

# 25 Days of Advent

## Seeing Jesus Through the Eyes of the Christmas Story Characters

### ADVENT DAY 15: Dec. 15 – Simeon, the Elder

#### Devotional

Unlike most popular versions of the Nativity story, Luke's doesn't end at the manger, and the three Magi do not appear. Instead, like any Jewish newborn of the day, Jesus is circumcised eight days later and is presented at the Temple in Jerusalem (Luke 2:21–22). At this occasion, a devout man named Simeon rejoices to see the Messiah and gives a prophecy concerning him (Luke 2:29–32).

Who is this Simeon character that just appears from the shadows into the Gospel story? Luke only included one thing about Simeon – he was “righteous and devout,” waiting for the consolation of Israel (the Messiah). Simeon was a faithful follower of God.

God revealed to Simeon that he would not see death until he beheld the Lord's Christ (Luke 2:26), the comforter of Israel who would fulfill all the promises of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants, the One who would bring both personal and national salvation. Simeon counted the days until God revealed what he had promised to him personally.

We don't know how long Simeon waited, but we do know that he was led by the Spirit to go to the temple that day, and he recognized Jesus the moment he saw Him.

Imagine the scene in the temple that day. An old man, stooped and praying, coming often to the temple expecting to see the Messiah. He was probably seen as an eccentric, the one we make jokes about – you know the ones we roll our eyes at?

Simeon, and generations before him, waited for the coming of the One who would console God's people. But unlike those around him, Simeon still believed God would save His people. He believed the promise of a coming Servant-King, the son of David threaded throughout the law and the prophets. He may not have understood everything he read, but he knew enough to believe. Simeon knew enough to listen to the Holy Spirit's whisper and was more in tune with God than the scholars who were paid to study and the scribes who were paid to teach.

And then the day came...the day he would finally meet his Savior. In this child Simeon saw the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people down through the centuries, and he was overjoyed.

Simeon's own name comes from a word that means “to hear intelligently.” And he is portrayed as deliberately listening to God's Spirit. We are told that the Holy Spirit rested on him (v. 25), the Holy Spirit showed things to him (v. 26), and the Holy Spirit moved him (v. 27).

The outcome of Simeon's listening is one of the most tender scenes in Scripture: Simeon enters the temple to discover Mary and Joseph with their newborn. Then he picks up baby Jesus (v. 28). He has the distinction of being the only person in the Bible who we are explicitly told held the Christ child in his arms.

In that act, he provided a striking visual of not just meeting Jesus but receiving Him unto himself. As Simeon gazed into the brand-new eyes of the Ancient of Days, Christ for him went from being “God with us” to “God with me.” Nothing outwardly about Simeon’s life had changed, yet he told God he could die in peace (Luke 2:29). His inner disquiet had been calmed by Christ, and his soul was at rest.

There is so much to learn from Simeon’s life. His perseverance, his attentive listening to God in a cynical age, his worship of the baby Jesus. But what is most important about Simeon was his relationship with Jesus. Simeon could die not because he’d checked off all the right religious boxes or performed all the outward rituals of the Jewish faith, but because he put his faith in the God-man.

We all should do the same.

## Look Up – Connect with God

**Read:** Luke 2:22-35

**Key Verse:** “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.” (Luke 2:26)

**Pray:** Father God, what a tremendous and encouraging story of faith. Give us Simeon’s perseverance, teach us to listen to you as attentively as Simeon did. We love you Lord and we worship you.

## Look In – Family Memories

**Discuss:** Talk about how in times of waiting it helps to remember the promises God made and the times He fulfilled those promises. Come up with one or two ideas for practicing attentive listening in your family and share those experiences with God as you invite Him to hone this skill in all your lives.

### **Activity:**

- Advent Tree: make or select an ornament of praying hands and put it on the tree. [Download Ornaments](#) or [Ornament Ideas](#)
- Advent Garland: put the key verse on a paper/card, assign #15, and attach it to the garland twine. [Key Verses](#)
- Advent Cards: select a card and see what the activity might be (i.e., wrap Christmas gifts). [Family Activities](#)

## Look Out – Connect with Others

Reach out to senior citizens in your church, neighborhood or family and ask them to share stories of times they waited expectantly for something they treasured. Listen to how they did it and what the outcome was. Learn from their experiences. If the opportunity arises, share your faith with them and talk about Simeon and the reason you’re asking for their wisdom.