

## **My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation (Luke 2:22-40)**

The Lord has given us the largest and most important gift- the best gift ever. And as Simeon found out, God put it in a very small package: another tiny baby, a firstborn, a sonō let's visit Mary and Joseph while at the temple in Jerusalem forty days after Jesus was born.

**Why at the temple?** . in the Old Testament law God told the Israelites that when he struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, he set them apart for himself. All of Israel's firstborn males belonged to him. If the child was not given into the service of the Lord, the parents needed to redeem him with a payment. Because Mary and Joseph were God-fearing Jews, who wanted to keep God's law, 40 days after Christmas, they left Bethlehem to make the short trip to Jerusalem, to the temple, to do for Jesus what the custom of the Law required, to redeem baby Jesus.

When they arrived they found an old man there, a devout Jew who still held on to the promise of the Savior, a man by the name of Simeon. He was waiting here with anticipation for the promised Messiah, the Consolation of Israel, to come. You see, this man had received a special revelation from God and had been told that he would not see death until he had seen the Messiah first. Simeon must have waited; watching every baby boy who came to Jerusalem, wondering if he might be the one.

But on this particular day, the Holy Spirit came to him again and moved him to go to the temple. How excited he must have been. He went and watched and waited there. Then, just as Mary and Joseph entered the temple courts, holding the infant baby in their arms, Simeon knew that this baby was the one! He saw in those arms more than just a newborn baby. Revealed by the Spirit, he knew that this little infant, was God's greatest gift! He was the long-expected Messiah they had all been waiting for! He was the salvation which God had prepared for all people! He was the Christ of Conflict who would confront many, causing them to either rise or fall! He was the Prince of Peace who would comfort and console his people, Luke 2:25-35:

***<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. <sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: <sup>29</sup> "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all people, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." <sup>33</sup> The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about***

*him.* <sup>34</sup> *Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against,* <sup>35</sup> *so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."*

## I. Christ of Conflict

Simeon knew his prophets well. He knew that it had been foretold long ago by prophet Isaiah that the Messiah would be a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall a trap and a snare. Causing many to stumble, fall and be broken, to be snared and captured. (Isaiah 8:14-15) How would this little baby Jesus do that? He would confront the people and demand a response. There are only two options: They would either believe Simeon's words and by faith trust that he was the promised Messiah, or they could reject him. There was no middle ground. There is only one right answer to the question, **"Who do you say that I am?"**

Christ came with a confrontation. "You are horrible sinners, you brood of vipers. You have not kept the law of God perfectly as God demands, you whitewashed tombs. You deserve nothing but death and punishment in hell. In fact, that's what you will suffer without one who can rescue you from this doom. You need me, your savior from sin."

To most, that confrontation was very offensive. How could the Pharisees be horrible sinners?! "Doesn't this man see all the good we do? Doesn't He know that we not only keep the law, but add additional laws to ensure that we keep all of it?! Who does he think He is?! This man is no Messiah. This is not what the Messiah is about."

Sadly, most rejected him. He was not the Messiah they had expected. Israel, God's chosen people, expected a political Messiah who would come in strength and might. Who, with miraculous signs and displays of his power, would forever banish the Romans from their land and usher in an era of peace and prosperity for every Jew. This little helpless infant hardly looked like that powerful and mighty king.

And as an adult he still seemed weak and helpless. It seemed that he couldn't even stop a few men from mocking him, beating him, and torturing him; he couldn't prevent them from nailing him to a cross to suffer and die a slow, painful death. Look at the end of verse 35. Simeon told Mary, **"A sword will pierce your own soul too."** The messiah would suffer a death that would pierce Mary's soul as she watched her beloved son suffer such agony. What kind of a Messiah is that?! **The Jews felt they didn't need a savior from sin, but a savior from the Romans.**

Simeon said that the Messiah would be **"A light for revelation to the Gentiles."** But to the Gentiles, who always looked for wisdom, he was no light for revelation! Were these philosophers and scholars really expected to believe that a man dying on the cross would make any difference at all? That this humble and lowly baby could solve life's problems? Were they really expected to believe in the fairy tale of an everlasting

life of bliss in some heavenly place?! **They felt they didn't need a savior from sin. They needed a new scholar.**

Simeon prophesied that Christ crucified would be a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles. He said in verse 34, ***"This child is destined to cause the falling... of many in Israel."*** He prophesied that those who rejected him would fall. It would be better for Sodom on the day of judgment than for those who saw the miraculous signs of the Messiah and spoke against him in rejection. Their hearts would be revealed for the self-righteous hypocrites they were.

But those who believed Simeon's words, who trusted in this Messiah, who recognized their own sinfulness and their need for a savior from sin, who fell on their knees in repentance, those, Simeon said, would be raised up. ***"This child is destined to cause the... rising of many in Israel."*** He knew the Psalm which read, ***"He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; he seats them with princes, with the princes of their people."*** (Psalm 113:7,8)

Today, Christ still comes in confrontation. There is no middle ground. Christ still says, ***"He who is not with me is against me."*** There are still only two options: Be offended. Reject him. Struggle to win heaven on your own. Find the solution to the filth of your sin somewhere other than Christ and someday fall eternally in the torment of hell. **Or**, believe Simeon's words; that this little baby Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, our Savior. Recognize your sin and your need for a savior. Fall on your knees in repentance and trust in him and be comforted. Receive forgiveness of sins, peace, joy, and life eternal with him when you literally rise up from the dead. What will it be for you? Don't let it be anything less than what Simeon found.

Simeon, moved by the Holy Spirit, chose the latter. He saw in this little baby more than a crying infant. He saw his savior from sin. He was comforted by this prince of peace.

## **II. Christ of comfort ( the Prince of Peace)**

Holding the Christ child in his arms, Simeon said, ***"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."***

Simeon was now ready to depart. He was ready to die and leave this vale of tears and sorrow. He was no longer troubled. No longer afraid of even death itself! He could go in peace. Peace of soul; knowing that through this child, this Prince of Peace, everything was now peaceful between God and him. Through the sacrifice of this little baby all of his sins were forgiven. He would soon stand spotless before God's throne. He had peace of mind; knowing that whatever else life might throw his way mattered little in comparison to the gift God had sent in this little baby. God had sent the salvation which he had prepared for all people; for Gentile, for Jew for Simeon. He was now set

free from sin, death, and an eternity in hell. He could depart in peace, according to God's word.

**You too, like Simeon, have seen with your own eyes God's salvation which he has prepared for you. The Holy Spirit has revealed to you that this little baby, is the Messiah, your Savior from sin. You can depart in peace. Peace of mind, knowing that God will work all things for your eternal good. And peace of soul, since this little baby, your Prince of Peace, redeemed for God 40 days after Christmas, has redeemed you from all sin, from death and from hell.**

Look at verse 33, *"The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him."* Like Mary and Joseph, marveled at what you've heard about this child. That though you deserve nothing but eternal suffering in hell, in this little baby, God has prepared your salvation. Wonder with amazement as you hear this gospel truth, as you see what Christ has done for you, as you taste his body and blood in the Lord's Supper, as you realize and appreciate the peace you have through him.

Like Simeon share what your eyes have seen! One of the early church fathers during the reign of Nero, the Christian persecutor, was **Polycarp**, who like Simeon, was advanced in years. He, like Simeon, shared his faith with all those around him. For such witness, he would be burned at the stake unless he would deny his Lord. But rather than save his life, he made one last bold and clear witness to his faith. He said, *"Eighty six years have I served Christ, who has never done me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and Savior?"*

Because he saw in such a tiny infant child, God's greatest gift to mankind, the salvation which God had prepared for him, he could depart in peace. He could make a bold confession of Christ, that others too might be confronted by the Christ of Conflict. That they too might be comforted by the Prince of Peace. That they, like Simeon, like Polycarp, might someday pray, *"Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word."* Amen.