

## Getting Started

- What is the longest amount of time you waited for something promised to come to pass? What did you do during that time to maintain your faith that it really would happen?
- The prophet Isaiah foretold the coming of the promised Messiah more than 700 years before His birth (Is 9:6-7). Simeon was a righteous and devout man of God who was waiting for the Messiah and it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die until he saw the Messiah (Luke 2:25-26). If you were Simeon, how do you think you would approach each day as you waited for this amazing promise to be fulfilled?
- As you read through the Christmas story in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2, who is your favorite character and why?

## Discussion

Read Luke 2:22-35 ...

- What do we know about Simeon from this passage?
- Why were Mary and Joseph bringing Jesus to the Temple at this time? The Law required that the baby was to be circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day (Lev 12:3) but also for the parents to present their firstborn to God 33 days later and to bring an offering for Mary's purification after childbirth (Ex 13:2, 12, Lev 12:1-8). What can we learn about Mary and Joseph from this passage?
- When Simeon sees Jesus, he picks up the baby and immediately praises God. There are three hymns of thanksgiving and praise recorded in Luke 1:46-55, 68-79 and 2:29-32. As you read these, notice the deep significance of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus for the salvation of Israel and the world.

Simeon noted that the Messiah was to be for the Gentiles as well as for Israel.

*Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for 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." (Luke 2:29-32)*

- Luke writes that Mary and Joseph "marveled" at what was said about their son. (2:33). What do you think may have been going through their mind? Then Simeon shares these difficult words ...

*And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:34-35)*

These statements and those of Isaiah in Isaiah 53 are fulfilled through Jesus at the cross. May we never forget the connection between Jesus birth and the cross.

"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

- Two last thoughts ...

Five times in this passage the phrase “according to the law” is used (v. 22, 23, 24, 27, 39). What is the significance of this as it relates to this story and Mary and Joseph?

In 2:39 they return to Galilee to their own home town of Nazareth, poor, obedient, yet with Jesus. Take time to thank the Lord that you are home with Jesus this Christmas as well.

*“We long for home because God has placed in us a longing for the home He has made for us.” – Pastor Lee*

## **Prayer**

Pray through one or more of the hymns recorded in Luke 1-2 and thank the Lord for His indescribable gift of Jesus!