

THE LIGHT AND GLORY OF GOD

THE POINT:
JESUS REVEALS GOD'S
GLORY AND LOVE.

Leader pages on pp. 118-121

LUKE 2:25-35

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,

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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.

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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."**

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MEMORY VERSE

KEYWORDS

Israel's Consolation (v. 25)–

The comfort and hope the people had in regard to God's plan for His people, but, more specifically, it referred to the Messiah's role in that plan.

Gentiles (v. 32)–A Latin term used by Jews to refer to non-Jews whom they considered to be

inferior since they worshiped many gods and denied the true God.

A Sign that Will be Opposed (v. 35)– Jesus as a spiritual divider of society.

HOW DOES JESUS REVEAL GOD'S GLORY?

One of my favorite parts of Christmas is all the lights. Lights on the tree. Lights on the house. Christmas lights throughout the city. My family loves checking out lights in parks and neighborhoods all over our city. Something about lights adds to the celebration of the Christmas season.

But then January arrives, and the lights come down. In my part of the country, that leaves us with the cold, dreary climate of winter. It may be a new year, but we drift back to our old ways and habits. We are reminded that darkness defines the world in which we live.

We may have taken down all the Christmas lights, but the light of Christ is not gone. Christ came into the world to be the light we need. Light shines brightest in the darkness, and Christ shines brilliantly into our lives, revealing God's glory and love for us. To whatever you may be anticipating in 2022, add this: let the love of God and the light of Christ shine in your life. And may that light be what others see so they will want to shine too.

Revealed Through the Holy Spirit // Luke 2:25-27

We know little about Simeon, but what we know is significant.

- **He was righteous and devout.** Simeon isn't identified as a priest, a scribe, a Pharisee, or any other type of religious leader. However, he took his faith and belief in God seriously and lived them out. His love and fear of God were evident.
- **He looked forward to the consolation of Israel.** "Consolation" is tied to the same Greek word for comfort; Isaiah frequently prophesied a time of comfort, renewal, and hope for God's people. This consolation is tied to the arrival of the Messiah who would comfort the people by bringing deliverance.
- **He was guided by the Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit came to all followers of Christ (Rom. 8:8-9), but before the events in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit only came to select



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people, such as leaders and prophets. For this reason, some think Simeon may have been a prophet.

IN WHAT WAYS IS SIMEON AN EXAMPLE FOR US?

The Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he would live to see the Messiah—the consolation and deliverer of Israel he longed for. It wasn't clear whether Simeon knew he would encounter the Messiah that day when he came to the temple, but he was obedient to the Holy Spirit's guidance. Simeon's divine appointment was about to happen.

When we seek to live lives of righteousness and devotion, looking to Christ and letting Him fill us with His Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), we will become more sensitive to the leading and nudging of His Spirit. We rarely know what “divine appointments” are before us, but we should consider every interruption and interaction we have with another person as having the potential to be a divine appointment from God.

HOW DOES GOD'S PROMISE TO SIMEON REINFORCE THE TRUTH THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH?

Revealed Through Prophetic Praise

// Luke 2:28-32

Jewish law required Mary and Joseph to circumcise Jesus eight days after His birth; thirty-three days after that, Mary was required to return to the temple when her days of purification were complete (Lev. 12:2-4). At that time, she was to bring an offering to the priest at the temple (vv. 6-9). That's what Mary and Joseph did (Luke 2:21-24), but they also brought Jesus to the temple. Because Jesus was their firstborn son, the law also required them to dedicate Him to the Lord and pay the required “redemption price” (Ex. 34:19-20; Num. 3:40-48).

When Jesus and His family entered the temple, they encountered Simeon. God promised that Simeon would encounter the Messiah before he died (Luke 2:26). Simeon was “guided by the Spirit” (v. 27) to approach Mary and Joseph.

When he met them, Simeon burst into praise. He could die a blessed man because he had seen God's promise fulfilled. Simeon lived to further God's purposes. He carried out



DIGGING DEEPER JESUS' REDEMPTION

Jesus was the firstborn son of Joseph and Mary. The law required firstborn males to be dedicated to the LORD and a redemption price paid. “The LORD told Moses: ‘Register every firstborn male of the Israelites’ one month old or more, and list their names. You are to take the Levites for Me—I am the LORD—in place of every firstborn among the Israelites” (Num. 3:40-41). For each firstborn male that outnumber the Levites a redemption price had to be paid because the Levites belong to the Lord (Num. 3:45). “As the redemption price for the 273 firstborn Israelites who outnumber the Levites ... Give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price” (Num. 3:46-48). As established by God's law, Jesus was redeemed.

How does the obedience of Joseph and Mary motivate you to be obedient to God?



that purpose as he held the infant Jesus and proclaimed God's salvation.

WHAT DOES SIMEON'S STATEMENT OF PRAISE TEACH US ABOUT GOD'S MISSION?

Simeon's praise pointed to the Messiah as God's "salvation" (v. 30). He held in his arms the deliverance he and many other Jews longed for. But Jesus wouldn't grow up to be the Messiah who would only deliver the Jews. Simeon announced, "You have prepared it in the presence of all peoples" (v. 31). God sent His Son, Jesus, to be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory to your people Israel" (v. 32). Jews and Gentiles alike would benefit from the Messiah!

Salvation had come to all the world. Jesus is the Messiah and the source of salvation to all who would believe and trust in Him. Jesus would provide a way for people of "every nation, tribe, people, and language" (Rev. 7:9), not just Israel, to receive salvation.

Jesus came to be the light of the world. Followers of Jesus are called to shine His light around the world. Simeon's joy wasn't just because he had met the Messiah. His joy was because that Messiah would be salvation for all the world.

Revealed Through Life and Death // Luke 2:33-35

Mary and Joseph knew their child was the Son of God, but they were struck by the role and mission their infant son would carry out.

Even as Simeon offered his blessing on the family, he delivered a troubling prophecy.

- **Jesus would cause the fall of many.** Not everyone would accept the truth that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Scriptures. The apostle Peter later quoted Psalm 118:22 to indicate what happens to those who reject Jesus as the Messiah.

"So honor will come to you who believe; but for the unbelieving, The stone that the builders rejected—this one has become the cornerstone, and a stone to stumble over, and a rock to trip over. They stumble because they disobey the word; they were destined for this" (1 Pet. 2:7-8; see also Acts 4:11).

- **Jesus would cause the rise of many.** Those who trust in the work of Christ—His death and resurrection—are freed from their sin and resurrected to a new life.
- **Jesus would be a sign that will be opposed.** Simeon referred to Jesus as "a sign." This likely refers to the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign: See, the virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel." Regardless of the miracles, teachings, and evidence of His deity, many will do more than reject Jesus; they will oppose Him. That opposition would lead to Jesus' crucifixion and death.

Jesus would be the Savior and Deliverer of Israel and all the world! But now Mary was hearing her son would walk a road that would include hardship, rejection, and opposition.

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It would be a hard road for Jesus—and it would be hard for Mary, too. Simeon told Mary that “a sword will pierce your own soul” (v. 35). Mary would experience great grief and sorrow as she watched her son suffer a horrible death on the cross (John 19:25).

The truth Jesus proclaimed is often comforting and also often convicting. The writer of Hebrews said, “For the word of God is living and effective and sharper than any double-edged sword, penetrating as far as the separation of soul and spirit, joints and marrow. It is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

The Word from God is Jesus Himself (John 1:1). As God, Jesus knows who we really are. When we accept the truth about Jesus, it reveals a heart that will trust Him. With that trust comes the salvation and deliverance Jesus came to earth to give us. We must decide whether we will trust in the truth of Jesus as Savior and Messiah or walk away from Christ and fall.

HOW DOES JESUS BRING BOTH PEACE AND DIVISION ON EARTH?

DID YOU KNOW?

Born a free person of color in Virginia, Elijah Anderson was forced from his native state by restrictive black laws passed after the 1831 Nat Turner Rebellion. Elijah relocated to Cincinnati, Ohio. He had been trained as a blacksmith. He forged strong friendships with other free blacks. Elijah attained leadership in the Madison Underground railroad. He excelled at opening and developing secure routes for fugitive slaves. Elijah brought 200 runaway slaves through before 1850. As an experienced conductor, Elijah realized that bringing fugitives across by ones and twos was inefficient and likely to alert the runaway-slave patrollers. Elijah soon was able to bring large groups of fugitives out through Boone County, Kentucky. Elijah and the Madison Underground Railroad delivered many fugitive slaves to freedom.⁷

How is the deliverance of slaves a metaphor for the deliverance of humankind by the Messiah?

LIVE IT

How will your life as a believer glorify God?

Jesus shows us what God is like because He is the Son of God. Even as Simeon prophesied when Jesus was an infant, not everyone would like what Jesus reveals. That truth would lead to His death. Perhaps you have had the experience of reading Scripture, and it feels like God is speaking directly to you. God's Word reveals His message to us. And Jesus ultimately reveals the light and glory of God through us.

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- **Write it down.** Start a journal to record what Jesus reveals to you as you read His Word and pray. Meditate on the things God has revealed and live out what He has told you.
- **Pray about it.** God knows the thoughts and intentions of our hearts. Pray that God reveals to you any area in your life that you have not trusted Him with.
- **Talk about it.** This week, evangelize by talking to someone who does not know Jesus. Tell them the truth of Jesus so they too can experience His love and peace.

DAILY READINGS

1. FAITHFUL SIGHT // LUKE 2:27

Faith means believing God before the outcome no matter how long it takes; it's believing and hoping in God before it's seen (Heb 11:1); it's believing God even when there is a delay. Simeon waited his entire life for the manifestation of God's promise to him. He didn't waver in his hope and faith in God. When he had baby Jesus in his arms, he praised God for the promised Messiah. Simeon had peace in God and peace in his death because God showed him his salvation in the Messiah—just like He promised. God's promises are true. We must have faith to wait on all He has promised.

The Lord of our salvation is faithful to perform all He promised.

2. NO MEDIATOR NEEDED // HEBREWS 1:2-3

Sometimes when opponents can't communicate well amongst themselves, a mediator is needed to help them come to an agreement. Old Testament prophets were the mediators between the people and God. They would present God's message. Thankfully, Jesus became our connection to God. He possesses God's glory and nature. He sustains the earth and all those in it through His Word. He saved us from the penalty of our sins and now we are in a right relationship with God. Now Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us. Give Him glory.

No mediator needed, we are connected to God through Jesus.

3. TOGETHER FOREVER // JOHN 17:24

You've probably heard someone say, "I wish you were here." That's usually said when they're somewhere pleasurable. They want those they love to experience the same pleasure they're experiencing. Jesus counted believers as a gift given to Him by God. Before He ascended to heaven to be with God, He asked God to allow all of His

believing, loving, obedient, and faithful disciples to be with Him in heaven. He wanted us to see the everlasting glory He received through God. That means we would experience God's love for Jesus which is revealed through the glory He gave Him.

Believers, be faithful, obedient, loving followers of Christ and receive the joy of being with a loving God forever.

4. HEAVENLY DEFENSE // MICAH 2:2-5

Gentrification is a major concern for many African Americans. It's a process involving changing the character of a poor urban neighborhood. This process involves displacing the current residents by either purchasing their homes at below market rates and/or preventing low income families from being able to afford previously affordable neighborhoods. This is not in line with God's Word. God said to care for the poor and needy (Deut. 15:11). Micah warned that God had enough of evil people coveting the fields and homes of His people, leaving them without an inheritance for their children. God planned "a disaster" for them that was inescapable.

When mistreated, don't be dismayed. God is our Defense.

5. THE PROPHECY // NUMBERS 24:17-19

Balaam was a diviner (one who claimed to have special power to predict the future) who was hired by Balak (king of Moab), to put a curse on the children of Israel (Num. 22:4-6). However, God made him bless them instead (Num. 22:20). Balaam's fourth message prophesied the birth of Jesus. He described the star that would later lead the wise men to Jesus. The prophesy further described Jesus as a descendant of David. The Moabites would be crushed and the Moabite tribe of Sheth would be destroyed. Israel would have the victory. God used a non-Israelite to prophesy the birth of Jesus and His victory over all of His enemies.

Allow God to use you to proclaim Christ.