



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V26 N51 December 22, 2024

CHRISTMAS PLAYLIST

“Simeon’s Song: Die a Happy Man”

Luke 2:21-32

THIS WEEK’S CORE COMPETENCY

Salvation by Grace

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9



Why did Simeon rejoice?



When Christians hear the word “salvation,” they naturally think in *personal, individual* terms. Salvation entails *justification, sanctification, and glorification* – to be freed from the penalty, power, and presence of sin – for those who believe in Jesus. To be “saved” is to be saved from sin, namely, to have one’s sins forgiven, to escape sin’s “wages,” which is “death,” and to receive the gift of “eternal life,” which is “in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ro 6:23). Christians do not naturally think in national terms, but salvation had both personal and national facets for the Jews of Jesus’ day – implicit in the fact that the coming Savior would be Israel’s Messiah.

The *individual* and *national* dimensions of salvation are evident in the hymns found in Luke’s birth narratives. After being told by Gabriel that the Lord God would give her son the throne of his father David and that he would reign over Jacob’s descendants forever. In the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55), Mary praises God for helping his servant Israel by remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants, “just as he promised our ancestors” (v. 54). Of course, the promises she alludes to are first and foremost the promises the Lord made to Abraham, regarding the land and regarding, blessings that would come to “all peoples on earth” through one of his descendants (Ge 12:2-3, 7) and also to David, regarding his kingdom and throne, both of which God promised would endure forever (2Sa 7:16).

Both dimensions of salvation are also evident in Zechariah’s song (Lk 1:67-79). In the *Benedictus*, Zechariah praises the God of Israel for coming to redeem his people by raising up a horn of salvation, namely, a

Davidic king with the power to save the nation from its enemies and “the hand of all who hate us – to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham; to rescue us from the hand of our enemies and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days” (vv. 68-75) – an allusion to the *national* dimension of salvation. But then, regarding the ministry of his son, John, he declares that John will go before Messiah “to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins” (v. 77) – clearly an allusion to the *individual* dimension of salvation.

Finally, both dimensions of salvation are evident in Simeon’s song (2:22-32). In the *Nunc Dimittis*, Simeon praises God for allowing him to live long enough to see “your [the Lord’s] salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel” (vv. 29-32). Salvation has a *national* dimension in that Simeon “was waiting for the consolation of Israel,” namely, the comfort that would come to the nation with its restoration under the rule of Messiah in the kingdom age (see v. 38; 23:51; 24:21; cf. Mt 5:4; Isa 40:1-2). Salvation here also has an *individual* dimension in that this salvation was “prepared in the sight of all nations” (v. 31). Salvation is for all people individually regardless of nationality. One commentator explains: “The plural [*lōan*] (‘peoples’) [‘nations,’ NIV] is significant. Jesus’s work is for the *whole of humanity*, made up of its various nations” (Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 136, italics added).



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Luke 2:21-32

21 *On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.*

22 *When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord* 23 *(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"),* 24 *and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."*

25 *Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him.* 26 *It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.* 27 *Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,* 28 *Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:*

29 *"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.*

30 *For my eyes have seen your salvation,*

31 *which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:*

32 *a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "when it was time," in v. 21 and "when the time came" in v. 22.
- Underline "and to offer" in v. 24.
- Circle "righteous and devout" in v. 25.
- Bracket "consolation of Israel" in v. 25.
- Circle "salvation" in v. 30.
- Circle "revelation" in v. 32.
- Circle "glory" in v. 32.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Mary's song is the Magnificat and Zechariah's the Benedictus. *What* is Simeon's praise song called and why?
 2. *What* do verses 21-24 imply about Jesus' parents? Explain.
 3. *How old* was Jesus when he was circumcised (Ge 17:12; Lk 2:21), and *how long* after that did Mary offer a sacrifice for her purification (Lev 12:1-8)?
 4. Mary offered "a pair of doves or two young pigeons" (v. 24). Explain *what* that suggests about her and Joseph (cf. Lev 12:8).
 5. For *what* was Simeon waiting? Explain.
 6. The Holy Spirit was on Simeon (v. 25). How so (v. 26)?
 7. After holding the baby Jesus, Simeon indicated that he was ready to die. Why?
 8. Jesus is the Sovereign Lord's *salvation*. What does that mean?
 9. The reference to "all nations" (v. 31) is significant. What does it imply about salvation?
 10. **Discussion:** Discuss what this passage teaches about Jesus' parents, about Simeon, and about Jesus.
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Commentary On The Text

The *Nunc Dimittis* is Simeon's psalm of praise to God sung on the day Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. Jesus is nearly six weeks old by this time. He had been circumcised on the eighth day (v. 21; cf. Lev 12:3), and then thirty-three days later (see Lev 12:4-6), Mary and Joseph arrived at the temple to carry out the rites required by the law. According to one commentator: "The journey of Jesus' parent so the temple in Luke 2:22-24 combines three separate ceremonies as recorded in God's law: the purification of a woman forty days after the birth of a child (Lev. 12:2-4, 6), the presentation of the firstborn to God (Ex 13:2, 12, 16; 34:19; Num. 18:15-16), and the dedication of the firstborn into the Lord's service (1 Sam. 1-2). Though this dedication to service is like many others that took place in Israel for centuries, his one is unique because of the call of this child" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 92).

The rite of purification involved the offering of a burnt offering and a sin offering. According to Leviticus 12:6-7a, "When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering. He shall offer them before the LORD to make atonement for her, and then she will be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood." The fact that Mary offered "two doves or two young pigeons" implies that she and Joseph could not afford to offer a year-old lamb for a burnt offering. Their scrupulous observance of the law indicates "Jesus's parents were not renegade Jews" (Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 136).

When Mary and Joseph entered the temple courts, either the court of the Gentiles or the court of women, since Mary was present, they met an older man who was "righteous and devout" and "waiting for the consolation of Israel," a reference to the consummation of God's promises regarding the nation linked to the coming messianic kingdom of God. "Moved by the Spirit" (v. 27), when he saw Joseph and Mary with baby Jesus, Simeon took the child in his arms, recognizing that Jesus was the Lord's Messiah (see v. 26; cf. vv. 29-30). And under the influence of the Spirit, he praised God in the words of the *Nunc Dimittis* (vv. 29-32). About which, one commentator writes: "Simeon's

expression of praise and thanks to God takes the form of a prayer which falls into three couplets, and thus has the most obviously poetic form of any of the 'hymns' in the birth narrative. In content it is similar to the Magnificat and Benedictus, and it is not impossible that it was used in Christian worship and private devotion at an early stage" (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC, 119).

In the first couplet (v. 29), he praises God for keeping his promise not to let him die before seeing the Lord's Messiah. Having seen the baby Jesus, he asks the Lord to let him die in peace. In the second couplet (vv. 30-31), he explains that he is ready to die a happy man because he has seen the Lord's "salvation." Having seen Jesus, he has seen the one who will bring salvation — both *individual* and *national* to the nation Israel and *individual* to the Gentiles. "This salvation of God will bring glory to God's people Israel (see Isa. 46:13). Even though God's mighty act of salvation will extend to all of the nations, Israel's place of preeminence will not be lost. It is important to stress this point, for often in appreciating Luke's emphasis that God's salvation has been extended to the Gentiles it is assumed that Israel no longer has a role to play or no longer enjoys God's favor. Israel will indeed reject Messiah and for this grievous error will suffer a catastrophe (see Luke 19:41-44); but if Gabriel's words to Mary (1:30-33) mean anything, Israel is not set aside . . . Luke sees much, if not most, of ethnic Israel in a state of obdurate disobedience, a condition that is neither permanent nor out of keeping with the prophetic Scriptures (see Luke 21:22; 24:25-27; Acts 13:40-41; 28:23-28; Rom. 11:25-32)" (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 39). Ultimately, all Israel will be saved. In the third couplet (v. 32), Simeon prophesies that Joseph and Mary's child will be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles," namely, a light revealing salvation to the Gentiles, and "the glory of your people Israel," namely that "all eyes will be drawn to Israel through what her Messiah achieves. He is the magnet that makes her great" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 93). Jesus' parents' reaction to Simeon's word comes as no surprise. "The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him" (v. 33).

Word Studies/Notes

v. 21 *when it was time* “The requirement of circumcision was included in the law Moses gave (see Ex 12:44, 48 and note; Lev 12:3), yet it did not originate with Moses but went back to Abraham (see Gen 17:10-12 and notes)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Jn 7:22). “Jesus’s parents were faithful Jews. They had him circumcised on the eighth day, giving him the name that the angel had said he should have” (Darrell L. Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 135).

v. 22 *when it was time* “In the case of a firstborn son, the parents were to present him to the Lord (Exod. 13:2, 12; Num. 18:16; cf. 1 Sam. 1:24-28). The parents would normally redeem the son (buy him back from the Lord) by paying five shekels for him (Num. 18:16)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Luke,” 2024 ed., 73-74, soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/luke.pdf).

v. 24 *and to offer* “On the fortieth day after her son's birth, the mother was to present a sin offering to the priest at the sanctuary to atone for her uncleanness (Lev. 12:6-7). Normally this offering was to be a lamb, but if the woman was poor she could bring two doves or two pigeons (Lev. 12:8). Mary apparently offered two birds, suggesting that Mary and Joseph could not afford the more expensive lamb sacrifice” (Constable, 74).

v. 25 *righteous and devout* “Notwithstanding the general low spiritual condition of the Jewish people at that time there were nevertheless (as always) genuinely pious and upright ones who served God faithfully and who (especially during the years before and around the coming of Jesus) looked forward with great yearning to the coming of the Messiah. They were expecting ‘the consolation of Israel’ – the salvation to come through the Messiah. One of this group of faithful people in Jerusalem was the devout Simeon” (Norval Gledenhuis, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, 25).

v. 25 *consolation of Israel* I.e., the deliverance of Israel (see Bock, *Jesus According to Scripture*, 136; *The NIV Application Commentary*, 93). “This refers to the consolation that would be brought about by the inauguration of the messianic age” (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 114).

v. 30 *salvation* “To see Jesus, the Messiah, is to see God’s salvation” (*NET Bible*, 90sn on Lk 2:30). “By the use of the phrase ‘my eyes’ (cf. Is. 52:10 MT; Lk. 10:23f.) he stresses the reality of this vision of God’s salvation. [sōtērion], an adjective used as a noun . . . is ‘the means of salvation, salvation itself’ (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC, 120). It has national and individual dimensions (see p. 1).

v. 32 *revelation* “The reference to the light for revelation to the Gentiles (v. 32; see Isa. 42:6; 49:6) further clarifies this idea and anticipates the universality of the gospel, a theme that finds its roots in the promise given to Abraham (see commentary on 1:55, 73)” (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 39). “He is a ‘revelation’ to Gentiles, for they will be brought into blessing through his ministry in a way they could have hardly imagined before his coming (cf. also John 1:3-9)” (Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 93).

v. 32 *glory* “In other words, Jesus is a special cause for praise and honor (‘glory’) for the nation” (*Net Bible*, 93sn, on Lk 2:32). “When the promises of God come, they come through the Promised One of Israel” (Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary*, 93).

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APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Praise God, Jesus is the salvation provided by the Sovereign Lord – a light to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

I know what it's like to gaze upon a newborn infant in awe. Four times in my life I had the privilege of holding my newborn baby in my arms and each time I thought my heart would explode with emotion – love, care, protection, joy, amazement (and a little panic and fear if I'm being honest). God created a miracle, a whole entire human, and I knew with all certainty I had the rest of my life to witness His goodness through the development of this child. What did Simeon feel when he laid eyes on the Savior of the world and took Him in his arms? Surely this was the culmination of his life. I bet everything he had seen and experienced had been leading him to this very moment. That's exactly how I felt the first time I "met" Jesus and trusted in Him as my Savior – the final piece of the puzzle, the exclamation point at the end of my sentence, the aha moment of finally understanding what my life was all about. Parents, you have the privilege of introducing your children to Jesus for the first time. Remember how you wanted to be the one to watch him take his first steps? Be the one who explains the good news of Jesus Christ. Share your story of salvation. Ask her if she would like to take this important faith step. Be there when their eyes open and the lightbulb turns on. Christmas isn't just about celebrating Jesus' birth but about sharing why we celebrate, why He made all the difference in our lives. Merry Christmas!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Luke 2:21-32.

1. Where did Mary and Joseph take Jesus on the eighth day? Why?
2. How was Simeon described?
3. Rewrite Simeon's song (verses 29-32) using your own words

What Do You Think?

What was baby Jesus like? Did He cry? Did He get fussy or hangry? What do you think?

What Do You Do?

With your family, go around the neighborhood looking at the Christmas lights. How can the lights and decorations reveal Jesus to those who see them?

CORE COMPETENCY: Salvation by Grace

I believe that I become a child of God through faith in Jesus, not because of anything I do.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 9:6

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.