

Preached on 12/22/24 at GBC – Ruston
"Seeing God's Salvation"

Lk.2:21-32

There is no doubt that the birth of the Lord's Christ was prophesied and typified throughout the Scriptures, from the fall of mankind in Adam until His actual birth in time at Bethlehem – *"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."* (Gen.3:15) Jacob (**WHO HAD SEEN THE LORD'S CHRIST**) declared by the Spirit of prophecy concerning *"Judah"* – *"Judah [is] a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him [shall] the gathering of the people [be]."* (Gen.49:9,10) Isaiah declared of the *"Lord's Christ"* – *"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* (Isa.7:14) Of this glorious God-Man, born of a virgin, Isaiah also proclaimed – *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of [his] government and peace [there shall be] no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."* (Isa.9:6,7) In this chapter we are looking at today, the Lord showed Himself faithful to His promise concerning **HIS** Christ – *"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* (Lk.2:6-11) In spite of the **FACT** that the vast majority of **NATIONAL ISRAEL** misunderstood and didn't believe the **NATURE** and **SCOPE** of this spiritual promise, God was faithful to the promise made to *"Abraham's seed"*, sending forth His Christ at the exact moment of His purposed plan – *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."* (Gal.4:4,5) Even though the majority of national Israel remained and died in **UNBELIEF**, those who were God's, being *"taught of God"*, **SAW THE LORD'S CHRIST** – *"It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."* (Jn.6:45-47) We see this truth displayed in this *"just"* man Simeon. The question we all need to ask ourselves and answer is simply this: **Have I Seen God's Salvation?**

After the birth of our Lord and the revelation of that birth to these shepherds, we see our Lord begin His work as His people's Substitute and Surety, fulfilling every *"jot and tittle of the law"* in our place or stead – **Read Vss.21-24. Think about it:** The **FIRST RITE** of God's church set forth in Abraham was "circumcision" – *"This [is] my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall*

circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which [is] not of thy seed.”(Gen.17:10-14) Seeing our Lord was circumcised, He became a debtor to do the whole law – “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.”(Gal.5:3) This rite proved Christ to be “under the law”, and a son of Abraham “according to the flesh.” With Christ this rite of circumcision ceased for those He represented – “For Christ is the END OF THE LAW for righteousness to every one that believeth.”(Rom.10:4) By Christ’s obedience to this rite, He became a debtor to fulfill the whole law as the Surety and Substitute of all those He represented. Therefore Christ freed His church from this rite of circumcision, as well as the entirety of God’s law by His obedience unto death – “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, [it is] evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed [is] every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”(Gal.3:11-14) Christ work as our Surety, Substitute, Mediator, and High Priest REQUIRED His obedience in our stead in all things – “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”(Heb.2:14,15)

But I want us to pay careful attention to the narrative in this story concerning this man Simeon. Look at Vs.25. What we have recorded in these verses is the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the reality of that “**FAITH** which is the gift of God” in this man Simeon. The writer declares of Simeon that he was “just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was **UPON** him.” The word “just” means ‘righteous, innocent, faultless, or guiltless’. The word “devout” means ‘reverencing God’. Simeon was “waiting” which means ‘looking for or expecting’ the “consolation of Israel”, which is a reference to the **MESSIAH** or great comforter of His people. It also tells us the “Holy Ghost was **UPON** him.” In other words, the Holy Spirit was upon him, not in an ordinary or common way as He is with all who are called by grace, but in an extraordinary way by spirit of prophecy. There had been no prophets from Malachi until now, yet with the conception and birth of **THE CHRIST**, prophecy is again present to the Jews in the instances of Zecharias, Elizabeth, Mary the mother of Christ, and in this man Simeon. All of this teaches us that Simeon was a justified sinner, one counted as righteous and devoted to God based on the work of the promised Messiah. Remember what the Scriptures recorded concerning the sinful man LOT – “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed [his] righteous soul from day to day with [their] unlawful deeds;)”(II Pet.2:7,8) This “**JUST MAN**” had a **REVELATION** from God – “And it was **revealed** unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” That word “revealed” means ‘to be Divinely commanded, admonished, or INSTRUCTED’. **Think about this glorious promise:** He wouldn’t die before he had **SEEN** the Lord’s Christ. Though by God-given faith he had rested in the **PROMISED MESSIAH** as His Savior, Redeemer, and Consoler, the Holy Spirit graciously revealed to him that he would physically see the “consolation of Israel”, the **ONE** he had been expecting **BEFORE HE DIED**. **Listen up:** All God’s elect have this same promise: **YOU WILL NOT DIE** until you have seen the Lord’s Christ as “the Lord **OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**”.

One thing we can be assured of as God's children – **THE LORD IS FAITHFUL TO HIS PROMISE**. When I think of God's faithfulness, I always think of Paul's words concerning Abraham, the father of the faithful – *"He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform."* (Rom.4:20,21) Simeon believed God as well, and according to God's faithfulness the time has come for him to **SEE** *"the Lord's Christ."* Look at **Vs.27-** The Spirit who had revealed the promise to Simeon now moved him to the **TEMPLE** at the exact moment for the promise to be fulfilled. Truly, *"all things work together for good to them who love God, to them who are the called according to His promise."* When Simeon saw this child, this infant, notice his response and his words – *"Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation."* Being overjoyed at God's faithfulness, Simeon took Christ out of their arms, and holding His Messiah in his arms *"blessed God."* That word *"blessed"* means 'to praise, or to celebrate with praises'. By God-given faith, I can imagine the raptured joy that filled old Simeon's heart and mouth with praise, as well as the loving embrace and care with which he held our blessed Lord. Simeon could just have surely said: **I HAVE SEEN MY SALVATION**, but he declared he had seen *"THY SALVATION."* We know it was God's plan and purpose that Simeon saw by his next words – *"Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."* Simeon sees **ALL THIS** in this infant. **HOW CAN THAT BE?** It is only by faith, which is the gift of God – *"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of [them], and embraced [them], and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country."* (Heb.11:13,14) Simeon declared that God's salvation is that *"which was prepared before the face of all people."* Paul wrote of this **PREPARATION** by our God – *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, [even] the hidden [wisdom], which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known [it], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed [them] unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."* (I Cor.2:7-10) The word translated *"prepared"* and *"hath prepared"* means 'to send men to clear and level the road in preparation for the Kings arrival', or better - 'to prepare the minds of men to give the Messiah a fit reception'. God had done this before the **WORLD** by His promises, His Holy Law, all the prophets, and John the Baptist, all pointing to the Messiah as the Savior of the world. But Simeon went further – *"A light to lighten the Gentiles"*, which means that the Messiah was the revelation of His mercy, grace, and love to His people, His chosen seed, even among the Gentiles. The Apostle John made this clear by His language concerning God's salvation – *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for [the sins of] the whole world."* (I Jn.2:1,2) But Simeon didn't stop there – *"and the glory of thy people Israel."* God had promised – *"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."* (Rom.11:26) Even though God's Christ was promised and prophesied about to Israel; even though He came from Israel, was born from the Jews, had taught them, performed miracles among them, yet for the most part Israel rejected Christ. But the Lord graciously reserved a "remnant" among Abraham's natural seed, joining them to His people from every kindred, nation, tongue, and

people, which was truly the “glory of His people Israel” – “Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha.”(Rom.9:29) So all God’s chosen, both Jew and Gentile, owe their salvation to this One glorious person, “the Lord’s Christ”.

Here’s the question: **HAVE YOU SEEN THE LORD’S CHRIST?** I can tell you this much – **IF YOU HAVE NOT SEEN HIM, YOU DO NOT KNOW HIM.** Almighty God has to teach His people about themselves, as well as about Him, and that is exactly what He does by His Holy Spirit under the preaching of His Gospel – “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”(Jn.6:45-47) Turn to Jn.5:36-42. Look at Christ’s words in Jn.17:1-3. Look at Rom.10:13-17. One more passage: II Cor.4:5-7.

Ask yourself this as we close – Have I seen the Lord’s Christ? If by God’s grace you’ve seen Him, you **KNOW HIM** and **LOVE HIM**, and like Simeon, you take Him in your arms of faith as your **ALL** in **ALL**, **PRAISING GOD FOR HIS INFINITE MERCY AND GRACE TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS** – “This [is] a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”(I Tim.1:15)