

My Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation

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Date: 05 January 2025

Preacher: Joshua Winters

[0:00] Luke chapter 2, and we're picking it up here in verse 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.

So we kind of saw the same thing happen with John, the son of Elizabeth and Zechariah, a few months before this. It was the Jewish custom at the time to hold off on naming a son until the eighth day when he was circumcised.

And Jesus' parents did the same. And Luke emphasized that the name chosen for Jesus by his parents was the name that Gabriel had spoken to Mary before Jesus had even been conceived.

This is significant. This means that the name Jesus was chosen by God. Jesus was named by his father. And Mary and Joseph submitted to that and obeyed that.

When the time came for the purification rites required by the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord, every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord 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.

[1:30] One of the first things that I noticed as I was reading these verses this past week is the repetition of Luke. Three times he says that Mary and Joseph acted in accordance with the law of the Lord or the law of Moses.

And I think one of the reasons he says this so many times is that it really does explain the reason for why Mary and Joseph went and did all this. They made a trip from Bethlehem into Jerusalem with their little baby.

Mary went through purification rites. They presented Jesus before the Lord and they offered a sacrifice at the temple. Why? In all of these cases, the reason is singular.

It's simple. This is what the Lord God had commanded all of his people to do through Moses long ago. And Mary and Joseph, desiring to be obedient to God and to honor him, did all that he asked.

We won't get into all the details of the purification rites for mothers who have given birth, but you can find those in the Old Testament book of Leviticus, chapter 12. And if we go back and read there, those details let us know that Mary and Joseph would have made this trip to Jerusalem 40 days after the birth of Jesus.

[2:52] And Jesus, being the firstborn son of Mary, he is to be dedicated or consecrated to the Lord. And this pointed back to the Exodus, where God claimed the firstborn son of every family as his, since he had spared the firstborn son of every Israelite family who followed his instructions the night of the Passover.

And so Mary offers a sacrifice to the Lord at the temple. The standard sacrifice to be offered when a child was born was a year-old lamb and a young pigeon or dove.

But notice that Luke directly quotes here what Mary offered from the Old Testament. He says, A pair of doves or two young pigeons. Not a lamb.

Because of Leviticus 12, verse 8, it says, If she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons. So it's a very clear indication that Mary and Joseph were poor.

That Jesus was born into poverty. And while Mary and Joseph are there in Jerusalem at the temple with baby Jesus, God gives another two signs that this child is very special.

[4:20] Let's read it in verse 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.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 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, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your 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.

First of all, imagine this from the perspective of Mary and Joseph that day. They're brand new parents. They've just made their first trip out of town into the big city of Jerusalem.

[5:37] They've got a newborn with them. As far as they know, nobody else in this city knows anything of what has just happened with them. Gabriel appeared just to Mary and to Joseph privately before the pregnancy and before the birth.

And the off-duty priest, Zachariah, and his wife Elizabeth, who we heard about, they knew something, of course, but they lived in the hill country. The birth announcement for Jesus was spectacular, but it came in the middle of the night to shepherds near Bethlehem who were probably still out there with their sheep.

Even if they did share the news around a bit, how many believe them and are taking it seriously? The identity of this child with Mary and Joseph is completely unknown to the people of this bustling city in Jerusalem.

And so Mary and Joseph just seem focused here on fulfilling their obligations to God with the birth of their baby. How surprising and unexpected it must have been to get into the temple courts and be intercepted by this man, Simeon.

And Simeon mysteriously, amazingly, seems to understand immediately something about the specialness of this child. He starts praising God and prophesies about the baby in his arms.

[7:09] How could he know all this about this child unless God had revealed it to him? And I think this is the point. It's another supernatural sign confirming the identity of this child.

Next, imagine this from the perspective of Simeon. Likely, an older man, judging by his own words. Death is not too far down the road for him.

And he's a righteous and devout man. So on the whole, he's a man who's been living by faith and obedience to God. A man who fears God, who's seeking to honor God with his life.

And he's a man who has been waiting, says Luke. Waiting, looking forward to the consolation of Israel.

That word consolation has to do with comforting or consoling. Those are things that you do for people who are in trouble, distress, or sorrow.

[8:15] And who is it that he's feeling this towards or longing for this to happen to? Israel. The people of Israel.

The once great nation and kingdom now in disarray. With corrupt and treacherous leadership. Governed by a foreign empire.

Times are difficult. And Simeon is longing for the comfort. For his people. The comfort of God. He's longing for deliverance.

Salvation for Israel. He's longing for all those ancient words that God spoke long ago to be fulfilled. And at some point, Luke tells us that God actually chose to speak to Simeon by the Holy Spirit.

And made a promise to him. You will not die before you see my Messiah. Can you imagine this?

[9:18] Can you imagine carrying that promise with you? Wondering when it's going to happen. Who's it going to be?

And you're getting a little older and a little older. Must have been exciting though to have this assurance from God. Think of the past.

The days leading up to this moment for Simeon. Centuries of silence from God. And centuries more before that. Where God had made all these amazing promises of a coming king of his choosing.

And now you're telling me that before I die, I will see him? There's probably a part of him that just wanted to share this news with everybody.

God's king is coming. Like very soon. Within years. And then on this particular day.

[10:21] Moved by the spirit, says Luke. Simeon is told to go to the temple. And somehow also probably the spirit's direction led him to realize, to see.

That this child. In the arms of that young woman. He's the one. Now this is pure speculation.

But I wonder if there was a little conversation there with Mary. Before what's written here. Like excuse me miss. What's his name? Jesus.

Which in their language meant the Lord saves. Can I hold him for a moment? And Simeon takes the child and he begins to praise God.

Sovereign Lord. As you have promised. You may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation. You've kept your promise to me.

[11:38] I love this. And notice the interchange. Probably related to the name of Jesus. He could have said my eyes have now seen your Messiah.

Just as you promised. That was the promise made. Your Christ. But Simeon takes it a step further. Probably because of the name of Jesus.

And he fleshes out the significance of this a little more. What's so good about the Messiah? He's the one who has come. To save us. To deliver us.

And what's he looking at? When he says my eyes have now seen your salvation. A one month old baby.

Wrapped up in his arms. I love this so much. It's like he's declaring God's about to deliver us. God's about to save us.

[12:34] From our troubles. Our sorrows. From our distress. How? Through this little baby. Wrapped up in his arms. It reminds me of the story of Moses.

Who would have thought that that little baby. Floating. In a basket in the Nile River. Would later come back. By the power of God. To bring the mighty.

Proud. Stubborn Pharaoh to his knees. And lead all the children of Israel. Out of slavery in Egypt. Here's a guy.

Who by God's spirit. Knows what this baby will do. Who he will be. Even before any of it unfolds. And takes place. While he's still a weak and lowly infant.

There's more. There's more. My eyes have seen your salvation.

[13:46] Which you have prepared in the sight of all nations. A light for revelation. To the Gentiles. And the glory. Of your people Israel. So Simeon puts his.

He highlights. This is something that you're preparing in the sight of all nations. Quite literally peoples. Sometimes it can mean nation. But here. The emphasis is on the people.

In their various groups. Or cultures. Not so much the geopolitical boundaries. Like we often think of today. Simeon's point though. Is that this salvation. Coming through this child. Is not something that God.

Is doing invisibly. This will not be a hidden story. This is something that all peoples will see. With their eyes.

As well. It may be. Little known at the moment. But in God's time. Every people on earth. Will know. Who Jesus is.

[14:46] Which you have prepared in the sight of all nations. Verse 32. The verse after. Unpacks this statement a little further. With a parallelism. A light for revelation.

To the Gentiles. Notice the similarities. And the glory. Of your people. Israel. Notice the similarities. Of those parallel statements. Both light and glory.

Are things that shine forth. Things that are radiant. But then notice the contrast. He will be a light for revelation. To the Gentiles. What does light do.

In the darkness. It illuminates. It shines. It helps us to see. Things as they really are. This child is going to be.

A light. A revealer. To the Gentiles. This is perhaps unexpected. Up till now.

[15:48] We've heard about. How he's the Messiah. How he is. The son of God. How he is the savior. Of his people. How he is the lord. Of his people. But this is the first mention.

In Luke's gospel. Of how he is going to be. Someone who reveals truth. To the Gentiles. To the non-Jews. To those outside of Israel.

Probably not. What most Jews in Israel. Were thinking about right now. That word Gentile. Translates the Greek word. Ethnos. From which we get. Our word ethnicity.

It refers to a group of people. Usually united by kinship. Or culture. Or language. Or tradition. But it can also refer to. Those nations.

Or people groups. Outside of one's own. And that's what it is here. Gentiles. Meaning all the non-Jewish peoples. We see this because of the contrast.

[16:47] The light for revelation. To the Gentiles. And the glory of your people Israel. And this is quite a huge statement here. Do you remember the promise.

That God made to Abraham. Like 2,000 years. Ish. Before this. Genesis chapter 12. I will make you into a great nation.

And I will bless you. I will make your name great. Said God to Abraham. And you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you.

And whoever curses you. I will curse. And all peoples on earth. Will be blessed. Through you. It sounds similar to what Simeon is saying here.

Doesn't it? This child is going to be. The glory of Israel. That's Abraham's. Great grandson. Grandson.

[17:47] Grandson. And that in itself is a loaded. A loaded statement. The glory of Israel. At the least. It means that. God is going to restore glory. To his people Israel.

Just as they have had in days gone by. When they were a great nation. He's going to do it through this child. But then from there. The glory. The light. Will shine out.

Even further. Into the darkness of the nations. And peoples all around. Blessing them. With the knowledge. Of the truth. Revealing to them.

What was shrouded in darkness. Until now. God's plan. Right from. Back in Genesis. All the way up until.

This point. And even today. Has always been. A plan of salvation. And blessing. For the world. For all peoples on earth.

[18 : 44] Special favor. And election. And blessing. For Abraham. And Isaac. And Israel. But for the long-term benefit. And blessing. And salvation.

Of all the peoples of the world. For God so loved the world. That he gave. His one and only son. And God is using Simeon.

To make this truth clear. From the time Jesus is one month old. This child will be a light. For all peoples. Not just ours.

Luke tells us that Mary and Joseph. Marveled at what Simeon. Said about Jesus. And then Simeon goes on. There's even more. Then Simeon blessed them.

And said to Mary his mother. This child is destined. To cause the falling. And rising. Of many in Israel. And to be a sign. That will be spoken against. So that the thoughts.

[19 : 45] Of many hearts. Will be revealed. And a sword. Will pierce your own soul. Too. Up until this point. Everything Simeon has said.

Is good news. God's salvation. Has come. Visible to all peoples. A light. And glory. For the nations. And for Israel.

But now along with all this. Will come some hard things. Too. This child is destined. To cause the falling. And rising. Of many. In Israel.

Here it is again. We heard this a little bit. In Mary's. Psalm of praise. After she had conceived. She praised God.

For being a God. Who. Brings down rulers. Humbles the proud. And lifts up. Or exalts. The humble. The lowly. She praised God.

[20 : 46] For being a God. Who. Fills the hungry. With good things. And sends the rich. Away empty. We talked about how he's the God. Of great reversals.

And through this child. Jesus. Simeon prophesies. There are going to be many. Reversals. Many. Will fall.

Because of him. And. Many will. Rise. Because of him. And I'm looking forward. To meditating. On how this plays itself out.

We'll see it. As we work through. More and more. Of the gospel of Luke. He also says. That this child. Is destined. To be a sign. That will be spoken. Against.

These are probably. Hard words. For. Mary to hear. About her infant son. Your son.

[21 : 43] Is destined. To be spoken. Against. Already. We're getting a glimmer. Of how the story. Will go. With Jesus.

God's announcing it. In advance. He's not just going to win. The hearts. Of everyone. In Israel. No. Many will rise. And many will fall. Because of him.

Many will speak. Out against him. And oppose him. And one result. Of this. Will be. See in verse 35. So that. The thoughts. Of many hearts. Will be revealed.

So the story. Of Jesus. Is not just going to be. A surface level. Story. Of what he did. And what he said. And then. What the people did. And said to him. The way this whole story.

With Jesus. Goes. Is going to reveal. Something that's hidden. It's going to bring. To the surface. What's been hiding. Deep down. In the hearts of many.

[22 : 39] We're not going to see. Just actions. And hear just words. But we're going to see. Motives. We're going to see. Character. We're going to see. What people. In the land. Really believe.

What they really. Hold dear. Deep down inside. That's the effect. That Jesus. Is destined. To have. Upon people. And let's pause.

For a moment here. This is one of the reasons. Why proclaiming. The gospel. The true story. Of Jesus. Is powerful. It can endear.

People to Jesus. Or. It can offend them. Because that's what he. Was destined. To do. It's not so much. About you.

Or me. Though. We can poorly. Represent Jesus. But it's about. The message itself. It's about. Jesus himself. Who he is.

[23 : 36] What he is. He is light. Shining into the darkness. And so he has. This effect on people. Some rise.

Some fall. Some oppose. And speak against. And Mary. To Mary. Simeon says. You yourself.

Are going to get caught. In the crossfire. Too. A sword. Will pierce. Your own soul. Too. These are surely.

Not the words. That Mary would have. Liked to have heard. That day. And they are. Very sobering. Words. What's going to be. Pierced. Not Mary's body.

But her soul. Her very soul. Will be wounded. Struck. Pierced. We can hardly even imagine this.

[24 : 37] Maybe. You've been a parent. And you've watched from a distance. As someone has hurt. Deeply hurt. Your child. Your son. Or your daughter.

That's maybe a place to start. As we imagine what this was like for Mary. But then times that by a thousand.

And imagine half the nation. Angry. With your son. Hating your son. Speaking vile things against your son. Shouting in the streets.

Crucify him. Over and over again. And then publicly executing him. In the most shameful way possible. When you know that he's done nothing.

To deserve it. Can you imagine how Mary's soul must have ached. With the fiercest of griefs. Ever known by a mother.

[25 : 35] As she watched Jesus. Her son. Die. On the cross. Mary was blessed among women. Of all generations.

Yet she would know the deepest inner pain. And sorrow of any mother. Ever to live. In all this.

I'm struck again. By God's. Awesome ability. To declare what will happen. Even before. It happens. Perhaps there was in this.

A strange comfort. For Mary as well. Long before anything. Even began to take a turn. For the worst. God is preparing her. God is letting her know. The hard things that are coming.

They're part of the plan. He shall reign forever. Yes. But the path to that throne. Will be a hard one.

[26 : 35] All of that. Is the first sign. That God gave to Mary and Joseph. Confirming yet again. The identity of their son.

And even illuminating a little more. Of who he will be. What will happen. How it will affect them. Then comes a second sign. That very same day.

Verse 36. There was also a prophet. Anna. Anna. The daughter of Penuel. Of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband.

Seven years. After her marriage. And then was a widow. Until she was 84. She never left the temple. But worshipped. Night and day. Fasting and praying.

Coming up to them. At that very moment. She gave thanks to God. And spoke about the child. To all who are looking forward. To the redemption. Of Jerusalem. Luke doesn't go into detail here.

[27:34] But again. This elderly woman. Seems to know. Something about Mary's baby. That others do not. She gives thanks to God. She begins to speak publicly.

About. Jesus. To others. Maybe the majority. Who heard. What she was saying. Thought she was. Little more than a crazy old woman.

And yet. Mary and Joseph knew. That the things that she was saying. Were true. She was in fact. A prophet. Speaking on God's behalf.

About their baby. And notice. Who seems to come near. And to listen. To her words. In this moment. The faithful. God.

Luke describes them. As those who were. Looking forward. To the redemption. Of Jerusalem. There were people. Who were longing. To see Jerusalem. Set free. And restored. To the once great city.

[28:34] Of God's king. Even as a little. Baby. Unable to speak. Jesus is already revealing.

The hearts. Of many. This was the second sign. Verse 39. When Joseph and Mary. Had done everything required. By the law of the Lord.

They returned to Galilee. To their own town. Of Nazareth. Some might wonder. At this point. Why there's not mention. Of the flight to Egypt. To escape the decree. Of King Herod.

Kind of sounds. From Luke's perspective. As if they simply go. From Jerusalem. Back to Nazareth. But these kinds of things. Which sometimes. Seem like discrepancies.

On the surface. They actually serve. To authenticate. Luke's account. Those who specialize. In reviewing. Written accounts. From various sources. For investigative purposes.

[29:30] Will tell you. That it's quite common. To find things like this. And it usually means. That there's some detail. Or nuance. That's. That the writers left out. That explains it all perfectly.

In fact. If there were none of these. Seeming discrepancies. It may indicate. That the eyewitnesses. Colluded with each other. And attempted to make. All their accounts. Say exactly the same thing.

Now we don't know. Precisely how this statement. About returning to Nazareth. Fits with Matthew's account. Of them fleeing to Egypt. But a few possibilities. Have been suggested. By scholars.

One is that Luke. Simply skips over the details. Of the Magi arriving. And the star. And the plot of Herod. To kill Jesus. In an effort to move. This account along. More quickly.

And show where Jesus grew up. Yes. There was the flight. To Egypt. But that may not have lasted. Very long. And after it. They returned to Nazareth. A second possibility.

[30:27] Is that they stayed in Bethlehem. For 40 days. Because they had to do. The circumcision. The naming. The purification rites. The sacrifices. And since Bethlehem.

Was very close to Jerusalem. They could have just stayed there. Those 40 days. Then went up to Jerusalem. To do what we just read. And then. Returned immediately home. To Nazareth. Perhaps to gather their belongings.

And move back down to Bethlehem. Where Joseph had found work. Or to be closer to relatives. And then stayed there in Bethlehem. Until the Magi later arrived.

And Herod's plot. Forced them to flee. Whatever the case. Luke wraps up this account. Of Jesus' infancy. With a quick statement.

That signals. He's about to fast forward. Some years. In the story. Verse 40. And the child. Grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom.

[31:23] And the grace of God. Was on him. Those words. For growing. And becoming strong. Are words which point. To Jesus. Physically developing.

And maturing. As a human child. From an infant. To a toddler. From a toddler. To a young boy. And not just physically.

But Luke says. He developed. He grew. Mentally as well. He was filled with wisdom. It's a participle. Literally. Being filled with wisdom.

Luke wants us to have. The sense. That Jesus' wisdom. Increased. As time went on. He was being filled. More and more. Continually. With wisdom.

And God's grace. And God's favor. Was upon this child. These words. Really emphasize. Jesus' humanity. As great as he was.

[32:20] Even divine. Truly God. Yet he was also. Truly human. He was small. And dependent. On the care. And nature.

Of nurture. Of his mother. And father. And yet he grew. He was weak. With regard. To his humanity. A baby.

And yet he became strong. As children do. And even though. He was truly God. Living among us. He was also. Truly human. He didn't come out of the womb. Speaking intelligent.

Hebrew sentences. He had to learn. His wisdom. Had to increase. He had to be filled. With wisdom.

It's hard for us. To conceive. Of how. Both Jesus' human nature. And divine nature. Could coexist like this. In one person. We. That's why we call it. A mystery. But the scriptures.

[33:14] Make it clear. That Jesus was both. God. And man. And these words of Luke. Help us see. That his divinity. Which is clearly stated. In many places.

Did not compromise. Or lessen his humanity. He started out weak. Just as we do. He started out small. Just as we do. He even learned.

As we do. He truly was. One of us. The son of David. The son of man. The son of Mary. There's all kinds of wonderful things.

That we could linger over here. In this account of. What happened in Jerusalem. That day with Jesus. And I do hope. That you'll take this week. Just to think about. Those words of Simeon. To Mary.

And to Joseph. That day. They do reveal. A lot. Of. The great plan. That God has. For Jesus. But as we come this morning. To the Lord's table.

[34:12] I'm struck again. By. How even Simeon's words. At the beginning of Jesus. Earthly life. Point us. To the cross. Who is this child.

Wrapped up in Simeon's arms. He is God's. Salvation. He's the one. God has provided. To save us.

And how will he save us. Not by winning the hearts. Of all people. And becoming king. In the expected way. But by becoming a sign.

Who many will speak against. Christ. He will save us. Through a great tragedy. Which will cause. Great anguish of soul. To his mother.

The cross. Do you know. What happened. At the cross. As Jesus died.

[35 : 14] It was there. That he offered himself. As a sacrifice. To God. To atone. For our sins. To cleanse us.

To make us right. With God. To save us. From our guilt. And the punishment. We deserve. The Bible tells us. That this salvation. Of God's.

Is a gift of grace. Which means. That it's free. It's given. Because God is kind. And generous. Despite. What we deserve. And to accept this gift.

The Bible tells us. All we must do. Is believe. For God so loved the world. That he gave his one.

And only son. That whoever believes. In him. Shall not perish. But have eternal life. Have you believed.

[36 : 14] Truly believed. In Jesus. God's salvation. If you have. Then.

This table behind me. Is for you. And I want to invite you. To partake of it. Again this morning. We're going to pass around. The cup. And the bread. Which symbolized. Jesus' body.

And blood. Which was offered to God. For us. At the cross. Something that we do. Every month. To remember Jesus. That he is.

Our salvation. We do this. Because he's precious. To us. If you have not yet. Put your trust in him. If you've not truly.

Believed in him. Then please let the. Bread and the cup. Pass you by. We're going to. Have a few moments now. To reflect. And pray quietly. And then. Charles and.

[37 : 10] Dave will come up. And serve. The elements. And everyone. Who wishes to partake. Can partake. Can take. And then we'll. Give thanks.

And we'll eat and drink. All together in unison. Now. I'll hear you. In a nutshell.