

THE TWELVE VOICES OF



**CHRISTMAS**

— WOODROW KROLL —

The Twelve Voices of Christmas  
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# SIMEON

## VOICE OF PEACE

LUKE 2:25-35

*Simeon, who longed for peace, found it in the form of a baby – God’s promised Prince of Peace. Having seen this child, the salvation of God, he rejoiced that he could now die in peace. In an outburst of praise, he prophesied that this salvation would extend to all peoples of the world.*

I was so tired that I wanted to die. My country was in chaos, and my people were steeped in sin and rebellion against the Lord. I longed for righteousness and – most of all – peace.

We were a conquered country, subject to the Romans. Sixty years before, when General Pompeii marched in and subdued our land, we knew that we had fallen to a sophisticated military power. The Romans became entrenched in our country. They set up camps, built fortresses and dug artificial harbors. No one liked them. We didn’t want them here, but it was evident that they intended to stay.

Surprisingly, in many ways they treated us with respect. They allowed us to continue to practice our religion and to build synagogues. We were exempt from service in the Roman army, and they did not force us to violate our Sabbath. On the other hand, they confiscated our homes, violated our women and demoralized our nation. There was no peace in our land, and there wouldn’t be as long as the Romans were there.

But I hadn’t lost hope. In the midst of all the darkness, degradation and despair, there was a small group of us, men and

women, earnestly anticipating a day when Israel would be free from the Romans. God had promised to bring blessing, comfort, joy and peace to us in the Person of the Messiah. Our oppression intensified our longing for the One who would deliver us. We called this “waiting for the consolation of Israel.”

I was just an ordinary man, not a priest, not even a Levite. I had no place of importance, either to the temple or to my nation. But I was honest in my dealings with others and conscientious in carrying out the duties God had assigned me.

My sorrow for my nation was so deep and so painful that I made a special request to God. “Please, don’t let my eyes close in death until I have seen the promised Messiah. Please let me see the salvation of Israel.” The Holy Spirit then gave me a significant promise: You will not die until you see Him.

One day I felt drawn to go to the temple. I hadn’t planned to be there that day, but I soon found myself walking through its courts.

While I was there, one particular young couple with a baby caught my attention. I

started walking toward them. Obviously they were there for the mother's purification and the child's presentation. It was common to see parents bring their babies there for that purpose.

Suddenly I knew – somehow I just knew – this baby was the Messiah. Only the Spirit of God could have revealed this to me.

I looked the young mother in the eye and asked, "Dear sister, would you let me hold your child?" After a quick glance toward the man and an affirming nod from him, she looked at me and gently handed me her baby. I took Him in my arms and held Him close to my chest. My eyes filled with tears.

I then held Him with both hands, high in the air, and began to praise God. "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation."

Until that day I had felt like a servant who had been told by his master to go to a high place and watch for the appearance of a special star. I had watched through long, wearisome hours during the dark night, and now, finally, I had seen the star.

I knew that this baby was the salvation of God. And in the midst of my praise, God showed me something new. His light, His salvation, would shine beyond the Jewish nation in its present oppression. His light would shine so brightly that all nations would see it.

When I finished praying, my beard was wet with my tears. I handed the infant

back to His mother. Both parents looked amazed. Perhaps they were surprised and delighted that God had revealed this secret to me. Perhaps it was because my words of praise had given them a clearer understanding of the divine majesty of their baby.

They introduced themselves as Joseph and Mary, and their baby was named Jesus. They told me about the message of the angel to Mary concerning the conception of the child. They told me of the assurance an angel had given Joseph. They told me about Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and about the shepherds who came to worship Him. They told about the angel's message to the shepherds – the announcement that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem.

We had been speaking of glorious thing. But God then gave me a message for the couple, which gave another side of the picture. The salvation this child would bring would be purchased at a high cost. He would bring out all the evil concealed in the hearts of wicked men. And Mary would have her heart pierced again and again by the sorrows she would witness and experience. This child, Jesus, was to be a stumbling block to some, but a stepping stone to others.

I had looked for peace – in life and as I looked toward death. I did not live in a peaceful land, nor in a peaceful time in history. Still, I could be one of the twelve voices of Christmas – the voice of peace – for on that wonderful day in the temple, I held the only One who could bring real peace to the world. At last, after seeing Him, I was ready to die in peace.