

Simeon's Song
Luke 2:25-35
ABC 12/20/20

Several years ago, newscaster Andy Rooney responded to the charge that his profession only covered the negative side of everything. He imagined a newscast in which it was reported that planes took off & landed safely. In Florida, the orange crop was hit by another night of average weather. In Detroit, General Motors announced 174,000 Chevrolets wouldn't be recalled because they were all perfect.¹ Rooney's point was that good news isn't always appreciated unless it's against the backdrop of bad news. Our text this morning in Lk 2, tells us the best news in the world, but 2 factors make it difficult for people to appreciate it. 1st, the Christmas story is perhaps the best known story in history. As a result, many people, even Christians, shrug it off as not being exciting or relevant to their lives. 2nd, many people don't realize what their standing before God & their eternal destiny is. So when they read the familiar Christmas story, they yawn & say, *That's nice. What's for dinner?* Not seeing their desperate need for salvation, they fail to appreciate the fact that this story is the best news in all of history: A Savior, who is Christ the Lord,¹ was born for you. Christmas is this Friday. Is anticipation & expectancy growing in your home? If not, can you remember as a kid desperately wanting some toy for Christmas? Christmas is a time of expectations. Remember the movie *A Christmas Story*? The plot centers on the expectations of Ralphie & his anticipation of an Official Red Ryder 200-shot Range Model Air Rifle for Christmas. In the end, he gets his wish. In Simeon's song we see that Simeon gets his wish as well because his expectations are fully met. Simeon, a man with great expectations, tells us who Jesus is & why He came. We pick up the story in **Lk 2:21-24**.

Quickly, note that 4 mentions of the OT Law are here:

1. The Law required all male children be circumcised on the 8th day after birth (21).
2. The Law required women wait 40 days after the birth of a son before presenting themselves in the temple for their purification (22).
3. The Law required parents to present their firstborn son before the Lord & to be redeemed because... (23)

¹ As told by Steven Cole, <https://bible.org/print/book/export/html/22222>

4. The Law required a sacrifice (24).

These vss clearly show that Jesus was born into a god-fearing, law-abiding home. They illustrate the truth of Gal 4:4 that when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, **born under the Law**. They also illustrate Jesus' own words in Mt 5:17, **I did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it**. Jesus was no law-breaker, as some of his opponents would later suggest. He was born under the Law, lived His life in obedience to the Law, & kept it perfectly. Luke presents Christianity as a law-abiding religion which doesn't reject the Jewish faith. 4x in this passage Luke draws attention to how Jesus' parents did everything according to the OT law. Clearly, Jesus grew up in a deeply devout Jewish household where He was taught all things according to God's law.²

40 days have passed since Jesus' birth. Joseph & Mary come into the Temple to present their Son **to the Lord** (23). There was nothing to distinguish them, no halos or signs that indicated they were anything other than a poor couple coming with their newborn son. In OT law, the rite of purification presumed the child was a sinner. What made the mother impure was the guilt of her child's sin, which he inherited from Adam. This is why sacrifices were made. It's been explained that *the sacrifices symbolized the sacrificer deserved death, but that the sacrificial animal is loaded with the guilt & death-penalty & for the sake of the sacrificer enters upon death to set him free from his guilt of sin*.³ Why did Mary need to go through this purification process? Her Child was no sinner. He was the sinless Son of God. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit & didn't inherit the guilt of Adam's sin. Nor had He, or would He, commit any sins of His own. So why did Mary have to be purified? Because God commanded it & because her Son had come to take our sin upon Himself. This association between Jesus & the need for cleansing was an early clue that one day He'd be the bearer of our sin, as God **made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him** (2 Cor 5:21).⁴ At this point Simeon enters the story. Aside from what we're told here, we know nothing about him. We don't know his background, hometown, education, or occupation. He simply appears as a bit player in the drama surrounding the birth of

² John Piper, *Simeon's Farewell to the World*, www.desiringgod.org/messages/simeons-farewell-to-the-world

³ Norval Geldenhuys, *The Gospel of Luke*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, p 118

⁴ Daniel M. Doriani, Philip Graham Ryken, & Richard D. Phillips, *The Incarnation in the Gospels*, pp 121–122

Christ. After his part is over, he disappears. Simeon has never seen Joseph, Mary, & Jesus before, they've never seen him before. But a divinely-planned encounter is about to take place. Luke tells the story this way: **25-26**

1. Simeon is different from the majority of religious people in Israel. One theologian wrote: *The ox & the ass understood more of the 1st Christmas than the high priests in Jerusalem.*⁵ The Jewish religious leaders didn't find who they said they'd been so earnestly searching & waiting for. Even at the cross, they sneered at the thought that Jesus could possibly be the Messiah. Why did they miss a truth that seems so obvious to us? If we could've seen the routine at the Temple & witnessed the rush exhaustion of all those so immersed in religion, we'd have seen a frightening truth. The fact is, the religious leaders missed Christmas because they were too busy being religious to see the Messiah had come. They were so busy doing the work of God, they missed God's greatest work. They had the Scripture, they knew the prophecies, they sang the songs, & they kept the holy days. But somehow, they missed what all of the Scripture, songs, prophecies, & holidays had been promising. But not Simeon. He found hope in the Messiah for which he'd long been waiting. We all need hope. Hope is one of the blessings that comes along with the babies God entrusts to us. Yet, the hope that comes with one's own children is an uncertain hope at best. There's always the uncertainty of disease or death. What parent of a newborn hasn't gone in by the crib in the middle of the night to make sure their little one is breathing? If the child survives disease or an early death, there's the uncertainty of this world. Crime, drunk drivers, accidents, pandemics, & economic instability make every parent worry about the kind of world our children will grow up in. Given these uncertainties, when we meet an elderly person who is filled with hope, we need to take notice. Here is someone who could be pessimistic, cynical, & filled with fears & anxieties. But Simeon's brimming over with hope. When he held the infant Jesus in his arms, we see more than just an elderly man taking hope in any newborn. Rather, we see him as one who put his hope & faith in the promises of God. This was no ordinary newborn. He was the fulfillment of God's promises to His people. In Simeon we see that those who hope in God's promises in Christ will be

⁵ Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain*. Christianity Today, Vol 39, no 14

rewarded. Tradition says Simeon was one of the translators of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew OT, & that he objected to the translation of Is 7:14 which reads: **behold a virgin will conceive & bear a child**. Simeon thought that was impossible & what Isaiah must have meant was a *young woman*, not a virgin. Legend goes on to say that an angel appeared to him & said the word was *virgin*. To make sure Simeon understood, the angel told him he'd live to see the Child. Interesting, but just tradition.⁶ What do we know about him? His name means *God has heard* or *he who listens*. Simeon certainly listened to & heard God, but went further & obeyed God as well. We don't know anything about his personal circumstances. But we do know his character: he was a righteous & godly man who was waiting for the coming of the Messiah. He believed God would comfort His people, & by a special promise, he knew one day he would see the Messiah with his own eyes. Once he had this promise, Simeon patiently waited for its fulfillment. This is what it means to be a believer, waiting in faith for God to do what He's promised to do. I can imagine Simeon daily watching parents bring their sons to the temple & wondering which child would be the Christ. Then one day the Holy Spirit led Simeon into the temple grounds where he met the desire of his believing heart.⁷ Luke's description of him as **righteous & devout** is loaded with meaning. **Righteous** speaks of his relationship with God. He, like Abraham (Gen 15:6), had righteousness imputed to him by faith. **Devout** has the meaning of *cautious* in classical Greek. It appears in the NT only in Luke's writings (Acts 2:5; 8:2; 22:12), where it describes those who are *reverent toward God*. It conveys the idea of being careful to obey & honor God so as to lead an exemplary life before others. Simeon had received the salvation benefits promised by Isaiah: **Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way & the unrighteous man his thoughts; & let him return to the Lord, & He will have compassion on him, & to our God, for He will abundantly pardon** (55:6–7; cf Mic 7:18–19). God had declared Simeon righteous when he trusted God rather than his own good works for the forgiveness of sins & for salvation. Simeon recognized his own sinfulness, turned to God, & was declared righteous because

⁶ <https://russianicons.wordpress.com/2014/11/19/legends-of-the-aged-simeon/>

⁷ Daniel M. Doriani, Philip Graham Ryken, & Richard D. Phillips, *The Incarnation in the Gospels*, p 124

Jesus' death on the cross would bear the punishment for his sins. Simeon was concerned & careful about the things of God. This reflects a lifetime of cultivation. No one accidentally becomes **righteous & devout**. Simeon cultivated his walk with God. The key to Simeon's righteous life can be seen in his view of himself in relation to God. In vs 29, the word **Lord** is an unusual one, used only 5x in reference to God. It indicates *absolute ownership & uncontrolled power*.⁸ Simeon saw God as the Sovereign Lord who'd prepared salvation (2:30, 31) & had graciously allowed him to see it. Simeon saw himself as the slave of this Sovereign Lord. Slaves have no rights. They belong to their owner & their only obligation is to obey. Simeon had a high view of God & a humble view of himself. To hope in Christ means to live righteously. It's also clear Simeon was Spirit-led. His life was governed by the Spirit of God. He'd been told by the Spirit he wouldn't die until he'd seen the Messiah & he believed it. He was prepared by God to point out the Messiah when He came. **27-28** Luke doesn't give the details of how they met, since neither party was looking for or knew the other. Picture that moment: Simeon came in the Spirit & was praising the Father while cradling the Son in his hands! We can only imagine what Simeon felt as he took Jesus from Mary's arms. We can only guess at the joy that must have overwhelmed him as he again realized that God kept His promises. The Savior of the world was here & was held in Simeon's hands! Simeon was, as the early church called him, *Theodoches*, the God-receiver!⁹ Holding the salvation of the world in his hands, he broke forth into these words of inspired song: **29-32**.

One look into the face of Jesus & Simeon knew the hope of his life had been fulfilled. One look into the face of our Savior & we'll know the same.¹⁰ Of course, neither Simeon nor anyone else is saved simply by the birth of Jesus. Jesus still had to live a perfect life, die an atoning death, & rise to eternal glory. There is no salvation without the cross & the empty tomb. But already at this point Simeon could see that salvation had come in the person of this Baby, & therefore that God would

⁸ Thayer's Greek Lexicon

⁹ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word, p 96

¹⁰ Max Lucado, *One Incredible Savior*

do everything else to save him. The Child in his arms wasn't simply part of his salvation, but salvation itself. Jesus is all anyone needs to be saved.¹¹

2. Expectations What were Simeon's expectations?

1) He expected to die (29). That's what **releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace** means. Day-by-day he'd prayed for Israel's Messiah to appear. Year-after-year his prayers were to no avail. As he grew older, his anticipation grew stronger because he knew he couldn't live forever. The Lord's Christ must be coming at any moment. Can you imagine the scene? Every day Simeon is watching & waiting for the Messiah to come. How would he know Him? What should he look for? Did he even know to look for a baby? Or was he looking for a teenager or a young man? No one knows. But day-by-day he kept watch. He must have asked & prayed each time he saw a young man, *Is this the One?* Each day the answer came back, *No, that's not the one. Keep looking. Keep watching. Keep waiting.* Then one day, here comes Mary holding her Baby with Joseph by her side. Jesus is only 40 days old. If you were people-watching, you wouldn't give them a 2nd glance. But when Simeon sees them, he asks his question for the umpteenth time, *Is this the One?* & the Holy Spirit answers, *Yes.* Suddenly Simeon's heart accelerates. The days of waiting are finally over. Israel's Messiah is in front of him. Here's the One for whom the nation has been waiting. He walks over, introduces himself, & says, *Do you mind if I hold your Child?* As Mary gives the infant Jesus to Simeon, the thought hits him, *I'm holding the salvation of the world in my arms.* With his purpose for living accomplished, Simeon is ready to joyfully enter the Lord's presence a fulfilled man. His 1st thought is that he's now ready to die. The word **depart** is a military word, used of a sentinel who's stood watch during the long hours of the night. Now at last, he knows his work is done, & he goes to his commanding officer to be dismissed. He then goes back to his barracks to sleep. That's the way Simeon feels. The long wait is over, the years of anticipation have been fulfilled, his duty is finished, because he's seen & personally held **the Lord's Christ.**

2) He expected salvation. **30**

¹¹ Daniel M. Doriani, Philip Graham Ryken, & Richard D. Phillips, *The Incarnation in the Gospels*, p 125

Simeon didn't say he saw the *Savior*, although he could have. Nor did he say that God's *salvation* had been revealed, although he could have. He used a word which means *one fitted to save*. The emphasis is on the fact that here at last was One fitted to do the saving work that nobody else could accomplish. Jesus had come to save His people from their sins. Simeon was holding the One, the only One, who was able to save.

3) Simeon also expected that the nation of Israel would somehow be glorified through this Child (32b). Glory had been given to Israel in the Person of their Messiah. Simeon saw in Jesus the One who was the world's Savior & the glory of God's own chosen people, Israel. In this Baby, Simeon sees the fulfillment of all the hopes & dreams of the Jewish people across the centuries. To call Jesus **the glory of Your people Israel** takes us back to the time of Abraham when the Lord said, **I will make you a great nation, & I will bless you, & make your name great; & so you shall be a blessing; & I will bless those who bless you & the one who curses you I will curse & in you all the families of the earth will be blessed** (Gen 12:2-3). After that came the repetition to Isaac & Jacob. Still later God told Moses that one day a Prophet would come who would be unlike any other prophet before Him. Still later God promised David a Son who would reign on his throne forever. Years later God spoke through Isaiah & promised that a Son would be born of a virgin & that His name would be called **Immanuel, God With Us**. For generations the promises were repeated, from parents to children, from family to family, & from generation to generation. After all these years, all God's promises are coming true. That's what Simeon means when he calls Jesus **the glory of Your people Israel**. As the song says, *the hopes & fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight*.¹²

4) Simeon expected that **the consolation of Israel** (25) would take place. **Consolation** is a direct reference to the Messiah. Simeon had a hope, an expectation for the coming of the Messiah, the King who'd bring the promised kingdom of Israel. Nearly 700 years before Simeon ever laid eyes on Jesus, Isaiah described the **consolation** or *comforter* of Israel. For many centuries, because of sin & disobedience, Israel had suffered the judgment of God. But God, in His mercy, pledged that one day He'd again act in their favor. Here's part of His promise, spoken through Isaiah:

¹² Phillip Brooks, *Little Town of Bethlehem*

“Comfort, O comfort My people,” says your God. “Speak kindly to Jerusalem; & call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, That she has received of the Lord’s hand Double for all her sins.” A voice is calling, “Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, & every mountain & hill be made low; & let the rough ground become a plain, & the rugged terrain a broad valley; Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, & all flesh will see it together Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, Here is your God!” (40:1-5, 9).

God is coming **as the consolation of Israel**. God would come to earth to save His people from their sins. Simeon was looking forward to that event & his expectations were fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus, & He alone, is **the Consolation of Israel**. How does that apply to us? That's what Christmas is all about. Take away all our Christmas trappings, all the presents, all the gatherings & the true significance of Christmas doesn't change. This is it: God takes on flesh & comes to Earth in the person of Jesus. He lives a perfect & sinless life, dies on a cross to pay the penalty for sin (a penalty we could never pay). He rises from the dead 3 days later so that you & I can have eternal life. Christmas is about God coming to save us. Jesus came to be our Savior. Let's let Simeon speak to that issue with his 5th expectation.

5) Jesus came for Gentiles, not just for Jews. Simeon said that Jesus would be **a light for revelation to the Gentiles** (32). Here is a thought we don't find explicit in the other songs of Christmas. Mary's song is completely Jewish. Gentiles are nowhere in view. The same is true of Zechariah. The angels' song broadens the viewpoint by mentioning the good news is **for all people** (Lk 2:10) & **on earth peace, among men**. But nowhere in any of the previous songs are Gentiles mentioned by name. But Simeon explicitly says this Baby won't only be the glory of his own people, but He'll also be the **light of revelation to the Gentiles**. Jesus isn't just for Israel. He came to shine a light of the revelation of God onto every people. The Jews couldn't say, *He belongs to us & you can't have Him*. Nor could they say, *You have to become a Jew to enjoy Messiah's benefits*. That's what some Jews expected but Simeon's words explode forever that narrow nationalism. Jesus is the Savior of the whole world. Rich & poor, young & old, black & white, Jew & Gentile, American & Chinese, healthy & handicapped. All people are included in His coming. He didn't come for a small group. He came for the whole world. That means there's hope for all of us. If you're lonely this year, Simeon meant to include you. If your family has rejected you, Simeon included you. If you feel

forgotten, depressed, discouraged, & down on your luck, be of good cheer, Christmas is for you! Whatever sins are holding you back, Christmas means you can be forgiven, because Jesus came for you. It's true that Jesus was a Jew. But He didn't come just for the Jews. He met a Samaritan woman at the well & forgave her (Jn 4). He met a Roman centurion & said, **I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel** (Mt 8:10). He met a Syrophenician woman & healed her daughter (Mk 7). When He was crucified, it was a Roman centurion who said, **Truly this was the Son of God!** (Mt 27:54). Simeon is telling us something crucial. By sending His Son to the earth, God isn't only fulfilling His promises to the nation Israel. He's also sending a Savior for all people. Because of Jesus's birth, God & His ways would be revealed to gentiles. Again, 700 years before the time of Simeon, Isaiah heard God speaking about the coming Messiah.

I am the Lord, I have called You in righteousness, I will also hold You by the hand & watch over You, & I will appoint You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the nations, To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the dungeon & those who dwell in darkness from the prison....

It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob & to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth (Is 42:6-7; 49:6).

The true meaning of Christmas isn't reserved for Jews, it's for everyone. Salvation through Jesus has been prepared by God to be sufficient for the whole world, Jew & Gentile alike. Jesus isn't only the Savior of the Jews, but of any person from any nation who will call upon Him. It's the glory of the gospel that wherever it goes, when people believe in Jesus, their lives are transformed as they're delivered from the penalty & power of their sins. Jesus is God's salvation for everyone. No wonder Joseph & Mary marveled at the things Simeon said about their Son (33). But Simeon had more to say, which would temper whatever joy they may have felt.

3. Prophecies He foretold Jesus' death some 30 years later saying, **34-35**.

With these words Simeon again drew from Isaiah to describe the child. Isaiah had said, **He shall become a sanctuary; But to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike & a rock to stumble over, & a snare & a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many will stumble over them, Then they will fall & be broken; They will even be snared & caught** (8:14-15). Jesus was the stumbling stone for the Jews (1 Pt 2:8). Gentiles, on the other hand, experienced Christ as a stepping-stone up out of darkness

into God's light (Eph 3:2-6). This is the 1st negative note in Luke's gospel. It foreshadows the opposition Jesus would face, culminating in His rejection by His nation & His own crucifixion. Simeon addressed his words to **Mary**. It was important for her to hear them so she wouldn't be surprised when the hatred of her Son showed itself. Joseph apparently wouldn't be around to witness it. After the incident at the temple when Jesus was 12 (Lk 2:41-51), Joseph disappears from the gospels. The presumption is Joseph died before Jesus' public ministry began. Up to this point, all Simeon's words about Jesus have been very positive. But now he unveils the other side of the story, which is also a part of the OT prophecies. Simeon sees the coming of Jesus as revealing the hearts of men & of dividing them so that, because of Him, some will rise & some will fall. But Simeon also speaks directly to Mary. **34b-35**.

Simeon says Jesus is the great divider of Men. He will cause many to fall. He will cause many to rise. Many will speak against Him, & in speaking against Him, the hidden thoughts of their hearts will be revealed. What a thing to say about a tiny Baby. *Mary, I know you're happy now, but you'll weep later. Today your heart is filled with joy. Later it will be filled with sorrow. Rejoice & enjoy this time because dark days are coming.* Isn't it true, as parents, the worst thing that can happen is to see your children suffer? Most of us will do anything to spare our children of needless pain. We'll gladly suffer ourselves if it will make the way easier for our children. That's what it means to be a parent. You take the pain yourself so your children won't have to. But it doesn't work that way, does it? Mary's Son was destined to be the determiner of people's destiny (cf Jn 1:9-13). As Jesus warned, **Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division** (Lk 12:51). Not only would some Gentiles be saved, but also some Jews would stumble over Him & **fall** into judgment (Is 8:13-15).¹³ **Opposed** means *to speak against, to reject, to deny, or to contradict*, all of which rightly describe the insults, abuse, mockery, & hatred, culminating in Jesus' crucifixion. Israel's rejection of her Son would cause Mary to suffer. Simeon graphically pictured the pain & grief she'd endure when he said, **a sword will pierce even your own soul** (Lk 2:35). With these words, Simeon offered a hint of the suffering Jesus would endure to bring us salvation. From

¹³ John F. MacArthur Jr., [Luke 1-5](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 183

the songs of Mary, Zechariah, & the angels, we've learned about the glory & greatness of Jesus. We've heard of His royal kingship, His divine lordship, & the peace He brings to His people. But here we learn that He'll also be the object of opposition. Jesus is the **sign to be opposed** (34). People will despise, reject, & take a stand against Him. In the end, they nailed Him to a cross & killed Him. This was the sword that pierced Mary's soul. Despite her intense joy over the birth of her Son, the day would come when she'd suffer a grief of such anguish that it would strike her to the heart. God used this prophecy to prepare Mary for the crucifixion. As she watched Jesus grow up, she must have always remembered what Simeon said. When she found herself at the foot of the cross, she knew the prophecy had come true. The piercing sword was the death of her Son. Simeon's prophecy shows that from the beginning, God had a mission for Jesus that required him to suffer & die for sinners. The crucifixion wasn't some surprising & unexpected development, but the fulfillment of God's pre-ordained plan.¹⁴ In Mary's song she sang of how the future generations would call her **blessed** (Lk 1:48). But here she learns the future will also bring great sorrow. That future would include the family's flight to Egypt, her Son being misunderstood & rejected, the terrible events of Passion Week, & watching her Son die on the cross. The most honored woman of all would know great pain.¹⁵ This prophecy must have sent a cold chill through Mary, who, with motherly instinct, surely wanted to protect her Baby & shelter Him from whatever evils might come. From our vantage point, we see her most agonizing moment fulfilled with grim clarity. One day, she'll stand below a blood-stained cross, watching in horror as life spills out of her precious Son. Like Simeon & Mary herself, what we do with Jesus reveals our heart. When a person really understands what Jesus is all about, there's no neutral ground: you either accept or reject Him. You can say with your words you like the idea that God wants to come & save you, but what your heart really feels about that is revealed by what you do with Jesus. You've got a choice: You can spend your life trying to fulfill your earthly expectations or you can focus on Jesus who came to die in your place for your sins. The bottom line is that Christmas is a time of decision about Jesus.

¹⁴ Daniel M. Doriani, Philip Graham Ryken, & Richard D. Phillips, [The Incarnation in the Gospels](#), pp 128–129

¹⁵ R. Kent Hughes, [Luke: That You May Know the Truth](#), Preaching the Word, p 97

There can be no neutrality. It's my prayer that we understand that the key to Christmas is to know the One whose birthday we're celebrating. Christmas isn't about us, it's not about fulfilling our expectations, it's about knowing the One who's given us the gift of eternal life. We know the story. It all came true. Jesus was arrested & put on trial as a blasphemer. He was beaten, leaving His skin in tattered ribbons. After the trials, He was condemned to die. In the end, Mary stood by the cross & watched her son die an agonizing, brutal, bloody death. Amid the gore of crucifixion, Mary stood by her Son, unable to staunch the flow of blood, unable to wipe His brow, unable to hold His hand. It all happened exactly as Simeon had predicted. When Mary watched her Son die, a sword pierced her soul. Above the cradle stands the cross. This little Baby was born to die. The joy of Christmas leads to the agony of Good Friday. Today we see Jesus even more clearly than Simeon did. We see Him not only in His birth, but also in His death & resurrection, knowing for sure that in Him we have the forgiveness of sins & the promise of eternal life. Let's join Simeon this Christmas in thanking God for Jesus. Greet this Christmas with the joy of acknowledging *God with us*. When Jesus has become our salvation, we find it so tremendous that we want to share it with others. How can we keep silent when such good news has been given? If you haven't trusted in Jesus as Savior, I urge you to listen to Simeon & to receive Jesus. He came to save all who call upon Him & trust Him as the only way of salvation. He bore your punishment on the cross. To embrace Jesus by saving faith & enter His kingdom, you must allow Him to expose your sin. Then repent & come to Him for forgiveness. What will you do with Jesus today? Either He is the Son of God from heaven or He's not. If He's not, then He's the greatest fraud in history & worthy of our scorn. If He isn't the Son of God, then He's either a lunatic or something much worse. But if He is the Son of God, then the only possible response is to bow down & worship Him!

What is Jesus to you this morning? Not who is He, but what is He to you? Is He life or is He death to you this morning? That's what Simeon is saying. This Baby, who is the glory of Israel & the light of the world, is also the great divider of the human race. You're either on one side or on the other regarding Him. No one stays in the middle forever. The way you respond to Jesus reveals your

heart. But that's not all. The way you respond to Jesus tells us where you're going & how you're going to get there. & most of all, the way you respond to Jesus tells us where you're going to spend eternity. What is He to you this morning? When Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms, he said, *Lord, I'm ready to go home now. I can die in peace.* But no one is ready to die until they've seen Jesus with the eyes of faith. You're not ready to die until you see Him, know Him, & trust Him as your Savior. Once you have, death is no longer an enemy. It's true you may live your life & you may come to the end not having been as successful as you like. You may live in some frustration because you haven't accomplished all your personal goals. But (& this is a very big *but*) if you can come to the end of your life & say, *I have seen the Lord's Christ*, then you've had a good life. But if you come to the end, & you've never seen Jesus, you've wasted your years upon this earth. But if Christ is your salvation, you can have hope no matter how difficult your circumstances. Whether you're suffering from a deadly disease or grieving over the loss of a loved one or facing overwhelming trials of some nature, you can have hope if you'll trust in Jesus as God's salvation for you. He has won the victory over sin & death & hell. Those who hope in Him will not be disappointed!