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A Prophet in the Temple (Simeon)

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THE PHYSICAL BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST A PROPHET IN THE TEMPLE (SIMEON)

THE SIMEON FILE

STATISTICS ON HIS LIFE

First mention: Luke 2:25

Final mention: Luke 2:34

Meaning of his name: "Hearing"

Frequency of his name: Referred to two times

Biblical books mentioning him: One book (Luke)

Place of birth: Probably Jerusalem

Important fact about his life: He blessed the infant Jesus in the Jerusalem temple.

STORY OF HIS LIFE

J. W. Shepherd, late professor of New Testament Interpretation at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary introduces Simeon as follows:

There was in Jerusalem when Jesus was presented a pious man named Simeon (Luke 2:25-35). He was just in conduct toward God; reverent in contrast to the self-righteous Pharisee; expectant of the coming of the Messiah. Some think that Simeon was the son of the great Rabbi Hillel, founder of a theological school in Jerusalem, father of Gamaliel, Paul's teacher, and president of the Sanhedrin in 13 B.C. But it is more probable that he was one of those humble, circumspect, pious, unknown persons – found sometimes in the midst of unfavorable circumstances – who awaited with patience the coming of the Messianic kingdom. To this aged man it had been revealed by the Holy Spirit, that he would not die until he should have seen the Lord's Anointed. Under the influence of the Spirit, he came into the Court of the Gentiles just as Joseph and Mary entered to present Jesus to the priest. He took the infant tenderly into his paternal arms and blessed God. From the mountain height of prophetic vision, as one who stood on the borderland of the Spirit-world and beheld the first rays of the sunrise on the distant shores of the Gentile world, growing into glorious radiance over his own beloved people, Simeon gave utterance to his praise to God in the poetic prophecy – the *Nunc Dimittis*, the most solemn and sweetest song of the Nativity. The years of his prayers and patient waiting were at last rewarded. His years of earnest study of the Messianic prophecies had given him

spiritual eyes to see the suffering Redeemer, where others sought a temporal Messiah-King. (*The Christ of the Gospels*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 35)

- Luke tells us that “*it was revealed unto him [Simeon] that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ*” (Lk. 2:26). While Simeon’s name does not appear in the biblical Hall of Fame chapter (Hebrews 11) along with Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc., he was nevertheless doubly blessed, for he saw that which they desired to see!

“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth ... And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise” (Heb. 11:13, 39).

- Note Simeon’s three key prophecies:

A. That this baby would serve as a “*light to the Gentiles*” (Lk. 2:32)

While the Old Testament is replete with passages which predict the Israelite Messiah would be the Savior of both Jews and Gentiles (Isa. 42:1-7; 49:6; 60:3; Mal. 1:11), Simeon becomes the first New Testament individual to reaffirm these glorious prophecies.

Here it should be noted that those prophecies predicting that the true Jewish Messiah would be believed upon and accepted by the Gentiles, this serves that Jesus is the true One!

To explain: In His book, *The Promised Messiah*, James E. Smith lists no less than forty-six Messianic pretenders, but no one has been able to attract the worship of Gentiles! However, Jesus of Nazareth is today looked upon by literally hundreds of millions of Gentiles as their Lord and Savior! (See p. 470 in Dr. Smith’s book.)

B. That “*this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel*” (Lk. 2:34a)

1. The fall

- a. Judas Iscariot
- b. A rich young ruler
- c. Annas and Caiphas
- d. The bulk of the Pharisees, Sadduces, scribes and Levites

2. The rising

- a. Nicodemus
- b. A Samaritan woman
- c. Zacchaeus
- d. Bartimaues

C. That “*a sword shall pierce through thy own soul*” (Lk. 2:35)

1. This prophecy is usually said to be fulfilled at Calvary when Mary watched her Son die an agonizing death on the cross.
2. However, her “*piercing*” may not have been limited to this one occasion. Consider:

- a. Her own children (by Joseph) were hostile unbelievers (Jn. 7:2-5).
- b. Then there was the question concerning just who was the father of Jesus. Certainly the gossipers knew it was not Joseph. It may well be that both mother and Son suffered under this vicious cloud of suspicion right up to Golgotha.

For example: During a heated dialogue with some Jewish leaders in regard to just who were the true followers of Abraham's seed, a Pharisee suddenly and rudely interrupted by boasting, ". . . *we are not born of fornication . . .* " (Jn. 8:41). While this statement was totally unrelated to their conversation, he may have meant, "Well, who—or who is not—a true follower of Abraham, we at least know the identity of our earthly fathers and apparently you don't!"

REFLECTIONS FROM HIS LIFE

I stand quietly here with Anna at the Temple entrance, both of us filled with joy and wonder as we watch them leave. What a truly caring and unique family. Caring because of the love demonstrated by the husband for his wife and baby. Unique because of the nature of this baby. Indeed, what a day this has been for us, to see and actually hold the Lord's Christ, the Gentile's light and Israel's glory. (Lk. 2:25, 26, 28, 32, 36; Mt. 1:19)

Both Joseph and Mary seemed amazed at my prophecies concerning their child, and well they should have been. What other life has been destined at birth to cause either the rise or fall of every Israelite! (Lk. 2:33, 34)

Blessed Holy Spirit, You have kept your promise in allowing me to see Israel's Consolation. I now am ready to depart this earthly life for the eternal one! (Lk. 2:25, 26)

I believe I speak for my friend Anna as well! (Lk. 2:36-38)