

WEEKLY SERMON

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Let's see lives changed for the better in 2024

Luke 2:22-36

It's nearly new year! I'm not sure where 2023 has gone.

Today we look at the later end of the nativity story where, for the participants and especially Simeon, this is not start of a new year but a new start in the history of our world, the arrival of our Saviour.

But what an arrival, God decided that His Son Jesus should be born, in effect, homeless in a stable.

His birth announced by angels to working class men, the shepherds, who are the first to spread the good news. This is astounding stuff; but just imagine what the orthodox Jews made of it!

They revere God so much they won't even say His name. Their God is so powerful that He created all there is, one word from Him and cities and nations are destroyed. The promised Messiah they're expecting will be a King with a programme to carry out; a decision-maker and man of action.

He will carry out a royal programme that will astound the world, free them from the Roman oppression and bring Glory back to the children of Israel.

But, in reality, Jesus will be the Prince of Peace who will rule in righteousness forever.

He will bring, if only people will follow Him, wholeness and wellbeing both to them and to their society. He has the power to destroy but prefers to heal, He calms storms, casts out demons, heals the sick, feeds the hungry, offers salvation and eternal life rather than destroying cities and peoples.

In Luke 2: 28-32 we read of Simeon's reaction to the arrival.

Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."

The Nunc Dimittis commonly used at Evening prayer is perhaps an apt reading for the year's end. Our main Christmas celebrations have ended, maybe many new faces have been seen at our carol service.

Christmas morning or midnight Communion; or maybe those people we only see occasionally at special occasions attended.

Let's hope that this message of Simeon will become relevant to them and that with prayer and encouragement their lives may be changed for the better as we start our new year. Happy New Year!

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