

Simeon's Declaration

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!" (Luke 2:25-32 NLT)

Context

Who, What, Where, When, and Why?

Who: The author of this account is Luke, a cohort of the apostle Paul and assumed to be the author of the book The Acts of The Apostles. The focus of this particular passage is a devout and righteous Jewish man named Simeon. The other primary players are the baby Jesus, his mother Mary, and his (see Foster) see father Joseph. Of course everything we read in Luke's narrative is ultimately about Jesus

What: Mary Joseph and Jesus had come to Jerusalem to allow Mary to participate in the purification process required by the Mosaic law. The fact that she and Joseph sacrificed "either a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons" reveals they were not well off at that point; the normal sacrifice would have been a (more expensive) "one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or turtledove for a purification offering" (Leviticus 12:6).

Where: This took place in the temple courts in Jerusalem of Judea, about seven miles north of Bethlehem.

When: According to the Mosaic ritual, the purification of a woman after delivering a son took place 33 days after the birth of the child. This would have happened sometime in the late fall of 2 BC.

Why: On the surface, this was simply the obedient behavior of a devout Jewish family after the birth of a child. Nevertheless, God, in his sovereignty, brought Simeon to the temple courts on that very day so he could see the Messiah before his death.

Content

What was the original author concerned with and what did he want his original audience to understand? Furthermore, how would the original audience interpret it?

Simeon was a righteous, devout old man, anxiously waiting for Israel's redemption. It is possible Simeon understood God's plan better than his contemporaries. It is interesting Simeon refers to Yahweh as his δεσπότης (*despotes*), the Greek word translated as despot in English. This shows a humble, subservient attitude.

Simeon's request to see the Messiah was all about seeing the means for realization of the Abrahamic promises.

Consideration

What are the principles found here and how do they apply to the modern Christian?

We should emulate Simeon and be devout and righteous followers of Jesus Christ. We should be clothed in Jesus righteousness and be led by the Holy Spirit. We should also recognize the Lord as the complete and absolute authority in our lives.

Unlike Simeon, we have the privilege of living in the time of fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus. Therefore we have all the more reason to walk in righteousness and unashamedly proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus.

Study Questions

- 1. How many days after the birth of Jesus did this event take place?*
- 2. What word does Simeon use to describe God?*
- 3. How do we best emulate Simeon in this New Testament age?*

If you would like input on your answers to the study questions you may message me through myFaithBase.com or email me at mfb@davidericwilliams.com