

People of Promise  
Simeon  
606 words

## A Finally-Fulfilled Promise

Simeon:  
The Man Who Wouldn't Stop Looking

Luke 2:25-35

Life had been dark and uncomfortable in Israel since the days of Solomon. The nation had gone into captivity; the Greeks, then the Romans, had taken over the Middle East; and in 37 B.C. an Edomite named Herod the Great became Rome's ruler over the Jews in Jerusalem. The glory of Israel's past and the promises of the coming Messiah were just a faint memory, an echo from better days.

Somewhere, sometime during the latter part of this chaotic period—perhaps about 50-60 years before the birth of Christ—a baby was born in Israel named Simeon. We don't know when or how, but “it had been revealed to [Simeon] by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ” (Luke 2:26). Remember—this was on the heels of one of the most discomfiting times in Israel's history. As a result of this promise, Simeon “was waiting for the consolation of Israel” (v. 25). Consolation means “comfort” in Greek, and comes from the same root word used to describe the Holy Spirit who is our “Comforter” or “Helper.” Israel needed help and comfort, to be sure. And Simeon knew that within his lifetime it would come! And that's why Simeon was a man who wouldn't stop looking. It wasn't a question of “if” the promise was true; only a question of “when.”

Everything we read about Simeon indicates that he was advanced in years: his devout lifestyle, his knowledge of the Old Testament, his role in blessing a young couple, his words of exhortation to the parents. It is probably not unreasonable to think he had been clinging for years to the promise given him by the Holy Spirit. Every day when he went to the temple to pray he went with his eyes of faith wide open, wondering, “Could this be the day the Messiah is revealed?” We know his eyes were open wide because he recognized the Messiah when he was a 40 day-old infant (Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple 40 days after his birth in accordance with Leviticus 12:2-8). Had Simeon already made up his mind as to what the Messiah would look like—beard, mid-to-late 30's, Judean accent, sword in hand—he would have missed completely what God wanted him to see.

We never hear of Simeon again, but it's likely that Joseph and Mary never forgot him. Think what his faithfulness meant to them: a prophetic confirmation of what God had called them to, and who their tiny son was—the Messiah of Israel. Because Simeon had not succumbed to the confusion of the times, and because he lived his life with the eyes of his faith wide open, he proved the faithfulness of God not only to himself but to

others. It seems never to have occurred to him that God's promise wouldn't come to pass.

When your world gets confusing or God's promises seem long overdue, think of Simeon:

- Are you living life daily with the eyes of your faith wide open?
- Have you removed your expectations about how his promise will be fulfilled?
- Have you remembered that others' blessings may depend on your faithfulness?

All it takes in a world gone dark is for one "righteous and devout" person to look for, and see, the hand of God at work. The "light for revelation" that Simeon saw—though only 40 days old—was enough to let many in Israel know that God was still at work among his people. You could be the person who sees, and testifies to, the faithfulness of God in your day as well.