

Christmas Revelation

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 28 December 2025

Preacher: Jonathan de Groot

[0 : 00] Well, it's a New York Times bestselling book and it's called 1000 Places to See Before You Die! So you can discover the travel destination of your dreams.

And this book 1000 Places to See Before You Die says it will guide you through tropical rainforests, through historic cities, through pristine beaches and breathtaking vistas.

And it says that you can ski through fresh powder in the towering Western Australian Alps. Never knew there was snow in Australia, but there you go. You can stroll through the winding streets of the hilltop villages bordering the Aegean Sea.

You can trek through Mount Kenya National Park. You can dance samba at the carnival celebration in Rio de Janeiro. Ever wanted to do any of those things?

Well, I wonder what your dream is of what you would want to do before you die. This book 1000 Places to See Before You Die also comes with an accompanying calendar.

[1 : 04] Just to rub in the fact that you aren't in the place of your dreams doing what you would love to be doing. Instead, you're stuck in Glasgow and you're soaked in the rain or you're looking at the rain as it beats against your window.

And it's basically a book that is saying there are some things that we reckon you need to do before you die. Some things that you need to see. So just think, what would actually be on your list?

What would you want to see before you die? You can tell me afterwards. Well, in our Bible reading from Luke chapter 2, we're introduced to this man called Simeon.

And Simeon just had one thing on his list. Only one thing for him to see before he died. And it was to see God's salvation.

And so as Simeon held the baby Jesus in his arms, he said to him, or he sang to him, For my eyes have seen your salvation.

[2 : 05] Salvation in a baby. Salvation in a person. Salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. And so Simeon's words form part of this song, which we call Simeon's Song, which is part of this Christmas playlist that Luke has recorded for us to hear and to listen to.

Just remember how he narrates the birth of Jesus with all of these different songs. And they are the original and the best Christmas songs, because what they do is they proclaim the true message of Christmas to the world.

Now, Simeon's Song is known in Latin as the nunc dimittis, which means, as you know, now you let depart or now dismiss.

And it's given that title because the Latin translation of the first few words of the song is now dismiss your servant in peace.

Nunc dimittis, now depart. So Simeon, we're told, is ready to die. Ready to die because he had now seen God's salvation.

[3 : 15] God's salvation wrapped up in the baby Jesus. So he knew it. He'd seen it. Now he could die in peace. And so Christmas, according to Simeon, reveals God's salvation.

And so we're being told in these verses that Jesus brings God's salvation to us. That's the good news of Christmas. And so if we're going to make sense of Christmas, if we're even going to make sense of life itself, then the crucial question that we each need to respond to is, well, what is my response to God's gift to the world of the Lord Jesus Christ?

What's my response? Because Simeon's words also tell us that Christmas reveals our hearts. Look at verse 35. So that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

So God reveals Jesus, and then the coming of Jesus reveals our hearts. And so I'd like us this afternoon just to look at these two simple points. We'll consider them.

God reveals his salvation. And then secondly, his salvation reveals our hearts. God reveals his salvation. What we must see, recognize, listen to, and then secondly, what we must respond to. [4 : 41] If God has done this, then what's our response to it? So firstly, God reveals his salvation. And we see this clearly in Simeon's song. So what prompted Simeon to sing this song?

Well, the context here is that Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem. So this is after Jesus has been born, and they present Jesus to the Lord God according to the law of Moses. And the law says every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord. And that's where Simeon comes in. And he's not exactly one of the better-known characters of the Christmas story. Is he Simeon? He never comes up in any nativity play. Maybe he's got more of this kind of supporting role. And that may be the case. But we can't miss what Simeon says about God's salvation.

Now, of course, we normally like to think of Christmas with warm, cozy, sentimental feelings, chestnuts roasting in an open fire, and all of that stuff. And this nice version, this sanitized version of Christmas, does fit with all the nostalgia.

[5 : 53] It is a sweet scene, Jesus being born. But Simeon is singing about salvation for the world. Now, salvation, as you know, is a word that speaks of saving, and it speaks of delivering.

And so it's highlighting for us the reality that we are in danger if we need to be saved. And so whatever else we like to think or feel at Christmas time, the coming of Jesus into this world is fundamentally a rescue mission.

Jesus is the Savior who came to save people in need of rescue. Which means that if we miss the salvation that Jesus came to bring, then we'll be lost forever.

And so at Christmas time, we should never miss this salvation story amongst all the tinsel, the trees, the turkeys, the toys, the traditions, and the time of work.

Because as Simeon sings this song, he wants to tell us, Jesus gives you salvation. And so as we read about Simeon, what do we know about him?

[7 : 11] Well, it tells us that he is righteous and devout, and that he was waiting for the consolation of Israel. In other words, here is Simeon, an older man, who has been waiting for a long time for God to deliver his people.

His longing was for God's salvation to be revealed. So centuries before, God had promised his salvation would come. And Simeon had waited his whole life for God to console this hurting world by sending his Messiah, his King.

And so Simeon had this longing deep inside him, that in fact is deep inside every human being, to see this world put to right, to see things sorted out, to see the reason and the point and the purpose for our existence.

And so the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he wouldn't die until he had seen God's Messiah with his own eyes, the one who would bring God's salvation.

And that was the one and only thing that Simeon had on his bucket list, so that he would be satisfied. When he had seen the Messiah, the Savior, he could die, he could go.

[8 : 32] And so when Mary and Joseph were in the temple, Simeon was moved by the Holy Spirit to perceive this child's identity. And that's why he took Jesus in his arms and he sang, verse 29, Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace, for my eyes have seen your salvation.

He'd seen God's salvation. God's salvation had arrived. It had arrived in this baby, who he held in his arms, the baby Jesus.

And so now that God had revealed his salvation and Simeon had seen it, his life was ready to end. Can you imagine that feeling that you're just ready to go?

You're ready to die. You've had enough of this life. You've seen enough of this life. You can contentedly die now. That's how Simeon was feeling.

Because he had seen the very key, the very purpose, the very meaning of life. And so he was ready to go. There's nothing more Simeon needed to see or to do in his life.

[9 : 44] Because he had met the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. He had seen that God had moved his great salvation plan onto its next phase in the coming of Jesus.

So all of this Old Testament promise about Jesus Christ coming, the Messiah coming, was now being fulfilled in this baby he held in his arms.

And that's why Simeon continues to sing, 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.

So the salvation that Simeon sings about is for all people, for Jews and for Gentiles. For the Gentiles, he says, Jesus is a light for revelation.

They didn't have all of the Old Testament promises, the Gentiles, but God would reveal to them that Jesus was the one who would save them. And so Jesus coming opens up the way of salvation wide for all people, for all nations.

[10 : 56] And also for God's people Israel, he says, Jesus is glory. So the coming of Jesus fulfills all of these promises that God gave to his people over hundreds and hundreds of years.

And so Jesus didn't just come to reveal God's salvation to Israel, God's people, but to Gentiles, everybody else, including you and me.

And so what does this mean? Well, it means to see Jesus Christ is to see God's salvation. God's light and revelation and glory are found in the person of Jesus, which indicates to us that salvation is found in no one else, in nothing else except Jesus Christ.

So it doesn't matter what your religion is, what country you come from, what your background is, what your achievements are, whether you consider yourself to be a spiritual person or a seeker or a skeptic, Christmas tells us Jesus is the only source of salvation for human beings in this world.

So for every single person who has ever lived, the only hope we have is in Jesus Christ and his salvation.

[12 : 24] But you might be asking, well, why do we need salvation? What do we need to be saved from? The story of the Bible essentially tells us we need to be saved from our sin because our sin will take us to hell, which is eternal separation from God.

It is death and destruction in a spiritual sense, no going back. And so sin is just like a deadly disease that infects everybody.

But we don't catch it like we might catch the coronavirus. We're born with it. It's part of our human nature. It's our condition. Our nature is a sinful nature.

And the symptoms of this sinful nature are seen in how we live our lives, in our thoughts, and in our words, and in our actions, and in the desires of our hearts.

But most of all, in our attitude towards the God who made us. Our human sin is the source of everything that is wrong with this world.

[13 : 33] And it is also what alienates us from God. We're at enmity with God because of our sin and so we deserve His punishment.

And that's why we need salvation. And that's why God sent His Son, Jesus, into this world so that He could bring this salvation to us.

to us. Because there's no way that any of us can be in God's presence unless our sin is dealt with. And so the wonderful news of Christmas is that God wants to forgive our sins so we can receive His salvation.

Well, how do we receive it? Just look at Simeon's closing words to Mary because they give us a clue. Verse 33 to 35. The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, this child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed and a sword will pierce your own soul too.

[14 : 46] Now, Simeon is talking to Mary about this child's future destiny. And so he could look Mary in the eye and say, a sword will pierce your own soul too.

What does he mean? Well, he's saying that this child would cause Mary so much pain and suffering and sorrow. And the deepest sorrow would be that Mary would watch her son die on a cross.

And it would be like a sword piercing her soul. So God's salvation would come at great personal cost to her. But it would be at even greater cost to Jesus who was born to die.

Who came down to lay down his life as a sacrifice for our sin so that from his earliest days Simeon's words are pointing to the shadow of the cross falling over Jesus' life even as a baby.

Because that's how God would accomplish his great salvation plan. That's how Jesus would fulfill his rescue mission. He came in order to die.

[16 : 03] Let me just try and illustrate one of the most horrifying stories in the news in recent weeks was the Bondi Beach Shooting in Sydney, Australia.

And if you've seen it on the news or you've watched any of the clips or footage there's one where there is a couple a heroic couple they're trying to stop one of the gunmen from killing people. And so they attempt to disarm him to grab his gun off him and pull it out of his hands but of course tragically they were shot and killed in the process.

And according to all of the people who witnessed and then told the news reporters what had happened there was no doubt in their minds that this couple had lost their lives trying to save the lives of the other people.

And that's why Jesus was born into this world because we can't save ourselves and so Jesus had to take on our human nature so he could die for us to sacrifice his life in place of ours.

[17 : 11] Jesus endured God's punishment for our sin at the cross so we could be saved from it. And so what is your response to this great thing that God has done for us?

Because first God reveals his salvation but secondly God's salvation reveals our hearts. Did you hear what else Simeon told Mary?

Let's read it again in verse 34 and 35. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother this child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be spoken against so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed.

So while God reveals his salvation to all people it doesn't mean that everybody receives the salvation he offers.

Simeon makes it very clear here that Jesus divides people. Jesus is the cause of everyone that's everyone who has ever lived either falling or rising.

[18 : 23] So Jesus is divisive. Jesus polarizes people and so right from the moment of his birth and then throughout his life people stood in bitter opposition to Jesus despising him even trying to kill him.

And so Simeon's words sung so long ago and written for us by Luke are true and are amplified in the life of Jesus and in the message of the whole Bible because for some Jesus will mean they're rising.

For others Jesus will mean they're falling. Some will be for Jesus and will rise. Others will be against Jesus and will fall. Some people will accept Jesus other people will reject Jesus.

People have always been divided in their response to Jesus Christ. And so it shouldn't be surprising that we see this today because we're told this is what it would be like when he was born.

And so the coming of Jesus causes great disturbance. Great disturbance in our world but also great disturbance in every single human heart. Because we're being told you can't actually sit on the fence when it comes to Jesus Christ.

[19 : 49] You will either turn away from him because you can't stand him or you can't stand his claims over your life or you will be drawn towards him attracted to him because you know that you need him.

And that's why your response to Jesus ultimately reveals your heart. Our response to Jesus exposes our true self before God.

Jesus is God's litmus test as it were. Revealing where we stand in relation to God and to his salvation. Proving whether we have really grasped our need for it.

How can we tell? Well, the answer will be in my personal response to Jesus. In my heart, am I aware of the problem of my sin against God and the punishment it deserves?

And am I trusting in Jesus as my only savior? Because in revealing his salvation to us, God is calling us to stop all our own attempts at salvation and to receive his in Jesus.

[21 : 03] Because every human being has a self salvation attempt. But our own attempts at trying to save ourselves or fulfill ourselves will never work.

And so there's no way we can find acceptance with God if we refuse Jesus Christ. Because basically every human being is trying to save themselves. So the life we choose for ourselves or the life we choose to live is our own self salvation project where we look to ourselves as our savior and as our own lord and we believe that we have got what it takes to obtain the salvation that we so desperately desire.

That with our strength we can manage to achieve the power the peace the purpose that we seek and yet everything will ultimately fail us whether it be we look for salvation in our job or in a relationship or in wealth or money or position or power or success or whatever it may be whatever thing we have up there and think if only I could achieve that my life would be perfect but the point is

it will never give us what we long for it can never give us the security that we crave And it will never ultimately satisfy the deepest desires of our hearts because none of it was ever supposed to that's not how God had wired us as good as all of these things are they will never give us what we really need and want everything will let us down in the end and even punish us when we fail and yet Jesus is the only saviour who not only gives us what we need the forgiveness of our sins but he's the only saviour who forgives us when we fail and that's why Christmas points to salvation in Jesus Christ because Christianity tells us that we are saved not by our own efforts not by anything we can do but by Jesus effort we're saved not through our own performance however good that performance may be but by Jesus Christ's performance on the cross his work on our behalf and that's why God's salvation is a gift that must be received it's never something we can earn and so Christmas really is good news because it tells us God is not distant from us God has come to save us to welcome us to himself right now but for all eternity and his gracious offer is for us to come in and to be saved whoever we are and whatever we have done so as we close turns out there's just one thing you need to see before you die only one and it is salvation in Jesus Christ and so the question is well have you seen it yet because God has clearly revealed his salvation to us and so have you received it yet whether we have or haven't will reveal the true state of our heart and so just as Simeon was moved by the Holy Spirit to find Jesus and to take him in the temple all those years ago we still have the opportunity to find Jesus and take Jesus today and so as one year ends and a new year approaches what better time to receive Jesus God's salvation than right now there can't be a better time to embrace Jesus as your savior and as your lord he is the savior of the world that's what

[25 : 25] Christmas tells us and so is he your savior let's pray you you you