

Advent, Day 21
Read Luke 2:21-39

Saturday, December 22

“...for my eyes have seen your salvation...” Luke 2:30

SEEING IS BELIEVING

“If I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes, I never would have believed it!”

That statement usually follows upon telling about something that happened that was so fantastic that it stretches the imagination or defies belief.

- the miracle end to a big game
- a feat of strength or courage that leaves you gaping and awe-struck
- being given the chance to see something happen about which you have hoped and dreamed, but which you never really thought to be possible
- seeing something heroic

If you had only been told about it, you might question the veracity of the one telling the story, but because you, yourself, were a witness, now you have to acknowledge how fantastic the story seems, but convince them that it really happened just that way.

Simeon and Anna were a couple of fixtures at the temple. They were there every day. You could set your schedule by their appearances for prayer. Every day they were there. Every day you could find them praying. And their prayers were always the same,

“Lord our God, King of the Universe, how long must we wait for your Messiah? How long until our Savior comes to us?”

It was the fervent hope for many in Israel. But the longer they had to wait, the less likely it seemed that it would ever happen. There was a tradition that every male child who was presented at the temple for dedication had the potential for being the One.

So every day, Simeon and Anna would look into the faces of the children that were brought by their parents for the ritual cleansing and dedication. Any boy might be the one they sought.

The moment he held Jesus, Simeon knew.

But when he looked into the child’s face, he saw so much more than he had bargained to see. As soon as he looked into the face of Jesus his spirit was blessed with an understanding and he saw how small his hope had been. He saw how much greater the plan of God was for this child.

Is it any wonder that the old man said,

“Now I can die in peace. For my eyes have beheld Salvation.”

Can we know what he saw? Did he see the white and rotting arms of lepers turned to new, pink, healthy flesh? Did he see the twisted and stunted legs of beggars suddenly made strong and sinewy? Did he see the eyes of the blind opened? Did he behold the crowds streaming to hear what the Rabbi had to say? Did he see the palm branches waving before him as Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the hosannas of the crowd? Did he see him stripped to the waist and being flogged bloody by the cruelty of the soldiers? Did he see the three stark crosses raised against a darkening sky? Did he see an empty tomb, and the wondering faces of those who sought death but found life instead?

We don’t know what he saw. We only know that it was more than he had expected.

But that’s the way it always is with God. God always gives us more. God knows our true need, even when what we ask for is less. God is never satisfied with just giving us part of the promise.

Seeing may be believing.

But believing might allow us to see more than we ever even imagined.