

I. Intro

A. Today, we finish our advent study

1. Walked slowly through the first chapters of Luke
2. Themes surfaced from the first advent and resurface on the eve of the second
 - a) The unexpected nature of advent
 - b) The transformative nature of advent
 - c) The glorious message of advent (come and see vs go and tell)
3. These themes help us behold, celebrate, and prepare

B. On this Christmas Eve, I'd like to examine one final theme

1. Present in a very real way during the first advent
2. Must be present in a very real way as we await the second advent
3. What is this theme – obedience

II. Text

A. Luke 2:21-24

1. We begin today, one week after Jesus was born
 - a) According to Lev 12:3, a male child was circumcised 8 days after birth
 - b) Circumcision actually dates back to Abraham [Gen 17:12]
 - c) Symbol that marked God's people – showed a literal cutting away of flesh
 - d) The core message – following God means cutting away flesh
2. Immediately following the circumcision, we have two more ceremonies
 - a) Ex 13:2 tells us, every firstborn male belonged to God
 - b) Lev 12:1-8 tells us, a woman who gives birth must offer purification sacrifices
 - (1) Can offer a lamb, or if she is poor, she can offer turtledoves and pigeons
 - c) Vs 22-24 capture both ceremonies – child dedication and mother purification
3. Why is Luke giving us this detail?
 - a) To show Christ's obedience in fulfilling the law on our behalf [Mt 5:17]
 - b) To show the obedience of God's people during the first advent
 - (1) Jesus was circumcised and dedicated because his parents obeyed the Lord
 - (2) Mary brought sacrifices because she obeyed the Lord

4. *If the people of the first advent cherished God's word AND obeyed it...*
 - a) *What can we say of the people of the second advent?*
 - b) *We have no sacrificial laws to fulfill – Christ has accomplished that for us*
 - c) *But don't we have commands to obey? – **Colossians 3:1-10***
 - d) *We have second advent commands we must obey*

B. Luke 2:25-33

1. While Jesus' parents are at the temple, they meet a man named Simeon
 - a) Was righteous and devout – patiently waiting for advent
 - b) Had the Spirit of God and a promise – “you won't die until you see Messiah”
 - c) The Spirit leads Simeon to the Temple – Simeon obeys...and beholds the child
 - d) What is Luke's headline – Simeon obeys the Lord and is rewarded
2. *Thirteen verses in and we have 4 people walking in obedience*
 - a) *Obedience is a cornerstone theme of the first advent*
 - b) *Obedience is cornerstone theme of the second advent – **John 14:15-31***
 - c) *Obedience is a cornerstone theme because it reveals what we truly love*

C. Luke 2:34-40

1. Luke shows us another person marked by obedience – Anna the prophetess
 - a) A widow who spent her time in worship, prayer, and fasting
 - b) Her lifestyle at the temple made it possible to behold the Christ
 - c) What is Luke's headline – Anna obeys the Lord and is rewarded
2. *We now have 5 people demonstrating obedience in the first advent*
 - a) *Span all ages and seasons of life – kids, parents, families, widows, elderly*
 - b) *Obedience is on display and so is another theme – reward!*
 - c) *Obedience is rewarded at the first advent AND at the second advent*
 - (1) “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. – **Rev 22:12**
 - (2) Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. – **2 Tim 4:8**

(3) Each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. – **1 Cor 3:13-14**

III. Conclusion

A. *Let's zoom out and examine the picture Luke is painting for us*

1. *The first advent is marked with obedience and reward*
 - a) *People of all ages, devoted to God and obeying His Word*
 - b) *These people are then rewarded for their obedience*
2. *The second advent is also marked with obedience and reward*
 - a) *Christ is coming back and He will reward the faithful and punish the wicked*
 - b) *The question before us today is simple – are you walking in obedience?*
 - c) *Does your life reflect the same obedience seen in the first advent?*
3. *If not, I'd like to draw your attention to Simeon's prophecy once more [vs 34-35]*
 - a) *This child is appointed for the fall and rising of many, for a sign opposed*
 - b) *Many hearts will be revealed, and He will be like a sword that pierces your soul*
 - c) *You can't avoid or outrun His return – He is coming to judge the hearts of men*
 - (1) *You can surrender now, walk in obedience, and reap a reward*
 - (2) *Or, you can continue walking in disobedience and suffer at His return*
 - d) *Either way, He is living and active, dividing the soul and spirit, discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart*

B. *The second advent is nearer than you can imagine*

1. *Joel 2:31 describes it as great for some, and terrible for others*
 - a) *It is great for those who cut away the flesh (repent) and walk in obedience*
 - b) *It is terrible for those who blazed their own path, disobeyed and rebelled*
2. *Luke's advent question for us today – How will the second advent look for you?*