

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

† THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

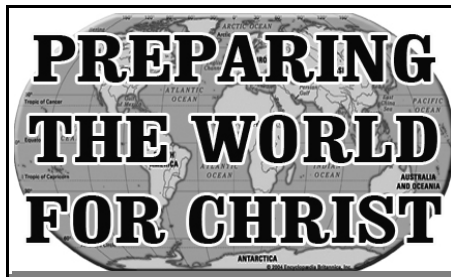
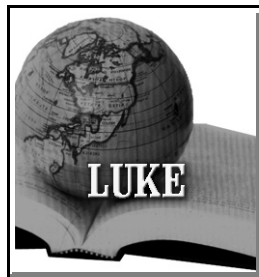
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #8

COMMENTARY ON: 2:21-40

THE DEDICATION OF JESUS

Joseph and Mary carefully adhere to the instructions of the Law concerning newborns, for Jesus was *"made of a woman, made under the Law"* (Gal 4:4) – and the Law was *"until John"* (Lk 16:16). They are very precise in everything they do; thus the revelations pronounced to them were also precise. We will find that everything was not crystal clear to Joseph and Mary at this stage – and even later, when Jesus was twelve years of age, there were some things that remained unclear to them. In this text we are introduced to two more godly people: Simeon and Anna. Thus far the following people have been associated with the birth of Jesus: Joseph, Mary, Elizabeth, a babe in the womb of Elizabeth, a group of shepherds, and now Simeon and Anna. All were people of faith, and all responded to Divine direction instantly. We will find throughout this Gospel that conscious involvement with God is always confined to holy and dedicated people. The unbelieving and indolent are always limited.

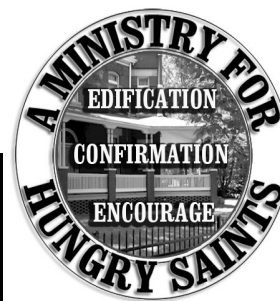


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke, 12/26/2014

Lesson Number 8



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB=Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV =English Majority Text (2002); ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ETRV = Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE DEDICATION OF JESUS

..Luke 2:21 " And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; ²³ (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) ²⁴ And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. ²⁵ And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. ²⁶ And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, ²⁸ Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: ³⁰ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, ³¹ Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; ³² A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. ³³ And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; ³⁵ (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. ³⁶ And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; ³⁷ And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. ³⁸ And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. ³⁹ And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. Luke 2:21-39

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

Joseph and Mary carefully adhere to the instructions of the Law concerning newborns, for Jesus was "made of a woman, made **under the Law**" (Gal 4:4) – and the Law was "until John" (Lk 16:16). They are very precise in everything they do; thus the revelations pronounced to them were

also precise.

THE MINISTRY OF THE LAW

In addition to the defining and convicting of sin, **the Law tutored people in obedience.** It taught them what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. It made distinctions between clean and unclean (Lev 10:10),

confirming that men had to be instructed **how** to live. Because their basic nature was corrupted, and they were fundamentally self-centered, they were incapable of distinguishing good and evil. **Eventually, God would re-create them in Christ Jesus, writing His Law on their hearts, and putting it into their minds.** Then, after a period of

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time, when their new senses had been “exercised,” they would be able to “discern both good and evil” (Heb 5:14). **Until that time, no matter how disciplined they were, they had to be told what to do.**

Before the Law, if Abraham had not been told to move to Canaan, he would not have done so. If he would not have been told that Sarah would have a son, he never would have imagined that to be possible. Men did not know the will of God intuitively, and

could not do so. A moral wall had been raised between men and God that could only be penetrated by a Divine initiative.

After the Law was in force, even when the people were told to do certain things, at certain times, they rebelled against the Lord (Num 20:24; ; 27:14; Deut 1:43; Psa 78:8). Their thoughts and ways were at variance with the Lord (Isa 55:8-9). **The history of God’s exclusive dealings with Israel (1,500 years) confirms that men as they are by nature cannot be consistently directed by law.** A contrariety exists between the natural man and God that cannot effectively be denied. His nature is at variance with the Divine nature, and that cannot be corrected by “a Law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Eph 2:15).

In the case of Joseph and Mary, we will find that everything was not crystal clear to them – and even later, when Jesus was twelve years of age, there were some things that remained obscure to them – and these were among the elite of the human race.

MORE PEOPLE ADDED

In this text we are introduced to two more godly people: Simeon and Anna. Thus far the following people have been associated with the birth of Jesus: Joseph, Mary, Elizabeth, a babe in the womb of Elizabeth, a group of shepherds, and now Simeon and Anna. **All were people of faith, and all responded instantly to Divine direction – TO Divine directives.**

The entrance of “the Word” into the world will not be attended by

rebellious and insensitive people – like the giving of the Law. The initial participants will not conduct themselves like Aaron and the Israelites at Sinai (Ex 32:1-6).

We will find throughout this Gospel that conscious involvement with God is always confined to holy and dedicated people. The unbelieving and indolent are always limited, or altogether excluded in any profitable association with the work of the Lord. Again, the only exception is Judas, who was chosen and used for another purpose.

It appears to me that this is a Divine manner. This is especially important to note because of the state of the church in our time. There are too many ungodly people associated with what the professed church is doing. Too much room is being made for the flesh, and self aggrandizement. So far as I am concerned, this is confirmation that Jesus is not in the house. This is simply not the way He operates. It is plainly written that no one can eat at the table of demons, and the table of the Lord at the same time (1 Cor 10:21). It is not possible for there to be a fellowship between righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Satan, believers with unbelievers, or the temple of God with idols (2 Cor 6:14-16). **Such unholy unions may be attempted, but it is not possible for them to be consummated.**

This is being lived out in our text. Only the believing and righteous are being brought into holy involvement with these events.

THE CIRCUMCISING AND NAMING OF JESUS

“ Luke 2:21 **“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”**

Because the Law and the Prophets

were “until John,” that is, until his ministry commenced, the birth of Jesus will be handled precisely as the Law required. There will be no deviation from what the Law mandated.

WHEN EIGHT DAYS WERE ACCOMPLISHED

“ **“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child . . .”**

This circumcision was required by the Law: **“If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according**

to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Lev 12:2-3). This was also in accord with the covenant made with Abraham (Gen 17:12).

When Israel came out of Egypt, all of the males were circumcised. But during the forty year wandering in the wilderness, none of them were circumcised. Thus it is written, "And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins. And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise: All the people that came out of Egypt, that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came out of Egypt. **Now all the people that came out were circumcised: but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.** For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till

all the people that were men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the LORD: unto whom the LORD sware that he would not show them the land, which the LORD sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey. And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for **they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.**" (Josh 5:3-7).

You must remember that at the time of Jesus' birth, Israel had been living in a moral desert for hundreds of years. Yet, even during that time, godly people did not forget about this matter of circumcision. First, Zacharias and Elizabeth did not forget (Lk 1:59), and now Joseph and Mary remember as well.

HIS NAME WAS CALLED JESUS

" . . . His name was called JESUS,

which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb."

It had been a little over nine months since Gabriel told Mary, "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt **call His name JESUS**" (Luke 1:31). The angel of the Lord told Joseph the same thing: "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt **call his name JESUS:** for he shall save his people from their sins . . . And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and **he called his name JESUS.**" (Matt 1:21-25).

Thus Joseph and Mary obeyed the Law concerning the birth of a male child, and the word of God concerning the naming of the child. **They did not forget what the Lord had said, which is a mark of those possessing faith.**

WHEN THE DAYS OF HER PURIFICATION WERE ACCOMPLISHED

" ²² **And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;** ²³ **(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)** ²⁴ **And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."**

Like Zacharias and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary walked in all of the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. At the time of our text, the First Covenant, together with the ordinances that contained the commandments (Eph 2:15), was in force. Even though they were not where they lived (Nazareth), they honored the Law, obeying what it said about giving birth – in their case, particularly to the male child.

THE DAYS OF HER PURIFICATION

"And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished . . ."

The Law of Moses stipulated the following concerning the ceremonial purification of a woman giving birth.

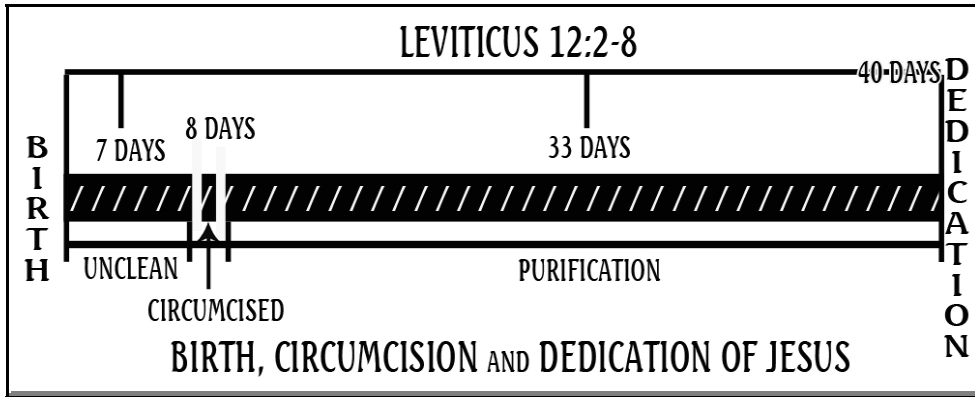
"Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean. And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled" (Lev 12:2-4).

The "days" of Mary's purification were, according to the Law, thirty-three days following her seven days of uncleanness. If a woman have birth to

a female child, the period of her uncleanness was "two weeks," not seven days as with a male child (Lev 12:5a). That would be a total of forty days after Jesus was born. Also, if a female child, the days of purification were also twice as long – sixty-six days (Lev 12:5b). Perhaps this was associated with the woman, Eve, "being in the transgression" (1 Tim 2:14). I do not feel at liberty to say anything more on that matter. It is enough to observe that sin, whether it is the first one committed, on committed in the greater light of redemption, is always a serious matter. It is never to be viewed in a cursory way, or as though salvation made sin less abrasive to the God of heaven.

THEY BROUGHT HIM TO JERUSALEM

" . . . they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer



a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

This was not something that could be done anywhere. In the beginning, under the Law, the presentation of the child to the Lord took place "unto the

door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest" (Lev 12:6). In our text, the presentation was made at the Temple.

If there is any question concerning the defiling effects of sin, notice that giving birth – certainly not itself an act

of sin – required a period of seven days of uncleanness, and thirty days for purification. That was for a male child. A female child required two weeks of uncleanness and sixty-six days of purification. Also, the child had to be dedicated, and was not simply God's by default, so to speak. All of accents just how defiled Adam's offspring became because of a single transgression. And, that does not even bring into consideration the absolute necessity of a justification, new birth, regeneration, reconciliation, and sanctification. I am convinced that the average Christ has very little understanding of the need for salvation – thorough salvation. If some measure of the Law and its attending ordinances is discerned, one will see that ultimate sin had to do with eating, drinking, working, and thinking – all of which have been impacted by sin.

THERE WAS A MAN WHOSE NAME WAS SIMEON

"²⁵ And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him."

A number of God-fearing people have been involved with Jesus' conception and birth. Mary (Lk 1:26-27), Elizabeth (Lk 1:43-45), Zacharias (Lk 1:17,56,68-79), the prenatal John the Baptist (Lk 1:41,44), Joseph (Matt 1:20-21; 2:4-5), the shepherds (Lk 2:8-20), and those to whom the shepherds testified (Lk 2:17-18). Confirming that heaven and earth was involved, there was the angel Gabriel (Lk 1:19,26), the angel of the Lord (Lk 2:9), and a heavenly host (Lk 2:13).

Notice the absence of uncommitted people. There was no representative, of the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees, or the Pharisees – not even the high priest. Only people of faith are allowed by the Lord to be profitably associated with the entrance of His Son into the world.

There is something to be learned

from this event – something concerning the manner of the Kingdom. **The more ungodly people there are in the vicinity of Divine working, the less is revealed.** This is one reason why Jesus spoke in parables when speaking publically (Matt 13:10-16). The same was true when He spoke to the multitude He had fed with five loaves and two fishes (John 6:24-66).

You can see the fatal flaw of making a practice of filling up the congregation with sinners, imagining that this is the way to convert them. Actually, that practice limits what the Lord will do among the people. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul presented a hypothetical situation where a stranger or unbeliever came into the assembly of the saints. The way such a person would benefit was if everyone was prophesying, or speaking unto edification, exhortation, and comfort. In such a case, God Himself would direct what was said by the people, and convict the visitors by words that were technically addressed to the body of believers (1 Cor 14:23-25).

THERE WAS A MAN IN JERUSALEM

" . . . And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon . . ."

This was a man God could use – a man that was, so to speak, at His disposal. Of course, God can use any person for any purpose He has designed. He can use ignoble vessels like Pharaoh (Ex 9:16; Rom 9:17), or Judas (John 6:70), or Hadad the Edomite (1 Kgs 11:14). Here, however, we are speaking of someone specifically participating in the entrance of the Savior into the world.

It is written that *"the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him"* (2 Chron6:9) – a man He can use for holy purposes.

⇨ When Moses fled from Egypt, and being prepared in the wilderness to be Israel's deliverer, God raised up "Jethro" to assist him in his orientation (Ex 3:1; 4:8).

⇨ When Jezebel was cutting off the

prophets of the Lord, God raised up the man Obadiah, who *“took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water”* (1 Kgs 18:4).

⇒ When Paul was apprehended by the glorified Christ, there was *“a man”* available to Christ to use in establishing Paul as an apostle – *“a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias”* (Acts 9:10-17).

⇒ When Paul attempted to join himself to the disciples, and they were suspicious of him, the Lord raised up the man Barnabas who *“bought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus ”* (Acts 9:27).

So it is in this case. There is a certain man in Jerusalem that God will use to dedicate Mary’s first son, the Son of God, to the Lord.

THE SAME MAN WAS JUST AND DEVOUT

“ . . . and the same man was just and devout . . . ”

Other versions read, *“righteous and devout,”* ^{NASB} *“upright man, fearing God”* ^{BBE} *“just and pious,”* ^{DARBY} *“lived an honorable and devout life,”* ^{GWN} *“Just and godly,”* ^{PNT} *“a good man, very devout,”* ^{LIVING} *“just and reverent,”* ^{ABP} *“a good man. He loved God,”* ^{CEV} *“a good man who was devoted to God,”* ^{ERV} *“He lived an honorable and devout life,”* ^{GW} *“an upright man, devoted to the service of God,”* ^{PHILLIPS} *“a good man, a man who lived in the prayerful expectancy,”* ^{MESSAGE} and *“righteous and devout [cautiously and carefully observing the Divine Law].”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Here was a man who was godly within and without. He was like Zacharias and Elizabeth who *“were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless”* (Luke 1:6). He was like **Cornelius**, who was *“A devout man, and one that feared God”* (Acts

JUST: “Upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God” ^{THAYER} INWARD	pious. ^{THAYER} OUTWARD
Righteous ^{NASB}	Fearing God ^{BBE}
Upright ^{BBE}	Pious ^{DARBY}
Honorable ^{GWN}	Reverent ^{ABP}
Good man ^{LIVING}	He loved God ^{CEV}
	Devoted to God ^{ERV}
	Devoted to service of God ^{PHILLIPS}
DEVOUT: Carefully & surely; cautious; reverencing God,	Prayerful expectancy ^{MESSAGE}
	Cautiously and carefully observing the Divine Law.

10:2). He was like **Ananias**, who came to Paul, who was *“a devout man according to the Law”* (Acts 22:12).

This kind of people has always existed – a holy remnant in the earth. Abel (Heb 11:4), Enoch (Gen 5:22), Noah (Gen 6:8), and a remnant in Malachi’s day (Mal 3:16-17). David wrote, *“But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for Himself”* (Psa 4:3). In Simeon we find another person of this spiritual caliber.

WAITING FOR THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL

“ . . . waiting for the consolation of Israel . . . ”

Other versions read, *“looking for the consolation of Israel,”* ^{NASB} *“looking forward to the consolation of Israel,”* ^{NRSV} *“waiting for the comfort of Israel,”* ^{BBE} *“eagerly anticipated the restoration of Israel,”* ^{CEB} *“waited eagerly for God to comfort Israel,”* ^{CJB} *“looking forward to Israel’s consolation,”* ^{CSB} *“waiting for the One who would comfort Israel,”* ^{GWN} *“eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel,”* ^{NLT} *“longed for the consolation of Israel,”* ^{TNT} *“looking for the comforting of Israel,”* ^{YLT} *“constantly expecting the Messiah to come soon,”* ^{LIVING} *“waiting for God to save the people of Israel,”* ^{CEV} *“waiting for the time when God would come to help Israel,”* ^{ERV} *“waiting for Israel to be saved,”* ^{GNB} and *“living in expectation of the comforting of Israel.”* ^{GOODSPEED}

The word translated *“consolation”* [paraklesis], means *“A CALLING NEAR, SUMMONS (ESPECIALLY FOR HELP,”* ^{THAYER} *“AN OFFER OF CONSOLING HELP CONSOLATION, COMFORT,”* ^{FRIBERG} *“TO CAUSE SOMEONE TO BE ENCOURAGED OR CONSOLED, EITHER BY VERBAL OR NON-VERBAL MEANS*

- *“TO ENCOURAGE, TO CONSOLE.”* ^{LOUW-NIDA}

This is the only place in a standard version of Scripture where the expression *“consolation of Israel”* is mentioned. In fact, the word *“consolation”* is only found a single time in the KJV (Jer 16:7), Two times in the ASV (Job 6:10; Jer 16:7) Three times in the NKJV (Job 21:2; Isa 66:11; Jer 16:7), four times in the NASB (Job 6:10; 21:2; Jer 16:7; Ezek 16:54), three times in the NIV (Job 6:10; 21:2; Psa 94:19), five times in the NRSV, and five times in the RSV (Job 6:10; 21:2; Jer 16:7; Ezek 16:54; Zech 10:2), and once in YLT (Job 21:2). **None of those verses are Messianic in nature.**

Isaiah did say the Messiah would *“comfort all that mourn”* (Isa 61:2), although the text itself is not clear about this being the Messiah. It was Jesus Himself who brought clarity to that text (Lk 4:18-129). God did promise His people, *“As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem”* (Isa 66:13).

Oppressive Conditions

In prophesying of John he Baptist, Isaiah did begin by saying, *“Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God”* (Isa 40:1-3). Perhaps our text alludes to that prophesy.

However, it appears to me that this is a holy CONCLUSION rather than a specific revelation. For a long time, those who were godly had been oppressed by the condition of Israel. Some of the last prophets to have lifted their voice prior to this reflected this oppressive condition. During the time of Malachi there was a holy remnant who *“feared the Lord,”* and consequently *“spake often with one another”* (Mal 3:16-17). As far back as Isaiah, the

Lord spoke of this condition: *"In transgressing and lying against the LORD, and departing away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving and uttering from the heart words of falsehood. And judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off: for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. Yea, truth faileth; and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey: and the LORD saw it, and it displeased him that there was no judgment. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore His arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him"* (Isa 59:16). During the Babylonian captivity, Ezekiel had a vision that reflected the impact of degeneracy upon godly people: *"And the LORD said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof"* (Ezek 9:4).

Jeremiah lamented, *"Mine eyes do fail with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city"* (Lam 2:11).

Ponder our Lord as He looked over the city of Jerusalem and wept, saying: *"Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation"* (Luke 19:42-44).

When Israel; was in a decayed spiritual condition, it was an agitation to the godly.

The Impact of Ungodliness Upon the Godly
Ungodliness and a degenerative

It is almost impossible to find a person who associates such a condition with Divine judgment. Consequently, they do not associate the Lord Jesus with comfort and consolation. They do not flee to Him for refuge, to lay

spiritual condition have an adverse impact upon those who walk with God. In the case of Israel, this was because such conditions indicated Divine abandonment and judgment. How often this was expressed by holy men.

⇒ *"How long, LORD? wilt Thou be angry for ever? shall Thy jealousy burn like fire?"* (Psa 79:5)

⇒ *"O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt Thou be angry against the prayer of Thy people?"* (Psa 80:4)

⇒ *"How long, LORD? wilt Thou hide Thyself for ever? shall Thy wrath burn like fire?"* (Psa 89:46)

⇒ *"Return, O LORD, how long? and let it repent Thee concerning Thy servants. O satisfy us early with Thy mercy; that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."* (Psa 90:13-14)

⇒ *"O LORD, how long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear! even cry out unto Thee of violence, and Thou wilt not save! Why dost Thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth."* (Hab 1:2-4)

And what can be said of our time? **One can scarcely find a person who laments the powerless condition of the church.** It is almost impossible to find a person who associates such a condition

with Divine judgment. Consequently, they do not associate the Lord Jesus with comfort and consolation. They do not flee to Him for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before them (Heb 6:18). **Simeon, by way of comparison, was looking for the One who would bring consolation from oppressive conditions.**

THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS UPON HIM

" . . . and the Holy Ghost was upon him."

Other versions read, *"the Holy Spirit rested on him,"* ^{NRSV} *"The Holy Spirit was with Simeon,"* ^{GWN} *"the holy ghost was in him"* ^{TNT} *"filled with the Holy Spirit,"* ^{LIVING} *"he was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,"* ^{WILLIAMS} *"God's Spirit came to him,"* ^{CEV} *"under the influence of the holy Spirit,"* ^{GOODSPEED} *"His heart was open to the Holy Spirit."* ^{PHILLIPS}

The meaning of the word translated *"upon"* [epi] is largely determined by the context in which it is used. A thorough meaning is, *"OF THE PLACE ON WHICH [SOMETHING IS PLACED]; USED OF VICINITY [WHERE SOMETHING TAKES PLACE]; OF TIME WHEN" [OCCASION WHEN SOMETHING TAKES PLACE].* ^{THAYER}

The meaning here is that Simeon was given special insight concerning the coming Messiah – and, in particular, of the impact He would have upon men. He was especially endowed with insight concerning the influence the Messiah would have upon the people, and even upon Mary herself. He would make things known that needed to be known.

There are occasions when special insight is needed, and God will raise up

men to whom He gives understanding of those times, enabling them to make things known that will assist the people of God in how to conduct their lives at during that period of time. Godly people will be able to recognize such men.

IT WAS REVEALED TO HIM BY THE SPIRIT

“²⁶ And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

We will learn much about Simeon by what was revealed to him. It will reflect his priorities and manner of life.

IT WAS REVEALED UNTO HIM

“And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost . . .”

There are people to whom things are made known, yet they are in a form that is not understood. Pharaoh’s, butler (Gen 40:9-11), his baker (Gen 40:16-17), Pharaoh himself (Gen 41:1-7), and Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:1-37; 4:10-18) are cases in point. There are other revelations that are, by the will of God, comprehended. The Spirit had revealed something of that nature to Simeon. We do not know when this revelation was given.

Unlike men, the Holy spirit does

HE SHOULD NOT SEE DEATH
“...that he should not see death...”

Hezekiah was told to set his house in order, for his time to die **had come** (2 Kgs20:1). Pashur was told **where** he would die (Jer 20:6). Jeremiah told Hananiah the prophet was going to die **that year** (Jer 28:16). Zedekiah was told he would die **“in peace”** (Jer 34:5).

However, Simeon is told he would **not die until he had seen the Messiah**. David’s words are for us all: *“My times are in Thy hand”* (Psa 31:15).

THE LORD’S CHRIST
“ . . . before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

Other versions read, *“before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah,”* ^{NRSV} *“the Messiah of ADONAI”* ^{CJB} *“that Anointed of the Lord”* ^{GENEVA} *“the Messiah, whom the Lord would send,”* ^{GWN} *“the Christ of the Lord,”* ^{YLT} *“God’s anointed King,”* ^{LIVING} *“Christ the Lord,”* ^{CEV} *“the Messiah*

are all of One: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Heb 2:11).

Jesus is our Savior and Lord, but He is God the Father’s *“Christ.”* Thus, we have the following expressions.

⇨ *“The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against **the Lord, and against His Christ.**”* (Acts 4:26)

⇨ *“And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our **Lord, and of His Christ;** and he shall reign for ever and ever.”* (Rev 11:15)

⇨ *“And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the **kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ:** for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.”* (Rev 12:10)

⇨ *“He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, **The Christ of God.**”* (Luke 9:20)

Ponder some of the associations of Christ Jesus with God the Father

⇨ Jesus is “the Son of **God** (Rom 1:4).

⇨ Jesus is “the Son of the Living **God**” (Matt 16:6).

⇨ Jesus is “the Christ of **God**” (Lk 9:20).

⇨ Jesus is “the Chosen of **God**” (Lk 23:35).

⇨ Jesus is “the Lamb of **God**” (John 1:29)._

The most important association Jesus Christ has is with the Father. It is that relationship that sanctifies His association with the saved.

not need to be instructed. He is *“sent”* (John 15:26), but does not need to be instructed. Therefore, we read, *“But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God”* (1 Cor 2:10-11).

from the Lord,” ^{ERV} *“the Lord’s promised Messiah,”* ^{GNB} *“the Christ of the Lord,”* and *“the Lord’s Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One).”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The most important association Jesus Christ has is with the Father. It is that relationship that sanctifies His association with the saved. Therefore, it is written, *“For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified*

- ⇒ Jesus is “the express image of **God**” (Heb 1:3).
- ⇒ Jesus is “the Bread of **God**” (John 6:33).
- ⇒ Jesus is “the Power of **God**” (1 Cor 1:24).
- ⇒ Jesus is “the Wisdom of **God**” (1 Cor 1:24).
- ⇒ Jesus is “the Image of **God**” (2 Cor 4:4).
- ⇒ Jesus is seated “on the right hand of **God**” (Heb 10:12).
- ⇒ The **Father** sent the Son (1 John 4:14).
- ⇒ The Son came to do the will of the **Father** (John 4:34; Heb 10:10-14).
- ⇒ The Son only spoke what the **Father** told Him to speak (John 12:49).
- ⇒ The Son only did what He saw the **Father** doing (John 5:19).
- ⇒ The **Father** draws people to Christ (John 6:37).
- ⇒ The Son brings people to **God** (1 Pet 3:18).
- ⇒ **God** delivered up Jesus (Rom 8:32).
- ⇒ **God** raised Jesus from the dead (Acts 10:40).
- ⇒ **God** glorified Christ (Acts 3:13).
- ⇒ Jesus offered Himself to **God** (Heb 9:14).
- ⇒ Jesus will confess the saved before the **Father** ().

- ⇒ The saved are the children God has given Jesus (Heb 2:13).
- ⇒ **God** has delivered all things to the Son (Matt 11:27; Lk 10:22).
- ⇒ The cup Jesus drank was given to Him by the **Father** (Matt 26:39;

- heard from His **Father** (John 15:15).
- ⇒ Jesus reconciles us to **God** (Rom 5:10).
- ⇒ **God** causes us to triumph through Christ (2 Cor 2:14).

The fundamental reason for Christ is God, His will, His purpose, and His love. Take God out of the picture, and there is no valid reason for Jesus Christ.

- John 18:11).
- ⇒ **God** commanded Jesus to lay down His life, and take it up again (John 10:17-18).
- ⇒ Jesus could do nothing of Himself, but spoke as His **Father** had taught Him (John 8:28,38).
- ⇒ The **Father** honored the Son (John 8:54).
- ⇒ The Son honored the **Father** (John 8:49).
- ⇒ The **Father** loves the Son (John 10:17).
- ⇒ The good works Jesus showed men were from the **Father** (John 10:32).
- ⇒ Jesus did the works of His **Father** (John 10:37).
- ⇒ Men do greater works because Jesus went to the **Father** (John 14:12).
- ⇒ Jesus is the True Vine, and His **Father** is the Husbandman (John 15:1).
- ⇒ Jesus made known all things He had

- ⇒ Glory is brought to **God** in the church by Christ Jesus (Eph 3:21).

The fundamental reason for Christ is God, His will, His purpose, and His love. Take God out of the picture, and there is no valid reason for Jesus Christ.

It is my persuasion that this is not how Jesus is ordinarily presented to our generation. He is commonly seen as the Answer to the temporal problems and challenges of everyday life, and the means of becoming happy and successful in this present evil world. **That vista is simply too small!**

The state of lostness is more precisely defined as “*alienated from the life of God*” (Eph 4:18), being “*enemies of God*” (Rom, 5:9-10), and being subject to “*the wrath of God*” (John 3:36).

In Christ, those are the primary matters that are resolved by being born again (1 Pet 1:23), justified (Rom 5:1), reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:18-20), and being made “alive unto God” (Rom 6:11). All of that is accomplished by the grace of God, and through faith. No view of Christ is valid that relegates these things to the background.

HE CAME BY THE SPIRIT

^{27a} *And he came by the Spirit into the temple . . .*

Other versions read, “*he came in the Spirit,*”^{NIV} “*moved by the Spirit,*”^{NIV} “*guided by the Spirit,*”^{NRSV} “*inspired by*

the Spirit,”^{RSV} “*full of the Spirit he came,*”^{BBE} “*Led by the Spirit*”^{CEB} “*Prompted by the Spirit,*”^{CJB} “*came by*

the motion of the spirit," ^{GENEVA} *"the Spirit led him,"* ^{NLT} *"he came by inspiration,"* ^{TNT} *"The Holy Spirit had impelled him,"* ^{LIVING} *"under the Spirit's guidance,"* ^{WILLIAMS} *"the Spirit told Simeon,"* ^{CEV} *and "under the Spirit's influence."* ^{GOODSPEED}

that he had, in fact, been led by the Holy Spirit to go the Temple at this precise time – when Mary and Joseph came to present the Holy Child to God.

AN IMPORTANT CONCEPT
This very concept of being led by

- ⇨ They promote the glory of God and the agenda of Jesus.
- ⇨ They do not promote self-glory or self-centeredness.
- ⇨ They do not exalt human organizations.
- ⇨ They blend with the revealed will of God.

This is one of the reasons believers are admonished, *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"* (Eph 4:30). And again, *"Quench not the Spirit"* (1 Thess 5:19).

The Holy Spirit will not direct carnally minded people, because they are living in the realm of spiritual death (Rom 8:6), and the Spirit is *"the Spirit of life"* (Rom 8:2,10).

It also ought to be noted that the Holy Spirit is aggressive in His desire to work in the saints. James put it this way: *"Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?"* (James 4:5). Other versions read, *"Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously,"* ^{NKJV} *"the Spirit He caused to live in us envies intensely?"* ^{NIV} *"The Spirit which God put into our hearts has a strong desire for us,"* ^{BBE} *"The Spirit that lives in us wants us to be his own,"* ^{GWN} and *"The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] with a jealous love?"* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Here is an aspect of spiritual life that, in these days, is scarcely known. Perhaps there have been times when you have sensed strong longings about your life toward the Lord. The desires seem relentless, and will not let you go. **It is quite possible that this is the Holy Spirit, yearning jealously for your attention and devotion.** Perhaps you have given too much time to earthly interests, and have worn yourself out for perishing concerns. This has resulted in you giving the Lord the weakest and most non-productive part of your life – and the Holy Spirit is jealous about it. I

The Holy Spirit will not direct carnally minded people, because they are living in the realm of spiritual death, and the Spirit is "the Spirit of life"

You can see by the various translations that the expression of the thought contained in this verse is not simplistic. In fact, it appears that the borders of language itself makes it like *"the bed [that] is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it"* (Isa 28:20). **The fact that language itself is too small to contain the things God reveals, is seen in the fact that "the eyes of our understanding" must be enlightened** (Eph 1:18), and we must be given *"understanding"* (Psa 119:34; Col 1:9; Tim 2:7).

Just as God's *"way is in the sea,"* His *"path in the sea,"* and His *"footsteps are not known"* (Psa 77:19), so is the direction and leading of the Holy Spirit. It simply cannot be explained academically, or mapped out so the human intellect can grasp it. When the prophet Micaiah told king Zedekiah that a lying spirit had been put in the mouth of his prophets, Zedekiah struck him and queried, *"Which way went the Spirit of the LORD from me to speak unto thee?"* (2 Chron 18:23). Micaiah simply responded, *"Behold, thou shalt see on that day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself"* (2 Chr 18:24). In other words, when his word was fulfilled, the king would know the message had come from the Holy Spirit.

So it is in this text. **When we learn what Simeon said, then we will know**

the Spirit is a very important one. The language must not be strange to us. Jesus Himself was *"led by the Spirit into the wilderness,"* where He was tempted by the devil (Lk 4:1-2). Paul wrote to the Galatians, *"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law"* (Gal 5:18) – and ONLY so! It is further affirmed, *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God"* (Rom 8:14).

The leading of the Spirit is an inward prompting that transcends any natural impulse. It can never be understood by those who have not experienced it. The moving itself is accompanied by the *"full assurance of faith"* (Heb 10:22), and *"the full assurance of understanding"* (Col 2:2). Even so, there are times when even these promptings must be examined and thought upon – like the time Paul and company were called to go to Macedonia by means of a dream given to Paul. It is said of their decision to respond, *"And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them"* (Acts 16:10).

Godly thoughts have certain characteristics.

- ⇨ They are God centered.
- ⇨ They have to do with the Lord Jesus Christ.

will tell you that if you are, in fact, *“led by the Spirit,”* His leading will often interrupt worldly agendas. I realize that this is an intensely personal matter, but it does demand your attention. **God has told you that the Spirit yearns jealously over you, and you must respond appropriately.**

We have lived to see such a corruption in the “Christian” religion, that one can scarcely be found that has an understanding of the yearning the Holy Spirit has for the souls of God’s people – or for the faithful intercession of the Lord Jesus for His people (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25), or for the Father’s

desire to consider us in truth as His sons and daughters (2 Cor 6:17-18). Deity is now largely viewed as a means to the accomplishment of humanly devised ends. This is a truly sad state of affairs, even lower than existed before Christ. *“God is not in all [their] thoughts”* (Psa 10:4).

THE PARENTS BROUGHT IN THE CHILD

^{27b} . . . and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him after the custom of the law.”

You see the devotion of Joseph and Mary. They, like Zacharias and Elizabeth were *“walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless”* (Lk 1:5). It has already been said that they brought baby Jesus *“to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord”* (Lk 2:22). The particular requirement of the Law has also been specified: *“As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”* (Luke 2:23 [Ex 13:2,12-15; 22:29; 34:19; Num 3:13; 8:17]). The required offering has also been clearly identified: *“And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons”* (Luke 2:24 [Lev 12:6-8]).

Like all true obedience, this could not be done perfunctorily. It had to be done at a precise time – after seven days of uncleanness, and thirty-three days of purification (Lev 12:2-4). The child was to be brought to the Temple, with a specific kind, and specified number of sacrifice (Lev 12:6-8). The

intention was to be deliberate: *“to present Him to the Lord”* (Lk 2:22).

All of this was done with an acute awareness of sayings like, *“all souls are mine”* (Ezek 18:4), *“children are the heritage of the Lord”* (Psa 127:3). **That is, the children belong to the Lord, and He entrusts them to parents to care for them, and tutor them in the ways of the Lord.**

That stewardship is to be taken seriously – particularly by those in Christ. Solemnly fathers are told to *“bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”* (Eph 6:4). Other versions read, *“training and admonition,”* ^{NKJV} *“discipline and instruction,”* ^{NASB} *“chastening and admonition,”* ^{ASV} *“training in the teaching and fear of the Lord,”* ^{BBE} *“raise them with the Lord’s kind of discipline and guidance,”* ^{CJB} *“instruction and information,”* ^{GENEVA} *“nourish them in the instruction and admonition of the Lord,”* ^{YLT} *“using the Lord’s warning and discipline,”* ^{IE} *“the sort of education and counsel the Lord approves,”* ^{WILLIAMS} and *“in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Today, the western world, which,

unfortunately, often sets the standard for much of the rest of the world, is plagued with a younger generation that is abysmally ignorant of God and the things of God. This is true of the church youth, as well as those who are unchurched. There is a group of imagined innovators that say God is raising up a younger generation who is going to reach the world for Jesus. This may have an appealing sound, and elicit some “hurras” from the society of the untaught. But it is nothing more than unfounded blabber. With a virtual army of youth ministers, and organizations purported to reach the youth for Christ, we still have a growing population of spiritually ignorant young people. Praise God, there is, as with the older people, a remnant among this younger citizenry who properly can be called *“disciples,” “believers,”* and *“holy.”*

The condition to which I have referred is the direct result of undedicated parents. They stand in stark contrast to Joseph and Mary, and Zacharias and Elizabeth. May there be a renewed and godly interest in raising children *“in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!”* In this fellowship we have a number of this kind of parents.

HE TOOK HIM IN HIS ARMS AND BLESSED GOD

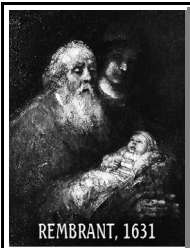
²⁸ Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: ³⁰ For mine eyes have seen Thy

Salvation, ³¹ Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; ³² A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the Glory of Thy people Israel.”

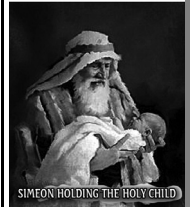
HE TOOK HIM UP

“Then took he Him up in his arms, and blessed God . . .”

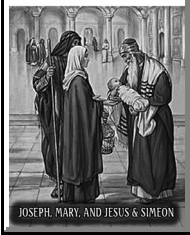
Like the book-ends of humanity,



REMBRANDT, 1631



SIMEON HOLDING THE HOLY CHILD



JOSEPH, MARY, AND JESUS & SIMEON

we see Simeon the aged one, and Son of God in an infant's body. And here, in that moment of time, you have a depiction of the whole of humanity: from young to old, from Savior to sinner, and from Divine Supply to need.

Simeon took the infant in his arms – but that is not how he saw this infant, as his words will attest. With the eye of faith, he saw what this infant of a little over one month of age would become. He would

now present the infant to the Lord in the behalf of Joseph and Mary, and as God's representative.

NOW LET THY SERVANT DEPART

“ . . . and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word . . . ”

Other versions read, *“now dismiss your servant in peace,”* ^{NIV} *“now you are dismissing your servant in peace,”* ^{NRSV} *“Now you are letting your servant go in peace,”* ^{BBE} *“your servant is at peace as you let him go,”* ^{CJB} *“Now, Master, You can dismiss Your slave in peace, as You promised,”* ^{CSB} *“now release Thou Thy servant in peace,”* ^{MRD} *“Now Thou dost send away Thy servant”* ^{YLT}

Sometime in the past God had promised Simeon *“that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ”* (Luke 2:26). Now he has come by the Spirit to the Temple, and it has been revealed to Him that this Child is, in fact, *“the Lord's Christ.”* There is no indication that Simeon knew Joseph and Mary before this, and the text does not say that they told Simeon who the Child really was. The same Spirit that led him to the Temple no doubt enlightened him concerning this Child.

Having seen *“the Lord's Christ,”*

Simeon was ready to leave the world *“in peace.”* So far as he was concerned, there was no further reason to remain.

All of this was according to what God had said. Simeon had rested his entire being upon the word of the Lord.

MINE EYES HAVE SEEN

“ . . . For mine eyes have seen thy Salvation . . . ”

Other versions read, *“your yeshu'ah,”* ^{CJB} *“thy mercy,”* ^{MRD} *“the Savior sent from the,”* ^{TNT} *“Your deliverance,”* ^{ABP} *“what You have done to save Your people,”* ^{CEV} *“how You will save Your people,”* ^{ERV} *“Thy saving health.”* ^{JUB}

Several of the versions did a bad job in their handling of this text. First, note that Simeon confesses that what he had seen was according to God's *“word”* – *“according to Thy word.”* The word concerned a Person – *“the Lord's Christ.”* How is it, then, that some of the translators rendered the text: *“your yeshu'ah,”* ^{CJB} *“thy mercy,”* ^{MRD} *“the Savior sent from the,”* ^{TNT} *“Your deliverance,”* ^{ABP} *“what you have done to save Your people,”* ^{CEV} *“how You will save your people,”* ^{ERV} and *“thy saving health.”* ^{JUB}

While the word translated *“salvation”* can have the meaning of the *“way of salvation,”* or the means through which it is accomplished, the emphasis must be placed upon the Savior, whom, Simeon was holding in his arms. **Once this is done, we will see that salvation is, in fact, a Person. Everything required for salvation is wrapped up in the incarnate Word, with absolutely nothing lacking.**

It goes without saying that many saw Jesus in the flesh, or have been convinced that He really is a Person, yet have never associated Him with *“the salvation of God.”* **All of the promises concerning salvation and the One who would begin and finish it are wrapped in the babe Simeon was holding in his arms.** He saw the babe, and made all of the proper associations. He did not think of salvation being

deliverance from the Roman empire, or any other political entity. He did not see this salvation as being the restoration of the Jewish nation to prominence.

THOU HAST PREPARED

“ . . . Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people . . . ”

Other versions read, *“made ready,”* ^{BBE} *“prepared this salvation,”* ^{CEB} *“prepared Him,”* ^{IE} and *“it's now out in the open.”* ^{MESSAGE}

A Prepared Body

From one point of view, Simeon saw the embodiment of salvation in a *“body”* that had been prepared for the Savior. As it is written, *“Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me”* (Heb 10:5).

A Prepared Feast

From another point of view, this was the beginning preparation of the feast of salvation. In one of His matchless parables Jesus said, *“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for His Son, And sent forth His servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, He sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared My dinner: My oxen and My fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage”* (Mat 22:1-4). **The entrance of this child into the world was the commencement of the preparation of the feast of salvation that was prophesied of old time** (Isa 55:1-3).

Setting Forth the Prepared Remedy

From yet another vantage point, this was the beginning of the preparation of a propitiation for sin that God would *“set forth”* before men. *“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in*

Jesus" (Rom 3:24-26).

All of that, and more, is involved in the saying, "For mine eyes have seen thy Salvation."

A LIGHT TO LIGHTEN THE GENTILES
 ". . . A Light to lighten the Gentiles . . ."

Simeon saw it. This salvation would extend to the Gentiles, just as the prophets had said (Psa 2:8; 22:27; 46:10; 86:9; Isa 2:2-3; 11:10; 42:1-3,6; 49:6,22; 60:3,5; 66:19; Jer 16:19; Mal 1:11).

It took many of the Jews a considerable time to realize the fulness of those promises. It was not until the conversion of those at the house of Cornelius, at least ten years after Pentecost, that it finally came home to the leaders of the church at Jerusalem that the Gentiles were intentionally included in the salvation wrought by Christ (Acts 11:18; 15:11,14-17).

Simeon saw it when the Savior was not yet two months old! God opened his eyes to see it. May many others be granted to see this before they leave this world!

THE GLORY OF THY PEOPLE ISRAEL
 ". . . and the Glory of Thy people Israel."

Other versions read, "for glory to Your people Israel," ^{NIV} "bring glory to your people Israel," ^{GWN} "He is the glory of your people Israel" ^{NLT} and "to see and honor for Your people, Israel." ^{IE}

And what is "the glory" of God's people Israel? For some, it was the nation itself (Rom 2:8). For some, it was Abraham (John 8:33), or Moses

(John 5:45). For others, it was the Law (Rom 2:17). Some even thought of the Sabbath day as being the glory (Matt 12:2). Still others considered the glory to be the Temple (Matt 23:16-17; Acts 4:1-2). But what was the real "glory" of God's people Israel? What brings the greatest honor to them, and proclaims their greatest privilege?

It is the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. The benefits of that nation are listed by Paul, and Jesus is the grand conclusion: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Rom 9:4-5).

He is called "the Stone of Israel" (Gen 49:24), "the Consolation of Israel" (Lk 2:25), "the King of Israel" (John 1:49), and "King of the Jews" (Matt 2:2; 27:11).

Jesus Himself said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt 15:24) – not exclusively sent to them, but primarily.

Peter affirmed to the Jews, "Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

Paul wrote "that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Rom 15:8).

O, make no mistake about this, the Lord Jesus Christ is truly "the glory" of God's people Israel! Paul

reasoned on this matter in a very convincing way. "For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?" (Rom 11:24).

Think of the names ascribed to Jesus, and how they show Him to be "the glory of" God's people "Israel."

⇨ "The Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5).

⇨ "Consolation of Israel" (Luke 2:25).

⇨ "David" (Jer 30:9).

⇨ "Glory of Israel" (Lk 2:32).

⇨ "King of Israel" (John 1:49).

⇨ "The Root and Offspring of David" (Rev 22:16).

⇨ "Root of Jesse" (Isa 11:10; Rom 15:12).

⇨ "Ruler in Israel" (Micah 5:2).

⇨ "Seed of David" (Rom 1:3).

⇨ "The Shepherd, the Stone of Israel" (Gen 49:24).

⇨ "Son of David" (Matt 1:1).

⇨ "The Son of Abraham" (Matt 1:1).

⇨ "The Seed of Abraham" (Heb 2:15).

Nothing more is required to be said. Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world is, indeed, "the glory of" God's people, "Israel." This is what God has affirmed, and it is to be accepted.

JOSEPH AND HIS MOTHER MARVELED

"³³ And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him."

This is the second time Joseph and Mary have heard things about Jesus that apparently had not been told them before. The shepherds had

reported what was told to them, declaring that the announcement of a Savior was "glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Lk 2:10).

They also heard heavenly hosts praising God and saying, *"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"* (Luke 2:14). Now they hear Simeon say that the salvation of God has been *"prepared before the face of all people,"* and that Jesus was *"a Light to lighten the Gentiles,"* and *"the Glory of God's "people Israel"* as well. So far as the record is concerned, none of these things had been said to either Mary of Joseph.

JOSEPH AND MARY MARVEL

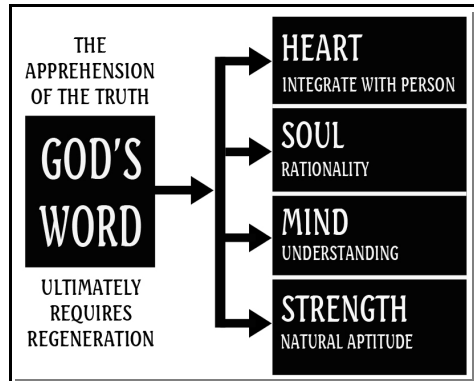
"And Joseph and his mother marveled . . ."

Other versions read, *"were amazed,"* ^{NASB} *"were marveling,"* ^{ASV} *"were full of wonder,"* ^{BBE} *"wondered,"* ^{DARBY} *"were wondering,"* ^{DOUAY} *"were astonished,"* ^{MRD} *"were surprised,"* ^{IE} *"were surprised,"* ^{WILLIAMS} and *"were speechless with surprise."* ^{MESSAGE}

The word translated *"marveled"* [thoumazo] means, *"TO WONDER, WONDER AT, MARVEL,"* ^{THAYER} *"BE ASTONISHED OR SURPRISED THAT, WONDER AT SOMETHING; BE AMAZED OR MARVEL AT; BE FILLED WITH WONDER, BE AMAZED."* ^{FRIBERG}

Here we have another confirmation that the plans, purposes, and works of God do not fit into the natural way of thinking. This should not surprise us, because God has made clear that particularly things relating to salvation are beyond human comprehension. As it is written, *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God"* (1 Cor 2:9-11).

In this text, when Joseph and Mary heard these things they did not disbelieve them, but marveled at them. **They were hearing things they could never have concluded – even from an astute study of the Scriptures.**



Ultimately, for the things God has prepared for them that love Him to be understood **when** they are heard, it is necessary for the person to be regenerated, born again, or justified. Those are the **only** people that God will reveal, or make known, such things. That is why, following the text cited above, it is written, *"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God"* (1 Cor 2:12).

Human faculties that are involved in the apprehension of the truth include, in order of their priority, heart, soul, mind, and strength.

- ⇨ **The heart** is the essential person – the center from which life is governed.
- ⇨ **The soul** includes the rational part of man, or the ability to reason, draw conclusions, and express oneself.
- ⇨ **The mind** is where understanding takes place, or a handle is put upon reality. This is where *"marveling," "astonishment,"* or *"surprise"* takes place.
- ⇨ **Strength** involves natural aptitude to use the various faculties with which one is endowed.

If you are in Christ you have learned by now that, when it comes to the things of God, or comprehending what is going on around you, these capacities are weak by nature. They have been marred by sin. There is a strain of religious thought that refuses

to accept this, clinging to the notion that men can comprehend the things of God simply by disciplined study and thought. However, this is not at all the case, and is to be rejected as spurious.

The things of God, particularly as they regard salvation, deal with realities that are outside the boundary of natural human aptitude. That is why regeneration is required to take hold of what God has revealed.

ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF THE TRUTH WAS MADE KNOWN WHEN JESUS WAS BORN

Actually, what was revealed when Christ was born was only a very small percentage of things related to the salvation He would effect. The whole of salvation had not yet been addressed.

To this point in Luke's Gospel, nothing has been said or known about the following.

- ⇨ What was involved in the Word becoming flesh (Phil 2:6-8).
- ⇨ That Jesus was coming primarily to do the will of God, not answer Israel's problems (Heb 10:5-10; John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38).
- ⇨ Regeneration (Tit 3:5)
- ⇨ Justification (Rom 5:1)
- ⇨ Faith that justifies (Rom 5:1; 10:17)
- ⇨ The gift of the Holy Spirit (Act2:38; 2 Cor 5:5).
- ⇨ Sanctification (2 Thess 2:13; 1 Pet 1:2).
- ⇨ The joining of Jew and Gentile into one body (Eph 2:16).
- ⇨ Reigning with Christ (2 Tim 2:12).
- ⇨ Receiving spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12; Rom 12:1-6; Eph 4:8-11).
- ⇨ Names written in heaven (Lk 10:20).
- ⇨ The New Covenant (Heb 8:10-12).

- ⇒ Being joined to the Lord (1 Cor 6:17).
- ⇒ The successful resistance of the devil (James 4:7; 1 Pet 5:7-8).
- ⇒ The ending of the Law as a means to righteousness (Rom 10:4).
- ⇒ Being made free from the Law of sin and death (Rom 8:2).
- ⇒ Being raised to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4).
- ⇒ God makes Jesus to be to us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30).
- ⇒ Redemption (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14).
- ⇒ Propitiation (Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10).
- ⇒ The Intercession of Jesus (Rom 8:34; Heb 7:25).
- ⇒ The Intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27)
- ⇒ The Mediation of Jesus (1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 12:24).
- ⇒ Being made joint heirs with Christ (Rom 8:17).
- ⇒ Teaching concerning the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15).
- ⇒ The High Priesthood of Christ (Heb 4:15; 5:5,10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21).

THINGS SPOKEN OF HIM

The tragedy of the whole situation is that the nominal church has a considerable distance to go to catch up with Simeon, Joseph, and Mary.

“ . . . at those things which were spoken of Him.”

Other versions read, *“being said about Him,”* ^{NASB} *“spoken concerning him,”* ^{ASV} and *“spoken touching him,”* ^{GENEVA}

And, what had Simeon said about Jesus?

- ⇒ His eyes had seen God’s salvation.
- ⇒ The salvation was prepared before the face of all people.
- ⇒ Jesus was *“a Light to lighten the Gentiles.”*
- ⇒ Jesus was the glory of God’s people, Israel.

How does that compare with what you personally know of Jesus? This is certainly not intended to deprecate Simeon, or Joseph and Mary. Rather, it once again sets before us what sin had done to the human race. **Prior to the exaltation of Christ, the truth about Christ was in small doses, and at sundry times** (Heb 1:1). Even that required an all-powerful God to break through the cloud of ignorance that sin had caused to envelop the people. The

souls with which we are dealing in this text (Simeon, Joseph, Mary) were among the most noble souls on the face of the earth. **And yet, at this time many of the very things you have come to see with relative clarity were astounding to them.**

The tragedy of the whole situation is that the nominal church has a considerable distance to go to catch up with Simeon, Joseph, and Mary. Perhaps this will help us to understand why such a level of spiritual ignorance exists in our time. **The truth of the matter is that in such an environment God simply does not make much known.** Yet, men are actually learning to adapt to such a circumstance.

God once said of Israel, *“For My people are foolish, They know Me not; They are stupid children, And they have no understanding. They are shrewd to do evil, But to do good they do not know”* ^{NASB} (Jer 4:22). **Now, I fear, the Lord must say that of much of the professing church.** I ask you, considering how much has been revealed, that a new and living way has been opened, that men are given access to God, and there is a new creation, how serious is this situation? How serious is it to be ignorant of God?

AND SIMEON BLESSED THEM

“ 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; 35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many

hearts may be revealed.”

SIMEON BLESSED THEM
“And Simeon blessed them . . .”

Other versions read, *“gave them his blessing,”* ^{BBE} and *“went on to bless*

them.” ^{MESSAGE}

I suppose that ordinarily, when a child was brought for dedication, Simeon would have blessed the child. **But this is not what He does with the Holy Child.** He seemed to sense, that

was not for him to do. It is particularly said of Jesus Christ, *"Whose (the Jews) are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen"*

Mary. She is the vessel God used to bring His only begotten Son into the world. As such, she has a special affiliation with Jesus. She is directly related with Jesus – His mother, but

THE FALL AND RISING AGAIN

" . . . the fall and rising again of many in Israel . . ."

Other versions read, *"fall and rise,"* NASB *"falling and rising,"* NIV *"cause of the downfall and the lifting up,"* BBE *"is the reason that many people in Israel will be condemned and many others will be saved,"* GWN *"cause many in Israel to fall, but he will be a joy to many others,"* NLT *"shall be the fall and resurrection of many,"* TNT *"for a downfall and a rising up,"* ABP *"will cause many people in Israel to fall and others to stand,"* CEV *"for the destruction and the salvation of many,"* GNB and *"marks both the failure and the recovery."* MESSAGE

These versions miss the point that is being made. While it is true that the presence of Jesus will cause these effects, the point being made is that this is the appointment of God. That is, Jesus was sent to CAUSE these opposing results.

(Rom 9:5).

The blessing of Mary and Joseph no doubt was intended to prepare them to raise this child.

I have never been satisfied with the academic definitions of *"bless."* Here are some of them: *"TO PRAISE, CELEBRATE WITH PRAISES; TO INVOKE BLESSINGS; TO CONSECRATE A THING WITH SOLEMN PRAYERS; TO ASK GOD'S BLESSING ON A THING, PRAY HIM TO BLESS IT TO ONE'S USE, PRONOUNCE A CONSECRATORY BLESSING, TO CAUSE TO PROSPER, TO MAKE HAPPY, TO BESTOW BLESSINGS ON,"* THAYER *"AS CALLING DOWN GOD'S GRACIOUS POWER ON PERSONS BLESS, INVOKE A BLESSING ON,"* FRIBERG *"TO SPEAK WELL OF, PRAISE, HONOR,"* LIDDELL-SCOTT *"REQUEST GOD'S FAVOR FOR SOMEONE,"* GINGRICH

Candidly, these are not satisfactory to me. In the English language *"bless"* means, *"TO INVOKE DIVINE CARE."* MERRIAM-WEBSTER I think that is a fairly good summation of what *"bless"* means in this text. **I see it as Simeon invoking care and direction from God in the matter of raising this Holy Child.** From what is said of Jesus when He was twelve years old, I gather that this blessing was honored and fulfilled by God in Joseph and Mary.

HE SAID UNTO MARY HIS MOTHER
" . . . and said unto Mary his mother . . ."

Now, a special word is directed to

Joseph does not have this kind of association. Mary is specifically referred to as *"His mother"* nineteen times in Scripture (Matt 1:18; 2:11,13,14,20, 21; 13:55; Mk 3:31; Lk 2:33,34,43, 48,51; Lk 8:19; John 2:5,12; 19:25,26), and as *"the mother of Jesus"* three times (John 2:1,3; Acts 1:14).

THIS CHILD IS SET FOR
"...Behold, this child is set for..."

Other versions read, *"is destined,"* NKJV *"is appointed,"* NASB *"will be,"* BBE *"assigned to be"* CEB *"will cause,"* CJB *"is the reason,"* GWN *"is set forth,"* MRD *"shall be,"* LIVING *"Many Jewish people,"* IE *"is situated,"* ABP and *"will cause."* CEV

The word from which *"set"* is translated has the following lexical meaning: *"to be (by God's intent) set, i.e. destined, appointed,"* THAYER *"of persons be appointed, be set, be destined,"* FRIBERG and *"be appointed, set, destined."* GINGRICH

This is apparently too strong for some of the translators. They diminish the power of the word by saying *"will be,"* BBE *"will cause,"* CJB *"is the reason,"* GWN and *"shall be."* LIVING These versions miss the point that is being made. While it is true that the presence of Jesus will cause these effects, the point being made is that this is **the appointment of God. That is, Jesus was sent to CAUSE these opposing results.** The Divine appointments are then specified.

This is a pointed teaching in apostolic doctrine, that **Jesus Himself is both the cause of people falling into condemnation, or rising to be saved.**

⇨ **THE PSALMIST WROTE:** *"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."* (Psa 118:23)

⇨ **ISAIAH PROPHECIED:** *"And He shall be for a Sanctuary; but for a Stone of stumbling and for a Rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken."* (Isa 8:14-15).

⇨ **PETER TAUGHT:** *"Unto you therefore which believe He is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the Stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the Head of the corner, And a Stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."* (1 Pet 2:7-8).

Jesus did come into the world *"to save sinners,"* and there can be no question about that (1 Tim 1:15). He did, by His own proclamation, come to *"seek and to save the lost"* (Luke 19:10). **However, that is not the only reason He came.** There are some other

things He came to do that are alluded to in our text.

⇒ TO CAUSE VARIANCE. *"For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household"* (Mat 10:35-36).

⇒ FOR JUDGMENT. *"And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind"* (John 9:39).

⇒ TO GIVE DIVISION. *"I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: For from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against her daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law"* (Luke 12:49-53).

It is to be acknowledged that, so far as God's "eternal purpose" (Eph:11) is concerned, **these are not the primary reasons Jesus came.** However, saving people did involve making a separation among men. There were individuals who would be rejected in the end. But that consignment to perdition would center around the Lord Jesus. **He would be the cause of both acceptance and rejection, of standing and stumbling.**

A SIGN SPOKEN AGAINST

" . . . and for a sign which shall be spoken against . . ."

Other versions read, *"a sign to be opposed,"* ^{NASB} *"a sign against which hard words will be said,"* ^{BBE} *"a sign that generates opposition"* ^{CEB} *"a sign which shall be contradicted,"* ^{DOUAY} *"a standard of contention,"* ^{MRD} *"a sign that will be*

rejected," ^{NET} *"He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him,"* ^{NLT} *"a proof from God which some people will not accept,"* ^{IE} *"for a token to be spoken against,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} *"a sign that will be disputed,"* ^{ISV} *and "to be a sign continuously disputed."* ^{WILLIAMS}

A "sign" is used to make some kind of distinction or identification. In the case of Jesus, **He was the appointed means of distinguishing the saved from the lost, the sheep from the goats, and the wheat from the tares.**

Mary would not be impervious to the words spoken against her Son, nor indifferent when He was finally tried and crucified. Who is able to imagine the impact of all these appointed things upon her.

Through Him those who were seeking for glory were distinguished from those who were not. Jesus is the Touchstone by which those who are accepted by God (Eph 1:6) are distinguished from those who are not.

Jesus drew out of people who they really were. For example, those who were rejected spoke against Him. Some of the charges leveled at Him are as follows.

- ⇒ *"That deceiver"* (Matt 27:63).
- ⇒ *"Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil"* [demon] (John 8:48).
- ⇒ *"Thou blasphemist"* (John 10:36).
- ⇒ *"He is beside Himself"* (Mk 3:21).
- ⇒ *"He saved others; Himself He cannot save"* (Mk 15:30).
- ⇒ *"Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners"* (Matt 11:19).
- ⇒ *"Art thou greater than our father*

Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" (John 8:53)

⇒ *"We know that this Man is a sinner"* (John 9:24).

Jesus Himself is the ultimate "Sign" – the Sign of what God thinks of and has provided for a fallen race.

A SWORD SHALL PIERCE THY OWN SOUL

" . . . (Yea, a sword shall pierce

through thy own soul also). . ."

Other versions read, *"and a sword will pierce even your own soul,"* ^{NASB} *"And a sword will go through your heart,"* ^{BBE} *"And a sword will pierce your innermost being too,"* ^{CEB} *"and also a dart will pierce thy own soul,"* ^{MRD} *and "and also thine own soul shall a sword pass through."* ^{YLT}

Mary would not be impervious to the words spoken against her Son, nor indifferent when He was finally tried and crucified. Who is able to imagine the impact of all these appointed things upon her. It was, indeed, like a sword being pushed through her heart, and causing unspeakable sorrow and grief. I imagine that no soul was as happy to see the risen Christ as that of Mary.

All of this is made known to her at the beginning of Jesus' life, at the very time when He was being dedicated to the Lord. Knowing the tenderness of Mary's heart and assuming that Zacharias and Elizabeth had told her of the ministry of John the Baptist, as soon as John commenced peaching, Mary would have known the sword that

would pierce through her heart was being whetted.

THAT THE THOUGHTS OF MANY HEARTS MAYBE REVEALED

“ . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

Other versions read, “-- to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed,” ^{NASB} “All this will happen in order to reveal many people’s inmost thoughts,” ^{CJB} “that the thoughts of many hearts may be opened,” ^{GENEVA} “that the thoughts of the hearts of many may be disclosed,” ^{MRD} “As a result, the deepest thoughts of many

hearts will be revealed,” ^{NLT} “that the reasonings of many hearts may be revealed.” ^{YLT}

All of this was done in order that the thoughts of many hearts might be known – what they really thought of God. Some, who thought they were not personally murderers, hated Jesus with such venom, they plotted how to have Him killed as a malefactor who had blasphemed God. That way their Law, they thought, would be honored, and the Law of the state could shoulder the responsibility. That is how their utter hatred of Jesus would be revealed – not a hatred that rose from being

abused, or robbed, or in any way put to a social disadvantage by Jesus – but because of what He taught, and who He said He was.

Whether men utter words or not, everyone who fails to believe on Christ, then live for Him, have spoken against Him. By their actions they have suggested He is unworthy of their commitment, and that He has misrepresented who He is and what He demands of men. They display their hatred for Him by refusing to trust Him, follow Him, and serve Him. By choosing their now will over His will, they are declaring their unbelief and hatred.

THERE WAS ONE ANNA, A PROPHETESS

“ ³⁶ And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; ³⁷ And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. ³⁸ And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

This entire event is being orchestrated from heaven. Something has occurred that must be published, and it must be by a competent person.

prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser . . .”

Other versions read, “Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of ^{Phanuel}, of the tribe of Asher,” ^{NKJV} “a prophet,” ^{NRSV} “a descendant of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher.” ^{GWN}

Here was a woman prophet, whose lineage traced back to Asher, the eleventh son of Jacob, born through Zilpah. The birth had made Zilpah happy, so she named that son “Asher,” when means “happiness” (Gen 30:13). Here, hundreds of years later, there surfaces in the Temple a prophetess

“ . . . she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity . . .”

Other versions read, “She was advanced in years, having lived with a husband seven years after her marriage,” ^{NASB} “she was very old, and after seven years of married life,” ^{BBE} “having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,” ^{ESV} and “she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years.” ^{NLT}

The word “virginity” is translated from a word [parthenia] that means, “VIRGINITY,” ^{THAYER} “VIRGINIA, AS HAVING HAD NO SEXUAL INTERCOURSE,” ^{FRIBERG} “THE STATE OF A PERSON WHO HAS NOT HAD SEXUAL INTERCOURSE,” ^{LOUW-NIDA} “VIRGINITY,” ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} AND “VIRGIN.” ^{GINGRICH}

The meaning is absolutely consistent in all etymological resources. Yet, more modern versions consistently avoid the use of “virginity” in this text. Instead, they read, “after her marriage,” ^{NASB/NIV/NRSV/CJB/CSB/ISV/LEB} “seven years of married life,” ^{BBE} “after she married,” ^{CEB} “after they were married,” ^{GWN} “having been married,” ^{NET} “she had been married,” ^{NJB/IE/GNB/GOODSPEED/MESSAGE} “they had been married,” ^{NLT} “seven years of marriage,” ^{LIVING} “after her maidenhood,” ^{WEYMOUTH/MRD} “after her girlhood,” ^{MONTGOMERY} “in her youth,” ^{CEV} and “seven years of married life.” ^{PHILLIPS}

However, if language reflects the moral state the people speaking it, and linguistic experts say that it does, then the society at the time of those later translators had lost ground morally.

Now we read of a woman that is not mentioned any other place.

ANNA, A PROPHETESS

“And there was one Anna, a

whose lineage is traced back to Asher. He was born when Jacob was still serving Laban.

SHE WAS OF GREAT AGE

The meaning of the text is that she was married for seven years, which marriage commenced with the end of her virginity. I see no valid reason why it should not be stated that way, or what rules of language were followed in not stating it that way.

I know that, for some, this may be inconsequential. However, if language reflects the moral state the people speaking it, and linguistic experts say that it does, then the society at the time of those later translators had lost ground morally.

SHE WAS A WIDOW

“ . . . And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years . . . ”

Other versions read, *“she was a widow until she was eighty-four (footnote = “widow for eighty-four years”, NIV “She had been a widow for eighty-four years” BBE “She was now an 84-year-old widow CEB “she had been a widow even for fourscore and four years,” ERV “she was widow about four score and four years,” GENEVA “she had been a widow for 84 years,” GWN “was a widow of about eighty and four years,” MRD “she had lived as a widow since then for eighty-four years,” NET “She had been a widow for 84 years,” IE “as a widow for eighty-four years.” ISV*

You can see there is a significant difference in the various translations. Either Anna was eighty four years old, or she had been a widow for eighty-four years. If she had been married for seven years, and was now eighty four years old, she would have been married at age of seventy-seven. If she been widowed for eighty-four years, and was married for seven years (=91 years), she would be well over one hundred years old. If married at fourteen, which would be considered the youngest, she was one hundred and five years old at this time.

In my judgment, the phrase *“great age,”* or *“advanced in age,”* and *“very”* old suggest she was over one hundred, which would have been unusually old. That is my preference.

SHE DEPARTED NOT FROM THE TEMPLE

“ . . . which departed not from the

temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. . . ”

Other versions read, *“she never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers,” NASB “She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.” NIV*

This was truly an extraordinary woman, who had given herself completely to the Lord. Night and day she was in the Temple, living there, and serving God with fastings and prayers. This would not have been allowed by some sects of our day – prophetess or not.

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COMING IN THAT INSTANT

“ . . . And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord . . . ”

Behold the timing, which was doubtless being orchestrated from the heavenly throne. This was something that the Lord wanted published, and He was particular about who will do it.

As soon as Anna came, and apparently upon hearing the words of Simeon, she picked up on what was happening, and *“likewise”* gave thanks to the Lord–i.e. joining the small group with insight and gratefulness.

SPAKE OF HIM

“ . . . and spake of Him to all them . . . ”

Other versions read, *“continued to speak of Him,” NASB “spoke about the child,” NIV “and to speak about the child,” NRSV “talking of him to all,” BBE “speak about Jesus to everyone,” CEB and “was speaking concerning him.” YLT*

Anna was not speaking about Simeon, or Joseph and Mary, but about the Child – particularly what Simeon had said about Him.

- ⇨ Simeon had seen God’s salvation.
- ⇨ This was something God had prepared.

- ⇨ The child was sent to be a light to lighten the Gentiles.
- ⇨ He was the glory of Israel.
- ⇨ He was set for the fall and rising of many.
- ⇨ He was a Sign that would be spoken against.
- ⇨ Things would take place that would pierce through Mary’s heart.
- ⇨ The thoughts of many hearts would be revealed.

Who could possibly be the catalyst for such things but the promised Messiah! They all pivoted upon “the child,” not yet two months old. Yet, there was Divine destiny in all of this that could not possibly be

thwarted.

ALL THEM WHO LOOKED FOR REDEMPTION

“ . . . that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

Other versions read, *“all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem,”* ^{NIV} *“waiting for the freeing of Jerusalem,”* ^{BBE} *“to all that looked for the redemption of Israel,”* ^{DOUAY} *“all who were waiting for Jerusalem to be set free,”* ^{GWN} *“all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem,”* ^{NJB} *“everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem,”* ^{NLT} *“telling everyone in Jerusalem who had been awaiting the coming of the Savior that the Messiah had finally arrived,”* ^{LIVING} *“Waiting for a ransoming in Jerusalem,”* ^{ABP} *“everyone who hoped for Jerusalem to be set free,”* ^{CEV} *“waiting for God to free Jerusalem,”* ^{ERV} and *“all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

What were the people looking or

waiting for? The various versions present different pictures.

- ⇨ The redeeming or liberation of the city of Jerusalem (“of Jerusalem”). ^{NIV}
- ⇨ All who were looking for the redemption of Israel. ^{DOUAY}
- ⇨ The redemption that would be accomplished in Jerusalem (IN Jerusalem). ^{ABP}
- ⇨ Everyone in Jerusalem who had been waiting for the Savior. ^{LIVING}

The word translated “in” (en) has the following lexical meaning: “IN, ON, AT, WITH, BY, AMONG; OF PLACE PROPER; A. IN THE INTERIOR OF SOME WHOLE; WITHIN THE LIMITS OF SOME SPACE, ^{THAYER} “THE PRIMARY IDEA IS WITHIN, IN, WITHINNESS, DENOTING STATIC POSITION OR TIME,” ^{FRIBERG} “A POSITION DEFINED AS BEING WITHIN CERTAIN LIMITS - ‘INSIDE, WITHIN, IN,” ^{LOUW-NIDA} “OF PLACE, IN,” ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

I gather that the meaning is that

Anna told every who was longing for the redemption that would take place in Jerusalem. This is what Joel prophesied: *“And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call”* (Joel 2:32).

Where did Anna give this report? Was it that she went throughout Jerusalem finding these souls. I think not. Because it is expressly said that she did not depart from the Temple, I assume she told Temple worshipers, whom she personally knew, and probably with whom, she had fellowship when they came to the Temple. She was a prophetess, and such are noted for speaking. I do not doubt that the Lord enabled her to expound the words of Simeon with insight – words that would be especially comforting to those who were living in expectation.

THEY RETURNED TO GALILEE

“³⁹ And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

WHEN THEY HAD PERFORMED

“And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord...”

Other versions read, *“done everything required by the Law”* ^{NIV} *“finished everything,”* ^{NRSV} *“accomplished all things,”* ^{ASV} and *“fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord.”* ^{NAB}

With all that had taken place, and that had been said concerning blessing, sorrow, acceptance, and rejection, **Joseph and Mary did not forget to fulfill the requirements of the Law.**

This was all done **before** sin was taken away (John 1:29), **before** there was a new birth (1 Pet 1:23) and a new creation (2 Cor 5:17), **before** a new and living way had ben opened (Heb 10:22), **before** Satan had been dealt a death blow (Heb 2:14), **before** principalities and powers had been plundered (Col 2:15, and **before** people were joined to

the Lord (1 Cor 6:17) and **before** they received the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:15).

Now that all of these things have taken place, this kind of obedience ought to be common among us.

THEY RETURNED

“ . . . they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

They had been away for about two months, and now they would resume life in Nazareth –but this time they would be raising *“the Son of God.”*

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 1/9/15. We will continue our series of lessons in the Gospel of Luke. The eighth lesson will cover verses 40 thru 52 of chapter 2: “THE TWELVE YEAR OLD JESUS.” Jesus’ parents went every year to Jerusalem for he Feast of the Passover. Something very special happened when Jesus was twelve years old. Without telling His parents, He stayed in Jerusalem when they headed back to Nazareth. Something of His character and manners were especially revealed – His priorities and His preferences. What took place was not understand by Mary and Joseph at that time, and moved Mary to express her concern to young Jesus. The first recorded words of Jesus were spoken at that time. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.