

# Luke 2b: HG Bishop Youssef

His Grace Bishop Youssef ~ فسوي ابن الالة فاين تاطع • LUKE 2: 25 - 40 ~ Bible Study

## Simeon's Praises

<sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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, <sup>28</sup> he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace,  
According to Your word;

<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation

<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel."

<sup>33</sup> And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against <sup>35</sup> (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

- Simeon

- His name means "The Listener"
- He was a devout Jew waiting for the fulfillment of the prophecies
- Holy Tradition tells us that Simeon was one of the Seventy Jewish Elders asked by Ptolemy to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek Language (Septuagint)
  - The Septuagint is the official translation of the Orthodox Church
  - All the New Testament writings when they quote the OT are quoting the Septuagint
- When Simeon was translating Isaiah "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel."
  - The Hebrew word can be translated to "young girl" or "virgin" (two different words in Greek).
  - Simeon decided to translate to the Greek word "young girl."
  - In a vision, he was told to use the word for "virgin" ( ) and he was assured that he would not die until he sees this Babe who is born of a Virgin

- Matthew's Gospel used (Virgin) when quoting Isaiah
- Simeon was moved by the Holy Spirit to go to the Temple right now
- Just and devout
  - Just means he is observing all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless
  - Devout means he is observing the Law faithfully
- Considered a Prophet because he prophesied about St Mary and the Lord Jesus Christ
- Tradition says he was about 360 years old - now he is eager to be released from this world after he witnessed the salvation of the whole world in Christ
- Blessing of Simeon
  - The Holy Spirit granted to him to witness the prophecy that he translated
    - Those who are led by the Holy Spirit and come to the Church to worship will undoubtedly meet with God
  - Simeon identified this Babe as the Messiah and Savior of all people
  - Now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word
    - Now I know for sure that this prophecy was "Virgin" - Now I have peace because I have witnessed the assurance of salvation for the world.
    - He is talking here about his death - but we know that because of Christ and the Cross, death lost its sting. Death even lost its name - as we say now "there is no death for Your servants but a departure" and Simeon uses this word.
  - For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples
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  - A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles
    - The Gentiles were sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death because they did not know God
    - Those who are separated from God, until now, are sitting in darkness and ignorance
    - "light of the Gentiles" is also mentioned throughout the Old Testament
      - Isaiah 49:6
      - Isaiah 42:6
  - And the glory of Your people Israel
    - He came to Israel first (He came to His own and His own did not receive Him)
    - Israel here does not refer to the nation of Israel, but refers to the people of God... we, Christians, are the new Israel and God is our glory.
  - Clearly, St Mary memorized this prayer and kept it in her heart and mentioned it to St Luke for him to record it for us.
- Simeon Blessed Them
  - Them refers to Mary and Joseph only
  - In Arabic it says "barekhoma" which means "Blessed them (two)" as opposed to "barekhom" which means "Blessed them (plural)"
  - Simeon realized by the Holy Spirit that he cannot bless Jesus
- Simeon Addresses Mary
  - This is unusual because in the Jewish culture it would be more typical to address the father/man

- This child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel
  - Fall is because Israel rejected the Messiah; but in the last days, before the Second Coming, many of Israel will believe in Christ (Romans 11:26) and this is the Rising
  - Fall and Rising refers to many who might accept Christ and many who don't
- A sign which will be spoken against
  - The sign of the Cross: to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness (1 Cor 1:23)
  - Christians will carry this sign and will be persecuted for their beliefs
- Sword will pierce through St Mary's soul
  - Anguish and wound of her heart when she stood by the Cross and witnessed her Son's brutal death
- The thoughts of many hearts may be revealed
  - In times of persecution, it is revealed and clear who is Christian. Who accepts Christ and who rejects. Who is on His side and who is against Him

## Anna Bears Witness

<sup>36</sup> Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; <sup>37</sup> and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

- Anna was probably around 105 years old
- Seems to come from a very well-known family in the tribe of Asher
- She devoted her life to the temple despite her husband dying very young - she did not consider re-marrying
- The Holy Spirit guided her to come in that moment
- She declared the good news to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem

## The Holy Family Returns to Nazareth

<sup>39</sup> So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- According to the Law of the Lord: St Mary and St Joseph were obedient to the word of God
- When did Christ go to Egypt?
  - Between the Presentation in the Temple and the return to Nazareth, the events of the Gospel of Matthew happened
  - They remained in Jerusalem, the wise men visited, Herod sent to kill the children in Bethlehem, they fled to Egypt, they returned to Nazareth
- St Luke in these words understands and confirms the true Humanity of the Lord Christ. Christ is perfectly divine and perfectly human, and these two natures are united together without mingling, without confusion and without alteration.

- The body that Christ took from St Mary is perfectly human - Human Body, Human Soul, Human Spirit.
  - Filled with wisdom - He is speaking about how Christ grew little by little in wisdom despite having perfect understanding and perfect and complete wisdom.
  - The grace of God was upon Him: He knew no sin. He lived a pure life. In the same way, if any of us live a life of repentance (i.e. a pure life), then the grace of God will be upon us.
  - Why don't we have more stories about Christ's childhood?
    - The Evangelists intended to give an account of Jesus' public ministry, not His private life or His childhood
    - We don't know anything except what we read in Matthew 1-2 and Luke 1-2
  - Christ set a perfect example for all children of all ages - He is obedient to His parents, living a life without sin.
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