

# What Simeon Saw

## Introduction

- I. At the time our Lord was born in Bethlehem of Judea every Jew regarded his own nation as “the chosen people.”
  - A. They also knew that by human means their nation would never attain the world greatness they believed was part of their destiny.
  - B. Most of them believed that because the Jews were “the chosen people” they were bound some day to become masters of the world.
  - C. To bring in that day some believed a great victor would come.
  - D. Some believed there would arise another king of David’s line and all the old glories would revive.
  - E. Some believed God himself would break directly into history by supernatural means.
- II. But in contrast to all that there were a few Jews who were known as “the Quiet in the Land” (cf. William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke*, p. 26).
  - A. They had no dreams of violence and of power and of armies with chariots.
  - B. They believed in a life of constant prayer and quiet watchfulness until God should come.
  - C. All their lives they waited quietly and patiently upon God—waiting for the “Consolation of Israel” and the salvation the Messiah would bring (cf. Isa. 40:1; 49:13; 52:9).
- III. After the birth of Jesus, when the days of Mary’s purification were ended, Joseph and Mary brought the Infant Jesus to Jerusalem when He was 40 days of age in order to make a sacrifice as required by the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:1–8).
  - A. From Luke 2:22–24 we learn that Mary and Joseph were relatively poor, for they did not offer a lamb.
  - B. They offered “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons” (Lev. 12:8).
  - C. While in the Temple, they met an old man named Simeon (Luke 2:25–35).
- IV. Simeon was one of those “Quiet in the Land”—in prayer, in worship, in humble and faithful expectation he too was waiting for the day when God would comfort His people.
  - A. God had promised Simeon through the Holy Spirit that his life would not end before he had seen God’s own Anointed King.
    1. Whether he had already heard from the shepherds or from someone else about the circumstances of the birth of Christ we do not know.
    2. The Holy Spirit led him to the temple, and while there a peasant woman comes in and he takes her Infant in his withered arms and praises God in a beautiful hymn which was later on known as the “Song of Simeon” or the “Nunc Dimittis” (from the Latin for “now dismiss”).
    3. Simeon, like all faithful Jews, was waiting for the Messiah, the Star of the house of Jacob.
    4. In the Baby Jesus he recognized that great King and was glad.
    5. Now he was ready to depart this life in peace.
  - B. In today’s lesson I would like to notice what Simeon saw when he saw the Christ-child in Mary’s arms.

## I. Simeon Saw Salvation

- A. "For my eyes have seen Your salvation" (Luke 2:30).
  - 1. Though Jesus was but 40 days of age, Simeon recognized Jesus as the One who would bring salvation to mankind.
  - 2. This is exactly what the Angel announced to Joseph (Matt. 1:20–21).
- B. Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was told that John would "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17).
  - 1. Notice the blessing (*Benedictus*) of Zacharias (Luke 1:67–79), where nearly every phrase is borrowed from the Psalms and Prophets.
  - 2. John spoke of the salvation Christ would bring (Matt. 3:1–3; cf. Isa. 40:3).

## II. Simeon Saw Fulfilled Prophecy

- A. "You have prepared before the face of all peoples" (Luke 2:31).
  - 1. The Jewish Scriptures were known among all nations, and all people were acquainted with the Hebrew expectations of a Messiah.
  - 2. Simeon saw in the Babe the initial step of God toward fulfilling all these Old Testament prophecies.
- B. After His resurrection, Jesus spoke to the men on the road to Emmaus concerning these prophecies (Luke 24:25–27).
- C. Preachers in the New Testament often made reference to these prophecies about Christ (cf. Acts 2:23; 3:18; Gal. 4:4).

## III. Simeon Saw Light For The Gentiles

- A. "A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32).
  - 1. Prior to the coming of Christ the world was in darkness—the symbol of ignorance, sin and misery.
  - 2. Christ would bring all nations light—the symbol of life, growth, knowledge and happiness.
  - 3. This is probably a reference to the words of Isaiah (Isa. 49:6; 51:4).
  - 4. Isaiah prophesied that the Gentiles would seek the Messiah (Isa. 11:10).
- B. Christ's light revealed the Father to the Gentiles.
  - 1. That Simeon should prophesy this is an evidence of the large spiritual knowledge given him, since even the apostles were slow to grasp the fullness of Christ's worldwide mission.
  - 2. Christ had a mission to the world (Psa. 98:2–3; Isa. 52:10).

## IV. Simeon Saw Glory For Israel

- A. "The glory of Your people Israel" (Luke 2:32).
  - 1. Israel was doubly glorified in Jesus, in that God chose this people to receive the Divine Son.
  - 2. Also, in that Jesus, as a Jew, presented to the world the picture of perfect manhood.
  - 3. In His Divinity and His humanity Jesus glorified Israel.
- B. The Angel told Mary about His rule (Luke 1:30–33).
- C. Notice what Paul told the Jews at Antioch (Acts 13:42–47; Isa. 42:6).

*Invitation*

- I. Before Simeon said a word, he took the Infant into his arms (Luke 2:28).
  - A. Can you imagine how that godly man felt at that moment?
  - B. What a privilege was his!
  - C. Your privilege need not be inferior.
  - D. Jesus said if a man would love Him and keep His word, He and the Father would come in and make their abode with him (John 14:23).
- II. "Only the eye which sees Christ is satisfied with seeing (Eccl. 1:18). To one who has Christ in his arms and salvation before his eyes the world looks poor indeed, and the loss of it appears gain—Phil. 1:21." (J.W. McGarvey, *The Fourfold Gospel*).