

Weekly Reflection – Can You Trust This Baby? “Christ”

Luke 2:22-35

“Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” Luke 2:25 ESV

Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel. Consolation means comfort, console, encourage or refresh, to come along beside to console or comfort. What or who is the consolation of Israel? ***“And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.” (Luke 2:26 ESV)*** The consolation of Israel is “the Lord’s Christ.” They were waiting for Christ the Messiah.

The word Christ is a title or an office of Jesus. Christ is not Jesus’ last name. Both the Old Testament word “Messiah” and the New Testament word “Christ” mean the Anointed One, and it’s drawn from the Old Testament where God anointed certain persons for special responsibility in His kingdom. Now in the Old Testament there were three particular offices that were anointed, or set apart, for unique elevated service in the kingdom. They were anointed with oil. Oil was poured on their heads as a symbol of being set apart to God.

First, it was the prophets. We see this, for example, in 1 Kings 19:16 where Elijah is told to anoint his successor the prophet Elisha. We see it in 1 Chronicles 16:22 where we read, “saying, “Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm!” Second group that were anointed were priests. In Exodus 29 you have Aaron and those who were in the priesthood, instructed to be anointed. In Exodus 40:15, the sons of Aaron were to be anointed again as priests unto God. And the third particular office that received anointing was that of the king. 1 Samuel 10:1, Saul, the first king, was anointed. 1 Samuel 16, David was anointed. 1 Kings chapter 1, Solomon was anointed.

The Heidelberg Catechism gives a good summary: Question 31: Why is he called “Christ,” meaning “anointed”? Answer: Because he has been ordained by God the Father and has been anointed with the Holy Spirit to be our chief prophet and teacher who fully reveals to us the secret counsel and will of God concerning our deliverance; our only high priest who has delivered us by the one sacrifice of his body, and who continually pleads our cause with the Father; and our eternal king who governs us by his Word and Spirit, and who guards us and keeps us in the freedom he has won for us.

Jesus is Christ: Jesus is the Prophet who reveals God, He is the Priest who reconciles us to God, and He is the King who reigns as God.

Hebrews 1:1-4

Prophet

Jesus is the ultimate prophet who reveals God. God had to speak. We could not know Him if He did not speak; and He did. I love how this simply says, “God spoke.” The true God, not an idol, not a dumb piece of wood or rock, not an impersonal cause, not an indifferent power; but God has spoken, which means He is a person, and He has spoken. And that is why the Bible is called the Word of God.

Look at John 1: ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*** Speaking of Jesus. So, we know the Word was God. Go down to verse 14: ***“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”*** Full truth is revealed in Him. Verse 18: ***“No one has ever seen God; God the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.”*** In Jesus God is fully revealed, and

the New Testament is written about this full revelation. The New Testament's all about Jesus Christ who is the full revelation of God. "He is the image of the invisible God" and "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,"

Priest

Jesus is the ultimate Priest who reconciles us to God. Go back to verse 3 of Hebrews 1: ***"after making purification of sins."*** This introduces us to His priestly work. That what priests did in the Old Testament, they went before God in the prescribed way to offer the necessary sacrifice that God required to pay for the sins of the people. But the writer of Hebrews wants us to understand there's never been a priest like this one. ***"Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."*** (Hebrews 2:17 ESV) Propitiation is satisfaction. He offered a sacrifice that satisfied God. No priest ever did that. All the other priests had to go year after year to offer more sacrifices, and those sacrifices never satisfied the wrath of God. Those sacrifices all pointed at this One sacrifice that would be made that did satisfy the wrath of God against our sin. ***"But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption."*** (Hebrews 9:11-12 ESV) ***"Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."*** (Hebrews 9:25-26 ESV) He's not just a priest, but He is the Priest who offered Himself as the sacrifice.

King

Jesus is the ultimate King who reigns as God. The end of verse 3, ***"He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."*** He sat down at the right hand, the power side of the Majesty on high; He took His rightful place. ***"that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come."*** (Ephesians 1:20-21 ESV) As the book of Revelation says, He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He reigns as the eternal King.

The already and the not yet.

Maybe at this point you're thinking, well if He is the King of kings then why is the world still functioning the way it is? Why is there still evil? Why are evil people still doing evil acts? Why is there still sickness and death? This is where we must understand there's an already and a not yet. He is right now the King, and the day is coming when every knee shall bow, when every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. There's an already and a not yet. His Kingdom already exists. We're already His people. He is already our King. But there is a day coming in which His kingdom will be fully realized.

The already but not yet tells us there's certain things we're not going to have in this world that we desperately desire. We want to see peace on earth, goodwill to men. We want to see all things made right. We want to see every tear wiped away. And that day is coming, but it's not here yet. One of the great things about knowing that Jesus is our King, is knowing that everything will eventually be made right according to His Lordship. We all long for our righteous King of kings to finally put an end to the evil that is the cause of such misery and grief in our lives and in our world.

So, is this cruel? Is it cruel of God to make us wait for the full reality of His Kingdom? It is not cruel. It is grace, it is patience, it is love. The reason for Jesus waiting to return to establish His Kingdom in its

fullness is because there are still rebels that He desires to bring into His Kingdom. For a holy and righteous King to return and establish His Kingdom and reign in all of His fullness is not good news for many. It is right for us to long for Jesus's reign over all rebellious reality. But it is also right to think of Christmas as a day to overflow with gratitude and celebrate the fact that Jesus came to make us righteous before assuming His reign.

How do we wait?

Did Jesus come as the Christ, the ultimate prophet, priest, and king and then ascend to the right hand of God leaving us in the same predicament as Simeon and the Jews of that day? Waiting for Jesus to come again? Waiting for the full reign of Jesus as King of kings? Yes, we are waiting for Jesus to return, but we are not waiting the same way as the Jews of that day were waiting. Listen to Jesus as He talks to His disciples (and us) right before His death, resurrection, and ascension. ***"These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper (Comforter), the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."* (John 14:25-27 ESV)** That word for Helper or Comforter is the same word for consolation. Yes, we are waiting, and yes there continues to be hurt, loss, sickness, evil, and death. But we are not waiting alone. Jesus has sent God the Holy Spirit to be our Comforter, our Helper, our Encourager, as we walk through the ups and downs of this life eagerly waiting for the return of King Jesus. We wait, but we wait in victory. We wait, but we don't wait afraid. We wait full of the peace and joy of Jesus. We wait full of the power of the Holy Spirit to bring more rebels into the Kingdom of God.