

Great Expectations

Nunc Dimittis - The Final Words of a Departing Servant
Luke 2:22-35
December 15, 2019

The coming of Christ, who brings division to the earth, fulfills the promises of God and leads to the praises of God's people.

I. PREPARATORY WORDS (vv.22-24)

- The Law of Moses, which is the Law of the Lord, finds a preeminent place in the lives of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.
 - Mary's purification (cf. Lev. 12:1-8).
 - Jesus's consecration (cf. Exod. 13:2, 12, 15).
- Old Testament saints were described as righteous, not because they were perfect or inherently righteous, but because they loved the Lord and his Word (cf. Luke 1:5-7; 2:25, 37).
- Mary and Joseph were of lowly estate, and this is the station our Lord humbly took unto himself.

II. SIMEON'S PROMISE (vv.25-26)

- The Holy Spirit promised Simeon that he would not die until he saw the Lord's Christ, who would bring consolation to Israel (cf. Isa. 40:1-5).
 - This promise empowered the patient endurance of Simeon.
 - The promises of God empower God's people to patiently endure in the present as we eagerly hope for the future (cf. Rom. 8:28; 1 Cor. 15:20-22; 2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 13:6; 1 John 1:9).
- The Holy Spirit rested upon Simeon, as he did upon all Old Testament saints.

III. SIMEON'S PRAISE (vv.27-32)

- The Holy Spirit led Simeon into the temple where he beheld the Christ child.
 - The mystery of the incarnation is seen Simeon taking up into his arms the One who formed and fashioned those very arms.

- Simeon's song, the *Nunc Dimittis*, shows forth Simeon's joy, his readiness to now depart in peace, and his declaration that the Messiah is for all without distinction (cf. Isa. 49:10; 52:13; 60:1-3; 61:10).

IV. SIMEON'S PROPHECY (vv.33-35)

- The Lord and his Word are occasions for rising and falling, for sanctuary and stumbling (cf. Isa. 8:13-15).
 - Jesus himself said that he did not come to bring peace but division (cf. Luke 12:51-53).
- The Savior born to the virgin Mary was appointed to pierce her soul through his life of humiliation, culminating in his crucifixion.

Suggested Reading:

Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus, ed. Nancy Guthrie

The Promises of God, Charles Spurgeon (ed. Tim Chester)

Questions/Discovery Points for Life Groups/Families

Please Read Luke 2:22-35

1. Why do you think the Law is so heavily emphasized by Luke in vv. 22-24?
2. Talk through ways in which the eternal Son of God, in the incarnation, stepped into a lowly estate. Make sure to include some pit-stops throughout his *entire* life.
3. What attributes of God uphold and support his promises? How do God's promises produce hope-filled endurance for us in the present? What are some of the promises of God that you remind yourself of frequently? Spend some time here...
4. Do you delight to praise what you enjoy? God created us to glorify and enjoy him forever, so spend some time praising our glorious God and watch your joy in him rise.
5. Have you beheld in the face of Christ God's salvation? If so, spend some time talking through how this great and glorious salvation prepares us to "depart in peace."
6. The herald of the angels was that the coming of Christ would bring peace to those whom God is pleased (Luke 2:14), but the coming of Christ also brings division to humanity (vv. 33-35). How is the gospel message inherently divisive? How can we keep ourselves from making it more divisive than it already is?