

December 29, 2024

Salvation Is for Everyone

Dr. Josh Mathews writes of his introduction to Simeon: “Growing up we had a record called *The Glory of Christmas*, which, . . . I remember as a delightful musical retelling of the events surrounding Jesus’ birth. Before the days of iTunes and playlists, we had this album on repeat on the record player for several of my childhood Christmases.” Dr. Mathews, a dean and professor at Western Seminary in Oregon, says they played the record so much that it began to skip in places, including when the narrator got to the part about Simeon, which they let skip over and over. “This . . . was almost as much a part of our holiday festivities as Christmas morning stockings, manger scenes, and going to grandma and grandpa’s house. It was a Christmas tradition.”¹

But Dr. Mathews says that Simeon is more than a nostalgic character from the Advents of his youth: “Simeon, as he is portrayed in Luke 2:22–35, is a wonderful character with multiple layers of significance, not only to Luke’s unfolding narrative, but also for us today.”² The story of Simeon is a profound reminder of the fulfillment that comes through Jesus’ birth. Simeon, a devout and righteous man, had spent his life waiting for the promised Messiah. Guided by the Holy Spirit, he encountered the infant Jesus in the Temple and declared, “Now, master, let your servant go in peace according to your word, because my eyes have seen your salvation. You prepared this salvation in the presence of *all peoples*. It’s a light for revelation to the Gentiles and a glory for your people Israel” (verses 30-32, emphasis added). In that moment, Simeon experienced the joy and peace of knowing God’s promise was fulfilled—not just for him, but for all people.

The birth of Jesus is more than a historical event; it is the foundation of our salvation and hope. Jesus’ arrival signals God’s faithfulness to those promises made to us and God’s unwavering love for humanity. Dr. Mathews writes, “[Simeon] was waiting for eschatological comfort, salvation, and revelation, promised in Isaiah and through all the Hebrew Scriptures.”³ And once Simeon saw Jesus, the waiting was over. Simeon’s response to seeing Jesus inspires us to consider how we recognize and celebrate God’s work in our lives. Do we allow the birth of Christ to bring us the same joy, peace, and sense of fulfillment?

As we reflect on the birth of our Savior, we are reminded that salvation is for everyone. Jesus came to bring light to the world, bridging divides and extending grace to all who seek Him. Like Simeon, we are called to recognize the significance of Christ’s birth and to share His light and love with those around us. This Christmas season, let us find fulfillment in the hope, joy, and peace that come from the knowledge that God’s promises are true and that salvation has come to us in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Mathews writes, “The Lord’s Messiah has come to comfort and save his people. Like Simeon, we rejoice in his coming, during Advent season and all throughout the year. And like Simeon, we long for the day when he will come again.”⁴

1. How does Simeon’s patience inspire you to wait on God’s timing?

2. How does knowing that God's salvation is for everyone affect how you engage with others?
3. Think about God's promises to you. Which ones have you seen fulfilled in your life, and how has that encouraged you?

¹⁻⁴From "The Significance of Simeon," by Dr. Josh Mathews, Western Seminary (December 23, 2015).

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