

August 10, 2003
AM Service
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Undoing Or Greatest Joy?”
Luke 2:25-35a NLT

[At the proper time required by the law, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. For (Luke 2:23-24) the law of the Lord says, "If a woman's first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the Lord." So they offered a sacrifice according to what was required in the law of the Lord.]

25 Now there was a man named Simeon who lived in Jerusalem. He was a righteous man and very devout. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and he eagerly expected the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. 26 The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, 28 Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

29 "Lord, now I can die in peace!
As you promised me,
30 I have seen the Savior
31 you have given to all people.
32 He is a light to reveal God to the nations,
and he is the glory of your people Israel!"

33 Joseph and Mary were amazed at what was being said about Jesus. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, "This child will be rejected by many in Israel, and it will be their undoing. But he will be the greatest joy to many others. 35 Thus, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed...."

Simeon a righteous and very devout man, filled with the Holy Spirit has some amazing things to say about the baby, Jesus, who was being present by Joseph and Mary. He proclaims:

1. (v30-31) that Jesus is the Savior given to all people. To say it another way Jesus is the Savior of the world. The Jews had been promised a Messiah and Simeon now proclaims that Jesus is this Messiah. Jesus alone is the only means of salvation offered by God. (Acts 4:12) Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." There is no other name in all of heaven (or earth) for people to call on to save them." Only Jesus can forgive sin. And He has come for all people – all who believe in Jesus will be saved. (Rom 10:11-13) As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

During one of the busiest times at Houston's Hobby Airport, a flight was delayed due to a mechanical problem. Since they needed the gate for another flight, the aircraft was backed away from the gate while the maintenance crew worked on it. The passengers were then told the new gate number, which was some distance away. Everyone moved to the new gate, only to find that a third gate had been designated. After some further shuffling, everyone got on board. As they were settling in, the flight attendant made the standard announcement, "We apologize for the inconvenience of this last-minute gate change. This flight is going to Washington, D.C. If your destination is not Washington, D.C., then you should 'deplane' at this time." A very confused-looking and red-faced pilot emerged from the cockpit, carrying his bags. "Sorry," he said, "wrong plane." What happens when the pilot does not know where he is headed?

There are people today who are very confused because they have looked to the wrong persons to help them find the meaning they seek. There are hundreds of Religions in today's world. New ones are born every year. Many people are blindly accepting strange theologies --- theologies that will not help them find the life that Jesus offers to you and me --- the Living Bread of God. (Author Unknown)

2. (v32) a light to reveal God and the glory of God's people Israel! He is the glory of Israel because His ministry was to the Jews first. But the OT said that the Gentiles (non-Jews) would see a great light. It described Gentiles as those who are in darkness (i.e.) in sin and in ignorance of God. But Jesus would be a light to them, so that they may become acquainted with God and with God's plan of redemption from sin through the sacrifice of Jesus. That is indeed great news because most of us are Gentiles. "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every person, and it can never be filled by any created thing. It can only be filled by God, made known through Jesus Christ." (Blaise Pascal)

And as Simeon said (v29) now we also like Simeon do not have to fear death. We can even find peace in death, if, like Simeon (v25), we eagerly expect Christ's coming (for Jesus will be returning to the earth to rescue us).

Jesus forgives sin and brings us into a personal relationship with God if we accept and don't reject Jesus.

(v34-35) Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, "This child will be rejected by many in Israel, and it will be their undoing. But he will be the greatest joy to many others...." (v34 NIV) "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many...."

1. First he says that those who reject Jesus as the Savior of the world will fall. The word "fall" here denotes "misery, suffering, disappointment," or "ruin." (from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft). Many expect Jesus to be an earthly or temporal prince. They were disappointed. Many love darkness rather than light and so reject Him and their sin has brought them misery and suffering. Many who are proud don't like His preaching and do not live according to His teaching to their own undoing. And to reject Jesus and not obey His words will ultimately lead to eternal suffering and ruin. But even those who fall can rise for God will forgive when we turn to Him and sincerely seek forgiveness.
2. Though his coming would ruin many because they rejected Him, others would greatly rejoice because in Him they find salvation. Many who humble themselves, and are willing to receive him, would obtain pardon of sin and peace. [This does not mean that those who believe will not experience suffering. Sometimes suffering comes because of our own foolish, sinful behavior. Sometimes we suffer because of the sinful behavior of others. Sometimes we suffer because suffering is just part of living in this world. Ultimately suffering is caused by sin because sin brought suffering into the world. What I mean by that is: when our first parents (Adam & Eve) disobeyed God the world (a paradise) that God created was corrupted and suffering became possible.] But because Jesus is our Source of hope we can "rise" from their sins and sorrows here, and finally, one day, ascend to eternal life.

1 Peter 1:3-7

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade-kept in heaven for you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

“Thus (Simeon says v35), the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed....”

Some are obvious about how much they hate holiness. But in time the deepest thoughts of all hearts will be revealed. And so it is true that, “...no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.” (1 Cor 12:3)

Will Jesus be your undoing or your greatest joy?

Do not reject Jesus to your own undoing. Let Him be your Savior, forgiving your wrongdoing. Let Him be your light, revealing God to you. Let Him be your glory, bring you the greatest joy!