

In our previous passage we looked at the conditions and events surrounding the miraculous birth of Jesus. Today we have come to the portion of Scripture only described here in Luke regarding Jesus' first trip to Jerusalem. It was a short trip, for the family was still in Bethlehem, but it was to be a momentous trip for the family would encounter two prophets, an elderly man and woman. These two remind me of what the Apostle Paul said about a characteristic of those who are in Christ and the reward that awaits us. It is a portion of the Apostle Paul's last words. *⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.* 2 Timothy 4:6-8 "But also to all who have loved his appearing!" Are you looking forward to the return of Jesus, or are you hoping He will put it off until some desire of your heart is fulfilled in this life?

I remember when I was a youth minister and I was talking about the Second Coming. One boy confided in me that he sure hoped it didn't happen until after he got married. Well, that is the voice of youth, but even the more mature can have desires in this life that are more important to them than Jesus. Today we are reading about a couple that knew far less about the Messiah than we do today, and yet their whole lives were wrapped up in the hope of His coming. They believed the promises of God and expected their fulfillment to happen soon. They lived in expectation of His arrival.

²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. Luke 2:21 We are going to see in the rest of this chapter how everything that was done to Jesus was done according to the Law. We see that multiple times in this chapter. Just as John was named on that eighth day (1:59ⁱ), so Jesus was named, and both names were given by God. Yeshua means the salvation of God! Circumcision made Him an heir of the covenant God made with Abraham (Genesis 17:10-12ⁱⁱ). His name was His destiny.

²² 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 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")

²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Luke 2:22-42 According to the laws God gave to Moses, the woman who gave birth to a male child was unclean until the fortieth day after the birth. Then she was to come and offer a lamb for her purification. If she was poor and could not afford a lamb, then she could offer two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Leviticus 12:8ⁱⁱⁱ). That was Mary's offering because they were poor. I have no doubt Joseph and she would have offered a lamb if they could have afforded it. They had not yet received the offering from the kings of the east (Matthew 2:11^{iv}). But they already had the greatest treasure known to man, Jesus.

If the first child born was a male, he was to be redeemed with a five-shekel contribution to the temple (Exodus 13:13^v; Numbers 3:46-47^{vi}). This was to remind the people that God slew the firstborn males of Egypt but spared the firstborn males of Israel. The attendance at the temple had this double purpose of Mary's purification and presenting Jesus to the Lord by paying His redemption fee. The firstborn being holy to the Lord meant that those boys were to live for the service of God. The redemption fee allowed the child to enter other fields of work. Jesus remained holy to the Lord, as the angel Gabriel declared, "He shall be holy!" (Luke 1:35^{vii}). Luke again reminds us that Jesus was raised strictly according to the laws God gave to Moses.

25 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. 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. Luke 2:25-26 Again we have a declaration that a person was righteous, which we know from the rest of the Scriptures means that his faith was in God alone to redeem him (Hebrews 11:33^{viii}; Philippians 3:9^{ix}; Romans 4:13^x). He was also devout. This implies that he did everything humanly possible to keep the laws of God given through Moses. This sets righteousness apart from being devout. You can be devout about keeping the rules but not be righteous because you are keeping the rules for the sake of pride and what others think of you.

Most importantly, he was waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was upon him. **Consolation - *parakaleo* - means comfort or to exhort for encouragement. Another form of the same word is used as a name for the Holy Spirit (John 14:26).** He was waiting for Israel to be consoled. The Comforter who was upon him prompted him to wait for all Israel to receive the comfort for which they longed.

The nation had failed God time and time again (Matthew 23:29-31^{xi}), gone into captivity, been restored but still compromised, were under one occupier after another, had a short period of independence, but were now under the oppressive taxation of Rome and taken advantage of by their religious leaders. Their ruler, Herod, was from a former enemy of Israel (Edom). Yet, many believed the promises that this One that would come would deliver them from all this. They believed He would not only set them free from oppression, but also clarify the interpretations of the Law and guide them into truth and all the promises of God that they had been unworthy of in the past (Isaiah 11:2-4^{xii}). They were to be a nation of priests for the world to bring the wonder of God's Word to all people (Exodus 19:6^{xiii}), but they were a far cry from that. Simeon was waiting for the One who would console them, and the Holy Spirit confirmed to him that he was going to see the Messiah before he died. He waited and waited in prayer, petitioning God.

27 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, Luke 2:27 Simeon was in the Spirit when he came into the temple courts. That is a good thing, or he might have missed what he had been waiting for. What do we miss when we walk in the flesh? God put him where he needed to be at the exact time he needed to be there. It was when

Joseph and Mary came to offer the redemption offering. How did Simeon know out of all the babies that this baby was the one? He was in the Spirit. How will we know when God puts an assignment is before us unless we are in the Spirit?

²⁸ he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, ²⁹ "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, Luke 2:28-31 This longing that so occupied the mind and heart of Simeon was finally fulfilled. How long had he watched and waited as couples came with the offering for redemption and then went away, but the Spirit did not prompt him? This day was different. In walked Joseph and Mary with baby Jesus, now forty days old, and the Spirit lit a fire in Simeon. He knew the Messiah had entered His temple. And suddenly he begins to utter the words that God breathed into his mind.

"Lord, my heart is at peace ready to leave this world now that Your promise has come to pass. My eyes have seen the salvation of God (Yeshua), the salvation you prepared in the presence of all peoples" (Isaiah 40:5^{xiv}). Simeon was ready to depart from this world. His greatest wish was fulfilled. He saw the coming of the Messiah.

I have heard of elderly people hanging on to life waiting for a distant son or daughter to travel to their bedside, and when they arrive the elderly person passes on. This is how I envision Simeon, clinging to life, staggering into the temple with a cane in hand to keep his balance hoping each day would finally be the day. That day a surge of power came over him and strength entered his old bones as he held the baby up for all to see and declared, "Behold, He has come - the Salvation from God!" I'm reminded of the carol, Joy to the Word. Joy to the world, the Lord has come, let earth receive her King! Let every heart prepare Him room, and heaven and nature sing!

³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." Luke 2:32 Simeon goes on to make it clear that this baby is the Messiah by alluding to passages in Isaiah regarding the Suffering Servant and how He will be a light to the nations and for glory to God's people, Israel (Isaiah 42:6^{xv}; 46:13^{xvi}; 49:6^{xvii}; 52:10^{xviii}). Light is a term for the Messiah/Jesus in both Testaments (John 1:4-5^{xix}; 12:46^{xx}).

³³ And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. Luke 2:32 Imagine the dismay of Joseph and Mary. Even knowing what the angel Gabriel had told them it would still have been a jaw dropping moment to have this elderly man walk up to them and grab the baby and prophesy. But it was the words of the prophecy that were the main cause of them marveling, specifically "a light for revelation to the Gentiles". They would have been familiar with the Suffering Servant Songs of Isaiah. How could this baby be the Suffering Servant? He is to be the Savior, so how could He also be the Suffering Servant of God? In hindsight we know, but to them it was a mystery.

³⁴ 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 ³⁵ (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts

may be revealed." Luke 2:34-35 Simeon pronounced a blessing over Joseph and Mary. Perhaps it was the Levitical blessing of Aaron, or some other blessing to help them in the seemingly impossible task of raising the Messiah. He also predicted, "This child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel..." **True exaltation and humiliation is not that which the world sees.** It is within the heart. Fishermen and tax collectors and what the religious elite called "sinners" would rise and the Pharisees and prideful rulers would be humiliated.

Then he gave Mary a prophetic word of warning. He did not speak it to Joseph, for at the time it came to pass Joseph would already be in heaven. "A sword will pierce through your own soul." These things would take place so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. The word for thoughts implies secret thoughts and in all eight New Testament uses it carries a negative connotation. Jesus' actions at the direction of the Father would reveal what the world does not see. He would not only reveal those trapped in sin who longed for salvation but also those trapped in pride who had no desire to change. God intervenes in the world to reveal the darkness of our hearts that we might humble ourselves and seek His grace.

³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. Luke 2:36-37 There were very few women in Scripture who were prophetesses. Miriam (Exodus 15:20^{xxi}); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14^{xxii}) and Deborah (Judges 4:4^{xxiii}) and a false prophetess Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14^{xxiv}) (Also see Philip's daughters – Acts 21:8-9^{xxv}). Anna's husband probably died when she was about twenty and then for the next sixty-four years she dedicated her life to God, worshiping daily in the temple with fasting and prayer. Any time one went to the temple they would expect to see Anna worshiping the Lord.

³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. Luke 2:38 "Coming up at that very hour" sounds like she happened to approach them when Simeon was giving his prophecy. The Spirit upon her and Simeon's prophecy convinced her that baby Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. She believed and responded by giving thanks to God.

We take it for granted that Jesus has come and that He died for our sins so that we could be forgiven and become sons and daughters of God (John 1:12^{xxvi}). But think of what it was like for those who waited in those days. They sacrificed in the temple as picture of the penalty for sins being somehow covered by God, but that was only for unintentional sins. They waited for the Day of Atonement each year for signs that God had covered their past sins, but soon they would be burdened about more recent sins. The prediction of One coming that would crush the serpent's head was thousands of years old, and still He had not come (Genesis 3:15^{xxvii}). Isaiah told them so much about this One and how it was He who would bear our sins and be crushed for our iniquities (Isaiah 53:5-6^{xxviii}), but that was seven-centuries prior, and still He had not come. The last prophet, Malachi, five centuries earlier said a messenger would be sent to prepare

the way for Him (Malachi 3:1^{xxix}). Now under Roman rule and feeling powerless, they longed even more for this One. Some of those hoping for His arrival knew one another, Simeon, Anna, and others who were waiting for Him to arrive and redeem Jerusalem. Then Anna heard the prophecy. Her heart was overjoyed, and she had to find the others who were waiting in faith and believing God would certainly fulfill His promises. She had to tell them she had seen this baby and the prophecy that Simeon had pronounced over Him.

Is this not what we experience today? John said He would return and every eye will see Him (Revelation 1:7^{xxx}). The angel told the disciples He would return just like He left (Acts 1:11^{xxxi}). The Apostle Paul said the trumpet will sound and the dead will rise incorruptible and we will be changed (1 Corinthians 15:51-52^{xxxii}). We will rise to meet Jesus in the air and forever be with Him. The prophet Zechariah said His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4^{xxxiii}). And so, we too wait. **Are we waiting in expectation of a certain hope like Simeon and Anna?** Are we a part of the group that is waiting for the redemption of the world from the curse of sin (Romans 8:20-25^{xxxiv}), those who will receive the crown of righteousness? Those two saints, Simeon and Anna, waited even in their old age and did not give up but kept their hopes high, and God rewarded their faithfulness. Should we not do the same?

I have a list of all the people I've seen pass on that attended Wayside. I know they are now completely whole and the work of God in them is completed. They could not be more glorious than they are now, for they share Jesus' glory. I'm looking forward to seeing them and rejoicing together with them in His presence. But most of all I'm looking forward in expectation of Jesus finishing the work in me when I see Him face to face (1 John 3:2^{xxxv}). I'm longing to look into His eyes, and though they are a flame of fire I know they will be filled with love for me. That's not because of anything I did, but because of what He did for me. Sometimes I see the rays of sun beaming through a gap in a brilliant white cloud and imagine Jesus bursting through. What a day of rejoicing that will be! Amen? Simeon and Anna waited in faithful expectation and were rewarded. We should do the same!

Questions

- 1 Are you longing for His appearing?
- 2 Why were they in the temple?
- 3 Why was Simeon righteous? Devout?
- 4 What was he waiting for? Why?
- 5 What warning did he give Mary? Why just her?
- 6 Who would rise and who would fall?
- 7 Describe Anna. What did she do?
- 8 What was it like then to long for Messiah?
- 9 Is it different today? How?
- 10 Is there anticipation in your heart?

ⁱ **Luke 1:59 (ESV)**

⁵⁹ And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father,

ⁱⁱ **Genesis 17:10-12 (ESV)**

¹⁰ This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹ You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹² He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring,

ⁱⁱⁱ **Leviticus 12:8 (ESV)**

⁸ And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."

^{iv} **Matthew 2:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

^v **Exodus 13:13 (ESV)**

¹³ Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

^{vi} **Numbers 3:46-47 (ESV)**

⁴⁶ And as the redemption price for the 273 of the firstborn of the people of Israel, over and above the number of the male Levites, ⁴⁷ you shall take five shekels per head; you shall take them according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel of twenty gerahs),

^{vii} **Luke 1:35 (ESV)**

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

^{viii} **Hebrews 11:7 (ESV)**

⁷ By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.

^{ix} **Philippians 3:9 (ESV)**

⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—

^x **Romans 4:13 (ESV)**

¹³ For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith.

^{xi} **Matthew 23:29-31 (ESV)**

²⁹ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the monuments of the righteous, ³⁰ saying, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹ Thus you witness against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.

^{xii} **Isaiah 11:2-4 (ESV)**

² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

^{xiii} **Exodus 19:6 (ESV)**

⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."

^{xiv} **Isaiah 40:5 (ESV)**

⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

^{xv} **Isaiah 42:6 (ESV)**

⁶ "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,

^{xvi} **Isaiah 46:13 (ESV)**

¹³ I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.”

^{xvii} **Isaiah 49:6 (ESV)**

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.”

^{xviii} **Isaiah 52:10 (ESV)**

¹⁰ The LORD has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

^{xix} **John 1:4-5 (ESV)**

⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

^{xx} **John 12:46 (ESV)**

⁴⁶ I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

^{xxi} **Exodus 15:20 (ESV)**

²⁰ Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a tambourine in her hand, and all the women went out after her with tambourines and dancing.

^{xxii} **2 Kings 22:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asaiah went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe (now she lived in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter), and they talked with her.

^{xxiii} **Judges 4:4 (ESV)**

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time.

^{xxiv} **Nehemiah 6:14 (ESV)**

¹⁴ Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, O my God, according to these things that they did, and also the prophetess Noadiah and the rest of the prophets who wanted to make me afraid.

^{xxv} **Acts 21:8-9 (NIV)**

⁸ Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.

⁹ He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

^{xxvi} **John 1:12 (ESV)**

¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

^{xxvii} **Genesis 3:15 (ESV)**

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

^{xxviii} **Isaiah 53:5-6 (ESV)**

⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

^{xxix} **Malachi 3:1 (ESV)**

¹ “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

^{xxx} **Revelation 1:7 (ESV)**

⁷ Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him, and all tribes of the earth will wail on account of him. Even so. Amen.

^{xxxi} **Acts 1:11 (ESV)**

¹¹ and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

^{xxxii} **1 Corinthians 15:51-52 (ESV)**

⁵¹ Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

^{xxxiii} **Zechariah 14:4 (ESV)**

⁴ On that day his feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives that lies before Jerusalem on the east, and the

Mount of Olives shall be split in two from east to west by a very wide valley, so that one half of the Mount shall move northward, and the other half southward.

xxxiv **Romans 8:20-25 (ESV)**

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

xxxv **1 John 3:2 (ESV)**

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.