

Luke 2: 25-32 (ESV): The Song of Simeon

Main point: You are close to God, “included.”



Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: This is the fourth ancient “advent hymn” from Luke’s gospel story of Jesus’ birth, according to Christian tradition:

1. Mary’s Magnificat
2. Zechariah’s blessing after the birth of his son, John the Baptist
3. the Angels’ “Gloria in excelsis”
4. Song of Simeon

Eight days after Jesus’ birth, according to Jewish law, his parents took him to the temple for a ritual of purification (actually for Mary) and presentation:

And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord...

Focus of study:

²⁵ 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. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to Simeon by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ²⁷ And Simeon came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents Mary and Joseph brought in the child Jesus, to do for Jesus according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸ Simeon took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

²⁹ “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation

³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.”

Questions:

1. How does the writer (Luke) describe Simeon? v. 25:
 - a. Righteous – follows Jewish law
 - b. Devout – *what does “devout” mean?*
 - i. Loves God, thinking about God all the time
 - c. Waiting “for the consolation of Israel” – *who were the Jews waiting for, for centuries?*
 - i. The Messiah! The promise of a Savior for the people
 - d. Holy Spirit “is upon” Simeon – *I wonder what that means?*
 - e. *Just to speculate: How old do you think Simeon is at this time, based on what we see so far?*

- i. Old! Most likely at least in his 80s. Faithful year after year, cherishing the hope given to the Jews by the Old Testament prophets.
2. *What was the promise that God gave Simeon?*
 - a. v. 26: Simeon would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ, the Messiah
3. *Then what happens?*
 - a. v. 27: Simeon is in the temple, and he sees Mary and Joseph with Jesus
4. *What does Simeon do?*
 - a. v. 28: Takes Jesus in his arms
 - b. Blesses God!
5. *Let's read again Simeon's "song" to God (v. 29-32). How would you put this in your own words?*
 - a. "Thank you, God! Now I can die happy and peaceful, because you've fulfilled your promise: I've seen the Messiah, the Savior, that you, God, have sent."
6. *Who is the salvation for? v. 32:*
 - a. a light for revelation to the Gentiles
 - b. for glory to Your people Israel
7. *Who does that include then, in the world?*
 - a. EVERYONE! Jews ... and everyone else.
 - b. *Was this the normal understanding of Jews at that time?* No – everyone who was not Jewish, not part of the chosen people, were "outside" God's plan.
8. *So what do we see about God's heart here? Who does God love, bless, and save?*
 - a. EVERYONE – This Messiah's mission is to break down walls between people and God.
9. *What makes you feel "part" of God, "close" to God, included in his love ... or far away? (Use these for prayers.)*

[OPTIONAL:] Here's an interesting thing: the people who first see and rejoice in God's long-awaited Messiah, God's fulfilled promise from the Old Testament, are OLD:

- John the Baptist's parents, Zechariah and Elizabeth (we looked at them a couple of weeks ago): an old, devout couple who raise the last prophet of Jesus' arrival.
- Simeon and Anna, two old, devout people in the temple who welcome Jesus.

But the parents of this promise, the ones who raise Jesus in a devout Jewish household, are Mary and Joseph: very YOUNG. Old people and young people, like bookends around Jesus' birth.

Why are these bookends important? What does it mean that old people and new people welcome Jesus?

- "For [the writer] Luke, the era of the law and the prophets has grown old like Simeon and Anna and is passing away. Christ and the message of his kingdom have come. Nevertheless Christ does not come to abolish [God's Old Testament promise] but to fulfill it. There is continuity with the old." The devout old saints, Simeon and Anna, rejoice in this new vision of God's promise: to bless and save ALL people.¹

- Ask for any other prayer requests for today.
- Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
- End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

¹ <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/simeons-farewell-to-the-world>

Luke 2:25-38

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