

Luke 2:25-31 – Joy to the World, the Lord Has Come

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: For children, when Grandma visits, they have joy, usually for 2 reasons. They want to see Grandma because she talks to them and plays with them, and they know Grandma usually has something in her bag, something they could eat. But that joy is temporary. Grandma leaves and the cookies she brought are gone. And they begin to count the days before she returns.

In a richer and fuller way, children of hope looked forward to Jesus' coming to **be with his people forever** and for the **gift of life that would last forever**. They knew his coming would bring them joy – real joy, eternal joy. You will hear about this today.

Our headings are:

Jesus Came

Jesus Confirmed

Our goals are: That, **you will be refreshed with the knowledge of Jesus' coming to be with you forever and give you eternal life, and that you will love him all the more for doing so.**

Jesus Came

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**. 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**.

1. Saints at the time of Jesus were waiting for Jesus to come and Simeon was one of those saints.

What do we know about Simeon? Simeon was likely the son of the famous Jewish scholar Hillel, and was the first one who was called Rabban – a special scholarly title. Only 7 people had it.

Simeon succeeded his father as president of the college his father founded. So Simeon was not an uneducated man who could easily be fooled by superstitions or customs. He was a scholar. A real scholar.

Jewish leaders said Simeon was put out from their group because he argued against their view which stated that Christ's kingdom was going to be an earthly temporal (physical) kingdom. He believed Christ's kingdom would be a spiritual one.

2. As a scholar, Simeon had studied God's Word and found out details about Jesus' coming. He did not read about candy cane, lights, mistletoe, turkey, Santa Claus, presents, and Christmas trees, as fun as those things might be.

He learned **where Jesus would be born, who his parents would be, what type of person he would be, how he would be betrayed, how he would die to satisfy God's anger, and**

of his glorious resurrection.

3. In addition to being a scholar, Simeon was a just and devout man.

Some devout men are not just and some just men are not devout. Simeon was devout and just.

“Devout” refers to the purity of his worship of God or obedience to the 1st table of the law (Laws 1-4).

“Just” refers to the way he dealt with his fellow men –in an honest and open way, the 2nd table of the law. (Laws 5-10)

Because he was just and devout (and a scholar), he learned.

4. This just and devout scholar had the richness of the Holy Spirit on him, so the Word he studied was clear to him (The Spirit always works with the Word!).

No Holy Spirit, no clear understanding! By the way, the Holy Spirit was there before Jesus' incarnation.

5. Simeon then waited patiently for the coming of Jesus so Jesus would console Israel.

He knew Israel badly needed Christ to come for they were in **a mourning state**. It was a spiritually sad time in Jewish history. Jesus was called the **“Consolation of Israel.”**

He probably listened to (and knew) passages like these:

Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 49:6 Indeed He says, `It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, And to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'"

6. God was pleased to reveal to Simeon that he would personally meet Jesus before he died.

Simeon means “hearkening” or “listening.”

27 So he came by the Spirit into the temple...

7. The Holy Spirit led Simeon to the temple on that particular day when Jesus came.

The Holy Spirit put that desire into him. The Spirit woke him up from his bed and gave him the desire!

8. Lessons:

a. A man who is faithful to God's law, who learns and believes it, who lives a godly life, and who is led by God's Holy Spirit can count on God's blessings. Those blessings are **always** profound...rich ...and heavenly. Those blessings are only **sometimes** light...like giving you wealth...and health...

b. If you want to know the truth about Jesus, about who he is, and what he did and will do, go to his Word and ask his Spirit for help. There is no other source! You will learn of sin, salvation, and service! Guilt, grace, and gratitude!

c. Jesus did come. The Scriptures are clear to anyone who would diligently look. All the prophets talked of him. All the law talked of him. All the psalms talked of him. He did not come as moral figure. He came as the Lamb of God to die for the sins of the world. Joy to the world! The Lord has come!

Jesus Confirmed

27 ...And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him **according to the custom of the law,** 28 he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

1. Jesus' parents, led by God's law and God's Spirit, brought the child Jesus to do as God required of them.

The Holy Spirit directed them to come at the right time so God would keep his promise to Simeon.

God wanted Simeon to be a witness

God wanted Anna to be a witness after he.

God wanted to reassure the parents of who Jesus was and what he would do – just as the angel Gabriel had said to them a year before.

Multiple witnesses confirm the truth of this coming.

(And add the wise men, Elizabeth, Zechariah, John, the disciples, the Pharisees, the shepherds, and angels!)

2. Jesus' parents did not bring him for a "dedication" ceremony as some brothers do to their babies today.

Dedication of a child or person to God meant to "be trained and disciplined." Modern dedication ceremony is not a Christian ceremony—but like a pagan ceremony. Jesus had no "godfather" or "godmother."

3. What did Simeon then do for Mary and Joseph that was according to the law?

a. Simeon received the redemption offering from the parents. What was the redemption offering?

Numbers 18:15 "Everything that first opens the womb of all flesh, which they bring to the LORD, whether man or beast, shall be yours; **nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem.**

Jesus' parents brought two doves as a redemption for their 1st born son because they were poor. The rich brought bulls and sheep.

b. It is possible Simeon also circumcised Jesus – that symbol of cleanliness.

Jesus was born away from his home in Bethlehem so it is possible they were not able to circumcise him.

4. Simeon did that which was according to the law because he had faith in God and trusted God's Word!

This boy Jesus had cheap clothes, a tired mother, and an older father. He came from Galilee, the most backward place in the country. Join that with the token of 2 small doves, while other parents brought bulls and sheep, **it is amazing Simeon still said what he did. Simeon's faith was based on the promises of the Word of God.** Jesus surely did not look impressive.

5. Simeon then took the child up in his arms, a symbolic gesture of the offerer giving over the sacrifice to the priests.

This is why in presbyterian churches the minister is given and holds the baby during baptism.

6. You can imagine the joy this revelation brought Simeon who read and believed God's words and saw it fulfilled in front of his very eyes.

Isaiah 51:1 "Listen to Me, you who follow after righteousness, You who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were hewn, And to the hole of the pit from which you were dug. 2 Look to Abraham your father, And to Sarah who bore you; For I called him alone, And blessed him and increased him." 3 For the LORD will comfort Zion, He will comfort all her waste places; He will make her wilderness like Eden, And her desert like the garden of the LORD; Joy and gladness will be found in it, Thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

Christ's coming was the main prophecy (and purpose) of the Old Testament and he came before Simeon's eye and into his arms. Simeon's waiting was rewarded and his hope was fulfilled. It was joy unspeakable.

29 "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation 31 Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

7. This experience was more unique, because not many people knew who Jesus was when he was a baby.

Some shepherds knew somewhat and they told it to others, but it seemed they only took him for an important baby. They did not get the full sense that that baby in the manger was the Savior of the world.

But Simeon knew what most people didn't...and he saw God in human form...and he held him!

Simeon had already met Jesus by faith...and now he was meeting him by sight! Faith was confirmed!

8. With Christ revealed, and faith already established in Simeon's life, he was then ready to die.

He asked God to literally "release him." (Letting your servant depart...) This word means to release someone whose ransom has been paid – as a slave. He felt as a prisoner or a slave who was ready to go home. The bond between body and soul was weaker. He was ready to move on. Only heaven was greater.

9. Lessons:

a. Never get tired of the account and the confirmation of the coming of Jesus – his incarnation and his work for sinners. He came. And many confirmed it. This brings joy. His death, burial, and resurrection are yours. Love, live, and labor for him.

b. The world has no excuse if it refuses to acknowledge and embrace Jesus – no excuse at all.

c. You have no good death if you die without meeting and embracing Jesus.

Conclusion:

Jesus came! Simeon knew he would. He would come, **live, and die for him.** Then as a priest, **Simeon confirmed who Jesus was and received and blessed Jesus** –Savior of the world. God the Son was incarnated, born of a virgin, and was a fit sacrifice for sins! God and man!

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ:

1. Know the Lord keeps his promises. He came, lived, and died for you. The hand of God guided his coming through Egypt's slavery, through the desert, through Babylonian slavery, through the return under Medo-Persia, and through the Greek and Roman onslaught. Let this bring you joy. Let joy fill your heart.

2. Pass this message on to the world. *Acts 13:47 "For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, that you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.'"*

3. Count on Christ coming one day to take you, his children, to his kingdom in heaven. And you will be able to see him face to face. Then your joy will be fullest!

Finally, let me ask you this: **Have you met this Jesus?** I know you have not physically met him. You have never held him as a baby in your arms. Have you spiritually met him...and touched him? Has he touched you...touched your heart, made you aware of your sins, and changed you? That would bring the greatest joy in your life. Then you can sing with meaning: Joy to the world...the Lord is come!