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Advent: Hoping in the Bigger Picture

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Advent: Hoping in the Bigger Picture

Abstract

"I am always thinking about what is next and wondering what God is doing in his bigger picture, yet Simeon seems to remind us to sit back in the spirit and lean into him."

Posting about waiting for God's plan to unfold from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/advent-hoping-in-the-bigger-picture/>

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Advent: Hoping in the Bigger Picture

 [all in allthings.org/advent-hoping-in-the-bigger-picture/](https://allinallthings.org/advent-hoping-in-the-bigger-picture/)

Brandon Huisman

Imagine working your entire life on one project. In 1248, the building of the Cologne Cathedral began. 632 years later, it was finished. The builders of the gothic masterpiece remained committed to the original plan—even 600 years after it was originally conceived. We visited in May 2012. The tour guides boasted of the stained glass, its prestigious world heritage site listing, and its medieval beginning. Sure, this was impressive, but I could not get past the stonemasons. Many of these guys spent their entire lives working on a single arch. Crafting, shaping, sanding, trimming, and measuring their entire lives. Unbelievable. Yet they remained committed to the original plan.

Luke introduces us to Simeon in [Luke 2](#) noting he was a righteous and devout man who had the spirit of God on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Simeon waited. Simeon worked. Simeon remained dedicated to the original plan he had been let in on. No, the plan was not complete and Simeon did not have a clear picture of what complete looked like, but he remained hopeful, trusting in the word of the Lord that he had been gifted. Moved by the spirit, Simeon responded by taking action. In this case, that meant going to the temple courts.

On the other end of the story, Mary and Joseph were busy doing ordinary things. The custom of the law required them to bring Jesus in to “do for him what the custom of the law required.” So they did just that. God worked through the ordinary obedience of Mary and Joseph to put in motion a life-defining event for Simeon and soon his eyes saw the salvation of God and the spirit's revelation was complete. Mary and Joseph were doing what was required, but God broke in with the extraordinary through their everyday situation. In that moment, Simeon saw God's gift of salvation in the Christ-child.

Until then, I can't help but assume his mind constantly racing. What would this revelation look like? When would it take place, and why must it take so long? Simeon was hopefully curious, but he had no idea how God would break in.

But then he saw Jesus.

He grabbed him and the glory of God was revealed. He was let in on the divine plan to use Jesus for the salvation of all people—Gentiles and Jews alike. God's revelation followed Simeon's faithful obedience.

The stonemasons in Cologne who began the work in 1248 must have known they would not finish their work. Yet, they remained ridiculously faithful. Their hope in a plan that was bigger than they were was enough for them, and they did not need to be let in on every detail.

I am always thinking about what is next and wondering what God is doing in his bigger picture, yet Simeon seems to remind us to sit back in the spirit and lean into him. The invitation is to invest deeply in the ordinary with the expectation that God is fully capable of using the everyday lives of others to speak his truth into our lives. May we rest in the hope of the ordinary this Christmas season as wait for God to finish our work.