

Sermon Outline

THE YEAR IN OUR LORD, 2013-2014

FOR A LIGHT AND GLORY (LUKE 2:25-33)

I. Not Just about a Happy Afterlife

II. Simeon the Righteous (Luke 2:25, 26)

- A. When we come to Luke 2:22, some time has passed since the Lord Jesus was born.
- B. The time had come for the ceremonial purification of Mary and the dedication of her son to God.
—Verse 23 tells us that this requirement for parents to dedicate their firstborn sons to the Lord was laid out in the Law of Moses: “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”)...” (cf. Ex 13:1-2 and 13:12).
- C. While Mary, Joseph, and the infant Jesus were in Jerusalem to fulfill their obligations, we’re introduced to Simeon: “there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel...”
1. The Scripture clearly says that Simeon was considered “righteous and devout” in the eyes of God.
 2. Does this mean that he was perfect, that he had no sin? Absolutely not.
 3. This simply means that Simeon was someone who tried to bring his life into conformity with God’s words.
 4. So we have here is yet another righteous saint in the Bible.
—Like Zechariah, and Elizabeth, Mary, and Joseph, and Job, and Noah, and all the great holy men and women of the Old Testament, Simeon was representative of the faithful Israelite, who, even though sinful, continues to keep his or her heart on the Lord God.
- D. We are also given to see what is one of the key marks of a sinful-yet-righteous human being.
1. Like Simeon, the human being whom God considers righteous is one who looks forward to the “consolation of Israel.”
 2. The “consolation of Israel” is the time, promised by the prophets, when Israel would finally be set free from her sins and God would return to his people.
- E. The Scripture also says, “the Holy Spirit was upon him.”
1. Up to this point in the Gospel of Luke, we would have encountered several references to the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Luke 1:15: The angel Gabriel announces to Zechariah that his son, John the Baptist, “will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb.”
 - b. Luke 1:35: Gabriel informs Mary that the Holy Spirit would enable her to give birth to the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - c. Luke 1:41: When Mary visits her cousin Elizabeth to tell her of the good news of her pregnancy, “Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit” and

proceeds to bless Mary saying, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”

- d. Luke 1:67: Zechariah himself is “filled with the Holy Spirit” and begins to prophesy.
2. When Luke tells us that Simeon was filled with the Spirit, we are prepared for words from God.
—The person filled with the Holy Spirit speaks about the wonderful works that God would do for his people.
3. The prophecy that Simeon speaks will begin in verse 29.
4. But for now, we learn that “it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ” (v 26).
 - a. The Holy Spirit gives special information to Simeon.
 - b. According to this information, Simeon himself would not die until he had seen the *Christ*, the long-awaited King of Israel whom God would send.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Why were Mary, Joseph, and Jesus in Jerusalem? (2) What has happened to those individuals who experienced the Holy Spirit? (3) What great reality was Simeon awaiting?

III. Simeon Meets Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:27-28)

- A. Still “in the Spirit,” that is, still under the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Simeon comes into the temple on that day when Jesus and his parents were there.
- B. Upon seeing the special family, Simeon knew immediately, right there and then, who the little baby was.
- C. And so, presumably with permission from Mary and Joseph, Simeon takes the little Jesus into his arms—and at that point, he utters a prophecy.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What was Simeon’s state when he goes into the temple? (2) What does Simeon do when he sees the divine Child?

IV. The Oracle of Simeon (Luke 2:29-32)

- A. First, Simeon blesses God and says, “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word...”
- B. But why? “...for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples...” (vv 30, 31).
 1. This is why Simeon knows his death is at hand: It’s because he has seen, in the infant Jesus, the future salvation of God.
 2. Again, we are reminded of Isaiah 52:7-10, a passage that forms the hope of salvation that was cherished by so many Israelites.
 3. This salvation is prepared “in the presence of all peoples.”
—This means that the salvation of God isn’t just for one race of people; it’s for all the peoples of the world.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) How does Simeon know that the Lord is going to let him “depart in peace” soon? (2) For whom is salvation prepared? How does this relate to world evangelization and missions?

V. A Light for Revelation (Luke 2:32)

A. Simeon says something that expresses more clearly what he had in mind by the salvation of all peoples: “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel” (v 32).

—This is what it means for Jesus to be the salvation of God for all peoples.

B. What does the phrase “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” (*phōs eis apokalupsin ethnōn*) mean?

1. The word “light” (*phōs*) unpacks the “salvation” (*sōtēriōn*) mentioned in verse 30.
2. As light that has been sent from God, Jesus is the agent by whom the knowledge and salvation of God comes to the Gentiles.
3. The phrase “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” is rooted in the book of Isaiah.

a. Isaiah 49:6:

he says:

*“It is too light a thing that you should be my servant
to raise up the tribes of Jacob
and to bring back the preserved of Israel;
I will make you as a light for the nations,
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.*

b. Isaiah 42:6-7.

*“I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you;
I will give you as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,
⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.*

—The Servant of the Lord will bring the Word of God to those who are enslaved to ignorance and sin.

c. The theme of liberation appears again in Isaiah 61:1-2.

*The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
² to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor,*

*and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn.*

4. Based on the Servant's mission as described in Isaiah 61, being light to the nations is about bringing the reality of salvation itself.
—As God's light to the nations, Jesus the Servant of the Lord will free the people from their captivity to the curse of the Law, the addictive power of sin, and those spiritual powers of darkness that rule the nations of the world (cf. Eph 6:12).

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What does “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” mean? (2) How does the theme of light relate to the theme of liberation in Isaiah? (3) How does Jesus' role as light-bringer relate to his work as Savior?

VI. A Glory for Israel (Luke 2:32)

- A. Simeon goes on to mention the role that the Christ would play toward his own people, the nation of Israel. What else does the Holy Spirit say about the Christ through Simeon?
- B. He says that the Christ is “for glory to your people Israel” (*doxan laou sou Israel*).
1. This phrase means that the Christ will restore dignity to God's people.
 2. Consider Isaiah 49:6 again.
 3. Judging from the language of promotion and restoration in Isaiah 49:6, the passage shows us what “glory to your people Israel” means.
—It means that the Christ will lift up Israel from their sins, restore Israel to their former dignity, and bring salvation to Israel.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) What role does Jesus play toward Israel? (2) What does it mean for Jesus to be “for glory to your people Israel”?

VII. The Lord God Is the Light and Glory of Israel

- A. If we trace the theme of glory, we see that the Lord is preparing us for more revelations about Jesus.
- B. Consider now Isaiah 60:19:

¹⁹ *The sun shall be no more
your light by day,
nor for brightness shall the moon
give you light;
but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.*

²⁰ *Your sun shall no more go down,
nor your moon withdraw itself;
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of mourning shall be ended.*

- C. We are on the right track when we say that light and glory are equivalent to or components of God's promised salvation.
- D. But Isaiah 60 invites us to see something more—that the Lord God himself will be the light and the glory of Israel.
- E. Once again, when God saves his people, he doesn't just bring them to heaven when they die. He gives them his very Self, his very Presence.
- F. We do not know if Simeon knew the full implications of the prophecy.
- G. But what matters is how this prophecy from the Holy Spirit connects with the other words the Holy Spirit has uttered in Scripture.
- H. Based on Simeon's prophecy, and the words of Isaiah, we see that Jesus represents much more than mere salvation alone.
—Somehow, in some mysterious way, Jesus is the return of God himself to his people; because in his mission, Jesus will do the works that the prophets said that the Lord YHWH himself will do when he returns. Jesus will be light and glory to Israel and to the rest of the world.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) According to Isaiah 60:19, who is Israel's light and glory? (2) How is Jesus related to the Lord God himself? How does Jesus function as the Lord God in his role as light- and glory-bringer?

VIII. Our Triune Light and Glory

What God has given to us for our salvation and eternal happiness is precisely himself in and through Jesus Christ. In Jesus Christ the Son of God, we are reconciled to God the Father, our Creator and Source of life. And from Jesus, we receive God the Holy Spirit, the eternal Light and Life whom the Father gives. And then Jesus himself is God the Son who accomplishes our salvation by becoming our Savior and King. Nothing less than the whole Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is what God has given to us for our salvation and eternal happiness. The child of God is rich beyond words.

- A. In order to receive God...
 - 1. We must turn away from our sins and return to him.
 - 2. We must acknowledge that apart from God, we are dead in our sins, have no defense against the powers of darkness, and cannot escape the judgment due to our own sins.
 - 3. From there, we must cast our hope on God himself.
- B. Like Simeon, we must put our hope in God and wait for the consolation of Israel and the world from him.
- C. When we do so, God comes to us and gives himself—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to us as light and glory.
- D. He brings his Word and his Presence to us. And in doing so, he makes us whole once again. Salvation is of God. Salvation is God himself.

***Questions for reflection:** (1) Who are the light and glory that God gives us? (2) What must we do to receive God for our salvation? (3) Have you returned to God and put your faith in him for salvation?