

## **Gnarly Bob's Christmas Story**

Have you read the story of Simeon? He was a special man who lived to be very old. He was righteous in the eyes of God and so God gave to him a personal message through the Holy Spirit. Simeon was told that he would not die until his eyes beheld the Messiah.

This was a morning like all the others. Simeon woke up, bowed before His Maker and then praised Him for the new day of promise. For this could be the day that God would allow Simeon to behold the Messiah.

Simeon left his home and stood facing the temple and with eyes focused up to the top of the hill and the heavens beyond. With hands held high before him, he ascended to the temple mount preparing his heart and mind for worship.

As he walked up the path his mind revisited the promise from the lips of God. "Simeon...for all these years you have prayed asking that you would remain alive until your eyes beheld and your hands could touch...the Messiah of Israel. The desire of your heart is granted to you.

You will see and touch the Promise of Israel before you die...live your life in patience before ME and wait."

When the Christ Child was born the scales that balanced the light on one side and the darkness on the other would begin to change forever. A great light had now broken forth out of the darkness. The light of the world, the Messiah of Israel, Jesus the Son of God had now been born...as promised by God in HIS WORD.

This anointed, pre-determined day for Simeon was to become his day of promise. Simeon, this day would behold and touch the flesh of God's most precious Gift of All...Yeshua, whose name means Salvation. Emanuel whose name means, "God With Us". Jesus, Lord of Lords and KING of KINGS had arrived.

All the prophets that lived and proclaimed in faith the ONE TRUE GOD had died without ever seeing HIS coming. But to this special man named Simeon, who also lived by faith as the prophets before him...God gave the gift of sight. For now man would be able to walk with God by sight for 33 years.

Gods promise to fallen mankind of a REDEEMER to come was fulfilled that day as Jesus walked forth from the pages of Scripture as foretold in eternity past before the foundations of the earth were ever formed.

Jesus walked the Earth He had Spoken into existence among people He had created. Every step in the Judean dirt brought life to the Words recorded in Scripture. Then at the end of His short 33 year journey HIS feet were nailed to a piece of wood and His arms were nailed open to a wooden Cross beam as the Flesh of the God/Man hung suspended between heaven and earth, supported by wood from a tree.

You know the story. You can find on among the pages recorded within the ONLY BOOK that has both pre-written and written history in it...so you would BELIEVE in the One of whom it speaks.

Simeon like us today, lived at a pivotal time in history. God refers to this time as "the fullness of time". For God sent His Son to be born and to die and to be resurrected at the fullness of time. A time when all the prophecies pre-written would have come true in history about the birth the death and the resurrection of Jesus the King of Kings during HIS short journey on earth.

Now today we wait for the prophecies that are pre-written to reach the one that will bring the end of this "greatest story ever told"...the RETURN of THE KING. A day pre-determined when everyone living in darkness will look up at the same time as their faces are washed in the light of God.

And So...Christian...you and I wait. It has been over 2,000 years since the coming of The King. Born as flesh from a Jewish mother, Born the Greatest Jew that has ever lived, for He is Alive today. Resurrected the First Born in the Spirit, He now brings together by the Holy Spirit Born Again Jews and Born Again Christians to form the One True Church, the Bride of Christ.

And so we wait together.

When I think about all of this it still bothers me greatly that Jesus would ask the question of us who claim to believe..."Will the Son of Man find Faith on the earth at His Appearing?"

This question implies whether anyone made of Flesh, even a single soul would be here with eyes looking up and holy hands held high, expecting and looking for HIS return...when He comes.

It is a fair question for it has been a long time since He came. It has been a long time since man was able to walk by sight. Have you noticed not only the decay common to man, but the decay of natural systems all around you?

The immorality of people has increased exponentially and so it seems has nature as it begins to go out of control. Sin is increasing and abounding everywhere. We no longer establish Godly children to carry on the Faith. And those that do represent a minority within a minority as the tidal waves of immoral people and their children continues to grow swallowing up those that are Godly.

And so there are few on the face of this planet made of flesh that will be here to lift up their eyes and their holy hands to greet the coming KING.

But God in His wisdom not only created flesh, but also the natural world. I would like to introduce Gnarly Bob to you. He is a close friend of mine who lives at the back corner of my condo complex. Like Simeon he waits for His Messiah. Like Simeon he lives in a time when all the signs say that his promised Redeemer will come soon. He also waits for the RETURN of the KING of KINGS.

Gnarly Bob is very old, actually ancient by human standards. I was talking to him the other day about the bloodline of the human family. How mine being a Jew could be traced back to Abraham and even further back to Adam as a human being. How God had created us to populate the earth and have dominion over it as a caretaker.

Gnarly Bob looked seriously at me with his one eye then reached down with one of his crooked limbs and gently lifted me 20 feet in the air so we could talk one to one. He lifted me so gently through the air with such strength. After all, his trunk was almost 7 feet around and his roots went deep into the earth for support.

Gnarly Bob said he was hundreds of years old and had seen first limb the years of Mankind and his caretaking abilities. He said in the Garden of Eden God had given mankind dominion, but the stewardship in the Garden was still provided by God. Then when Adam and Eve left the Garden because of the Curse of Sin...we'll it's been nothing but down hill from there for the Earth and its Creatures.

Gnarly Bob agreed that God made man in His Image and that of course was a great honor. But God made many other things as well, all after their own kind. He began recounting special times when God had chosen to use his relatives made of wood.

He spoke of the wood that Noah used to build the Ark that contained the remnants of human flesh and the animals. Many of his ancestors had given freely of themselves to be reshaped into a refuge that would carry Gods precious cargo to safety. And oh the honor to have the hand of God touch the mighty door of wood and then close it shut from the outside.

Then thousands of years later Moses was told by God to use Bob's relatives to make another Ark, the Ark of the Covenant. This was a precious Ark with

precious cargo as well. The Ark contained things that God had called His people to remember Him by. It contained the budding staff of Aaron that Moses used to separate the waters for the Nation to cross over. It contained the Manna that the nation of Israel ate as God fed them for 40 years in the wilderness. And it contained the 10 Commandments, carved out of rock, with the very writing from the finger of God upon it. The Ark also had the Mercy Seat on it where the very presence of God sat when He visited the people in the Tent.

What an honor, Bob said to be able to serve the Living God in such a way.

But then tears began to flow from Bob's one eye. He was visibly shaken, for his limbs were creaking as deep shudders of emotion came over him. Sorry Ernie, but I cannot help but feel humbled when I think of our shining hour as a specie to whom God gave such an exalted honor too.

The Cross...the Cross Ernie...Bob choked up. My ancestors were able to support the Lord as He hung between Heaven and Earth. When they drove those nails into HIM ...they drove them into one of us.

Bob and I were silent for a while.

You see Ernie, my ancestors have been serving the LORD longer than yours. In fact one of mine IS the "Tree of Life". He was in the Garden of Eden. Like the rest of us he now waits in heaven for the new earth the Lord has promised us all.

My Kind have supported humans and given sacrificially to them since the very beginning.

In fact Bob said his Redwood relatives, have been on the earth since the time of Christ. They stand as a monument to the people living today of the Truth of Yesterday. You see their roots go down so deep they are actually rooted into the fossil layer of all those billions of people who died in the flood.

God has given your kind so many, many signs about who HE IS. Its hard for us to understand how dark and deep the blindness of the human race is.

But we just like those of you that believe look forward to His Soon Coming to make all things new again. We had been speaking for quite a while Bob and I. So he gently set me down and I went home to bed.

Every morning as I drive by work I wave to Gnarly Bob. I represent flesh and he represents nature. Both of us are watching the sky.

There was more I wanted to say to Gnarly Bob about the differences between us. His life so simple and mine was so very complicated. But then the other morning I was reading something by Charles Haddon Spurgeon a Great Saint from the

past. It reminded that in some ways Gnarly Bob and I are the same because like him my roots go deep...

“May you be rooted and grounded in love. May your convictions be deep, your love real, and your desires earnest.

May your life be so settled and established that all the blasts of hell and all the storms of earth will never be able to remove you.

Why? So you will be established in HIM! Your roots will not grow deep if the storms were not to come. Those old gnarlings on the root of the oak tree and the strange twistings of the branches, all tell of many storms that have swept over it.

They are indicators of the depth into which the roots have forced their way. So the Christian is made strong and firmly rooted by all the trials and storms of life.

Shrink not before these tempestuous winds of trial, but take comfort believing that by their rough discipline God is fulfilling His plan for you. Which is to mold you ever more into His Image.” (Charles Haddon Spurgeon)

“There is statue of Jesus  
On a monastery knoll,  
In the hills of Kentucky  
All quiet and cold.

He’s knelling in the garden  
As silent as a stone  
And all His friends are sleeping  
And He is weeping all alone.

And the Man of ALL SORROWS,  
He never forgot,  
What Sorrow was carried,  
By the hearts He had bought.” (Lyrics by Michael Card)

And So we wait like Simeon and like Gnarly Bob for HIS return. But our faith has already been fulfilled because He Came already as promised the first time.

This is what Christmas is about ...waiting for the final Gift of Eternal Life He will bring for all those who believe. If you Believe then you will hear the Trumpet that announces His Coming. You will see the King of Kings together with the rest of us. We all will tremble with JOY and DELIGHT that day; as together forming a sea of upturned faces we will be bathed in endless light.

Many Blessings to you and those you love this **HOLY DAY** as we celebrate the Birth of our Savior...Jesus.

**Merry Christmas from Ernie.**

**Merry Christmas from Gnarly Bob**; of whom you could say, that he is a CHRISTmas Tree in the real sense.

**AMEN and AMEN**