

Luke 2:25-32

Sermon: **Simeon holds Shalom in his arms**

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ODDBALLS

1. (Luke 2:25) “And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.” Luke wants us to see that Simeon was a devout man, just like Zechariah and Elizabeth, about whom it was written that they were “righteous in the sight of God¹.” We also read that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah. This shows us that Simeon had a prophetic role—not as great as the great prophets of the Old Testament, perhaps, but still a role nonetheless.

1.1. And here a question arises, one we often ask ourselves: “God, why is my role in Your plan so small, while other people seem to do great things in Your name?” Our ambitions often cloud our vision so that we fail to clearly see what God has actually appointed us to do. Instead of asking: “Why isn’t my role as big as theirs?”—the real question should be: “Do I have a role in God’s plan at all, and have I learned to accept it?”

1.2. Let’s remember Mary’s words: “Behold, the Lord’s bond-servant; may it be done to me according to your word².” Perhaps God gives one of us the role of being persecuted for His name. Another the role of sickness. Another the role of poverty, being born in some forgotten corner of the world. Another the role of a soldier who lost his legs in war. Another the role of a mother who lost her child. As painful as that may be, the key— I believe— is to accept that role. To say: “I am Your servant, let it be as You say.” That is hard. It is a struggle, a wrestling with God. But those who truly belong to Him, in the end, accept their role and love their Father, because they see—looking back—that it had to be that way.

¹ Luke 1:6

² Luke 1:38

1.3. Now, let's step into Simeon's shoes. He receives a revelation: *"You will not die until you have seen the Messiah³!"* What would our lives look like after such a revelation? I believe we would dedicate our entire lives to that promise: constantly studying the Scriptures, searching, praying, bearing witness to our fellow countrymen, passionately persuading them that this is true and that it will happen. We would long for them to believe what the Holy Spirit had revealed to us.

1.4. But—would they believe us? Perhaps out of politeness they might listen, but as soon as we left, maybe they would whisper: *"He's gone mad."* Maybe they would say: *"The rest of us haven't received such a revelation—why should we believe him?"*

1.5. God is no stranger to blessing a man with "foolishness"—by giving him a revelation that no one else has. And because of that revelation, the man becomes an "oddball" in the eyes of society. I believe Simeon lived out that revelation with all his heart, and that many likely saw him as eccentric because of it. The text doesn't say this directly, but I offer it as one way to understand his situation.

1.6. The same is true of us Christians today. We too are "oddballs" to this world. The revelation we have received from God is not understood by the world, yet it has changed our lives. Our worldview is no longer the worldview of this age. And just as Simeon, in his "foolishness," shamed human wisdom, so God uses us today to expose the emptiness of worldly wisdom. Simeon longed to see the Savior with his eyes before death—and he did. We will see Him after our death.

1.7. Still, I believe Simeon was sober-minded, stable, and reasonable as he bore witness to the truth. God's foolishness is not human foolishness! God does not ask us to scream, shout, or grab people by the sleeve. He asks us, in humility, love, and firm conviction, to share what we have received. To use reason, to be grounded in evidence, and to carry the truth in our hearts as we proclaim it to others. That kind of "foolishness" is, in fact, wisdom from God.

SIMEON HOLDS SHALOM IN HIS ARMS

2. (Luke 2:25) Luke tells us that Simeon was waiting for the "consolation of Israel." The word consolation comes from the Greek *paraklesis*, meaning "encouragement" or "comfort." When someone suffers and feels pain, we comfort them with a hug and say: *"Better days will come."* That is the sense we must carry here. The question is: what consolation was Simeon expecting?

2.1. If we know Israel's history—and I've already spoken about this—we know it was a nation that had suffered greatly through the centuries. Most of the time they were under the firm hand of foreign rulers, for whom Israel was nothing more than a pawn in their politics. They hated them, oppressed them, and exploited them as they wished. That is precisely why Israel longed for the fulfillment of the promises Yahweh gave to Abraham, Moses, and David. They knew: as long as their oppressors ruled, the blessing could not be realized. And so they waited for the Messiah who would set them free. They were a people worn out, exhausted, and hungry for comfort. Simeon was one of

³ Luke 2:26

them—and the arrival of the child Jesus was confirmation and encouragement to him that God would indeed fulfill what He had promised.

2.2. The text adds: “And the Holy Spirit was upon him.” What does this mean? I’ve already mentioned Simeon’s prophetic role, so it most likely means God had specially consecrated him for that task.

2.3. **(Luke 2:26)** “And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

Just like the Old Testament prophets, Simeon receives instructions and explanations about the future directly from God.

2.4. **(Luke 2:27)** “And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law.”

At exactly the right moment, the Spirit led Simeon into the temple—just as Mary and Joseph arrived to fulfill what the Law required.

2.5. **(Luke 2:28–29)** “Then he took Him in his arms, and blessed God, and said: ‘Now, Lord, You are letting Your bond-servant depart in peace, According to Your word.’”

The first thing Simeon feels when he holds the child is peace. In Hebrew: shalom. Some teachers claim that Jews in the Old Testament had no concept of eternal life—that they saw the Law only as a guideline for life “here and now” and that eternal life was hidden from them.

2.6. But if we carefully study the Old Testament, it becomes clear that this is not true. The concept of eternal life was present and revealed⁴. Simeon, as a man who knew the Scriptures, understood this. That is why he rejoices—not thinking that there is nothing after death, but knowing that with the coming of the Messiah comes blessing. Now he can “depart in peace.”

2.7. **(Luke 2:30–32)** “For my eyes have seen Your salvation, Which You have prepared in the presence of all the peoples: A light for revelation for the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

Simeon’s words revolve around one central point: the child Jesus. In verse 30 he uses the word *salvation*, but I personally prefer to say Deliverer. Why? Because Israel had been waiting for centuries for the One who would *deliver* them from the hands of their oppressors.

2.8. “In the presence of all the peoples...” Here we see another dimension. Throughout history, Satan had tried to prevent God’s promises to Israel from being fulfilled—stirring hatred and envy among the nations. Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome—all of them oppressed Israel and “delayed” the fulfillment of God’s promises. But now the King was before Simeon’s very eyes! This was proof that God had not forgotten His people.

⁴ Book of Job 19:25–27; Psalm 16:9–11; Psalm 49:16; Book of Daniel 12:2–3; Book of Isaiah 25:8; Book of Isaiah 26:19; Book of Hosea 6:1–2; Book of Hosea 13:14; Book of Proverbs 14:32; Book of Wisdom 3:1–4; Book of Wisdom 5:15; Second Book of Maccabees 7:9, 14, 23, 36

2.9. Yet Jesus did not come only for Israel. He came to bring Gentiles into the truth as well. The apostle Paul said: *“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son⁵.”* Jesus came as light—to unveil God’s plan and show us why history has unfolded the way it has. Truth was present in the Old Testament, but not with the clarity that Jesus brought.

3. Simeon clearly understood this truth. The Old Testament prophets had written of the One who would be a light to the nations⁶. Perhaps Simeon was a diligent student of Scripture, or perhaps he pieced it all together through the Spirit. In the end—it doesn’t really matter. What matters is that it was available to him, just as the Bible is available to us today—with the added gift that we now have an even broader, fuller picture.

3.1. **(Luke 2:32)** “A light for revelation for the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.” These words look forward—to the end of this age. When Christ returns a second time, all nations will see the glory of Yahweh with their own eyes—the glory of the invisible God the Father, who has handed all authority to His Son. Then Jesus, the visible God, will reign forever, and through Him all nations will see the glory of His Father—the invisible God.

⁵ Hebrews 1:1-2

⁶ Jeremiah 33:14–16; Isaiah 42:6