

Simeon Says: Wait

Luke 2:22-35

Simeon awoke every morning with the imminent hope he would see the Messiah.

Does that sound like anyone you know? Christians in the Church Age awake to the imminence of Jesus' return to resurrect and rapture us.

One day, and we don't know how many days it was after Simeon initially received the prophecy, *that day came*. God the Holy Spirit directed him to the Temple. His excitement must have been palpable.

Undoubtedly others knew of the prophecy. Seeing Simeon, with an extra bounce in his step, they may have followed him.

"There He is," God's Spirit announced. Where? Is it that guy? Is it that guy?

"Simeon - He is that 40-day old in the arms of His teen mother."

It is a good bet Simeon figured that, when he saw the Messiah, it would be 'deliver'n time,' *not* diaper'n time. We are so familiar with the Christmas story that we assume Israel was waiting for a baby to be born. They were not.

Simeon, however, was anything but disappointed. He blessed the little family, then went away hopeful.

Throughout the Bible we find God working in unusual ways that we could never predict. Sending a baby to do a Messiah's job isn't strange for Him:

- He sent a stutterer to be His voice to Pharaoh.
- The youngest, least obvious teenager was His choice for King.

His work in your life will be no less unusual. It is His signature as the craftsman who is completing His good work in you.

Brother Andrew put it this way: *"I am a fool for Christ. Whose fool are you?"*

With that under our belt, so to speak, let's take this wonderful passage verse-by-verse.

"Simeon Says, "Wait"

Do you think of little Jesus like Boss Baby - an infant with the mind of an adult? We sing, *Mary, Did You Know?* The better question might be, "Jesus, what did *You* know?"

The subject of how Jesus processed the world as an infant isn't discussed in Scripture. The only appropriate verses I can think of are in the Gospel of Luke where the baby in Elizabeth's womb, John the Baptist, "leapt" when Mary came to visit pregnant with Jesus. He and cousin Jesus were definitely not normal babies.

If we are careful doing so, I think we can make a few suggestions as to how Jesus would look back upon His infancy.

Luk 2:22 Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord

Luk 2:23 (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "EVERY MALE WHO OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),

Luk 2:24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."

The Law God gave to Moses when Israel exodus-ed Egypt required Jesus be circumcised (Leviticus 12:3), and presented as their firstborn to God (Exodus 13:2 & 12). It was also necessary to bring an offering for Mary's purification after childbirth (Leviticus 12:1-8). Jesus would be 40-days old when Simeon encountered Him. .

As a newborn, Jesus kept every requirement under the Law thanks to the obedience of Joseph and Mary. We are informed in the Book of Hebrews that Jesus "learned obedience" (5:8). It means that He was fully immersed in being human. As a Jew, He must obey the Law. He would throughout His lifetime perfectly obey God and the Law of God, first with the needed assistance of godly parents, then on His own. Both in the womb and now 40-days having emerged from it, the Lord had not only fulfilled prophecies of His virgin birth, but was perfect. Jesus learned to walk in holiness before He learned to crawl as a toddler.

Luk 2:25 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.

In the Gospel of John, we are told that Jesus "came to His own." He came to Israel, as their "Consolation," i.e., the Messiah. His own, however, received Him not. That is an understated way of reporting that they hated Him and had Jesus crucified.

Towards the end of His earthly ministry, Jesus lamented over the Jews in Jerusalem. He said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37).

Every Jew could have been a Simeon.

Jesus is the Savior of all men, especially those who believe. He draws all men to himself by the agency of the cross. God is not willing that any perish, but all come to eternal life. Whoever believes in Him will not perish, but have everlasting life.

The leadership hardened their hearts and resisted the grace of God. Yes, God's grace *is* resistible. The first Christian martyr, Stephen, substantiated it when he accused these same Jews, saying, "You always resist the Holy Spirit" (Acts 7:51).

But there was Simeon; and there were others like him, believers. This would greatly encourage Jesus in His mission, just as it would any of us with a mission, to find faithful followers.

Simeon was "just and devout." The two words summarize Simeon's walk on Earth:

- Towards men, he was motivated to do what was "just," meaning *right*.
- Towards God, he was devoted above all other persons or things.

This is another way of saying, " 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is *the* first and great commandment. And *the* second *is* like it: 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' "(Matthew 22:37-40).

It is always a good idea to reflect upon your love for God. It can easily wane as we wait for Him. Not always out of disobedience. We can leave love for Jesus in the dust of our zeal to serve Him.

As for “your neighbor,” Jesus told a parable, The Good Samaritan, so that we would not ask, “Who is my neighbor?”, but, “Whose neighbor am I?” You are everyone’s neighbor, to do good to them and thereby glorify God. You make the invisible God, visible.

“Consolation” sounds weird to English ears. I immediately think of a consolation prize for losers. We describe someone as inconsolable.

Simeon used it hopefully. The nation would be consoled when the Deliverer came:

- He would deliver them from the oppression of other nations.
- More importantly, He would deliver Jews and Gentiles from the oppression of the malevolent ruler of this world, of sin, and of death.

Luk 2:26 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.

Was Simeon an old man? Nothing in the text indicates his age.

He lived in a state of imminence. The Messiah might appear any moment. Imminence is a big thing to us. Jesus could return any moment to resurrect the dead in Christ, and nearly simultaneously rapture living believers.

It seems that it was widely known that the Holy Spirit had “revealed to him” this marvelous promise. In that way, it was a shared promise. You could get up every morning and check the obituaries in the Jerusalem Daily News. If Simeon wasn’t listed, then you still had a chance to see the Messiah.

Luk 2:27 So he came by the Spirit into the Temple...

- Maybe the Holy Spirit gave him a strong impression to go to the Temple.
- Maybe he had a dream, or a vision, or a prophecy.
- Maybe another God-fearing believer received the message from the Lord to give to Simeon.
- Or a bunch of seemingly random coincidences suddenly seemed to him God’s providential direction.

God the Holy Spirit is multi-lingual, especially when it comes to communicating in unusual, non-linguistic ways. He especially likes to 'sign' things to you. Throughout our walk with Jesus, we will learn SSL - Spirit Sign Language.

If you are not receiving anything from the Spirit, one possibility is that you are not listening. All of us understand the husband who is not really listening to his wife. Whether it is on account of the game on the television or something else, he's not hearing her. Or those scenes when someone isn't listening and the speaker starts stating absurdities.

A first step to listening is to *believe* God's Spirit 'speaks' to you. Then go through the Book of Acts and note the various times and ways the Spirit 'spoke' to the apostles and disciples.

We read, "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by *His* Son... who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person..." (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Baby Jesus was the first step in revealing God to His creatures on Earth. Coming as a baby by itself shouts volumes about God's understanding of, and use of, power and sovereignty. Human infancy isn't exactly a strong position to take in a cosmic war against supernatural creatures bent on your destruction.

Satan is the ruler of this Earth. From the Garden of Eden forward, he has been trying to stop the coming of the Messiah. With all of his many resources, both natural and supernatural, how easy would it be to simply kill the promised Christ as an infant. In fact he tried to do just that.

Satan incited brutal King Herod to "put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men" (Matthew 2:16).

Sidebar: Secular scholars try to discredit the slaughter by saying there is no historical record of it. One may yet be found. Without minimizing the event, mathematicians have calculated the likely number of male children in Bethlehem and its districts who met Herod's criteria - 12. Significant, sure, but not exactly newsworthy when dealing with a despot who regularly killed his own family members.

Luk 2:27 So he came by the Spirit into the Temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,

I can't speak for Simeon, but I know what I'd have thought. When I saw the Deliverer, *I'd be expecting deliverance!* An infant deliverer meant decades more of waiting for the political aspect of deliverance. Think Moses.

This is the third time our attention is drawn to God the Holy Spirit's ministry in Simeon:

1. "The Holy Spirit was upon him" (v25).
2. The Holy Spirit "revealed to him" (v26).
3. He "came by the Spirit" (v27).

God's Spirit did not indwell him. The indwelling of God's Spirit is a gift promised to believers in the Church Age.

Jesus promised that those who believed in Him would receive the Spirit of God. This includes **all** believers. Are you a believer?

Then you don't need to seek Him, per se; He lives in you.

I always liked the comic book Green Lanterns. They are intergalactic peacekeepers who receive superpowers from power rings. A Green Lantern's ring is charged using the energy from a power battery that resembles an old-fashioned lantern made of dark green metal. A Green Lantern's ring must be recharged every 24hrs.

Ever hear of Hour Man? He was chemist Rex Tyler, who created *Miraclo* which granted him super-strength and endurance, but only for one hour.

Do you think of God the Holy Spirit as if He is a power source that wears-off and needs replenishing?

The Spirit is not a *power* but a Person with *power*. His presence in you makes it possible to obey God's Word. What God says to do, *you can do*.

Luk 2:28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

Simeon wasn't a priest or Levite. Joseph and Mary were from far away. Simeon may have been a complete stranger to them when he found them. Was there an awkward moment in which Simeon clearly wanted to hold their baby?

Again I want to stress I have no idea what Jesus perceived. But this is a marvelous moment for Him on Earth. A human being who was waiting for His coming held Him in his hands. God had come in human flesh as promised 4000 years prior.

Luk 2:29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;

There is nothing to indicate Simeon died soon thereafter. Let us suppose for a moment that he did not. His life had been all about waiting for the fulfillment of this promise. Now, that part of his life had ended, pretty abruptly. He would have to transition into a new ministry.

It can be hard to do something like that, since so much of your identity is wrapped up in what you've been doing. If the Lord tells you to stay, stay. But if he tells you to go, to move, then do it.

"Peace" came from Simeon realizing God kept His Word. Some dialogue from *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* came to me. Kirk asks Khan something like, "How do I know you'll keep your word?" Kahn replies, "I've given no word to keep."

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Luk 2:30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation

Luk 2:31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

Luk 2:32 A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Notice Simeon says Jesus will "bring revelation to the Gentiles," **then** the "glory of... Israel." It seems out of order. Shouldn't it be to the Jews first, then Gentiles? But that is precisely what occurred:

- In His first coming, rejected by His own, Jesus put Israel on hold while the Gospel would go out to the Gentiles. The apostle Paul stated at the end of the Book of Acts, "the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" (28:28).

- In His Second Coming, all Israel will be saved. Quoting Paul again, "Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved..." (Romans 11:25-26).

Luk 2:33 And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.

Make note that Luke says, "Joseph and His mother," using the wording appropriate to the virgin birth.

Parents, have you ever felt inadequate in raising children? That's a rhetorical question, by the way. How inadequate must Joseph and Mary have felt to raise Jesus in light of so much expectation upon Him.

The best they could hope for was that He would grow up to be a godly master craftsman. It is all they knew, all that they had to impart.

They knew God. They entrusted Jesus to God. Chip Ingram said, "Remember that you are not called to produce successful, upwardly mobile, highly educated, athletically talented machines. Giving your children great opportunities is good; it is not, however, the goal of parenting. Christlikeness is. Above all, seek to raise children who look and act a lot like Jesus."

Luk 2:34 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

Luk 2:35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

David Guzik writes, "*The 'fall and rising of many' would be shown in the way that Peter repented, but Judas despaired; in that one thief blasphemed, the other believed. Jesus is like a magnet that is attractive to some, but others are repelled from Him.*"

Jesus was a "sign," which here could be translated, *target*. We use the phrase, "He has a target on his back." That's the idea.

Mary would be more than heartbroken. A "sword" would pierce her heart. Hers would obviously be a unique suffering, seeing as Jesus was born to her in such a unique way. No one would be able to say to her, "I know what you're going through."

Multiple commentators note four main lessons we learn from Simeon: We *wait*, we *watch*, we *worship*, and we *work*.

Simeon 'says' each of them.

I encourage you to read and reread the story of Simeon with those characteristics in mind. Ask the Lord to reveal your *progress* or *regress* in each of them. Then yield yourself to His leading in order to wait-watch-worship-work as you walk.