

“COME, LET US ADORE HIM”

“His Unblemished Life”

Scripture Reading – Luke, 2:21-35

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived.

When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons”.

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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: “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”.

The child’s father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. 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, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too”.

‘How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!’

Hebrews, 9:14, NIV

This series for Advent is based around the theme: ‘COME, LET US ADORE HIM’.

In it, we consider four different reasons why we should adore Jesus as we prepare ourselves for the celebration of his birth this Christmas: ‘HIS UNEQUALLED BIRTH’ ... ‘HIS UNBLEMISHED LIFE’ ... ‘HIS UNDIMINISHED DEITY’ ... and, ‘HIS UNQUESTIONED LORDSHIP’.

Jesus did not have his start in Bethlehem.

He stepped out of glory, and he did it just for you! God being made flesh was necessary for our salvation. Jesus’ Christmas gift to you is his legacy, his life and his Lordship. As you listen to this series, it is my prayer that you will gain insight into his matchless gift to you.

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Festivals\Advent\Come, Let Us Adore Him

“ARE YOU READY FOR CHRIST?”

Are you ready for Christmas?

No, I am not asking if you have written and posted all your Christmas Cards; or purchased and wrapped your Christmas presents; or bought your turkey with all the trimmings; or if you have put up your tree, lights and decorations... I am asking if you are ready for the coming of Christ.

What are YOU waiting for this Christmas? Are YOU longing for anything? What are YOU expecting to receive? Are YOU looking forward to anything special this Christmas time?

Simeon makes his appearance in the final acts of the Christmas drama.

Simeon is usually pictured as a very old man, but nothing in Scripture supports this. Tradition says he was 113 years old, but it is only tradition. He does not appear in any nativity scenes, or on many Christmas cards, but he is a significant player in the first Christmas pageant. Simeon was waiting for something. Actually, he was waiting for someone.

Luke uses a Greek word for ‘ANTICIPATION’ that identifies Simeon as ‘WAITING WITH EXPECTATION’ for the coming of the Messiah. It literally means that he was ‘ALERT TO HIS APPEARANCE, AND WAS READY TO WELCOME HIM’.

Simeon was anticipating the first Christmas.

He was waiting for the Messiah to come. The Holy Spirit had previously spoken to him and promised that he would not die before he saw the Christ. Now, the same Holy Spirit had moved him into the Temple.

Many people missed out on the first coming of Christ; do not miss out on the second!

The priests called by King Herod to the palace in Jerusalem were well aware of the prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. They heard from the magi that they had seen his star in the east and had come to worship him. Bethlehem is just five miles downhill from Jerusalem, but the priests did not go to see the Christ, Immanuel – God with us.

‘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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.’

Luke, 2:25-27a, NIV

We use Simeon as an example of how we can be ready for the coming of Christ...

ARE YOU SAVED?

Simeon was righteous.

He was blameless, good, honourable, and upright.

But, more than that, when the Bible uses this word it refers to being right with God. Christians often wonder how people can be saved before Jesus was crucified. But this is to misunderstand Scripture. The Bible tells us that Jesus was the Lamb of God who was

crucified before the foundation of the world. Simeon was saved because he was a man of faith. Simeon was saved because he was a man who looked ahead and was able to see the purpose of Christ.

Someone once said that if you do not have a glimpse of heaven before you die, you will not be going there after.



ARE YOU SURRENDERED?

Simeon was devout.

He was pious and religious – both words conjure up negative feelings today. He was committed – a word that conjures up negative reactions. He was devoted and dedicated.

But, more than that, Simeon **'WAS WAITING FOR THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL'**. In prayer, in worship, in humble and faithful expectation he was waiting for the day when God would finally comfort his people.

What is the passion of your life?

We are waiting for Jesus to come again. When we have this hope of the coming of Jesus within us, we want it to affect our life – we want to be holy people.



ARE YOU SPIRITUAL?

The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon.

The name 'SIMEON' means 'LISTENING ONE'.

The Holy Spirit had spoken to him. When we are saved, we have the person of the Holy Spirit within, but Simeon had more, he knew something of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Is the Holy Spirit upon you? Does the Holy Spirit have you?

'HE WHO HAS AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES.'



ARE YOU SENSITIVE?

Simeon was moved by the Holy Spirit.

He was enthused, motivated, stimulated and stirred.

God spoke to Simeon, who was so wired up to God that he obeyed the moving of the Spirit. We do not know how the impulse of the Spirit came, but whatever Simeon experienced, it was enough for him to be convinced. Sometimes, we will not be moved no matter what shove we experience. But Simeon was open to what the Holy Spirit wanted to do within his life.

The Holy Spirit wants to guide us and reveal the truth of Christ coming to us.

SIMEON WAS SATISFIED

'Moved by the Spirit, Simeon went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God.'

Luke, 2:27b-28, NIV

Simeon took Jesus up into his arms and praised God.

I would be surprised if this was the only child brought that day into the Temple Courts to be presented to the Lord. There is no record of Simeon lifting up every child that came. But the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that this child of peasant parents, was the promised Messiah.

THE WORD OF GOD... THE SON OF GOD... and THE SPIRIT OF GOD came together in Simeon's life.

"HIS UNEQUALLED LIFE"

'Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "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".'

Luke, 2:28-32, NIV

SIMEON'S SONG IS A WORSHIP HYMN

He blesses God for keeping his promise and sending the Messiah. He joyfully praises God that he has been privileged to see the Lord's Christ.

SIMEON'S SONG IS A SALVATION HYMN

"FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION "

Now Simeon is ready to die! The word depart has several meanings, and each of them tells us something about the death of a Christian. It means to release a prisoner, to untie a ship and set sail, to take down a tent, and to unyoke a beast of burden.

SIMEON'S SONG IS A MISSIONARY HYMN

This devout Jew standing in the temple sees this great salvation going out to the Gentiles! Jesus has brought the light to the Gentiles so that all people can be saved.

Simeon said five things about Jesus that describe his unblemished life...



JESUS BRINGS DELIVERANCE

"MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION , WHICH WAS PREPARED IN THE SIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE"

The baby Mary delivered is the One who would deliver us.

Jesus was born of a virgin, that we might be born again.

Jesus is the Saviour of the World.

The Jews were well acquainted with the Old Testament prophecies that spoke of the Messiah's blessings to their nation. They did not always give equal attention to the prophecies saying that he would bring salvation to the entire world, not just the Jews. Many thought that Christ had come to save only his own people. Luke made sure his

Greek audience understood that Christ had come to save all who believe, Gentiles as well as Jews.

'The LORD says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth".'

Isaiah, 49:6, NIV



JESUS DISPELS DARKNESS

"A LIGHT FOR REVELATION TO THE GENTILES AND FOR GLORY TO YOUR PEOPLE ISRAEL "

Jesus is the Light of the World.

We smile when we hear of children who are afraid of the dark, but what about adults who are afraid of his light? The Bible tells us that people prefer the darkness because their deeds are evil. When standing in the light he bestows, we are able to see ourselves as we truly are. Are we afraid of the light that shines in the darkness?

Why would we seek to stumble in the darkness when we can walk in the light?

'If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.'

1 John, 1:6-7, NIV

SIMEON STOPPED PRAISING AND STARTED PROPHESYING

'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, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too".'

Luke, 2:34-35, NIV

In his prophecy, Simeon used three important images: 'STONE... SIGN... SWORD...'.



JESUS DETERMINES DESTINY

"THIS CHILD IS DESTINED TO CAUSE THE FALLING AND RISING OF MANY IN ISRAEL "

Jesus would be a 'REJECTED CORNERSTONE'.

The nation of Israel would stumble over him. Because of Jesus Christ, many in Israel would fall in conviction and then rise in salvation. Even today, God's people Israel stumble over the Cross and do not understand that Jesus is their Rock.

Jesus will be a stepping-stone or a stumbling block.

You can build your life upon Jesus – 'THE ROCK OF AGES' – or you can stumble over him. Either way, he is unavoidable, you cannot go around him.

The destiny we have to look forward to is determined by our response to the Lord Jesus Christ.

'For in Scripture it says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame". Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe, "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone", and, "A stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall". They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.'

1 Peter, 2:6-8, NIV



JESUS PROVOKES DERISION

"TO BE A SIGN THAT WILL BE SPOKEN AGAINST"

The word 'SIGN' literally means 'MIRACLE'.

This is not so much a demonstration of power but as a revelation of divine truth. Jesus Christ is God's miracle; and yet, instead of admiring him, the people attacked him and spoke against him. His birth was a miracle, yet they slandered it. They said his miracles were done in the power of Satan and that his character was questionable. They slandered his death and lied about his resurrection. Today, people speak against his coming again

When people curse, they often say: "OH, CHRIST!".

I do not particularly like this kind of blasphemy, but have you noticed that when people curse they usually do not say, "OH MOHAMMED!" or "OH BUDDHA!"?

'Jesus said, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you".'

Matthew, 5:11-12, NIV



JESUS CAUSES DIVISION

"A SWORD WILL PIERCE YOUR OWN SOUL TOO"

The image of the sword was for Mary alone.

It spoke of the suffering and sorrow she would bear as the mother of the Messiah. The Greek word means a large sword such as Goliath used, and the verb means 'CONSTANTLY KEEP ON PIERCING'. During our Lord's life and ministry, Mary did experience more and more sorrow until one day she stood by his cross and saw him suffer and die.

However, without minimising her devotion, Mary's personal pain must not in any way be made a part of Christ's redemptive work. Only Jesus could die for the sins of the world.

*Born thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us for ever, Now thy gracious Kingdom bring.*