

The Birth of the Savior, Christ, the Lord

Luke 2:1-20

by Pastor Keith Ebrahim

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THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHRISTMAS

Luke 2:25-35

by Pastor Larry Pabiona

Celebrations of Christmas always focus on sweetness and light. They're about how the arrival of Christ means peace on earth. It certainly does, but it's not that simple. Jesus said "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). It doesn't mean that He incites violence. It means that His call to follow brings struggles – among people and within people. Jesus upsets people, and He often causes conflicts and strife. Yet this is the way His peace comes:

1. THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS WILL CAUSE YOU STRUGGLES WITH OTHERS: Verses 34-35a

"This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed."

- Simeon is saying that there is an offensiveness to Jesus, and anyone who identifies with Him will be seen as offensive too. People hate the light for it exposes them for what they are (John 3:19–20). It means we will get hostility for Jesus' sake.
- You don't have to be Jesus to get people furious at being exposed for what they are. Just living an honest, moral life will expose gossip in the office, corruption in government, discrimination in the neighborhood.
- The coming of Jesus into our lives makes us peacemakers, yet it also brings conflict. If you are a committed Christian, then, you will know both the triumphs of peacemaking and the heartbreak of opposition (Psalm 120:7).

2. THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS WILL CAUSE YOU STRUGGLES WITHIN YOURSELF: verse 35b

"And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

- If Jesus is truly your Lord, a sword will pass through your heart too. There will be inner struggles, sometimes confusion, and sometimes pain. You may fight with Him or with yourself. The new peace Christ brings doesn't come without inner struggle in two ways:
 - 1) God's peace comes after the inner struggle of repentance.
 - 2) God's peace comes after the inner struggle of submission.
- How can we get the resolve to face the "sword" of trials and difficulties? By seeing how Jesus got the resolve to face the ultimate sword for us (Isaiah 53:8). The sword that passed through Jesus, the battle that he fought for us, was infinitely greater than anything He asks us to endure. When He faced His final moment, and the sword was descending, He was utterly alone (Matthew 27:46). When we walk through our difficulties however, we are not alone. He always walks with us. Let's not give in to self-pity or cowardice
- What if Mary had said, "I don't want a sword in my soul"? What if Jesus had said, "I don't want a sword in my soul! I don't want to bring peace that way" where would you and I be? Don't shrink back. Follow Him to peace.

Final Thoughts:

Christmas teaches us that Christians should not give in to self-pity. Nor should they be shortsighted, because the ultimate results of these struggles are deeper peace and joy.

No one should ever seek suffering. But if you do go through suffering and put more trust in Him, you will find a kind of joy, strength of character, and power that can come to you in no other way.