

Simeon's Song

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[0 : 01] Take your Bibles and turn to the Gospel of Luke. Luke chapter 2. We'll be reading verses 21 through 40.

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

When the time of their purification, according to the law of Moses, had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him 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.

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 upon him.

Had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.

[1 : 17] And 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 now dismiss your servant in peace.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. And 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 of many hearts will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too.

There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, 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.

[2 : 43] Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth, and the child grew and became strong.

He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. I want to say thank you for your prayers for me while I've been down under the weather.

It's so good to be back with you. There really is no substitute for the real spiritual presence of the Lord Jesus Christ with his people as they meet in his name.

He's present with us. He sings with us. He receives our worship. He even speaks to us by his word. Precious realities found nowhere else as we, his church, gather in his name, and he makes his walks among his golden candlesticks. So I'm glad to be back.

[3 : 57] I promised you four songs surrounding the birth of our Savior in the month of December. I did not keep my promise.

We're into January, and we're going to touch on the fourth song this morning, just proving that whatever we say, we must say if the Lord wills. We don't know that we'll be here tomorrow.

Well, who can deny that there is a unique bond between mothers and their children, a newborn baby, a bond that fathers can only look on with envy and wonder from the outside.

Mom has had a nine-month head start on you, Dad, that mysterious bonding that takes place even while the child is in the womb, and we're told that they can hear the mother's voice and recognize it.

And it's that special attachment from birth that only deepens then during the nursing period. So, Dad, you have a long game of catch-up, of holding them, feeding them, changing their diapers, spending time with them, and I still wonder if we really ever really catch up.

[5 : 15] There is just something special in the God-given mother-child bond. What thoughts go through the mind of a mother as she holds her baby in her arms?

What will he be when he grows up? Will he be tall or short? What will his personality be, his talents, his job? Where will he live? Will he marry?

Will he have children? Will he repent and trust in Christ? What challenges and trials and successes await him? How will he die?

Mothers, if you had the choice to know all those answers ahead of time, would you want to know them? Or could they not be a burden, a heavy weight upon you to carry through life?

Well, no doubt some of these same questions came to Mary's mind as she looked into the face of her baby boy. But mothers, unlike you, Mary has been told many things about her son, things that amazed her, but also things that must have raised as many questions as they answered.

[6 : 26] Think at this point of all that she's learned from the angel Gabriel, from Joseph, Elizabeth, Zechariah, and the shepherds, that she would conceive supernaturally by the Holy Spirit without a human father, that she would have a son who would be the son of the most high God.

That he's to be named Jesus because he'll save his people from their sins. That he would be a king to reign forever on the throne of David's kingdom.

That he would bring salvation blessings that were promised through Abraham. That he's the savior, the long-awaited Messiah, Christ the Lord, God himself.

Now that's enough to set your heart, your head spinning, isn't it? As you would look into the eyes of your child. These were not things to be forgotten. And so she stored them up.

Mary stored them up and treasured them in her heart. And that left her often returning to them, to ponder them. To think what this all means.

[7 : 34] How will it end? And then we come to our text this morning when Jesus was just 40 days old. Mary received further information about him from a man named Simeon.

And that does bring us to our fourth of the songs that surround the birth of Jesus. Simeon's song. And when I say songs, I'm not at all implying that they were all actually sung.

But just recognizing their poetic form. That these words come to us in the format of poetry and of song. Now Luke 2 and verses 21 to 24.

Tell us two things that happened in the early life of Jesus. His circumcision and naming on day 8. And then his consecration as the firstborn.

And presentation to the Lord on day 40 of his life. Both of these were done in obedience to the law. And some of this had to do with purification rites.

[8 : 38] And we might wonder, well, why did Jesus undergo such laws and rites? It's really the same question that John the Baptist had when Jesus came to be baptized by him.

A baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And John said, Lord, I should be baptized by you. Not you by me. And Jesus said, suffer it to be so.

For we must fulfill all righteousness. All righteousness. He was working out a perfect obedience to the law.

That might be put to the credit of every believing sinner. Galatians 4, 4 and 5 says that when God sent his son. He was born of a woman.

Born under the law. So the great eternal law giver. The son of God. In becoming a man. Puts himself under the law of God.

[9 : 40] Now obligated to obey that law. Why? That he might save. That he might redeem law breakers. You and I. And transform us into law keepers.

It's why he fulfilled the righteousness of the law. That he might have it. To give to us who needed it. Well, it was this consecration of the firstborn.

That brought Mary, Joseph and Jesus to Jerusalem. Where they come into contact with this mystery man named Simeon. I say mystery man because all that we know about him.

We find here in these few verses. Notice three things about him. First of all, in verse 25. He was righteous and devout. He was one of the faithful and righteous remnant of believers in Israel.

This backslidden nation that was far from God had a few people. A remnant that was righteous. They did what was right in God's eye. And they were devout.

[10 : 45] They were devoted to God. That's what this Simeon is. Devoted to God. And secondly, we're told that he was living by faith in the coming Messiah.

Savior. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel. That's a messianic title. The consolation of Israel.

The comfort. The encouragement. Of Israel. Why would he be named that? Well, because of the comfort and consolation and encouragement that he would bring when he comes in his saving mission.

And so Simeon's waiting for that consolation of Israel to come. And this is ever the mark of the righteous remnant. They're awaiting people.

There have been hundreds of promises of the Messiah's coming that were yet unfulfilled. And so they waited. It had been over 400 years since a true prophet had brought any fresh word from heaven, from God.

[11 : 50] There had been over 500 years since any true king of Israel had reigned on the throne. That Israel had been put under the heel of the nations, the Gentiles. And so most in Israel had quit trusting.

Or they had quit waiting. They had lost hope. They had given up on the promises of his coming. Indeed, to many it looked like the promises had failed. But in fact, it was only their faith that had failed.

God has always had a righteous remnant who go on believing, who go on waiting because they have a word from God.

That's enough. A naked promise to keep them waiting. And Simeon is one of these happy exceptions to the unbelieving nation.

And Anna, spoken of in verse 38, also one of the righteous remnant. And she spoke of this child to others who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

[12 : 55] God has always had a people looking for his Messiah, waiting. So Simeon had his faith and hope set on this coming Messiah.

I wonder, are you marked by this same mark of the people of God? Is your faith and hope set on the next coming of our Messiah, Savior?

That's the mark of God's people. They long for his appearing. So he was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, the coming of the Messiah.

And thirdly, the Holy Spirit was upon him. Now that's true in several ways. It was first of all true in his righteous life. Even as we prayed earlier, we can do nothing on our own.

And so if there was any righteous, devoted life in this man, Simeon, it was due to the Holy Spirit's presence within, producing the righteous life, the fruit of the Spirit. He was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

[14 : 01] But the Holy Spirit was also upon him in a unique sense. And it's seen by the supernatural revelations that the Holy Spirit gave him, enabling him to prophesy, to declare things, to know things otherwise unknowable to men.

We're told it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Most of the righteous remnant down through the ages had lived and died with this hope of seeing the promised Messiah, but never had it fulfilled.

They did their best to keep hope alive in their own hearts, in the lives of their children and their grandchildren, but they never lived to see this coming Messiah. But Simeon was given a special promise by the Holy Spirit, just to him alone.

You're going to live to see him. Now how long had he known this? We're not told. How many days did he wake up saying to himself, this could be the day?

One thing he knew, he was immortal until he saw the Lord Jesus. That might have put a spring in his step. Well, we also don't know how often Simeon visited the temple courts in Jerusalem.

[15 : 22] We do know it was the law of God that brought Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus to the temple that day, but we're told it was the Spirit of God that brought Simeon to the temple that day, that moved him to leave his house, to go into the temple courts at just the right time for this meeting to occur.

There was yet one more thing that the Holy Spirit must have revealed to Simeon. And it was that it is this baby in this woman's arms who is the Lord's Messiah.

There could have been other babies brought for the same reason to Jerusalem, to do what the law had required. But Simeon knows it's this one by the Holy Spirit.

How Simeon ended up with the baby Jesus in his arms, we'll have to wait to heaven to find out. Did Mary just let this stranger come up and take the baby out of her arms?

All of that is not important enough to be entered into Luke's account. What is important is what Simeon said as he held the baby in his hands and said by the power of the Holy Spirit.

[16:38] So his song, it's addressed to God, and it's about the baby that he's now holding. And in the very first thing that he says, I don't want you to miss the evidence of his devotion to God.

That was one of the things that marked him. He was righteous and devoted to God. Notice how he speaks of God and himself. Verse 29.

Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.

He sees himself as the servant of the sovereign Lord. Now a servant exists to do the will of another, even of God, his sovereign Lord.

And so Simeon's devotion is seen in that God is viewed as the one with absolute rights over him, sovereign lordship over his life.

[17:38] And he sees himself as existing, as a servant of this sovereign Lord. And it's his will that is to be done about everything, about how long I live, about when I die.

All of that is part of his devotion to the Lord. Is that your view of yourself and of your God? That I am a servant of the sovereign Lord.

I exist to do his will. Well, he says, sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.

Don't miss it. As he sees the Lord Jesus, he sees God's salvation. He is God's provision.

It is a person. It is God's son made flesh. This baby is God's salvation for sinners. Neither is there salvation in any other.

[18:44] There is no other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved. It's either this one or be lost forever.

This is God's salvation. And notice what he says about God's salvation. Your salvation, it's something which you have prepared in the sight of all people.

Now, that's a reference to Isaiah chapter 40. And you don't need to turn back to Isaiah 40 because Luke quotes it just a page over in chapter 3. So just look over at chapter 3 in verses 4 to 6.

Speaking of the forerunner, John the Baptist, and of the coming Christ after him, Luke 3, 4 is a quotation from Isaiah 40.

As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, a voice of one calling in the desert, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in and every mountain and hill made low.

[19:50] The crooked road shall become straight, the rough way smooth. And here it is. And all mankind will see God's salvation.

This is God's salvation prepared in the sight of all the people. That's what Simeon said.

He's not some secret Messiah. He's not hiding out in private. He carried on his ministry in public for the most of it in the sight of all the people, going around doing good, going around healing, teaching.

And he's carried out his work of salvation in the clear sight of all people. As he hung there on the cross, the tag on over his head was printed in three different languages as people were thronging by and could see this salvation of God.

The apostle Paul was giving his defense before Governor Festus and King Agrippa in Acts chapter 26. And he says, I'm saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen, that the Christ would suffer and as the first to rise from the dead would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.

[21:09] And at this point, Festus just blows up. He interrupts Paul's defense, shouting, you're out of your mind, Paul. Your much learning has driven you mad.

Paul's answer, I'm not insane, most excellent Festus. What I'm saying is true and reasonable. The king here, he's familiar with these things.

And I can speak freely to him. I'm convinced that none of this, his life, his death, his resurrection, I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice because it was not done in a corner.

If something's done back here in the corner, you may not know what it was. But if it's done openly in public, you know what it is.

And that's what he's claiming. This, the Lord's salvation was not done in a corner, but in the sight of all the people. That's what Simeon says about this child.

[22 : 13] He is God's salvation prepared in the sight of all people. And furthermore, he says of this salvation, it's not just for Jews, but it's also for Gentiles. It is for all people, all different kinds of people.

Verse 32, this salvation is a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people, Israel. Now for so long, the light of God's special revelation had been given almost exclusively to Israel. They were the ones that had the covenants. They were the ones that had the law of God. And God, for the most part, left the nations to go on in their superstition, in idolatry, their darkness and ignorance.

But with the coming of Christ, there was a change. Now he enlightens the Gentiles and he brings God's salvation to them as well as to the Jews.

You have a servant song back in Isaiah 49, one of the songs of the Lord's suffering servant. And in verses 5 and 6 record the inner Trinitarian conversation between the Lord God and his servant son.

[23 : 39] So it's Christ speaking about God the Father. And this is what it says. And now the Lord says, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and to gather Israel to himself for I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength.

And he goes on to say, what God the Father says to me, his son. It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and to bring back those of Israel I have kept.

I will also make you to be a light for the Gentiles that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth. Son, merely restoring a remnant of Israelites to me is not a great enough mission for you.

That's too small a thing for someone like you, my son. No, I'll also make you a light for the Gentiles, the nations that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

That is more in line with your sacrifice, your honor, and your worthiness. So spoke the Father to the Son in that eternal transaction. And this is what makes the incarnation so precious to us Gentiles.

[25 : 09] Have you thought of that? It was for our salvation too that he came. Not just for the wandering tribes of Israel that had turned their backs on him.

And so Christmas is not just a Jewish holiday. That ought to shock us. It doesn't, but it ought to shock us. That's what Simeon is saying.

This is not only God's salvation for the Jews, the Israel of God, but this is God's salvation to enlighten the Gentiles. It would have just been a Jewish holiday if that's all he came to do is restore the Jews that had wandered from God.

It would have had nothing to do with us. Nothing. Just a point in history that had something to do with others, but not us.

Oh, but Christ came as a light for revelation to the Gentiles. Now the light of the gospel, the good news of salvation has come to us. As well as being a glory to his people, Israel, who would have the privilege to bring forth the Messiah as to his human nature.

[26 : 33] And sadly, many Jews still see no glory in Christ and refuse to own him as their Savior or as God's salvation. Oh, but some did.

And some still are and more are believing on the Lord. And then we're told in verse 33 that the child's father and mother marveled at what had been said about him.

Now by now, there's been a lot said about him, but the reference is here to what Simeon has said about him. And on top of everything else that they had heard before, here was the clearest revelation of the worldwide scope of the salvation that their son was bringing.

He's not just a Savior for Israel, but he's a Savior for the world. And let us never lose the wonder of that as we think upon the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

He's come for us, poor Gentile dogs. that if he'd have left us in our sins, we'd have gone on forever worshipping idols in darkness as to the true way of salvation.

[27 : 57] That we who repent and believe on Christ are included in this great salvation of God. Well, as the parents were marveling at these things, it's interesting what the scriptures say.

You see it? They're marveling. Verse 33, And Simeon blessed them and then spoke to Mary. Isn't that interesting, the difference? He blessed them, presumably Joseph, Mary, and the baby, and then he spoke to Mary.

Why not to Joseph? He was standing there too. Well, could it be that by the time these next things would happen, that he's about to speak of, Joseph would be nowhere in the picture?

That he wouldn't be around, he would be off the scene as we find in the pages of scripture, evidently had died, presumably so. And so these things would not be for him.

[29 : 04] they would really belong to Mary and concern Mary. And so they were given to her to prepare her for what was ahead. Now, up to now, the many things spoken to Mary about her son were all good things.

Everything in the other three songs, everything in Simeon's song, good news of great joy. But now for the first time, a dark shadow is cast over the life of her son.

Indeed, there would be surprises in store in the way that God's salvation would come through this son. The way that salvation would be accomplished, the expectation of most was that he would come and crush the Gentile nations and destroy these political enemies.

But these words of Simeon that come specifically to Mary carry sobering warnings of struggle and suffering ahead for Mary's son. And so Simeon, by the Holy Spirit, speaks to Mary of three things, about a separation, about a sign, and a sword.

First of all, a separation that's to happen. Verse 34, this child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel.

[30 : 29] Folks, when something is destined by God, it's going to happen. And that's what he tells Mary. This child, I'm not talking about anyone else, I'm talking about this child, Jesus, that you named him Jesus.

He's destined for this. Here he is, hardly five weeks old, and yet Mary's to see him dividing the whole nation of Israel into two groups, causing some to fall and others to rise.

Peter would later speak of this Christ as a stone, chosen by God and precious to him. First Peter 2, 6 to 8, for in scripture it says, see, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious, but to those who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected, has become the capstone, and has become a stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that causes men to fall.

They stumble because they disobey the message, which is also what they were destined for. Well, Peter speaks of that afterwards, but Simeon speaks of this separation separation when Jesus is 40 days old.

[32 : 00] And it's a separation in Israel that takes place as people will meet Mary's son. He's a living stone. He's been placed here by God himself.

And some in their lives coming to him will put their trust in him. They will believe on him. they will receive him as the cornerstone and foundation of all that they do their whole life.

He's the foundation. He's the one that determines how I live my life. They build upon him for time and eternity, and so they rise to eternal life.

But others come to the same stone, the same Jesus. And they're offended at his teaching. They're offended at his claims.

They're offended at his demands, and they don't believe on him. They reject him. And so for them, he's a stone that causes them to stumble. He's a rock that makes them fall, and so they fall into an eternity without him.

[33 : 15] And Mary, it's this child who's destined to cause such falling and rising in Israel. And it all happened just as Simeon said it would. You could see it happening as he taught the people.

You could often see it visibly happening. He cut the crowd in half. He cut them in two, and they split up upon meeting this stone.

Those who rose in faith, those who fell in unbelief. There's no neutrality here in Christ, either for him or against him. And you can still see it happening today.

Speak about God, and people will listen, but speak about Jesus, Christ, the Lord, and they're for him or they're against him.

Jesus and his gospel remain the great cause of separation, cutting right through family sometimes. those who rise to eternal life and others who fall to eternal damnation.

[34 : 24] Some, upon hearing the gospel, even today, are humbled. And they say, this is right. Jesus is right. I am the sinner, and I need a savior.

And the Bible tells me that's why he came, and I trust in you. And I expect to receive mercy from God only because of what Jesus has done for worthless sinner like me.
And they rise. That's what Jesus said, that whoever humbles himself will be exalted, will be lifted up. Whereas others, upon meeting Christ and hearing his gospel, they reject it.
No, their proud self-righteousness will not accept such statements about their need for a savior, that Jesus must be damned if you're ever to be saved. And so they stumble over the gospel, they stumble over Jesus, and they fall to their everlasting destruction.
So which is it? Which is it for you? Are you receiving Christ, or are you rejecting Christ? Have you humbled yourself, trusting in only what, only in what Jesus has done for sinners?
[35 : 41] sinners? You say, I'm not rejecting him, I'm considering him, I'm just waiting. Yes, and while you wait, you are rejecting him today.

You're refusing to give to him your love, your trust, your worship, your service, your obedience today. Because whether you believe it or not, you are rejecting him.
If you're not receiving him, if you haven't received him and are not worshipping, loving, trusting, obeying, then you have rejected him, you are rejecting him. And you're just promising yourself what the devil's trying to convince you that someday, someday, you'll receive him.
Oh, you're rejecting him even while you wait. This child, Mary, is destined to cause that reaction. Even in Israel, the people who had all the privileges, how much more in a world of Gentiles as well as Israelites.
He will be a separating factor in the nation of Israel. Secondly, he'll be a sign, verses 34 and 35. This child is destined to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

[37 : 03] Christ is a sign and a sign points away from itself to something else. And Jesus, as a sign, pointed to his father. He pointed to the one who sent him.

The works that I do are his works. The words that I speak are his words. And you either, in accepting me, you accept the one who sent me, or in rejecting me, you reject the one who sent me. And so, in meeting Christ, the sign, who was ever pointing to the one who sent him, the one that he perfectly was the perfect image of, men's hearts were being revealed.
It was becoming clear which side they were on. How did they treat Jesus? That was the true readout on their hearts attitude toward God.

You know, there were many in Israel in Jesus' day, especially the leaders of Israel, who said, we love God, we're serving God, our whole lives are wrapped up in God, God, God.
[38 : 04] Even while they rejected Jesus, were thinking how to kill him. No, this child will be a sign spoken against, and in speaking against him, their thoughts about God will be revealed.

They'll be uncovered, brought right out into the opening. My baby boy, a sign to be spoken against, who wouldn't love him.

After all, he's God's salvation, God's Messiah. Oh, but Mary, it's easy to love the harmless little baby Jesus in your arms, the baby Jesus who makes no demands.
But at age 30, he begins preaching, and immediately men's cherished sins are exposed, and their hatred of Christ and God is surfacing, and his holy life and his holy words aroused their hidden hostility, and the hot thoughts of their hearts were uncovered.

You can see it as early as Luke chapter four. I mean, this is right at the beginning of his public ministry. He's come back to his hometown of Nazareth, where he grew up for 30 years, better part of 30 years.

[39 : 23] In fact, it's hard to imagine that Mary was not in the synagogue on the Sabbath that day. It's her hometown too, as Jesus returns to this hometown. And to begin with, all spoke well of him and were hanging on his gracious words, Luke 4 22.

But by the end of the sermon that day, they were furious. They drove him out of town and they took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built in order to throw him down the cliff.
But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way. You see, it didn't take long for Mary's son to be a sign spoken against, a despised and rejected man.
The things she heard them say about her son. And worst of all, coming from the mouths of religious leaders of the Jews, they called him a drunkard and a glutton, a friend of sinners.
They said he was demon-possessed in league with the prince of demons, that he was out of his mind, that he was a lawbreaker, that he was a sinner, a blasphemer, worthy of death.

[40 : 28] She heard them speaking against him, their plots against him. And we wonder when he said to them, I and my father are one, and they began to take up stones, if she was there that day.

She must have died a thousand deaths as she heard what men were saying against her son. and each time she heard it, she must have heard the echo of these words of Simeon. Mary, this child is destined to be a sign spoken against, a separator, a sign, but thirdly, there was something else that Simeon said, and it was the most ominous of all, a sword.

Verse 35, and a sword will pierce your own soul, too. kids, what is this? Swords pierce bodies, right?

What is it to have a sword pierce a soul, a non-material thing called the soul?

Well, this sword does not refer to Mary's own direct sufferings as such, but speaks of the sufferings of her son, which would affect her. And every mother knows the reality of vicarious pain felt when seeing your own children in pain.

[41 : 55] In fact, your pain, as the mother, can be more intense than the actual pain that they're going through. It's a mother's heart that's tied up with the joys and sorrows of her children.

And it was no different for Mary. She was already beginning to feel the sword piercing her soul to see the way that they treated her son. As he went around doing good, healing, casting out devils, preaching the good news of salvation and forgiveness of sins to unworthy sinners.

She had no idea how deep that sword could and would cut into her own soul. But then it happened. It was early one Friday morning during Passover, just days earlier.

She had seen her son ride into Jerusalem on a colt amid the cries of Hosanna, Hallelujah, to the King. Long live the King.

Palm branches, clothes strewn on the path before him, receiving him into Jerusalem as the King of Israel. What heights of joy must have risen within her heart.

[43 : 06] But this Friday morning, John has come to get her and to lead her outside the city gates to a ghastly site at Golgotha, the place of a skull.

There are three blood streaked bodies hanging on their crosses. And as John leads her to the middle cross, she can barely make out that it is her son.

John assures her it is, and the sign over his head confirms it, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews. Mary that came for him during the night, and he never fought against them.

Never did a man go so willingly to his death. As a lamb to the slaughter, as a sheep before her shears is done, so he opened not his mouth.

Mary never knew her soul was capable of such pain as at that moment as she looked upon her son suffering on the cross. Because it wasn't only the worst that men could do to him, but it was the infinite wrath of God that was due to sin.

[44 : 25] That's what he was bearing. She heard his cry of forsakenness. My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? And all the earlier stabs of pain in her soul were nothing compared to this.

This was it. This is what Simeon was speaking of 33 years earlier. In the temple, a sword will pierce your own soul too.

In other words, her child was destined for the cross. And Simeon's words were meant by God to prepare her for this.

These were the words of the comforter, so that when it all happens and Mary, your soul is reeling as with a sword stuck through it, know this, this is no freak accident.

This is not the mission of your Messiah, son, gone awry, somehow. There's no frustration here of your child's mission. Rather, all of this is God's predestined plan for your child.

[45 : 39] This is the way Jesus brings salvation to many, to Jews, to Gentiles, and yes, to Mary as well. What a comfort this would be to her, even as she looks upon him.

It was all said to her, and it's now happened just as it was said. And three days later, her sorrow would turn to joy as he rose triumphant over sin and death and hell, never again to die, with eternal life to give to all who trust in him.

And dear Christians, whatever pains and losses you have been called upon to bear in this life, we can know the same comfort and consolation and encouragement as Mary receives here through Simeon.

God's perfect plan for you has not been frustrated. This is your sovereign Lord working out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will for you.

Nothing can touch you but what God has ordained and promises to work together for your highest good. Drink it in for your comfort. drink it in for your joy and peace even in the midst of your pain.
[47 : 01] And then let none of us forget that our Savior was born to die. That he was destined for this even before creation. That's why he came into the world as a man that he might suffer death in our place and in this way bring many sons to glory.

Jews and Gentiles alike. Christian the reason God does not treat you and has never treated you as your sins deserve is because he treated his son as your sins deserve.
For he bore! For he bore our sins in his body to the tree and there he took the punishment that you might have the forgiveness and he took your pain and sorrow that you might have his peace and joy and he bore God's infinite wrath that you might know his eternal favor.

It was by suffering and dying on the cross that he has purchased our redemption. So measure his love not by your pains but by his pains endured for you and then offer yourself afresh to him as your sovereign Lord to serve, to worship, to love, to trust, to obey.

What a passage. Lost, sinner, friend, where are you with this Jesus? This Jesus who died on the cross and rose again. This Jesus who was spoken against.

[48 : 38] This Jesus who was despised and rejected. Here alone is salvation. It's found in this Jesus and him alone. only through his death on the cross and his resurrection.

Are you stumbling over him to eternal perdition or are you building your hope and trust and life upon what he has done for sinners?

Your eternal destiny depends on what you do with this Jesus. Are you rejecting or receiving? Oh, receive him today and find out just how blessed are those who put their trust in him.

But we want to sing of him. We want to sing of him being despised and rejected for us and the great salvation that has come to us because of all he bore.

It's number 200 or 128. 128. We'll sing it to the more familiar tune. Let's stand as we sing.■