

Simeon's Song

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Christmas Songs of Salvation / Luke 2:22–35

Hope is a theme of Christmas. But what does it mean to hope in the Lord?

Because everyday we place our hope in something, don't we? Like, we hope that the roads aren't too icy. My kids hope that if there is snow, there's going to be a snow day.

We hope, man we hope, the Blue Jays are getting back to the World Series next year, and we hope this time they'll take it. We hope that the Maple Leaf's, well, never mind. You get the point.

Most of the hope we talk about in everyday life is uncertain.

We hope for what we *want* to happen—but we're not sure it *will* happen. It's more of a wish or a longing without guarantees.

And I think that's why some people grow weary of hope—especially during Christmas.

Because the kind of hope this world offers is often **fleeting** and **empty**.

We hear the word *hope* everywhere in December—but for many, it feels hollow. It sounds nice... but it doesn't seem real. There just doesn't seem to be any hope in my life right now.

But the hope the Bible speaks about is radically different.

Biblical hope isn't wishful thinking.

It isn't "*I hope this might happen.*"

It's a confident expectation, an assurance.

It is trusting that what God has promised—He will surely do.

That's why the writer of Hebrews describes our hope in Christ as:

“a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul.”

In other words—biblical hope is not a maybe.

It's not a possibility.

It is a certainty you can build your life on.

So maybe you're here this morning weary of empty hope—the kind of hope the world offers and never delivers.

Maybe you're longing for a hope that is *real*...
a hope that doesn't disappoint.

This morning, we look at a man named Simeon.

He spent his life hoping in the Lord—hoping in the promises of God.

And when he finally sees the Saviour with his own eyes, he sings a song of worship.

And his song is exactly this:

a song of hope fulfilled.

So, here's our question today:

What does it look like to hope in the Lord?

Luke 2:22-35

One of the questions people often ask is this: *How were the Old Testament saints saved?*

Because the New Testament is clear — we are saved by faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus. That's the only way anyone can be reconciled to God.

So, what about those who lived before the cross?

How are they saved in something that hadn't happened yet?

The answer is this:

That God has only ever saved people one way — by grace through faith.

We look *backward* in faith, to a promise fulfilled at Calvary and sealed by the resurrection.

But the Old Testament saints looked *forward* in faith — believing God's promise of a Redeemer yet to come.

We place our hope in a finished work.

They placed their hope in a promised work.

And that's exactly where we find Israel... where we find Simeon this morning.

Simeon, like us, was living by faith — trusting God's promise of a Saviour.

The very same promise echoed through the Old Testament Scriptures for thousands of years.

We've traced that promise in these Christmas songs, haven't we?

- Back to the garden — [Genesis 3](#) — the promise that the seed, a descendant of the woman would one day crush the serpent's head.
- Through Abraham — a seed through whom all nations would be blessed.
- Through Moses — a greater prophet who would come to deliver God's people.
- Through David — a King whose throne and kingdom would endure forever.
- Through the prophets — a child born of a virgin, bearing the very glory of God, bringing salvation to His people.

This is the promise Simeon is waiting on.

And he's been waiting even though some had given up hope.

Most Jews in Simeon's day weren't living with any real expectation of God's promise. The idea of a coming Deliverer had little bearing on daily life.

In fact, after the angels announced the birth of Christ, the majority of Israel simply carried on—waking up the next morning, going to work, going about their business—completely unaware that the Messiah had come.

Others tried to shape a religion out of the promises—clinging to laws, rituals, and traditions of their own making—hoping those practices might somehow bring them closer to God.

But there was a faithful remnant.
A few who still watched and waited.

There were still those who still trusted and believed—who anchored their hope in God’s promise.

Simeon was one of them.

There is this sense that during this Advent season, as we look back on these saints in the gospels, waiting on the coming of their Messiah, that we are connected to that sense of waiting, aren’t we?

This advent season really connects us with those first-century believers, because we—just like they—are in a season of waiting.

We are watching, hoping, and trusting in the promises of God.

As we read of Israel waiting for the first coming of Christ, we’re reminded that we are now waiting for His second coming.

And that reality should sit in the back of our minds and shape how we celebrate Christmas.

The first advent isn’t just a sentimental look backward—it’s a powerful reminder of the promise still ahead.

Just as they watched and waited and prepared for the Messiah’s arrival the first time, we are called to watch and wait and prepare for His return.

It leads us to our question this morning:

What does it look like to hope in the Lord?

And the answer we find in the life of Simeon is this—
when we hope in the Lord, hope looks forward with expectation.

1. HOPE LOOKS FORWARD IN EXPECTATION

Hope looks forward expecting that God's promise will be fulfilled.

That's what the faithful remnant in Israel were doing in this season. Many had given up hope—"the *Messiah* is never going to come."

But not Simeon. Simeon was trusting, believing, hoping, and looking forward with expectation that what the Lord had promised would indeed come to pass.

Luke tells us in verse 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.

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.

Notice the phrase—**waiting for the consolation of Israel**.

That word *consolation* simply means *comfort*.

Simeon was waiting for the Comforter—the one Isaiah had promised:

He remembered God's promises through the prophet Isaiah

Isaiah 40:1–2 ESV

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,

and cry to her

that her warfare is ended,

that her iniquity is pardoned.

Simeon was waiting—watching—as the people around him drifted farther and farther from God.

He was waiting expectantly because he knew there was only one answer for Israel:

the promised Comforter.

And God had given him personal assurance. Verse 26 tells us the Holy Spirit revealed that he would not die before seeing the Messiah.

We don't know how long he had waited—days, weeks, years.

But you can imagine how difficult that waiting must have become as he watched God's people slide deeper into religious ritual and farther from relationship.

He kept praying, "*How long, O Lord?*"

And we can connect with Simeon in that longing, can't we?

Because **we** are also waiting.

We are waiting for the second coming of Christ.

And as we look at our world, we see that same kind of drifting take place in our world.

The unrest in the nations, the conflict, the violence, the moral drift of our culture, and even the compromise within the Church—we feel that same ache:

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

And when we look at our own lives—the struggles, the hardships, the suffering, the battle with sin and flesh—we feel it again:

Come, Lord Jesus, come.

There is only one true comfort for this world.

Only one hope.

The coming of the Messiah.

So, our hearts cry with the old hymn:

*O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel...
that mourns in lonely exile here...
until the Son of God appears.*

But think about Simeon's hope.

Think about that personal promise from the Lord—that assurance from the Holy Spirit:

“You will see Him in your lifetime.”

Tell me—how might that change the way you hoped for Christ's coming?
what if the Lord spoke to you and said that before your life was over you would see the return of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Simeon lived everyday like that could be the day he sees the Lord.

How would that change the way you live your life day-to-day?
If you lived like at **any moment** Christ could return, how would it affect the way you plan your life—your career, your home, your possessions?
How would it change the things you value and hold tightly to?

Just imagine the impact it would make if we lived our lives with that kind of expectation—that we could see the return of Christ today.

And the truth is: the Bible *actually calls us* to live this way.
To live as though Christ could return at any moment.
To be watching.
To be waiting.

Jesus says in **Matthew 24**, “**Stay awake... be ready... for you do not know the day or the hour when the Son of Man is coming.”**

And doesn't that sound a lot like how Simeon was called to live his life?

He knew he would see the Lord's Messiah before he died—but he didn't know when.

He was told the promise, but not the timing.
So he lived **every day** as though this could be the day.

And he didn't know *how* the Messiah would come.
Was He coming in the clouds?
Would He arrive suddenly in glory?
Would He march in with heaven's armies?

He didn't know.
But he lived with a heart ready to see Him at any moment.

Simeon lived in *anxious expectation*. That's what hope looks like.

Hope looks forward in expectation

That's the lesson we take from Simeon's life.
He hoped in the coming Messiah—but it wasn't a weak hope, not a wishful dream.
It was confident expectation.

He believed God's promise would come to pass, and so he watched, he waited, and he lived ready.

And that's the reminder we need in this Christmas season.

Just as they longed and hoped for the promises of His first advent, so we long and hope for the promises of His return—for restoration, for justice, for peace, for all things made new.

It's in the songs we sing isn't it... ***O Lord haste the day when my faith shall be sight, the clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trump shall resound and the Lord shall descend even so, it is well with my soul...***

or how about this one.. when we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that would be, when we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory.

To live, to live in expectation of God's promise, to look forward in expectation.

That's what it looks like to hope in the Lord.

But maybe you're wondering, why? Why so long? Why have we been waiting so long?

I'm sure there were those in Israel asking that same question. What had it been, 2000 years since Abraham, 400 years since Malachi's promise?

I always think of Peter's words in [2 Peter 3](#), he warns us... ***know this that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing... They will say, “Where is the promise of his coming?***

And Peter gives this warning in

2 Peter 3:8-9 ESV

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

Peter is saying, listen, before you start scoffing you gotta remember something, our understanding of timing is not like the Lord's timing.

You cannot put time limits on God... God is not limited to our clocks and calendars.

Perhaps to us it's been a few thousand years, but to God it's only been a couple of days.

But more importantly Peter says, understand this... If God is delaying Christ's coming it is merely out of His grace and His mercy. Because when He comes, He is bringing judgment with Him.

God takes no pleasure in the condemnation of people, He is patient, oh, so patient with us. He is not willing that any should perish, His longing is that all would come.

And so, if He is delaying the Lord's coming it is merely His grace and His mercy giving people more time to repent, to turn from their sin and come to salvation.

And maybe for you today is that day? Today is that day when you turn your back on your life of sin and turn your life and your heart towards God.

So, what does it look like to hope in the Lord?

It looks like Simeon—living with expectation.

Watching.

Waiting.

Believing that God will keep His word.

But biblical hope isn't passive.

Simeon didn't sit on his hands and coast while he waited.

His hope didn't make him idle—his hope made him faithful.

And that leads us to the second truth:

Hope in the Lord doesn't just look forward with expectation...

Hope walks in present faithfulness.

2. HOPE WALKS IN PRESENT FAITHFULNESS

Notice how Simeon is described again here in verse 25.

Luke 2:25 ESV

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.

Do you notice the character traits mentioned? Righteous, devout, walking with the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's delay did not cause Simeon to slack off. If anything, the longer he waited, the more devoted he became.

And that's where many of us struggle, isn't it?

When we think Christ's return is a long way off, the temptation is to become complacent in our faith, or to relax spiritually.

"The Lord's been gone a long time... I'll pray tomorrow... I'll deal with that sin later... I'll reconcile with that brother or sister another day... there's time."

That's how we think.

But Simeon lived the opposite way.

Hope didn't make him passive, hope made him urgent.

Waiting didn't lead him to waste his life chasing the desires of the flesh or the comforts of the world.

Waiting drove him to prepare himself to meet the Lord.

While he waited, he was growing in righteousness, becoming more devout and filled with the Holy Spirit, he walked with the Lord while he waited.

It's like when I was a kid and my mom left us with a list of chores.

At the start of the day we thought, "We've got lots of time."

So we played.

We goofed around.

And then—thirty minutes before she walked in the door—we were scrambling, cutting corners, rushing to make it look like we'd been diligent all day.

Or think of a research paper or a work deadline.

You get the assignment early.

You think, "There's time."

And then the night before, you're cramming, knowing it will never be as good as it could have been.

Simeon refused to live like that.

He didn't want to stand before the Lord unprepared.

So, he used the waiting:

- to grow in righteousness
- to deal with sin
- to deepen devotion
- to pray, to worship, to study
- to yield to the Holy Spirit

His hope shaped how he lived day by day.

He grew in faithfulness as he waited. That's what hoping in the Lord does... it produces present faithfulness.

What are we doing with our waiting?

Are we growing?

Are we repenting?

Are we pursuing holiness?

Are we praying?

Are we investing in the kingdom?

Jesus warned us in [Matthew 24](#) to be watchful and ready.

He told the parable of the servant—

one who stayed faithful, and one who assumed, “*My master is delayed,*” and drifted into worldliness.

It's a stern warning.

The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know.

This is what it looks like to hope in the Lord.

It's a hope that looks forward in expectation—just like Simeon.

It's a hope that walks in present faithfulness—not growing lazy or distracted but living each day as though it could be the day we see Him.

But here's why that kind of hope isn't wishful thinking...
here's why it holds us like an anchor in the storm:

Because biblical hope isn't built on possibilities.

It's built on a Person.

It's a hope fulfilled in salvation.

3. HOPE IS FULFILLED IN SALVATION

Simeon sings a song of Hope fulfilled – do you see it there?

Notice Simeon's song of praise:

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, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation.”

Amazing, isn't it? Imagine the joy that filled his heart. All his life he had been waiting—hoping—for this moment when he would see the Lord's Christ with his own eyes.

And this is what hope is: living your life trusting and believing in what you cannot yet see, confident that one day you will.

And for Simeon, that day finally came. Everything he had hoped for became reality in that moment.

Can you imagine looking your hope in the eyes?

I can't help but think about the reality that we share the same hope. [Revelation 22](#) tells us that in the new heaven and new earth:

His servants will worship him. They will see his face.

Just pause and consider that. The wonder Simeon experienced as he held that baby—looking on the salvation he longed for—is the same wonder we will share one day. When he looked at Jesus, he was looking into the face of God.

And that's our hope as well. One day, those who have put their hope in Christ will be renewed, and we will see God face to face. We can't even begin to imagine what that will be like—but it is the hope of our lives.

One day, our faith will become sight.

One day, our hope will be fulfilled.

One day, we will look upon the very One we have longed for and worship Him for all eternity. As the hymn says: *“When we all see Jesus, what a day of rejoicing that will be, when we all see Jesus... we’ll sing and shout the victory.”*

But notice something in Simeon's words. He doesn't say, *“My eyes have seen the Messiah,”* as true as that is. He says, *“My eyes have seen your salvation.”*

Simeon recognized where his hope rested. His hope wasn't just in a person—but in what that Person came to accomplish.

He wasn't merely hoping in the arrival of the Messiah.

He was hoping in the salvation the Messiah would bring.

And if we look at the backdrop of this event, we already see the shadows of what this Messiah is bringing. Notice where this encounter takes place in verses 22–24:

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... and to offer a sacrifice... a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

The Law stated that once a child was born, there were forty days of purification for both mother and child. For those forty days they were considered ceremonially unclean. After that time, the parents were to come to the temple to present the child to the Lord. Every firstborn son was dedicated in this way.

But it wasn't just about presenting the child—there was also a sacrifice that had to be made. An animal had to die for purification and for sin. You would place your hands on that animal as a sign that your guilt and impurity were being transferred, and that animal died in your place so that you could be right with God.

And you see where that's pointing?

It's pointing us forward—toward the One who would take our sin and die in *our* place.

Even here, in the temple courts, you can already see the shadows of the cross falling over the manger.

Now, I know that sounds strange to us—but that was how first-century Jews believed they were made right with God: through laws, rituals, and sacrifices.

And yet, if we're honest, we do the same thing—just in different ways. We may not offer pigeons or lambs, but we still fall into the mindset of *earning* God's favour. We think, "If I'm a good person, if I do good deeds..." Maybe we go as far as, "Well, I try to live out the Ten Commandments or the golden rule, you know just try to be a good person."

Or we think that church attendance adds brownie points to the ledger. Maybe if I pray enough... give enough... do something kind—like pay for the person behind me in the drive-thru or shovel my neighbour's snow—maybe that will tip the scales. Maybe then God will see that I'm a good person.

But then you hear the sobering words of [Psalm 130](#):

***If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
who could stand?***

If God really kept a tally of every sin, every failure, every selfish thought, none of us could stand.

There aren't enough good deeds in a lifetime to satisfy God's righteousness. There isn't enough church attendance, prayer, or generosity to purchase salvation. I cannot make myself right with God by my own effort.

And that's why this baby has come.

This is why Simeon rejoices. This is why he says, "*My eyes have seen your salvation.*"

God has made a way.

This child is the One who will fulfill every righteous requirement of the Law—down to the last detail. That's why He is being offered here in the temple. He is beginning the work that you and I could never complete.

Jesus came and He would grow to be the final sacrifice, the sacrifice to end all sacrifices. The only sacrifice that would take away and purify us from our sin.

Salvation is not found in rituals, traditions and sacrifices. No, salvation is not found doing good deed and being a good person. And salvation is not found in going to church, singing songs, preaching sermons and giving financial offerings. Salvation is found in a person. Salvation is found only in Jesus Christ.

There is salvation in no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

And notice—notice how widespread this salvation is.

This isn't just for Simeon.

It isn't just for Israel.

Listen to his words of his song again:

***My eyes have seen your salvation
that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to your people Israel.***

Simeon is making a staggering claim.

This child—this salvation—has come **for all peoples**.

It's for Israel, yes.

But not only for Israel.

It's a *light for the Gentiles* too.

For the nations.

For the outsiders.

For those who were once far off.

For people who were not looking, not waiting, not part of the covenant family.

This is God throwing the doors of salvation wide open.

And that truth still lands on us today.

Because maybe you're here, and you wonder, "*Is this really for me?*"

- Maybe your background isn't religious.
- Maybe your past is messy.
- Maybe you weren't raised in church.
- Maybe you've wandered far.
- Maybe you feel like an outsider looking in.

And Simeon's song answers that with a resounding:

Yes.

This salvation is for you.

This hope is for you.

This Saviour is for you.

God is not building a kingdom for one nation or one ethnicity.

Not for one class or one group of morally impressive people.

Not for the spiritual elite.

He is building a kingdom from *every tribe and tongue and nation*.

This hope offered through Jesus at Christmas is not the kind of hope the world throws around.

It isn't fleeting.

It isn't empty.

It isn't temporary.

It's a hope you can anchor your soul to.

It's a hope found in a Person—in the Lord Jesus Christ.

That the God who loved this world sent His Son—born in Bethlehem—to restore us back to Himself.

And He does that by dealing with the one thing that separates us from God—our sin.

Jesus came to take it.

Jesus died to forgive it.

Jesus rose to defeat it.

The hope of Christ is a hope in a Person...

a hope in His promises...

a hope that is sure and steady.

And it is a hope that changes us.

It is a hope that looks forward with expectation.

A hope that walks in present faithfulness.

And a hope that finds its fulfillment in salvation.

This is the hope Simeon held.

This is the hope every believer shares.

And this is the hope held out to you today.