

Are You Still in the Dark?

By Bob Young

In the first century, many Jews were waiting for the coming of the Messiah. In Luke 2, Simeon was waiting for the “comfort of Israel” to come. With good reason! The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would see the Messiah come before his death.

Simeon was in the temple in the spirit (or, in the Spirit) when Jesus’ parents brought Jesus to the temple. Simeon recognized that his wait was over. Simeon took the child and blessed God, “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

As Joseph and Mary marveled, Simeon continued, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel....so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

At that exact moment, Anna arrived, giving thanks to God, and speaking about him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

The Greek word that is translated **waiting** combines a root verb and a prefix – “waiting patiently” catches the meaning. Simeon had a timeline: before his death. Some were waiting impatiently because the situation of the Jews was *only* worsening. When would comfort, hope, and redemption come? A second word easily escapes notice. **Light** has come, revealing truth to the Gentiles and glory to Israel. The light of salvation has come.

No more waiting patiently (or impatiently). No more uncertainty. God has acted. Simeon is certain. Anna is certain. The King has come, Lord, Savior. God with us. Light, life. The great Messianic prophecy of Isaiah 9 is being fulfilled: ***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:2).***

Now we can know. Full of glory and truth, for Israel, for the world. No more patient waiting for God to act. That is the declaration of the Simeon/Anna story.

So why do we struggle to see the kingdom of God? Be assured that we are not alone! The headlines focus on the suffering and brokenness in our world. We wonder if our meager efforts in sharing the gospel make any difference. Perhaps we need to shift our focus and address head-on the suffering, poverty, disaster, hunger, and disease.

The Incarnation of Christ declares that the waiting is over. Salvation has come, light, redemption, truth, glory. In the Incarnation, light overcomes darkness. Light illuminates the darkness and lets us see clearly God’s purpose in this world. Those who walk in darkness will see the great light!

Hear the rest of the story, the entire story. Christ came into the darkness to shine light, to declare good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty, to make visible the kingdom of God (Luke 4; Isaiah 61).

Jesus will come again. We are waiting—but the Hebrew writer uses a different word, different prefixes. Anticipatory waiting, waiting expectantly.

Do not doubt! The gospel of Christ, preached, obeyed, lived out daily by Christ-followers around the world continues to reflect light into the darkness, declaring the presence and reality of the kingdom of God in our lost, broken, and suffering world. Why do you wait? (Acts 22:16). (Luke uses another Greek word, ***mello***). Why are you constantly living in “about to” mode? Why are you always getting ready but never acting. In Jesus, we declare that the kingdom of God is here! Act accordingly! Now!

More than ever, our world needs a light in the darkness. LALD and our partners seek diligently to shine the light of Christ into a lost world. You can be a light in the darkness by giving people hope that the kingdom really is advancing.