

Scottie Alvarez 12-24-2024
CHRISTMAS EVE 2024
PART 4: GOD THE SON

Merry Christmas CVCHURCH! I'm thankful you chose to spend your Christmas Eve with us and to invite your family and friends to our family celebration. I want to welcome our guests who are here with us, in the worship center and online. I hope you feel welcomed as our honored guests, and I hope we may feel almost like extended family to you this afternoon. As we like to say: welcome home. Because our incredible worship team has such an important role in today's celebration, leading us into the presence of Father God, I'm going to jump right in. It's always good when there's more of Jesus and less of me! Today's part 4 of our Christmas series GOD THE SON **[Show God the Son graphic]** that we'll conclude next week. I hope today gives you a little appetizer of how we feast on the Word of God each and every day, and I hope to see you again this coming Sunday, December 29th when we'll conclude our verse-by-verse journey through the Luke chapter 2 account of the Christmas narrative. If you enjoy today, you can watch any of the previous 3 weeks of this series on our **website cvchurch.com** and our **YouTube channel** and **Facebook page**, both **@cvchurchla**. There you'll find the video, transcript, and notes from every Friday and Sunday service. Before we start, let's re-focus on Jesus. He's who we celebrate today. Let's pray: *"Lord Jesus, we quiet our hearts and minds to focus on you. You are the source of our joy and hope. Open our eyes, Father God, to see your Son, Jesus, as our comfort, our restoration, and our healing. We celebrate you as our promised Liberator and Savior. Holy Spirit, lead us to find the one who came to rescue us. Give us faith to choose to follow you, God the Son, our lasting light in this world. In Jesus name, Amen."* Follow me in your notes as I read the 1st of our three passages for today, the Gospel of Luke Ch 2, verses 25-28. As I read, ask yourself: **"How can I apply to my life today the hope of Jesus, God the Son?"** This will allow the Holy Spirit to speak to us about God the Son fulfilling our hopes for rescue, freedom, and restoration. Follow along with **Luke 2:25-28 – The Prophecy of Simeon – 25 At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him 26 and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27 That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, 28 Simeon was there.**" To celebrate God the Son this Christmas, turn to Jesus as your hope in your time of need. Here's your first fill-in in your notes: **I. Jesus REVEALS Himself to those who SEEK.** Our passage today introduces us to Simeon, someone we know little about. **[Show Simeon Image]** This is the only place in the Bible he appears. Some faith traditions call him a rabbi or a priest, but Luke, who we know doesn't waste important details in his Gospel, presents him as a simple layman with no special profession or role. In fact, the name Simeon would've been common in ancient Jerusalem because it's the Old Testament name of one of Abraham's great grandsons. But that's not this Simeon. This Simeon is likely a common elderly man waiting to die. The uncommon thing we know about him is his spiritual condition. He's not wishing for a better future, but actively, patiently, devoutly, confidently expecting the fulfillment of God's ancient Old Testament promise to send

Israel their Messiah to comfort, console, and rescue His people. Simeon, like many in Israel, longed for when God would restore His people and usher a new era of peace. What have you been waiting for? Have they been selfish things? Simeon was waiting on the Messiah! He wasn't going to get to see the full outcome of Jesus. Yet he was still waiting with devotion, trusting God. Have you told God, I quit, I'm ready to die! You've not answered me? Simeon trusted God's promise of a rescuer descended from King David who would restore peace and justice. Simeon was sensitive to the Holy Spirit. He cultivated hearing God's voice by reading His Word. The Spirit tells him he will live to see Jesus. As we listen to this song, "Won't You Come?" imagine Simeon yearning, waiting, calling out to Jesus. **[Song 'Won't You Come']** To those who listen, the Holy Spirit guides, leads, heals, comforts, and reveals Jesus. Through His Spirit, Jesus reveals Himself to those who seek. Do you hear from the Holy Spirit but choose to ignore Him? Or have you drowned the Spirit with addictions, noise, stress, media, distractions? To hear Jesus' Spirit, we read His Word, quiet ourselves, and train our ears to hear. The Holy Spirit has been speaking to many of you. He brought you here today. Simeon heard and responded. He arrives at the Jewish temple in Jerusalem at the very moment Joseph and Mary enter to dedicate Jesus, The Firstborn Son, back to Father God. This 'chance' orchestration is how God's sovereign hand works in the ordinary events of our lives. **[Show Entering Image]** As we listen to this song, "The Carol of Joseph", imagine Simeon as Joseph and Mary enter with baby Jesus. The promise is true! Imagine Simeon receiving supernatural, Holy Spirit insight and empathy into Joseph and Mary's emotions in that moment. **[Song 'The Carol of Joseph']**

Flip back and follow along as I continue with our 2nd section, **Luke 2:28-32 – 28 He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, 29 "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. 30 I have seen your salvation, 31 which you have prepared for all people. 32 He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!"** The next fill-in: **II. Jesus was PREPARED by God for ALL of us.** Joseph and Mary enter with the baby Jesus, and Simeon immediately recognizes Him as the fulfillment of God's promise—to Simeon, to Israel, and to the whole world. Simeon speaks this truth through the power of the Holy Spirit who gives us supernatural discernment and insight. Simeon approaches and holds the baby, an intimate, personal gesture. Joseph and Mary trust Simeon with their 40-day old Messiah! **[Show Lifting Image]** Simeon lifts Jesus above him, and filled with the Holy Spirit, breaks out in praise, known to some of you, who may have grown up Orthodox or Catholic, as the Nunc Dimittis, Latin for "Now, Lord". Simeon proclaims that Jesus is the rescue prepared by God for all people. Joseph and Mary knew their baby was the comforter of Israel, but now Simeon says He's for all of us! Have you accepted that Jesus is for you? He is for you! He's the glory of the Jews and the light of revelation to us non-Jews, the Gentiles! You can boldly approach Jesus today and say, "May I hold Him?" All who heard Simeon that day would've been astonished! Have you ever been in awe and wonder of Jesus? Simeon is. He's so moved that he's ready to die. His life's wait has been worth it. He holds in his arms baby Jesus, God the Son, and praises Father God for sending Him here for you and for me. **[Song 'God the Son']**

Flip back and follow along as I continue with our 3rd and final section: **Luke 2:33-35 – 33 Jesus’ parents were amazed at what was being said about him. 34 Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby’s mother, “This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. 35 As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.”**

Joseph and Mary could’ve brushed off Simeon as a crazy old man, or they could have argued that no, the Messiah is for us Jews, not Gentiles! I was foolish like that when I was a new dad. Instead, they humbly believe Simeon’s prophecy. The final fill-in: **III. Jesus REVEALS our HEARTS.** Simeon blesses Joseph and Mary, and then warns Mary, shockingly foretelling of the fierce opposition Jesus will face, ultimately upon the cross. **[Show Simeon Mary Image]** Simeon’s words to Mary sting, but they’re important for her to hear so she’s not shocked by the hostility to her Son, from Jews and Romans alike. Simeon speaks to only Mary because Joseph would not be alive to witness the hostility to Jesus. The sword piercing Mary’s soul is the anguish she will feel at the rejection and suffering of her Son during His ministry and upon the cross. This is the first moment where the joy of Jesus arriving is tempered by the reality of His mission. Many will oppose Jesus, and many will fall in their opposition, but many others who receive Him, like Simeon does, will rise. Jesus reveals the deepest thoughts of our hearts and minds. Do you oppose Jesus? I did for 28 years of my life. Fortunately, He didn’t give up on me, and He hasn’t given up on you. He says to us in **Matthew 12:30** **“Anyone who isn’t with me opposes me, and anyone who isn’t working with me is actually working against me.”** You can choose to work with Him today. Are you here out of obligation or religious ritual? Simeon, Joseph, and Mary were all in. Jesus offers you a chance today, to say, “Yes, Jesus, I’m all in.” Imagine Mary’s reaction to Simeon’s shocking words about who her brand new baby boy, her Son, God the Son, really is, and what He was sent to do for her, and for us. **[Song ‘Mary Did You Know’]** Simeon knew—and Joseph and Mary discovered that day—that Jesus came to die for us, to take our rebellion and our rejection of God upon Himself so that we could be cleansed of everything that fills us with shame and separates us from Father God. Jesus died so that we could be restored. That’s the reality of Christmas that you won’t hear in a jingle or see in a marketing campaign. All the money in the world can’t buy it, because it’s free, and it’s the reality of your and my eternity. Jesus offers to cleanse us and give us eternity with Him when we choose to follow Him. For Simeon, this truth was eternal hope. He was ready to die because He met Jesus. If you’d like to meet Jesus, you can. If you choose to follow Jesus as God the Son today, pray with me: *“Jesus, we declare that you are God the Son. Like Simeon, we receive your rescue and your consoling. Lord, fill us with the same Holy Spirit that led Simeon to find you. Just like Simeon held you as the embodiment of God’s promise, we choose to embrace you as our Savior and Lord. Inspire us, like Simeon, to declare your Good News of salvation to all people. Empower us to reflect your rescue of us to those around us. In your name, Jesus, Amen.”* If you prayed that prayer with me, please let me know on your friends card or see me out back after service. I’m here to help you with resources for your journey following Jesus. Here’s Pastor Scott & Kathe to lead us in the candle lighting.