

## Luke 2:25-38

In the first two chapters of Luke, we see that the Roman Empire had taken over the land of Judah. Wicked king Herod had been put in charge, and the Jews were oppressed. But God still had His people. Ordinary people. Not people of any status in society. Just ordinary people like you and me.

We come across Elizabeth and Zachariah, the parents of John the Baptist. It was said of them:

Luke 1:6

*“...they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.”*

他们二人，在神面前都是义人，遵行主的一切诫命礼仪，没有可指摘的。

We come across Mary and Joseph. Of Joseph it was said that he was “*a just man*” (Matthew 1:19). And when Mary found out she was pregnant, she humbly replied:

Luke 1:38

*“Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.”*

马利亚说，我是主的使女，情愿照你的话成就在我身上。

And we come across Simeon and Anna. We’ll look at these two for a short time now. God always has His people in the right place at the right time, to fulfil His will. If we are the Lord’s people, we should also be exactly where He wants us to be.

## **Simeon**

*[25] “And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.”*

在耶路撒冷有一个人名叫西面，这人又公义又虔诚，素常盼望以色列的安慰者来到，又有圣灵在他身上。

Here, we find out five things about Simeon:

1. He was in Jerusalem. This was where the true religion was outwardly based. Of course, God is everywhere. So we are able to worship Him anywhere, wherever we are. Christ said:

John 4:23

*“... true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth...”*

时候将到，如今就是了，那真正拜父的，要用心灵和诚实拜他，因为父要这样的人拜他。

God is not dependent upon a place to be worshipped, but He does have churches in this world, where his witness is. Simeon was in the right place, in the Temple, the outward, visible church of his day. And it was there that he got the blessing.

2. He was “*just.*” The Bible tells us:

Matthew 5:6

*“Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.”*

饥渴慕义的人有福了，因为他们必得饱足。

Christianity is primarily concerned with morality.

1 John 5:19

*“And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.”*

我们知道我们是属神的，全世界都卧在那恶者手下。

Which side are we on? Do we love righteousness and hate wickedness?

3. He was “*devout.*” True religion was not just the first priority in his life. It was his life. He saw that everything else in this world was not worth living for. Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived apart from Christ, concluded:

Ecclesiastes 1:14

*“I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”*

我见日光之下所作的一切事，都是虚空，都是捕风。

Living for the Lord alone is the only thing worth living for. Everything else is emptiness.

4. He was also “*waiting for the consolation of Israel.*” He was waiting. Often, we don’t think that just waiting is very useful. We would rather be busy, busy, busy, doing something all the time. We get impatient with waiting. But waiting, or patience, is a virtue. It is a fruit of the Spirit. We are called to wait, like the Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 1:9,10

*“For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God;*

*and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.”*

因为他们自己已经报明我们是怎样进到你们那里，你们是怎样离弃偶像归向神，要服事那又真又活的神，等候他儿子从天降临，就是他从死里复活的，那位救我们脱离将来忿怒的耶稣。

The Thessalonians were true believers. They had “*turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.*” They were waiting for Christ’s second coming, as indeed we are. Simeon was waiting for Christ’s first coming.

Waiting doesn’t mean doing nothing. We do whatever the Lord has for us to do in this world. But we also wait and long for Christ to return. Waiting develops patience. We all need to grow in the grace of patience. Without it, we so easily get annoyed at the tiniest problems that come upon us in this world.

Simeon was waiting for “*the consolation of Israel.*” For centuries, God had promised that a Messiah, a Saviour, would come to save Israel. We have many references to this in the Old Testament.

5. And we see that “*The Holy Ghost was upon him.*” He was a godly man. He lived close to the Lord. And he was led by the Holy Spirit in all that he did.

In all these aspects, Simeon is indeed a wonderful example for us all to follow.

[26] “*And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.*”

他得了圣灵的启示，知道自己未死以前，必看见主所立的基督

The Holy Spirit had shown him that he wouldn’t die until he had seen the promised Messiah for himself. He must have been an old man, otherwise this promise wouldn’t make sense. It would only make sense if his life had been prolonged beyond an average lifetime. We see that he was sensitive to the Holy Spirit, otherwise he would never have known this. We need to learn to be sensitive to what the Holy Spirit has to say to us, in the same way.

[27] “*And he came by the Spirit into the Temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him after the custom of the Law,*”

他受了圣灵的感动，进入圣殿。正遇见耶稣的父母抱着孩子进来，要照律法的规矩办理。

Moved by the Spirit on this particular day, he was told to go to the Temple. Now, this wasn’t just a sudden thought from nowhere. A lot of people today think the Holy Spirit is leading them to do all sorts of stupid things, things that just pop into people’s imaginations at the time. No. Simeon had spent a

long time of patiently waiting. During this time, he made sure that he stayed close to the Lord. This wasn't a sudden impulse to do something. But when the Holy Spirit did tell him to go to the Temple, he was ready to obey at a moment's notice.

The Lord told him to go to the Temple. At the same time, in the Lord's providence, Joseph and Mary arrived for her purification. This would have taken place forty days after the birth.

Leviticus 12:2-4

*"If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled."*

你晓谕以色列人说，若有妇人怀孕生男孩，她就不洁净七天，像在月经污秽的日子不洁净一样。第八天，要给婴孩行割礼。妇人在产血不洁之中，要家居三十三天。她洁净的日子未滿，不可摸圣物，也不可进入圣所。

And in the crowd at the Temple, in the Lord's providence, they met.

[28] *"Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,"*

西面就用手接过他来，称颂神说，

[29] *"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word."*

主阿，如今可以照你的话，释放仆人安然去世。

Simeon took the boy in his arms and praised God. He was now ready for his death. The promise of God had been fulfilled. He had seen the Messiah just as the Lord had promised him. And he realised that his life's work had now been completed, and was ready to die.

If we are true Christians, we all have a unique life and calling from the Lord. Our job is to fulfil everything the Lord has for us to do as individuals in this world. But we should also realise that one day our lives here will be over, and we shall go to be with Christ.

We shouldn't be living our lives here so that death overtakes us suddenly. To most people, death comes as rather a shock. They aren't ready. They would have wanted to do so much more in this world before going away to the next. But that shouldn't be the attitude of the Christian. We should be ready for our death. While we're here, we should be aware of the work that the Lord has for

us to do, and be diligently doing it. But we should also be aware that God has got a day fixed for every one of us, when we will die and go into the next world. It is inevitable. Paul said:

Philippians 1:21-24

*“For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.”*

因为我活着就是基督，我死了就有益处。但我在肉身活着，若成就我工夫的果子，我就不知道该挑选什么。我正在两难之间，情愿离世与基督同在。因为这是好得无比的。然而我在肉身活着，为你们更是要紧的。

Paul was ready for his death. But he also realised that at that particular time the Lord still had some work for him to do down here.

Here, the Lord’s promise to Simeon had come to pass. He was now ready to die. He was happy and content to die. He knew his life’s work was over. Then he blessed the child.

[30] *“For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,”*

因为我的眼睛已经看见你的救恩。

[31] *“which thou hast prepared before the face of all people,”*

就是你在万民面前所预备的。

[32] *“A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”*

是照亮外邦人的光，又是你民以色列的荣耀。

His own eyes had seen the salvation that the Lord had provided for His people. Centuries of prophecy had now come true. This was the highlight of his life, and he knew that it was such a privilege to be able to see the Lord’s salvation for himself.

It’s a wonderful privilege to be a Christian. To know Jesus Christ for ourselves. We are now the children of God. The world won’t understand us. But that shouldn’t bother us, knowing the tremendous privilege it is to know Christ, and that through Him we shall be eternally saved from our sins.

1 John 3:1

*“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”*

你看父赐给我们是何等的慈爱，使我们得称为神的儿女。我们也真是他的儿女。世人所以不认识我们，是因未曾认识他。

But Simeon also knew that this salvation was *“before the face of all people. A light to lighten the Gentiles.”* He was perfectly aware that the salvation God had provided was not just for Jews, but for Gentiles too. This was prophesied in the Scriptures:

Isaiah 49:22

*“Thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.”*

主耶和華如此說，我必向列國舉手，向萬民豎立大旗，他們必將你的眾子懷中抱來，將你的眾女肩上扛來。

So we see that Simeon, the man of God, was not only close to the Lord, but he knew his Bible well. The two go together.

The church leaders in Israel, on the other hand, hated the idea of their Messiah being for Gentiles. They thought that they Jews were the one true people of God, and nobody else. They thought that they could get to heaven because they were born into the right family. Many people think that. It's very sad. We shouldn't put our trust in our family or church background, or in church leaders, but put our trust in the Lord alone.

*[33] “And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.”*

孩子的父母，因這論耶穌的話就希奇。

Joseph and Mary, being godly people themselves, understood the blessing Simeon pronounced on the child, and they marvelled. They knew Simeon to be a true believer like themselves, and they joyed in the fellowship they could have with one another.

Psalms 133:1

*“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”*

看哪，弟兄和睦同居，是何等的善，何等的美。

But we can only dwell in unity if we have been truly changed in our hearts.

Do we know that experience when we meet a true believer? It's a joy to our hearts. This is our new family. These are the people we should support and have our fellowship with now. These are the ones whom the Lord has changed in their hearts forever. They will now no longer be living for themselves, but for Christ.

[34] *“And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother: Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against,”*

[35] *“(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”*

西面给他们祝福，又对孩子的母亲马利亚说，这孩子被立，是要叫以色列中许多人跌倒，许多人兴起。又要作毁谤的话柄。叫许多人心里的意念显露出来。你自己的心也要被刀刺透。

And then Simeon gave Mary a prophecy. Mary would have accepted it. But it wasn't happy news for her. She was told that her son would be *“set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel.”* That He would be *“a sign which shall be spoken against.”* And that a sword would pierce her own soul too.

Mary would witness everything the world would do to Christ. He would be persecuted and put to death. Mary would be at the cross to see His death at first hand. She would have these trials to go through in this world.

Not only this, but Christ would cause division in the land. The world today is divided into two types of people. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are saved to eternal life, and those who aren't. True believers will be persecuted by those who do not believe. But Christ said:

John 16:33

*“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*

在世上你们有苦难。但你们可以放心，我已经胜了世界。

But Simeon was not the only believer who was in the Temple at that time.

### ***Anna***

[36] *“And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;”*

又有女先知名叫亚拿，是亚设支派法内力的女儿，年纪已经老迈，从作童女出嫁的时候，同丈夫住了七年，就寡居了。

[37] *“And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”*

现在已经八十四岁，（或作就寡居了八十四年）并不离开圣殿，禁食祈求，昼夜事奉神。

[38] *“And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”*

正当那时，她进前来称谢神，将孩子的事，对一切盼望耶路撒冷得救赎的人讲说。

Anna also was very old. She had been married for seven years and then her husband died and she became a widow. She was now 84 years old. Did she have children? We don't know.

How did she spend her time? She *“departed not from the temple but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”* What a life! Complete devotion to the things of God. Do we have such complete devotion to the Lord? I don't know about you, but I feel ashamed that my devotion to the Lord is so small. Our lives should be like Anna's. After all, Christ is the only thing worth living for.

As a result of such devotion, the Lord blessed her. At the very same time as Joseph, Mary and Simeon were all together in the Temple praising God for the child, Anna also turned up. The Lord also guided her through the Temple crowds to meet them. And she offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

And then what did she do afterwards? She *“spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”* She told others about the Saviour. God had finally visited and redeemed His people. What a joyful message we all have to tell others about. Paul said:

Romans 1:16

*“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”*

我不以福音为耻。这福音本是神的大能，要救一切相信的

There seems to have been plenty of other godly people in Jerusalem. Anna knew many who also *“looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”* But they weren't the important people. They were the quiet, unknown people in the land. We don't know who they are. But one day we'll meet them all in glory, and be praising God with them for evermore.

So, there we have Simeon and Anna. Two old people. Of whom the world was not worthy. What an example they are to us. May God grant that we all could live our lives in patience, humility and complete devotion, just like Simeon and Anna did.