
Prayer at Advent

Luke 2:22-35

Introduction How do we pray at advent, at this season of celebrating the coming of Jesus?

Shepherds, wise men, angels all come to adore...

But what is Luke after in this opening section of his gospel?

The Exemplary Submission of Parents (v.22-24)

Joseph and Mary walk in obedience to God by being in submission to the Scriptures.

Their Conformity to the Law

The Law required a dedication of the first born after his circumcision and period of healing and ceremonial purification.

The Fulfillment of the Law

Jesus is the full and final son who opened the virgin's womb and became the sacrifice.

The Spiritual Qualities of Simeon (v.25-28)

Simeon is a man of personal and practical holiness that is shaped by the Spirit.

His Personal Character (v.25)

He was a common man, not a priest or a prophet.

He was a holy man, in purity and passion.

He was Bible man, understanding the Messianic message of the Scriptures.

He was a spiritual man, having the Holy Spirit upon him.

His Spiritual Expectation (v.26)

As a result of direct revelation by the Holy Spirit

To see the Messiah personally before his death

His Practical Obedience (v.27)

Led by the Spirit, He goes to the Temple at the precise time Jesus is being brought

So here we have the providence of God bringing Simeon and Jesus with his family together. But Luke is showing us something that is very important and sets up the argument of the book. Recognizing and knowing who Jesus is as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises, is the joint inward working of the Scriptures and the Spirit.

The Glorious Prayer of Blessing**(v.28-32)**

He responds with a grand prayer that declares the theme of the book of Luke.

The Experience of God's Promises**(v.28-29)**

He glories in the seeing and experiencing God fulfilling His promises.

This is not just the joy of his personal promises, but also the glory of the culmination of the Old Covenant shadows.

The Presence of God's Salvation**(v.30-31)**

He understands that the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, is bringing salvation.

This salvation is not just for the benefit of Israel, but also planned for all the people groups.

The Grandness of God's Purposes**(v.32)**

He exults in God bringing light to all the people groups, the nations, including the Gentiles.

He exults in God bringing to pass the glory He intended for Israel.

So Luke is giving what Advent is all about: it is about the fulfillment of all the Old Testament promises in the person of Jesus Christ who will bring salvation to His people. This salvation will be for all His people over all the world in all the nations.

The Painful Prophecy of Suffering**(v.33-35)**

The glorious provision of salvation comes only through the terrible suffering of sacrifice.

The Opposition to Jesus' Life**(v.33-34)**

Simeon understands that the Messiah will be opposed. That opposition will even be in the face of His authenticating signs, His works of miracles and power.

The Pain in Mary's Future**(v.35)**

The suffering He will ultimately experience will be a sword through Mary's heart. His pain will pierce her. Her suffering son will be the saving sovereign.

The Revealing of Heart Agendas**(v.35b)**

So the Messiah, this child he is holding up in his arms, will expose hearts, their rebellion and their wickedness.

Here is what Luke is helping us to see. Godly people all through the book of Luke recognize Jesus for who He is: the Son of God, the Messiah, their Redeemer. Simeon rejoices to see this day. Those who come to know and believe in Him understand that He is both Redeemer and Ruler, savior and sovereign, humbled in suffering and worth of glory.

Conclusion True godliness comes through submission to the Scriptures and being shaped by the Word. These two are joined – there cannot be one where there is not the other. Too many today are trying to separate the one from the other. Brothers and sisters, the Spirit is where the Word of God is. They are joined. If you want to experience the fullness of Spirit, you must engraft the Word. It is ever and always, Word and Spirit. They are co-joined in the incarnation. They joined in the Old Testament. They are united in the New Covenant.

Advent is not primarily about a child in a manger, an infant. Even in the gospel accounts, the writers are at pains to point us to Jesus as the Messiah, the fulfillment of the promises, the Redeemer of His people. Have you ever noticed that outside of the gospels, with one possible exception, the birth and infancy of Jesus are never referred to in the New Testament? So we hold up to you this babe, not as sweet infant cooing in a cradle. We hold Him up to you as the promised one, our great Redeemer and Ruler.

Let us worship Christ like Simon – understanding the Scriptures, led by the Spirit, acknowledging His suffering, praising the wide sweep of His mercy to the nations and His marvel of His grace to all people groups.

Pray like this at advent:

Lord, now I am ready to depart from this life in peace, according to your word; for by faith I have seen Your salvation that You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, Jesus, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.