



Learn Your Bible

Resources to help you learn and understand the Bible

Short Study 062: Simeon

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Read: Luke 2:22-35

Introduction: There are a few characters whose only appearance in Scripture was around the birth and infancy of Jesus. One of the most remarkable was the aged prophet Simeon. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Simeon recognised the infant Jesus as the promised Messiah and prophesied the work of redemption that lay in the child's future.

1. The Situation (verses 22-24). Mary and Joseph had brought Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord. See verse 23 and Exodus 15:11-16 to find out why they did this and its significance. Can you work out roughly how old Jesus was when this occurred? (Clue: It was after Mary's purification – see Leviticus 12:1-4.) Parents were expected to offer a sacrifice on these occasions. Do you think the sacrifice offered by Mary and Joseph reveals something of their financial standing? (See Lev 5:7)

2. Simeon (verses 25-28). He is described as "righteous and devout" (NIV, NLT and others*). Look up these two words in a Bible Dictionary and try to assess his character. He was "waiting for the consolation of Israel". What do you think Luke means by this? Look it up in a Bible commentary if you are not sure. He knew the Messiah would come in his lifetime, entered the Temple at the right time, and recognised that the infant Jesus was the promised Messiah. How did he know these things? (See vs 25, 26 & 27)

3. His Prophecy (verses 29-35). The first section (verses 28-32) has been given the title *Nunc Dimittis*, which are the opening words of Simeon in the Latin, Vulgate version. The second section (verses 34-35) are words addressed to Mary, but are also prophetic. Can you explain what Simeon meant by the following expressions? Look up commentaries where you are unsure? ...

- (i) "my eyes have seen your salvation" (v30)
- (ii) "prepared before the face of all peoples" (v31)
- (iii) "a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles" (v32)
- (iv) "the glory of your people Israel." (v32)
- (v) "destined for the fall and rising of many" (v34)
- (vi) "a sign which will be spoken against." (v34)
- (vii) "a sword will pierce your own soul also" (v35)
- (viii) "the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (v35)

To think about: (i) How alert to the voice of God and available to speak for God am I?
(ii) Would I want the "thoughts of (my) heart" to be revealed?

To dig deeper: See what you find on the *Nunc Dimittis* and Simeon's words to Mary, using Bible commentaries and whatever other sources are available to you.

* Some versions render it as "just and devout" "Righteous" and "Just" are both the same word in the Greek. "Righteous" expresses the meaning better: meaning he was "*right* with God".