

# THE FIRST 15

Wednesday, December 25, 2024

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Today is December 25, Christmas Day. We celebrate the birth of God's Son, Jesus Christ. We study the song of Simeon recorded in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

## OPENING PRAYER

*Blessed and holy Lord, in the early morning of a dawning December day, I seek Your presence. As I complete my Advent journey and celebrate the birth of Your Son Jesus Christ, my heart overflows with love and joy. In these busy days, I find a few moments of stillness. I slow my breathing, quiet my mind and prepare my heart to reflect on the message of Simeon, a prophet of old. I listen for the message You have for me today. Amen.*

## SCRIPTURE

***Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Luke 2:28-33***

## REFLECTION

The Songs of Christmas are often identified by their Latin names. Mary's Song is called the *Magnificat*, for her opening words that her soul "magnifies" the Lord. Zechariah's Song is called the *Benedictus*, for the words, *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel* or "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." The Angel's Song is known as *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*, meaning "glory to God in the highest." Today we study Simeon's Song, known as the *Nunc Dimittis* - which comes from Simeon's opening phrase, "Now let your servant depart in peace."

All the songs focus on peace and salvation. All the songs declare that the birth of this child is good news. All the songs proclaim that God's covenant promises are realized in the baby Jesus. Simeon's song takes things quite a bit further, however. Simeon extends this good news beyond Israel, to all people, to everyone, even the Gentiles. This is God's salvation for humanity in its broadest scope.

Simeon utters the first declaration of the vastness of God's plan for salvation. This is big news! No one was to be excluded in God's plan. The offer is for all people, in all times and all places. Every continent. Every nation. Every tongue. Every tribe. Every generation. God's offer of salvation is for the young and the old. The rich and the poor. The wise and the foolish. For you and for me. For our sons and our daughters. Our children and grandchildren.

As John told us in his Gospel, "For God so loved the world, He gave His only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16). *Whoever* believes in Him. Will you believe this Christmas? Will you peer into the manger and recognize the greatest gift ever

given? Will you see the Christ Child for who He is and what He means to You? Will you tell someone?

**Ask:** How can I come to the manger this Christmas and truly behold the Christ Child? How can I open my heart to receive Jesus anew this Christmas? How can I share the good news?

**Pause and Pray**

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Holy and loving God, thank you for the faithful service of Simeon, who waited patiently for Your promises to be fulfilled and recognized Jesus as the promised Messiah. As the Holy Spirit led Simeon to hold the tiny baby in his hands and opened his eyes to the truth of salvation, may the Holy Spirit guide me to find Jesus and open my eyes to the glorious gift of my salvation. May the Holy Spirit lead me to share the news of Jesus with another. Come, Lord Jesus, be born in my heart anew this Christmas. Amen.*