

Simeon: A Man With An Expectant Heart

Luke 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."

"**waiting**" is a word (GRK: *prosdechomai*) that means "to be filled with expectation of the fulfillment of a promise."

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"Expectancy is not only the key to the Abundant Life,  
but is the doorway through which the blessings of God pass."  
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Attitude of an Expectant Heart:

"The prayers of a righteous man avails much!"
"Pray and Declare!"

Expectation has always been the birthplace of the manifestation of the promises of God

1. God has promised that a righteous person's expectations shall never be cut off.

Proverbs 10:24 "but the desire of the righteous shall be granted."

2. We should always expect an answer from God when we request Him. According to Matthew 6:33. the sense of the verse is we expect God to hear and fulfill our request in prayer. When you pray, believe that you receive.
3. To pray with expectant faith means believing our prayers have "already been answered." This belief is in contrast to hoping that God will answer our prayer. When the heart is not convinced, we can not move to a faith that expects
4. Praying with expectancy can be with an expectation of either a GOOD or BAD outcome. It depends on whether one trusts in the "goodness of God."
 - Simeon is one of two individuals who testified publicly in this instance. Anna was the other.
 - The significance was both were under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In The Old Testament, the Holy Spirit would come upon individuals when God wanted to speak about a situation or event.
 - Luke uses the testimony of two credible people to announce what Jesus would be about in His life. Notice that Anna's prophecy was not recorded but only reinforced Simeon's.
 - Luke aims to assure his readers that Jesus was indeed the Lord.

What was Simeon like in his character?

1. He possessed the essential characteristics found in Old Testament
 - He was pious or heartfelt devout
 - He was a "righteous person" in his faith towards God
 - He was faithful and filled with faith
 - He was thankful
 - He was EXPECTANT

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- He made a REQUEST
 - He was one of the believing remnants in Israel at that time who were looking for Messiah's appearing: "the consolation of Israel."
 - He was led by the Holy Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit was upon him, and God anointed him to speak.
 - He felt the weight of Roman oppression and the lack of true freedom.
 - He was just and devout in his observance of the Law. There were many like him in Israel when Jesus was born. **REF: Ps. 119:166, 174; [Is. 52:10; Luke 3:6]**
2. God went "beyond Simeon's expectation!"
- His request to see the Messiah before he died was fulfilled.
 - God did something even better. God chose Simeon to speak a prophetic word over the Messiah of Israel.

Concerning prophecy of the time

- It is important to note that there had been no prophetic word for 420 years since Malachi, the last recorded prophet of Israel. The Old Testament prophecies had been sealed since that time.
- Jesus came because of God's announcements through the Old Testament prophets. Peter said, "we now have something better than the (prophetic) word." We now have Jesus fulfilling the word of these prophets.
- Like in the Old Testament, God speaks today prophetically to exhort, encourage, edify, console, and comfort.
- Today's prophets do not declare God's judgment against people for personal sin like Old Testament prophets. Judgment went to Jesus according to John 12:30

Who is the "Consolation of Israel?"

1. Jesus is called the "Consolation of Israel."

Definition: consolation, comfort, solace; that which affords comfort or refreshment thus of the Messianic salvation (so the Rabbis call the Messiah the consoler, the comforter)

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"The consolation of Israel" is a prophetic reference Jesus, the promised Messiah. He is the One who was to console is to "alleviate grief by removing Israel's sense of loss and trouble." The Messiah, the "Consolation of Israel," came to remove sorrow and comfort the nation. Simeon and generations before him waited for the coming of the One who would console God's people.

Who was Simeon?

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1. Many assumed that Simeon was an older adult, but the text does not reveal his age. He could have been younger. This is because the text states the Holy Spirit led him, making him a seasoned person of faith. It is likely that, after years of continued prayer, he was filled with “divine assurance”
2. Hillel was the father of Simeon, and Simeon was the father of Gamaliel. Gamaliel was the Rabbi who taught Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the Apostle.
3. Traditionally, it has been believed by some that this Simeon who prophesied in song over the infant Jesus was the same old man pronounced the "*Nunc Dimittis*," which means “permission to depart.”

Old Testament Parallel to Simeon

1. Isaiah predicted that the Messiah would take on the ministry of consolation:

Isaiah 40:1–2 "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for."

2. Simeon declared his knowledge of this, and other scriptures, concerning the coming Messiah

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

- It is an interesting parallel between Simeon seeing the face of the Messiah and Israel seeing Joseph many years believing him to be dead. Israel must have carried great remorse and grief in his heart and may even pray, never giving up hope. This idea is typical in parents who have lost a child in the same manner.

Genesis 46:30 "And Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, because you are still alive."

- On the one hand, Simeon was representative of a "man of faith" of whom Jesus often spoke.
- Because Simeon lived a life of "expecting God to be good," he easily made this unique and personal request to God. A person's expectancy is directly related to what they will request, which translates to receiving from God.

Luke 2:30 "For my eyes have seen Your salvation..."

- This verse indicates that Simeon was very familiar with the scriptures. He was also able to interpret the times in which he was living.
- Simeon is a perfect example of a Jew who was, by faith, looking for the coming of the "Kindred Redeemer," the Messiah of Israel. He was, obviously, "saved in faith" before the cross and resurrection. He believed without seeing, just like Believers after the resurrection.

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3. The patriarch, Jacob, is seen as a person who also “waited”

Genesis 49:18 "I have waited for your salvation, O LORD!" (Jacob blessing his sons)

Redemption is for both the Jew and Gentile (non-Jew)

- God provided redemption to the whole world. The only difference is the "how" God provided justification and salvation.
- The Jew (Israel) was **looking forward** “**by faith** in the promises made to Abraham” for the coming Messiah, the Seed, who justified Israel through the cross. This made them “righteous.”
- The Gentile, **looking back** at the cross, is justified **through faith** in Jesus, the Savior of the World.

Romans 3:30 Jews are "justified" BY FAITH[in the promises of God] while Gentiles are "justified THROUGH FAITH [because of the work of Jesus on the Cross.

Galatians 3:26-29 Gentiles are baptized into Christ THROUGH FAITH in Jesus
The Law had been done away with. The only thing left for the Gentile was "THROUGH faith in Jesus" and what he did.

The blessing of Simeon on Mary

Luke 2:33-35

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

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

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

- The Child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, "This Child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too" (Luke 2:33-35).
- Luke showed that Simeon, did not acknowledge Joseph as Jesus' true father. He only stated that Mary was Jesus' mother. The verse subtly references the "father of Jesus" as God.
- Simeon told Mary a sword would pierce Mary's soul. The meaning is that because of Jesus's suffering and crucifixion she would suffer great grief and loss.
- Because the narrative was directed exclusively to Mary, it could be argued that Joseph would not be around to see Jesus rejected and crucified by the people whom He came to save.
- "Mary is listening to a direct prophecy given by Simeon, a man possessed by the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:25–27).

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- Simeon's prediction is that Jesus' ministry will result in sharp division between people, even among Israel (Luke 2:34).
- This verse corresponds to Old Testament prophecies, which indicated that some of God's chosen people would "stumble" in response to the Messiah (Isaiah 8:14).
- As Jesus preached, He noted this same effect (John 9:39).
- This division intends to reveal whether each person is sincerely seeking God (1 Corinthians 1:23; 1 Peter 2:8; John 3:16–18).
- Here, Simeon notes that Mary will suffer intense personal pain as part of her role in Jesus' life. Some of that will come from confusion and uncertainty (Mark 3:21, 31). Primarily, it will involve the horror of watching her Son's torture, crucifixion, and death (John 19:25–27)."

The ‘fall and rise’ of Israel

1. Jesus disrupted and separated relationships because of who He was

Matthew 10:34-39

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword.

35 For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law';

36 and a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'

37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves Son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.

39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

2. Jesus was a peaceful "firebrand!"
 - A "firebrand" is someone passionate about a particular cause. They typically incite change and take radical action. They also create unrest or strife.
 - Change of this sort is always at the level of the heart.

Anna Bears Witness In The Temple

1. Anna was a prophetess known to Israel

Luke 2:36-38

36 Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity;

37 and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

- Prophecy always confirms the Word of the Lord.
- Simeon "prophesied," & Anna backed it up.
- Luke's narrative met the requirement under the Law of Moses of "two or three witnesses" for prophecy.
- The "content" of Anna's prophecy is not mentioned; she seems to have meandered into the situation in support of the Word of the Lord for Joseph and Mary.

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- The phrase, "In that instant," appears to be a happenstance occurrence. The timing was impeccable!
 - Because Anna was a known prophetess, her appearance and speech further supported Simeon's prophecy of Joseph and Mary.
2. Again, it supported the Law of "two or three witnesses."
 3. There are many examples of God speaking by two or three witnesses. Jews were meticulous about not receiving prophecy unless another prophet confirmed it. This philosophy is also found in Paul's directive to the Corinthian church.

1 Cor. 14:29: "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge."

Conclusion:

Psalms 33:20-22

20 Our soul waits for the LORD; He is our help and our shield.

21 For our heart shall rejoice in Him, Because we have trusted in His holy name.

22 Let Your mercy, O LORD, be upon us, Just as we hope in You.

Jesus instructed all Believers to "Have faith in God."

Mark 11:22-24

22 So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God.

23 For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

24 Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

When we seek God to hear, make a request, or for a supplication, we expect to receive and answer.

1 Timothy 2:1

1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,

2 for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

"Those who expect nothing are never disappointed!"

-Steve Sampson