

# '“My Eyes Have Seen...” Simeon on Christ’s Birth'

12/19/2021

The video of the sermon is available [HERE](#).

The video of the skit shown during the sermon is available [HERE](#).

The Slides from the sermon are available [HERE](#).

*Luke 2:22-35*

*And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 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. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,*

*“Lord, now you are letting your servant[a] depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”*

*And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”*

Transcription:

Well for years now people have sung this as a hymn, they've called it a hymn. And what I'd like to do this morning is to see if you can recognize this hymn, as it's called. I'm going to quote a few lines from it, see if you recognize the hymn and can give the name of it. "In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea. With a glory in His bosom that transfigures you and me." Do you know recognize it yet? It's the Battle Hymn of the Republic, by Julia Ward Howe. I'm going to quote some more lines here. "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored. He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible swift sword. His truth is marching on. Glory! Glory! Halleljah!" She wrote that in 1860 after visiting Washington, DC, and hearing some soldiers singing John Brown's Body. She used the same tune, and put these words to it as a rallying point for the abolition of slavery in the War Between the States. Amazing statements that are made in here. Things like, "I have read His fiery gospel writ in rows of burnished steel!" And "He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat. He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat. Oh, be

swift, my soul, to answer Him; be jubilant, my feet! Our God is marching on." And "He has died to make men holy, let us die to make men free!" I was taught that in school public school, as a matter of fact, and it does have a lot of heritage there. But I want you to note that when Julia Howe wrote that, she wrote it as a social activist, to promote the abolition of slavery. So what she did is she attached an allegiance to Christ to the political cause that she was promoting.

And that is not the first time that that's happened. As a matter of fact, the Bible talks about it over and over, that happening. It talks about it, for example, with Nimrod and the Tower of Babel. He attached God's purpose to his political cause. And Jeroboam did that when the kingdom was divided, to keep the people together. He came up with what the Samaritans later had issues with, that Jesus addressed in John 4:20, "You say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship, but our fathers worshiped on this mountain." Jesus clarified the issue for her concerning where salvation is out of for the Jews. He said, it's not there in Jerusalem, it's not in this mountain. It's in spirit and in truth. The point that I'm making here is that issue of confusing causes/agendas, with the allegiance to God in Christ, is not new. It's gone on and on and on and on. Rome did it in making Caesar a god. England did it in adapting the Church of England in protest to the Catholic church at that time. And let me say this, anti-Christ will do it, from what the Bible says, My point in this is that we need to be aware and not confused, about allegiance to Christ, and competing causes that will often draw on that for people. It wasn't the first time, as I demonstrated to you, it won't be the last time, as we just talked about. Yet, in a strikingly similar fashion, saying some of those same words, "my eyes have seen", Luke chapter two talks to us about the birth of Christ, it is Simeon, on the birth of Christ. And let me say, this is definitely God's cause and allegiance to God's cause. And we are helped. It is an important passage that he has to say. Turn with me to Luke chapter two, if you haven't yet, Luke chapter two.

We're in our series on Christmas/Christ's Birth: people's comments, angel's comments, God's comments, concerning the birth of Christ. And today, we are definitely seeing God's cause in this in Luke chapter two. Last week, we heard the angel's comments, Luke chapter two, where the angels say to the shepherds, For today, there is born to you in the city of David, Bethlehem, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this is for great joy. It's good news of great joy to all peoples, all the peoples joy. And suddenly, in the midst of that, an ensemble that appears in heaven. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace toward men to whom he's pleased. The shepherds heard that, reported that to Mary and Joseph, and they all wondered, look at verses 17 and 18, "And when they saw it," the child, "they made known the sayings that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them." They marveled at this, they were moved to admiration with this. As a matter of fact, that's what this, this account ought to be.

Now we pick up the text that we're going to look at this morning. Luke 2:21-33, "And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus....And when the time came for their, Mary and Joseph's, purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord') and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, 'a pair of

turtledoves, or two young pigeons.' Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 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. And he came in the spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom", the practice, the prescription "of the Law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 'Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.' And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him." We're going to pause right there, not because Simeon is done yet, but because we'll come to that in a bit.

This morning, we're going to take a look at this note from Simeon. And we're going to take a look at God's work in bringing this note from Simeon. And we are going to be helped concerning the cause of Christ, we're going to be helped concerning the daily, experience by experience, basis of our life concerning God's involvement in it. Father in heaven, we come before you this morning, and we are asking for grace, to have your grace to help us like Simeon did, and what a story he brings, in Jesus name, amen. These things we're going to look at this morning. First, God sets up the situation of this child, that becomes extremely clear. God sets up this situation of the child and what he experiences and what proves true for Christ. And in this, what Christ also brought into our lives. God sets up the situation, experience by experience basis, that we live, God sets up this situation, as per his word. And secondly, Simeon takes up this child, he takes up the child in this situation that is clearly described and set up by God. And he says this, what a help it is for us, in our lives.

Let's take a look at this first. God sets up the situation of this child, as per his word. Dr. Luke has recorded here for us, he was a physician. And he records here for us some things that the law records that are very insightful. You know, the law that God gave, yes, it was to make His people distinct, but it was also to provide benefit to his people. Another physician wrote a book called None of These Diseases, in which he goes through the scriptures and unfolds how the law, giving direction to people's actions, provided for their health. Dr. Stewart often has told me the biggest health problem on the mission field in third world countries is water, it's hygiene, concerning the way that they manage those things. It's the biggest health problem. Hygiene, the use of water. Interesting. God was clear about washings and places in which things take place, and about purification procedures, long before, long before medical science came up with purification and washings in place. As a matter of fact, it was a huge debate. And the guy that advocated this was looked at as crazy, all this washing stuff. But now if you go into the hospital, there are not only many places, in every exam room, for physicians to wash their hands but also outside every one of those rooms, there are alcohol hand sanitizers that they are pressed to use. And not only the doctors, but everyone who enters that room and exits that room. Let me tell you that God's law, yes, was to make his people distinct, and was to provide them benefit. This, Dr. Luke tells us, in verse 22, is "when the time came for the purification". And we're going to look at how God sets up the situation for this child.

This is to Mary and Joseph, this is concerning them. Mary and Joseph, according to the Law of Moses, actually, there are two things here that are given to us in the Law of Moses. Let me start by asking this, who gave the Law of Moses? God did. This law came from him. If you remember, he went up Mount Sinai in the book of Exodus, and he gets this law, the 10 commandments, Exodus 20. But more than that, he got much, much more than that, concerning God's prescriptions and directions on things and how they're to go. This is the law. Now in that law, God giving it to them, Moses had the reflection of God on his face, you remember that, and how he came down from the mount, and how the people were frightened, and he had to veil it, because the glory was fading away. And he didn't want that glory, fading to be seen, that's 2 Corinthians 3. Here's the point. God gave this law, and he gave it with great detail.

Now at this point in time, there are actually two directions that are being taken into consideration here. Actually, there's three if you include verse 21, because on the eighth day, Jesus was circumcised. And he was circumcised, Genesis 17, because the law prescribed this to take place. However, Luke focuses in on the two directions here, the two directions of God setting up this situation. So when the time came for the purification, that's one of them, the purification here and that's prescribed, but actually there's one before that, that Luke comments on and this is the direction of the firstborn. Notice with me, Luke 2:22, "they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord," verse 23, "(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord')". What is talked about here, first of all, is the direction of the law of the first born. They are to be presented to the Lord as His possession. They are holy to the Lord. They are to be dedicated to the Lord. Now this isn't the dedication as in the form of a human sacrifice. This is the dedication as to the form of serving the Lord. They are to be His servants, that was the first born human male.

And every first born animal was to be presented to the Lord. Now this was in the form of worship, burnt offerings, and in the form of sin offerings, every firstborn of every sheep, goat, donkey, dog was to be presented to the Lord as His. And the Lord describes in those passages why he wants that. He wants that because he wants it to be a continuous reminder of the deliverance he provides for his people through the death of the first born in the 10th plague on Egypt. He delivered his people from a terrible bondage. He brought them freedom. So, he says, every one of these, the first born of the clean animals, and the unclean animals: the clean animals to be used in the worship and the covering for sin offerings, the unclean animals such as the firstborn donkey, it is just to have its neck broken. When your children ask, Why do we do that? Use it. You use it to tell the extent to which the Lord go to rescue his people, use it, the Lord set it up.

Jesus was being brought to the temple, to be present to the Lord, for his service. They brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him, to the Lord as it is written in the Law of the Lord, Exodus 13:2, Every male who opens the womb shall be called separated, devoted to the Lord, and in Numbers 18:15. That was the first thing that was bringing them to Jerusalem. Jesus was the firstborn.

There is a second thing here, to Mary and Joseph again, according to what is said in the law, it's the second thing. Notice with me, Luke 2:24, "and to offer a sacrifice", to present the child to the Lord for service and to offer a sacrifice, "according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons". Purification was prescribed in the law according to Leviticus 12. When a woman had a child, she had a certain time period to go through, in which she was to be kept out of large congregant gatherings. She was to be purified before that. Now, purification was a time period that was very designated by the Lord. The first seven days were to be devoted to recovery. And then on the eighth day, the child was to be circumcised, which the Jews then also named the child. And then for the next 33 days, 7 plus the 33 days, she was to wait for purification when it was a male. And on this then 40th day, they went through the offerings of purification, that this has been accomplished now, to the Lord, and they would present a lamb, a pigeon or a turtledove. If the family had an economic hardship at that point in time, that they could according to Leviticus 12:8, offer a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons which were much, much, much less expensive than the lamb. Jesus parents brought the pigeons and the turtledoves. So what does that suggest to you? Yeah, they were poor.

Let's just remember what's going on here. There's just been a decree that everybody has to register to be taxed. And Joseph is a carpenter. He makes his living by building things. Rich men were recognized as if they had more than food for one day and more than one change of clothes, that was a rich man during that point in time. Joseph been out of work for a while, because he had to make this journey up there. And now he has to present this sacrifice and pay what is called the redemption price for his firstborn. The redemption price was five shekels of silver, because the redemption was that God called them to be His, but they paid the price to be redeemed. And the Levites, they served the temple. That was how the law was set up. The situation is this. Joseph brings Jesus and Mary to the temple, and is present there himself because of contact with his wife before those 40 days were up, him being with her caused him to be unpurified too. So they're all there, in the temple, according to a specific designation of God's law for their protection and their good and to bring it about as it is, right here. Right here. And Jesus is 40 days old. The reference in verse 22, where it says that the time came for purification. Jesus is 40 days old, to the day, to the day...the first seven days prior to circumcision, the circumcision and then the next 33 days are all designated. Jesus is a month old newborn, 40 days. That's what the Lord set up with all of that.

And then the Lord sets this up, Simeon. Look with me at Luke 2:25. Now, right now, it just happened at this time, right now, "there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous", he was concerned about doing what was right before God with other people. And he was devout, he was inclined to God's way and to learn it and to grow with it. And he was "devout, waiting for the constellation of Israel." According to the Word of God, we have many prescriptions that are given, the book of Daniel, the book of Isaiah 9, "For to us a child is born", Isaiah 7, "a virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son and shall call his name Immanuel", God with us. There are many predictions that are given. And this man was looking for the fulfillment of those predictions. He was waiting for the playing out of the Bible's prophecy that he knew. He was looking forward to it with investment and interest. Isaiah 7:14, a virgin conceives and gives birth. They call his name God with us. A son is born, a child is given, the government's on his shoulders. Simeon is looking for that, according to God's word. I have a

question for you. Are any of you looking for the playing out of what God's said is yet coming? It's up in our face. Every day, it's up in our face, with what is happening in our world right now. It's in our face. And what are we doing with it? Are we griping and complaining and angry because the world we knew growing up is changing? That's not where Simeon was. He was looking for the playing this out. There are some hard things that he's going to talk about here. But he's looking for it.

Simeon, right now, had it revealed to him. Verse 26, "And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see deaths before he had seen" the fulfillment of this prophecy, before he saw "the Lord's Christ". You know, that interesting statement there. "It had been revealed", is not like in the book of Revelation. The book of Revelation talks about God unveiling things. They're formerly covered and now they're uncovered. That's what the book of Revelation is, as a matter of fact, that word is used a little bit later by Simeon. Right now, there is a different word that is used. What's used here is that there is input. It's a confirmation that's given as an input as needed. It's a confirmation, it was used in business for giving the title. You and I do this when we buy a vehicle or something that is mobile, they give us a title. It is a confirmation that underscores this. That's what this reveal is, there was an input of what was needed as a confirmation. At this point in time, Simeon had it revealed to him, as a confirmation by the Holy Spirit, that he would see the Lord's Christ. Now Simeon had not sought this out. This was something God confirmed in him, God gave him this input and confirmed it. You know, God does the same thing with us by the Holy Spirit. Romans chapter eight tells us, His Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God. And if children, then heirs and the heirs of God, through Jesus Christ. This is the input, a confirmation that God gives through His Spirit. And Simeon had that revealed to him. I know folks who have confirmations of what's needed in a situation, needed according to God's purpose, not theirs. God gave me a confirmation that when I go to the busy parking lot, I'm going to pray and he's going to open a parking space for me! That's not the kind of confirmation we're talking about here. We're talking about in God's working out of His plan, that there is a confirmation of the spirit, our salvation, situations that we need to pray for and being moved to prayer. Interesting confirmations he gives. He does that, He does that, God does that, He does that. We experience that.

That's part of walking with the Lord and being led by the Spirit. Because look at what happens next. Verse number 27, "And he came in the Spirit into the temple and" "...it was exactly..." "when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the practice, the prescription, the custom of the Law". Simeon, in the spirit, goes into the temple. Folks, this is being led of the Spirit. This is being led of the Spirit. We have the word of God which is directing our lives. It was directing, Mary and Joseph, it was directing Simeon and what he was looking for, what he was anticipating, what he was seeking after. God gave him, by the Spirit, a confirmation that borne witness with him. And then the Lord, in the setting up of things by His laws years ago, brings Joseph and Mary and Jesus and Simeon into the temple at this exact moment. You know, this is an amazing thing, because the temple area is 35 acres. And there's all kinds of things and events going on. And Simeon walks in right at the time that this offering is being done.

And Simeon responds, verse 28, Simeon took up this child and he blesses God. He directs his words to God as in a eulogy. That's exactly what is used here for the Greek word. It means to speak well of, to say words that are speaking well of, bringing praise to this person that is being spoken of. That's what Simeon does here. And he eulogizes, he speaks well to God for what God has done. I want you to see how he grasped that God has set up this whole situation, and I want you to hear what he has to say. You know, last week I told you about the door that got blown off in the wind storm, you remember that? Well, yesterday I got to it. Yesterday I got to putting this door back together. And by the way, I had to completely disassemble it, I know that you're interested in this, you kind of wonder what's happened to my door, it broke one by fours that were double, double one by fours, at three different places in this door, when it pulled it in the wind and slammed it on the ground. So I had to go get some lumber, and I got to it yesterday. And I collected all the things that I needed, to make sure I got the right pieces, and drove to Menards. After parking the car, I got ready to get out, double checking to make sure I had everything, a metal channel and a one inch jay steel metal channel that has to go around the door because that got all mangled too. I had it all with me to go in and get the replacement parts. And as I was getting out of the car to go in, I realized that I forgot to bring my backpack with my wallet in it. When I left home, so concerned that I had all the parts, I left the backpack with the wallet there. I wasn't happy! That's an hour trip, round trip. And now is going to be yet more time added to that. I wasn't happy. But like in your experience and mine, I had to realize that God sets up these situations just like they are. God works everything after the counsel of his will. Everything! Ephesians 1:11, God works it all together for good, to make me like Jesus. And when I sat there not feeling or thinking like Jesus at all, I had to realize this is to make me like Jesus. So I had to turn down the temperature of the attitude and walk through this. So I closed the car door, turn the car on and drove back home, thanking God not for this but because he deemed that I needed. Those experiences God sets up, just as detailed, to bring Jesus, Joseph and Mary to Simeon. He sets it up. It's so easy to lose that isn't? How many of you are good at hanging on to that? How many of you realize you need to hang on to that? Yeah.

Simeon eulogizes this. As your words say, Lord. As your words say, notice how he says this in verses 29-31, "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;" according to what you say, "for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared," promised, that we've been waiting for, that you confirmed in my heart, that I would see, my eyes have seen this. This thing he says "that you have prepared in the presence of all people". That's the statement where God set this up, with specific detail. He set this up for all people to see. And he explains what that is. He is "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, verse 32a. Now here, this is the unveiling. This is the covering and the cover getting pulled off. This is the revelation to be known. You know, yesterday when I was in Menards, amazing things were being played over that loudspeaker. Songs about Christ and His coming. Can you believe that!? I've been through Walmart and heard, "Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn king". Isn't that amazing!? "Peace on earth, mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled", being shouted through the speakers in Walmart. You want to know why? Because He is the light of unveiling to the Gentiles. And over this entire world, we are coming to a day, this week, that people will celebrate a birth of Christ... only there's, "Santa baby, so hurry down the chimney tonight", also being played, okay? This unveiling is going to get lost in the agenda and the aims that other people have for this, borrowing from the allegiance to Christ. It's got other aims to it. There are other aims. It's to make profits. "I wish you a lot of presents. I wish you a lot of presents. I wish you a lot of presents." You see, there are aims, that

they are using the allegiance to Christ for, even though he's a light of revelation to the Gentiles. There still is the blindness. And folks see it, because this is our world. And this is the light of revelation to the Gentiles. It's there. It's shouted, it's going on. It's not like Psalm 19, where there are no words. This revelation has words and persons and places. Simeon said it's "a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." This is the importance of Israel. This is the weightiness and place of Israel. That salvation, Jesus said to the Samaritans, with the mixture of Jeroboam's messing up the allegiance to God for his political purpose. Jesus said, salvation is of the Jews. This is it. This is the glory, the importance of his people, Israel.

Then to the parents, Simeon said this, and as they hear this said about their child, are filled with wonder, verse 33. And in verses 34-35, he blesses them. He praises God and exhorts them, this child is set up, he is appointed, God set it up. He is appointed for the fall and rising of many, many in Israel. Many will hear about this Christ, and it will knock them down. And they will be opposed. He is the marker and people will oppose him, they will speak against him. And oh, did that happen in Israel! It happened. And he says to Mary, a sword, a big, broad cutting sword is going to pierce through your soul, your life, your feelings. You know this was depicted well. I think of the image that was used in the Passion of the Christ, where Mary is lying on the ground. And she has this distorted look on her face as she sees him on the cross. Simeon knew it, a sword will pierce through your own soul but it will have a purpose, to reveal the thoughts of many hearts, where they're at with God, where they're at concerning this Christ. Simeon knew a lot, didn't he. He knew a lot. He had a walk going. He was led by the Spirit, just as we can be led. As a matter of fact, the Bible tells us how we are led by the Spirit. We see those deeds of the body, the way I respond when I realize I left my wallet at home, and I just drove a half hour to get here. And you put to death that, you put it to death, that's being led of the Spirit, Romans 12:13. It's not goody goody for me, because it was pretty bad for me and I hated it, and I wouldn't vote for it. But I needed it. I needed it. He does this, being led of the Spirit, Simeon knew a lot.

And yes, our eyes, as believers, have seen the glory of the coming of Lord. Our eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord. And you know what? There's more to this story. There is another coming. And the message changes there. There's good news of great joy. But he's going to be rejected, opposed and talked against but this one, he takes over. We've got a song for you this morning. Joy to the world, which is about the second coming of Christ.

Father in heaven, as we look in on what Simeon knew, he had a lot to share with us. But Lord, we know more than he did about this Christ and His coming. There's two parts to this, a first and a second. And we wait because we see what you did in the first. In Jesus name. Amen.