

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas  
"Marveling with Mary and Joseph" Luke 2:33  
December 25, 2024  
Rev. Ed Weber

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas is from our Gospel reading, Luke 2:33.

**“And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.”**

So far the text...

What do people marvel at? Since 1939 Marvel Comics have been written about superheroes that people marvel at. You may know a few like: Spider-Man, Iron Man, Wolverine, Captain America, Black Widow, Thor, Hulk, Daredevil, Doctor Strange, Black Panther, Captain Marvel, and Deadpool, as well as popular superhero teams such as the Avengers, X-Men, Fantastic Four, and Guardians of the Galaxy. Any favorites?

Some people prefer to marvel at great structures or statues. Since 2001 when a poll was conducted, these became the 7 new wonders of the world.

Giza Pyramids	2560 BC		
Great Wall of China	700 BC		
Petra Ma'an, Jordan	312 BC		
Colosseum	Rome, Italy	80 AD	
Chichén Itzá	Yucatán, Mexico	600 AD	
Machu Picchu	Cuzco Region, Peru	Machu Picchu in Peru	1450 AD
Taj Mahal	Agra, India	Taj	1643 AD
Christ the Redeemer	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil		1931 AD

Jesus made the list, though in statue form, that is. Of course, any man-made structure or carving has no power to marvel at or help you with. But Mary and Joseph weren't holding a statue in their arms when they entered the temple. They were holding a 40-day old baby. A real baby! But more than that, an elderly man was directed by the Holy Spirit to them and told them more about this baby. For He was the Lord's Christ. The Anointed

Messiah sent from heaven. As the angel Gabriel had told Mary, He was the Holy One, the Son of God.

**“And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 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.”**

Simeon was declared just and righteous before God by faith in the Lord’s Christ, THE Consolation of Israel. We don’t know much about Simeon, but what is important we do know. He was righteous before God. “The just shall live by faith”. This was the passage that turned the light on for the Gentile Luther from Romans 1:17.

We hear Jesus described as the everlasting consolation in 2 Thessalonians 2:

**“16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, 17 comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.” (2 Thessalonians 2:16-17)**

Everlasting consolation is what Simeon had and what every believer in Jesus has. Peace with God. And with this everlasting consolation, Simeon was ready to depart. A justified person is always ready to die. So, we sing a special song each Sunday which speaks of our readiness to depart.

What did Simeon say that made Joseph and Mary marvel? Simeon’s song. It is our Nunc Dimittis, meaning, “Now You let depart”.

He had received a promise that he would not depart from this world until He saw the Lord’s Christ. Does God always keep His promises? Of course. He was so glad that the day had finally arrived that Simeon would see the Savior with his own eyes.

What made Joseph and Mary marvel anew, and also you and me?

First, here was another witness that their baby was the Messiah! God raised up another messenger to reinforce this good news to Joseph and Mary. A total stranger. Yet, another sent by God, like Gabriel, Elizabeth, like Zacharias, like the shepherds, like the Wise Men who would still come. Each explaining the Gospel – the Good News- more and more.

**“Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word;  
30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation.”**

Second marvel - the peace which the angels spoke of this “peace on earth” is truly a peace that is received by faith and treasured. A believer in this Child can truly die in peace -peace with God that one’s sins are purged away through Jesus, as we heard in Hebrews 1 on Christmas.

Third marvel - This peace is for all people.

**Simeon: “For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,”**

Once again, Simeon told them what the angels told the shepherds,

**Angel: “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.”**

Fourth marvel: This good news is specifically proclaimed to the Gentiles. Gentiles weren’t mentioned by name by Gabriel, Zacharias or Elizabeth. They are given preference here in Simeon’s song! They are spoken of first. A light, THE Light Jesus, this Child shines to them! ...and on the people of Israel, from whom the Messiah came.

**“A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”**

Now, how could this marvelous work be achieved? The Holy Spirit leads Simeon to tell Mary, Joseph and each of us how. It is truly the opposite of what people would marvel at, but it is God’s marvelous work of salvation!

**“34 Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against”**

This Child, this First Born of Mary, and only begotten of the Father, causes all people to either rise or fall. For either Christ’s sacrifice on the cross for the sins of the world is foolishness or your great consolation.

We remember how the first born of Israel were saved by the blood of the lamb on the doorpost in Egypt. They were the Lord's. And so, Mary and Joseph went to present their first born to God. Yet, this first born was indeed the Lamb whose shed blood saved all people.

**“(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”**

The sword would pierce Jesus physically and spiritually, and it would also give much suffering to Jesus' mother to watch her Son be crucified.

A person's attitude to Jesus' person, Word and work, reveals the thoughts of a person's heart. For the believer in Jesus, His death is for his or her rising - for the unbeliever his or her eternal falling. One of those crucified with Jesus believed and was with Him in paradise that same day. The other contradicted Jesus and would not believe. And he fell to the depths of hell.

Yes, some of the Jews spoke against Jesus. It was for their spiritual fall. They persecuted and wanted to kill Jesus because He did not keep the Sabbath and made Himself equal to God. **“He came to His own but His own received Him not.”** We heard on Christmas day from John 1. They spoke against Him. They contradicted Him.

“What Child is this” we sing in a Christmas hymn, LSB 370. Verse two says:

*2      Why lies He in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here The silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce Him through, The cross be borne for me, for you;  
Hail, hail the Word made flesh, The babe, the son of Mary!*

The Word made flesh is pleading that you would hail Him as your Savior for your eternal rising to heaven through His death and resurrection! This is God's will that all men be saved. Jesus spoke these words to the Jews later in His ministry in John 6.

**“And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”**

Yes, the angels sang of God's good will to the shepherds: “Peace on earth and good will to men”.

But if God's good will and favor are rejected then there is a consequence. There is a consequent will that every man should fear to face. John 3:19 tells us.

**“19 And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John 3:19**

Condemnation – the eternal falling to hell is the consequence of the rejection of Jesus. May God ever keep us from falling by hearing His Word and receiving His blessed sacraments! May God keep us ever marveling at His great work of salvation. So, we read Psalm 98 on Christmas.

**“Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory.” Psalm 98:1**

**Psalm 139:14**

**I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well.**

Jesus Himself said:

**Matthew 21:42**

**Jesus said to them, “Have you never read in the Scriptures: ‘The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the Lord’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes’?**

Jesus’ death and His resurrection are marvelous in our eyes through faith as they were in Simeon’s eyes! And we proclaim Jesus’ death as we eat this bread and drink this cup in the Lord’s Supper for it is His very body and blood given and shed for your forgiveness.

As we receive the Lord’s Supper today, like Simeon, we receive the Consolation of Israel in our hearts. We receive peace in our hearts that our sins are forgiven. “Peace of the Lord be with you” is said by the pastor after the Words of Institution are spoken. And the Gentiles reply “Amen”. It is true. It is true for me. I may depart in peace according to Your Word. For Your Word says “Take and eat this is My Body”. What Body is this? Christ’s body. Take and drink this is My blood. What blood is this? Christ’s blood...for the remission of your sins.

So, we too have seen His marvelous light and proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness.

**1 Peter 2:9**

**But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;**

Simeon's song is our song. Hanna's song is our song...to the praise and glory of God. Merry Christmastide! Amen.

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**