



The Promise of a Lifetime

By Johnny Caruso on January 4, 2022

READING: Luke 2

In Luke we meet many people who play significant parts in the story of the Messiah's birth. We have seen angels, Elizabeth, Zachariah, John the Baptist, Herod, of course Joseph and Mary. Yet, in the days following Christ's birth, we meet several individuals who show long-suffering faith. One of these is Simeon.

We know Simeon was a "righteous and devout" man (v. 25). He was in Jerusalem when Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple for dedication. We know that Simeon was a man of God: "the Holy Spirit was on him" (v. 25). He had been looking his entire life for "the consolation of Israel" (v. 25). God had promised him that he would not die without seeing Jesus. Can you imagine what it was like the moment he held Jesus in his arms? It was the answer to his prayers and the redemption of the people of God.

The term *consolation* means "comfort," more specifically "help" or "rescue." The promised Messiah would prove the faithfulness of God. One Jewish writer explained this sense of longing, "Surely the Lord will reward your confiding trust; and may He give you, and all those who await His coming, glory instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the robe of praise instead of the spirit of heaviness."

Please take time to read Simeon's prayer of dedication over Jesus. They are words of celebration from him for himself and the people of Israel. It gives us and the Jews a glimpse of the plan of salvation for the souls of the gentiles.

While the consolation of Israel was focused on the Jewish people, John Piper notes that this longing remains for each of us today: "If there is any deep longing in your heart for a consolation and comfort that this world cannot satisfy, it is because God is preparing you to recognize and receive his gift: Jesus Christ, the consolation of Israel. Don't seek it anywhere but in him."

What are you longing for today? I heard John Piper say in a sermon, "Sometimes our sense of sadness following great celebrations is a reflection of our heavenly calling. Nothing on this earth will ever truly satisfy the deepest longing of our hearts. Don't seek it anywhere but in him." Ask God today, and allow Him, to fulfill the deepest longings of your heart.

PRAYER: Father, thank You for examples of faithful men and women who lived their lives waiting on the promise that You have given us.

TOMORROW'S READING: Luke 3

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