

The Hope of the World

Luke 2:31-32

When Simeon takes Jesus into his arms at the Temple forty days after the Messiah's birth, he utters a prayer/blessing that communicates his understanding of the Person and work of Jesus. *"My eyes have seen Your salvation* (a personal statement of faith in the Messiah), *which You (God) have prepared in the presence of all peoples* (laos), *a light of revelation to the nations* (ethnos)." Peoples and nations are synonymous words that refer to the world. These words about Jesus give to us our motive for missions.

I. Jesus is the *only Deliverer* for all the people groups of this world.

In the age of political correctness, we tend to think of Jesus as the God of Western peoples. God's plan is that Christ be known, praised, and enjoyed by all the peoples of the earth, not just the West. *"The gospel will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations"* (Matthew 24:14). Jesus once asked His disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" "And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets" (Matthew 16:13-15). Jesus said, "Who do you say that I am?" Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus said, *"Upon this rock I will build the church and the gates of hell will not prevail"* (Matt. 16:18). There is but Savior, the "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). "He who has the Son has life, and he who has not the Son does not have life" (1 John 5:12). This is why missions is absolutely necessary. Jesus came to save the nations. He came to deliver the world.

II. Jesus will not fail in bringing *all the people of the world* to praise Him.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" (Matthew 28:18). This is why Jesus can say "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail" (Matt. 16:18). He binds the enemy.

(A). Progress is being made ... According to one research group (JoshuaProject.net) there 16,597 people groups (ethnos) in the world and only 6,916 have not been "reached." In 1900 there were only about 50,000 evangelicals in Latin America. Today there are over 100 million. That's a growth rate 20,000% faster than the population growth. Over 100 years ago there were no Christian churches in Korea. Today there are 6,000 churches in the city of Seoul alone. My friend David Garrison has just written a book called "A Wind in the House of Islam." He spent 3 years and traveled 225,000 miles and discovered 60 new movements of Muslim followers of Jesus. In the previous 14 centuries there had only be one. Something is happening in the Muslim world,

(B). We are used by Christ in this mission ... We are those who have seen "the glory of God in the face of Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). We cherish "God in Christ" (Phil. 3:8) as the supreme value of our lives ("devout" v. 25). He is for all "tribes, languages, peoples and ethnic groups" (Rev. 5:9; 7:9).

(C). Our trust in God's sovereignty encourages us ... Any motivation for evangelism and missions is birthed in the knowledge that God has His people in all the nations. He delivers His people from all ethnic groups (Rev. 5:9). The fathers of the modern mission movement (David Brainerd, William Carey, and Jonathan Edwards) all had firm convictions in God's sovereignty in salvation.

III. Jesus is calling each of us to play a role in bearing witness of Him to the nations.

Missions is not the part and portion of the hired guns in evangelical Christianity. If you know the Messiah, you are commissioned to be a part of the mission of bringing the Good News to the world. For some that is going, for others it is giving. For some it is teaching, for others it is serving. All of us who claim the name of Christ should be thinking about our involvement in bringing the presence of Christ through faith to all the "peoples and nations." Let's keep on keeping on here at Emmanuel.