

The Biblical Significance of Christ's Birth

In Relation to Israel and the Gentile Nations

Luke 2:25-32

Introduction

²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." (NKJV)

- I. The Introduction of Simeon – Vss. 25-26
 - A. The Character of Simeon – Vs. 25

“Just” (δίκαιος) refers to his character from a legal perspective. He was just, or righteous, because he kept the law of Moses.

“Devout” (εὐλαβής) refers to Simeon’s personal reverence for God. Taking these two elements together, we understand that Simeon was a justified believer.

“Waiting for the Consolation of Israel” refers to Simeon’s attitude of expectation (waiting = προσδεχόμενος) for the coming of Israel’s Messiah to restore the nation according to the Biblical predictions. “Consolation” translates παράκλησις, by metonymy, that which affords comfort or refreshment; that is, the Messianic salvation (see Thayer).

“The Holy Spirit was upon him” is a way of saying that he was influenced by the Holy Spirit in some ways. These ways are explained in vss 26, and 27a.

- B. The Revelation to Simeon – Vs. 26

The first result of the Holy Spirit’s being upon Simeon is that he received the revelation of vs. 26. He would not die until he had seen the Messiah. Scripture records only this one individual who received prior knowledge of the coming of Messiah apart from the angelic messages to Mary and Joseph.

The second result is found in the first part of vs. 27: he came by the Spirit into the temple. This was so that the revelation could be specifically fulfilled. There he saw the Lord Jesus as a baby, and recognized the fulfillment of the prediction.

- II. The Events in the Temple – Vss. 27 – 32
 - A. The Fulfillment of the Legal Requirement – Vs. 27

See vs. 21. The law required that a male child be circumcised on the eighth day (Leviticus 12:1-3.) The law then required them to present their **firstborn** to God (Ex. 13:2, Ex. 13:12) 33 days later and to bring an offering for Mary’s **purification** after childbirth (Lev.12:1-8).

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B. The Statement of Simeon – Vss. 28-31

1. Simeon's Reaction to the Child – Vss. 28-29

Simeon “blessed (εὐλογέω) God.” This blessing is not simply an act of praise, but a statement of God's fulfillment of His prediction. Vs. 29 is a statement of Simeon's blessing, “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word.”

2. Simeon's Recognition of the Child – Vss. 30 - 32

a. The Lord Jesus Christ is Salvation Incarnate - Vss. 30-31

- i. “For my eyes have seen Your salvation” is a reference to the Babe which Simeon held. This is not salvation in the abstract, but salvation in the flesh. Simeon is thinking of Christ's Messianic salvation, not the redemptive work of Christ on the cross which had not yet been predicted.
- ii. “Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples” is a strong Hebraistic idiom showing the extent of God's provision of Messianic salvation. God's plan was not limited to Israel, even in the OT. It included the Gentiles as well.

b. Christ has a Two-Fold Designation – Vs. 32

- i. He is designated “A Light to Bring Revelation to the Gentiles”

In the OT the Gentiles as such had no special relationship to God. They were in darkness and needed illumination. They were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.” But God *always* had a special plan for the nations apart from Israel. God in His graciousness left no one out of His divine reckoning. A provision for the nations was included in the Messianic hope of Israel.

Be not confused. That hope is not being experienced by the Church today. It is part of Israel's messianic message that the Gentiles, as Gentiles, can come to God. And this will happen during the tribulation period, during which many non-Jews will become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ as Messiah.

- ii. He is designated, “The Glory of Your People Israel”

The idea of glory as expressed by the Israelite Simeon had a strong Old Testament flavor to it. The word “glory” (δόξα as the LXX translation of the Hebrew כְּבוֹד) in the OT referred to the visual manifestation of the very essence of God.

Simeon sees in the Babe the actual presence of God on earth. Evidently Simeon recognized the necessity for the deity of the Messiah of Israel.