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SIMEON'S PROCLAMATION



What's something you never thought you'd see happen in your lifetime?

QUESTION #1

We have a sure hope when we trust in Jesus.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

More and more people are buying 3D printers. Far beyond the way old-school printers reproduce words on paper using ink, 3D printers create objects in myriad shapes from various materials. But what if a 3D printer could be used to reproduce, say, a human liver? Researchers are already looking into the possibility. Instead of stacking successive layers of some material to create an object, a “bioprinter” would use a person’s own cell tissue to construct living tissue. In the future, you could receive a transplantable organ with no risk of rejection.¹

Far-fetched? Just think how far-fetched a 3D printer once sounded. Or walking around with a hand-held device with a camera, phone, and more computing power than NASA had for the moon landings. We have seen these amazing things in our own lifetimes.

The Jewish people had waited for centuries for the Messiah. God had promised He was coming through the prophets, but would it happen in their lifetime? One man in the Bible knew the answer. We don’t know a lot about him, but we know this one thing: he knew he would see the Messiah before he died.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Luke 2:25-27

²⁵ There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking forward to Israel’s consolation, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah.

²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, he entered the temple. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to perform for him what was customary under the law,

Simeon wanted to do one thing before he died. In fact, we know of only one thing on Simeon’s “bucket list.” Simeon had waited his whole life for this one thing, and it was definitely something worth waiting for. Simeon’s desire was to behold the promised Messiah who would come to save us from our sins.

Many often assume that Simeon was an older man because of the Holy Spirit’s promise “that he would not see death before he saw the Lord’s Messiah,” but we just don’t know. The Scripture gives no hint to his age, but Luke did note three revealing characteristics.

- 1. He was righteous and devout.** The word *righteous* simply means right living. Most people let sin run their lives; Simeon’s life, however, was defined by doing the right thing. *Devout* means reverent and faithful. It implies that Simeon lived with great respect for God in all he did.
- 2. Looking for the Messiah.** This righteous and devout man was “looking forward to Israel’s consolation.” Israel’s consolation centered in a hope for a Messiah who would bring comfort to the weary souls of Israel. This consolation does not include the erroneous notion of a political messiah, but the messianic hope expressed by the prophet Isaiah. “On that day it will be said, ‘Look, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he has saved us. This is the LORD; we have waited for him. Let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation’” (Isa. 25:9).

What are some ways the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives?

QUESTION #2

3. Full of the Holy Spirit. Prior to the coming of the Holy Spirit on all believers in Acts 2, people experienced the Holy Spirit's work in different ways. Luke had already told us that Simeon sought to live right and was wholly devoted to God, so his heart would have been receptive to the Spirit's work in him.

Just as the Spirit promised Simeon he would see the Messiah, now he was "guided by the Spirit" to enter the temple at just the right moment. We don't know how Simeon recognized the infant as the Messiah, but we can assume the same Holy Spirit who guided him there opened his eyes to who was in front of him.

During a certain period in Israel's history, "the people were waiting expectantly" regarding the coming Messiah (Luke 3:15). Messianic expectations were running high, yet only a small number of people realized Jesus was the fulfillment of the prophecies. But Simeon knew—and he could do nothing less than praise God.

Luke 2:28-32

²⁸ Simeon took him up in his arms, praised God, and said,

²⁹ Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation. ³¹ You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples— ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel.

We might wonder what Simeon felt when he first saw and held Jesus. In those moments, this servant of the Lord saw and held what he eagerly had anticipated his whole life. We may not know what he felt, but thankfully we know what he said.

Verses 29-32 are commonly referred to as Simeon's Psalm. It is a touching expression of Simeon's faith in God. His praise is the right response to the grace God was pouring into Simeon's life.

What does Simeon's statement of praise teach us about God's mission?

QUESTION #3

FINDING FULFILLMENT

Choose five of the most common things people seek in order to fulfill their lives.

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|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Money | Fame | Friends |
| Family | Achievement | Recognition |
| Happiness | Possessions | Freedom |
| Peace | Reputation | Other: |

Simeon felt his life was fulfilled when he encountered the Messiah.
In what ways has your encounter with Jesus brought you similar satisfaction?

*"God, you have made us for yourself, and our hearts
are restless till they find their rest in you."*

—AUGUSTINE

Simeon prefaced his praise with a request: “Now, Master, you can dismiss your servant in peace, as you promised.” We’ve all heard people say things like, “I could die happy if I could just . . .” Simeon was not being flippant in that way; instead, his words carry the tone of a slave being set free. It was his farewell to the world.

Simeon now saw “Israel’s consolation” (v. 25), and his response calls to mind a similar proclamation Isaiah the prophet made eight hundred years earlier: “The LORD has displayed his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; all the ends of the earth will see the salvation of our God” (Isa. 52:10). God’s salvation is for every nation, tongue, and tribe—both Jews and Gentiles. God’s global purpose is to draw all people to Him: “A vast multitude from every nation, tribe, people, and language, which no one could number, standing before the throne and before the Lamb” (Rev. 7:9).

Simeon’s proclamation might have shocked other Jews in the temple that day. The Jews were proud of their status as God’s chosen people. They saw the Messiah as *their* deliverer. They assumed He would establish *their* kingdom, which would then rule over the Gentiles. The truth that God’s salvation included the Gentiles ran counter to their preconceptions and prejudices.

At that point, Simeon saw what others did not—salvation was not limited to one nation—so his words could also be viewed as a missionary hymn. The mission of the Messiah was to bring us all to God, and for that we can be eternally thankful.



Luke 2:33-35

³³ His father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and told his mother Mary: “Indeed, this child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed—
³⁵ and a sword will pierce your own soul—that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Joseph and Mary were surely amazed with their child. They already knew Jesus was special, but the words Simeon spoke were most likely hard for them to understand. Simeon highlighted three things that would result from the life of Jesus.

- ▶ **Jesus would impact people’s destiny.** “This child is destined to cause the fall and rise of many in Israel.” This phrase has to do with how we respond to the Messiah. People can be divided into two groups: Those who rise (individuals who accept Christ by faith, are lifted out of their sin, and enter heaven) and those who fall (people who reject Christ, remain in their unbelief, and fall into eternal punishment). These consequences would reveal what people thought about Mary’s son.
- ▶ **Jesus would be opposed.** This term refers not only to the verbal insults Christ would endure during His life and death, but also to the people’s hatred and rejection. Jesus would be “a sign” from God that many would reject.
- ▶ **Jesus would reveal our thoughts.** Through Christ’s ministry, teaching, and presence, the thoughts of many hearts were revealed—and still are today. Christ exposes us as we truly are. It’s natural to run from someone who will expose us. We don’t want our deeds to be found out. Humanity’s rejection of the Messiah would reveal the wicked state of our heart.

On the other hand, when our thoughts are revealed, our sins are exposed. When we confess them, Jesus forgives. When we trust Him, Jesus changes our eternal destiny. We truly have a sure hope when we trust in Jesus.

How does Jesus cause people to “fall and rise”?

QUESTION #4

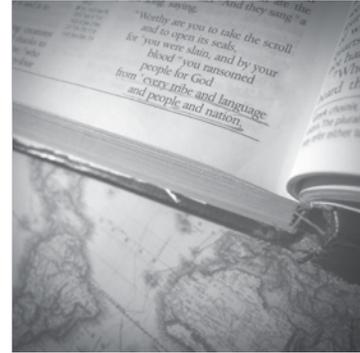
What are some ways we can be prepared to respond to those who oppose Jesus today?

QUESTION #5

LIVE IT OUT

We can have a sure hope in Christ. To nurture that hope, choose one of these applications.

- ▶ **Praise.** Simeon's first response to the Messiah was praise. Specifically, Simeon praised God for His salvation. Spend time praising God for His grace, mercy, and salvation.
- ▶ **Wait.** Jesus' salvation brings freedom and joy; however, we must still live in a fallen world until we are with Him in heaven. The hard thing about waiting is that it involves patience. Memorize Psalm 27:14: "Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart be courageous. Wait for the LORD."
- ▶ **Go.** Simeon's words reflected a global view of Christ's salvation. Talk with your church leaders about opportunities to get involved in taking the gospel to the world: praying, giving, or a short-term or long-term missions involvement.



None of us knows for sure how long we have left on this earth. But we do know that we have a sure hope when we trust in Jesus. And we have a responsibility to share that hope with others.

My thoughts

1. Patrick J. Kiger, "5 Futurist Predictions in the World of Science," *How Stuff Works*, <https://electronics.howstuffworks.com/future-tech/5-futurist-predictions-in-science2.html>.