**John 14:19, 20**) “**A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. At that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**” **An empty tomb is our everlasting consolation!**

III. The final reason why the Christ-child is our consolation: **He is our Redeemer.** (v.36-38) **Anna her name means: “grace.”** She wasn’t a person of great importance; she was a “widow” who simply “devoted” her life to serving the Lord. At the age of *eighty-four* she wasn’t sitting around “lamenting” about her *physical* limitations; but rather, she employed herself in the most *important* ministry of the Temple, ***worship, prayer*** and ***fasting.*** (**Grandma Rose**). ***Here’s a true woman of “faith.”*** **She was widowed after only seven years of marriage.** She could have grown “bitter” but she got “better,” because she made the Lord her “portion.”

She was a “prophetess” which meant God had given her a *special gift*, of declaring His message, **Miriam** (Exodus 15:20); **Deborah** (Judges 4:4);

Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); **Noadiah** (Nehemiah 6:14); **the wife of Isaiah** (Isaiah 8:3); and **Philip's four daughters** who were "prophetess" (Acts 21:8, 9). **Notice: she didn't use her "gift" to draw attention to herself, but to Jesus! (v.38b).** "...*all those looking for redemption...*" The word "**redemption**" is from the Greek word **lutroo** (loo-tro'-o); *to ransom; to buy back*. We were "sold" under the *penalty* of sin; but Christ purchased us back to God, *with His blood*, and paid in full, the "debt" we owed! **This is a "glorious" consolation!**

CONCLUSION: Jesus was sent to "console" *all those looking for a Savior*. The *sincerest* prayer ever prayed in scripture was uttered by the Apostle Peter, **Matthew 14:30; "Lord save me!"** *Simeon and Anna were looking for a Savior on that day, and found Him.* **Do you need a Savior today?** You may have walked with Him a long time, but today you feel like you are going under. **(Jeremiah 29:13) "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."**