

Simeon: A Life of Faith & Fulfillment

Luke 2:21-35 NIV

²¹ On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

²² When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”, ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

*²⁹ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.*

³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

*³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”*

³³ The child’s father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

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This passage in Luke 2:21-35 delves into the story of Simeon and the significance of his encounter with baby Jesus.

It begins by describing the meticulous adherence to Jewish customs and laws by Mary and Joseph in presenting Jesus at the temple. The careful observance of rituals, including the circumcision on the 8th day and the purification period for Mary, emphasizes their faithfulness to the Law.

Simeon, a righteous and devout man, emerges as a highly spiritual character waiting for the consolation of Israel. He is portrayed as being empowered by the Holy Spirit, with a sensitivity to its guidance. The Greek words used to describe him, "righteous" and "devout," highlight his uprightness and earnest devotion. Simeon's waiting for the consolation of Israel is intertwined with Messianic prophecies found in Isaiah, and his encounter with baby Jesus is prompted by the Holy Spirit.

When Simeon takes Jesus in his arms, he breaks into a profound and prophetic utterance known as "Nunc dimittis." This declaration expresses his gratitude and fulfillment, recognizing Jesus as the promised salvation for all peoples.

Simeon's words echo Isaiah's prophecies, emphasizing Jesus as a light to the Gentiles and the glory of Israel.

The passage also includes Simeon's warning that Jesus will cause division, laying bare the hearts of people. He predicts that the comfort of salvation will come at a cost, foreshadowing Easter following Christmas. Simeon's words imply that Jesus is not just a source of comfort but also a bringer of righteous judgment, challenging the status quo and causing upheaval.

The narrative concludes with insights into the universal significance of Jesus' mission. Simeon emphasizes that salvation is in a person, Jesus Christ, breaking away from the exclusivism of Jewish beliefs. This salvation, however, comes with challenges, causing divisions and opposition.

The lessons drawn from Simeon's faith provide a deeper understanding of his character. His patience and perseverance in waiting, obedience to the Holy Spirit, recognition of God's faithfulness, and anticipation of God's fulfillment serve as valuable examples for believers. Simeon's faith becomes a beacon for cultivating hope, trusting in God's timing, and carrying the message of hope and comfort to a troubled world.