

²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
 you now dismiss your servant in peace.
³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
 and for glory to your people Israel.” (NIV 84)

Theme: God Acts According to His Word

1. We have seen his Salvation
2. We now have peace

Promises. You have made plenty of them. “I promise to take out the trash. I promise to finish that report right after lunch. I promise to be faithful to you as long as we both shall live. I promise to continue in the word after my confirmation. I promise I will come to church more often.” Some promises we keep and many others we don’t. Is the problem in the promise itself, or is it in the person who keeps the promise?

We are the only ones who make promises. God also makes many promises. But the difference is that God always keeps his promises. God acts according to his Word. And because this is the case we have seen his salvation and we have peace.

The song we are looking at this evening is a little bit different than the others we have looked at. The other two songs took place before Jesus was born. They are true advent texts—because they are before Christ’s coming. But today’s text took place after Jesus was born. Today we are looking at the song of an old man named Simeon. This song is sometimes referred to by the first two words of its Latin translation, the *Nunc Dimittis*. And like we do during advent, he waited for the Savior to be born. In fact, God came to Simeon and gave him an astounding promise. Luke tells us about this promise, **it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ**. We don’t know why God decided to make this promise. We are told that Simeon was a **righteous and devout man**, but it’s not as if God owed him anything. God decided to give this promise to Simeon strictly out of his grace.

Because God was the one who gave Simeon this promise, Simeon knew that it was going to come true. And so he waited. And soon he was an old man. And even though he waited for years, he never doubted God’s promise. He knew the promises God made to send a Savior to Abraham and all his descendant. He himself was promised by God. So he knew that God would send a Savior. And he knew that he would see that Savior. And one day the Holy Spirit led him to go to the Temple.

Unlike Simeon we don’t always trust God’s promises. You may doubt God’s word from time to time. You have been waiting for a long time for Christ to come. And you wonder if he is going to come at all. You are going through a hard time in your life. And you begin to question if God is really watching over you. You have committed some horrible sins lately. And you doubt that God can really forgive you for what you have done.

When Simeon was at the Temple that one day he saw a couple walk in. They had a baby with them. It was about 40 days after the baby was born and they took him to the temple to present him before the Lord. When Simeon saw them he knew right away who the baby was. God revealed to him that this baby was the long awaited Savior. The one Israel had waited for, for thousands of years was born. The one God promised to send Simeon that made him grow so old, was finally here. Once again God kept his promises. Just like Simeon knew he would. And we know that God keeps his promises too. He will come again soon, he does watch over us, and his death did pay for all the sins we have ever committed.

When Simeon saw Jesus he took him in his arms and burst out into song. He had to give praise to God for keeping his promises. Listen to one of the reasons Simeon praise God, **now I have seen your salvation**. Simeon knew that God was fulfilling his plan of salvation. God was putting into effect what he had promised to do long ago. The plan involved sending his son to live as a human here on this sin-filled earth. Simeon knew that this baby, named Jesus, would grow up to live a perfect life for us. He would die on the cross as he took all our sins upon himself. And three days later he would rise from the dead. Through Jesus’ perfect life, innocent suffering and death, and through

his resurrection we are saved. Our sins have been removed and we will live with him in heaven forever.

We have been promised God's plan for salvation. And we have seen his plan of salvation. And it includes God, not us. He does all the work. We don't have to do anything. It's his plan, not our plan. Now we would pay a lot of money to see our favorite athlete up close. Or perhaps wait in line to get a glimpse of our favorite celebrity. But we don't have to give up anything to see Christ. We can't do anything to be near him. Salvation means that we will live in heaven, next to Christ forever. We will be with our Savior for eternity, not because of anything we have done, but only because of Jesus.

Simeon knew this was all true. He knew that he couldn't do anything to be saved, he needed the Savior God promised to send him. He saw the one promised. And that gave him peace. He had peace because he knew that his sins were forgiven. That it didn't matter what he did wrong. That baby would remove all of his sins. He had peace knowing that he was going to live in heaven forever. He was going to be next to his Savior in eternity.

So he asked God to take him from this life. He asks God, as recorded in our hymnal, **Now you let your servant depart in peace, according to your word.** Now that God has fulfilled his promise, Simeon wants to go home. He wants to leave this world of tears. And live with God forever. So he wants to leave this world in peace. He wants to peacefully pass on to a better place.

Because we have known Christ we too have peace. We have peace knowing that all our sins have been paid for. Peace knowing that God does not treat us as our sins deserve. But that he removed our sins as far as east is from the west. This peace we have not a vain peace. It is not the lack of war—like peace in the Middle East. It is not the peace of mind knowing that a big mistake you made at work has been covered up by someone else. It is not peace and quiet. It is the peace of forgiveness. It is peace knowing that Christ shed his blood on the cross for you. It is peace knowing that you are not a sinner in God's eyes, but now you are pure and innocent. It is the peace of not living in this sin-filled world anymore. It is peace living a perfect and holy life forever in heaven.

The fact that Christ died for all people also gives us peace. Simeon sings that salvation was **prepared in the presence of all peoples.** When Jesus finally came, he didn't hide himself. He didn't preach the gospel in secret. But he came for all and preached to all. He shined a light on our dark hearts. And he made us see his way of salvation. And most importantly, Christ died for all. Jews and Gentiles alike. We don't have to wonder if we are those whom Christ died for—as if he died for some, but not others. For when he was on the cross he took the sins of the whole world upon himself.

And because Christ died for all, we know that we will live with him in heaven forever. We will live in glory. No longer we will live in a world full of pain and toil and sin. We won't have to worry about growing old. Or losing our strength. But we will have God's glory. For it was won for us by the one he promised.

We make all sorts of promises. Some are small promises, others have rather large implications. Some we keep, some we have no chance of fulfilling. God, however, makes promises much more far-reaching than ours. And he keeps every single one of them. He acts according to his word. Because we know that God keeps all of his promises we know that Jesus is coming soon. He will come to save us and give us eternal peace. Amen.