

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Luke 2: 25-38

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank God, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Luke Chapter 2. We will read verses 25-38 today.

Verse 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.”

When Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke, he specially collected many early materials; at that time many eyewitnesses were still alive, and Luke interviewed many people. He deliberately recorded some very pious Israelites—those who had long been waiting for the Consolation of Israel, the Messiah—who were both just and devout. In this time of transition between the Old and New Testaments, Luke shows how God took care of these faithful servants of His. Here he specially records one man named Simeon. The name Simeon means “God has heard.” Luke calls him just and devout, and he was constantly waiting for the Consolation of Israel—that is, the Messiah—and the Holy Spirit was upon him. He was a pious Israelite who obeyed God and knew God's will.

Verse 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.”

The Chinese Union Version translates it as “the Lord's Christ,” but the three words “the Lord's” (所立的) are not in the original text. It is that he received revelation from the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. “Lord” indicates that He is the One who comes to rule and reign; “Christ”

means the Anointed One, the Messiah longed for by the people. Although Simeon was advanced in years, he received God's revelation in prayer, knowing that before he died he would surely see the Lord's Christ—the Messiah, the Anointed One—for whom he had waited many years. Just when Joseph and Mary brought the child into the temple, Simeon was also moved by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 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,”

Joseph and Mary were also a devout Israelite family. When the days of purification were completed, after forty days, they brought their infant child Jesus Christ to the temple to perform the dedication according to the regulations of the law.

Verse 28: “he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:”

Simeon was a man full of the Holy Spirit; there is a deep response between Spirit and spirit. The moment he saw the Lord Jesus Christ, he was filled with emotion in his spirit and immediately began to bless God. The situation brought forth by the moving of the Holy Spirit is almost always immediate praise to God. How did Simeon praise?

Verse 29: “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word;”

Because what he had been waiting for was the Messiah of Israel, the Anointed One. The moment he saw Jesus Christ, he was moved in his spirit and recognized that this was the One God had promised. Therefore he prayed to God: “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word!”

Verses 30–32: “For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”

His prayer is truly great; his praise is truly complete. He had already set his whole life aside, because he had seen the Messiah—he could go directly to be with the Lord. This boldness of heart is something we Christians today often cannot attain. We are frequently caught up in the worries of daily provision, living in the busyness of life. God, through His word, has given us many enlightments, and in our life He has given us many revelations; but we cannot be as bold as Simeon—once we see the Lord, to say, “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, because I have seen Your salvation.”

Today, every one of us experiences God’s salvation upon us daily, yet we often cannot be satisfied with God’s salvation alone. Beyond God’s salvation we still demand many other things. This shows that our heart is truly not pure enough, not like Simeon, who purely and simply looked to God. Moreover, his knowledge of this Messiah, this Anointed One, was more complete than that of his contemporaries.

Why? He said: “A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles.” In thousands of years of Israel’s history, they always considered themselves a specially beloved and chosen people. In fact, this was true—God chose Israel and set them apart in order to bring forth Jesus Christ. But the coming of Jesus Christ was not only for Israel; Simeon knew very well that He was prepared for all peoples, that He was a light to the Gentiles; of course, He was also the glory of His people Israel. Simeon was truly a wise elder; he knew God’s will, knew God’s salvation, and knew that God’s salvation was for all humanity.

Verses 33–35: “And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. 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 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’”

Simeon blessed them and spoke these words to the child's mother Mary as a blessing to her. He said: "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel." He truly understood God's will; from the later ministry of Jesus Christ's life, what he said was entirely accurate. Jesus was destined for the fall of many and the rising of many. Jesus is that Stone: to the unbelieving He is a stumbling stone; to the believing He is the chief cornerstone.

Jesus is so; today as Christians we continue the ministry of Jesus Christ, and the gospel we preach is the same: the gospel we preach will cause some to fall if they do not believe, and cause some to rise if they believe. Paul also continued this ministry; in his ministry of preaching the gospel he said he was the aroma of Christ, an aroma that brought death to some and life to others. To the unbelieving it is the aroma of death; to the believing it is the aroma of life. These characteristics of Christians are clearly described in Simeon's blessing to Mary.

"This Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." When people come before Jesus Christ, the thoughts of every heart will be exposed. There can no longer be any pretense, no longer any pretending, because He is the light of life; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. When we preach the gospel we bring light into people's darkness: if they receive it, it becomes their salvation; if they reject it, they remain in darkness.

Simeon also said: "yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also." I believe Mary may not have understood this at the time, but thirty-three and a half years later, when Mary stood at the foot of Jesus' cross, gazing up at Jesus' body hanging on the cross, I believe Mary fully understood what Simeon had said: "a sword will pierce through your own soul also."

This pious and just Simeon had a spirit that was truly transparent; the moment he saw Jesus he knew He was the One God had prepared for all peoples and the glory of Israel. When he saw Mary, he also foresaw that one day her soul would be pierced by a sword. In Luke's record, not only does he record this pious, just servant of God, Simeon, but he also records the prophetess.

Verses 36–37: “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; 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.”

This prophetess Anna, in human eyes, seemed very unfortunate; she became a widow when young. After becoming a widow, she devoted the rest of her life into God’s hand and lived in the temple. She did not depart from the temple, fasting and praying, serving God night and day. Therefore Luke calls her a prophetess. For these people who have nothing in the world, yet are able to devote their whole life to the temple—just as today to the church, serving the saints—these people are extremely in need of being remembered and honored by the saints.

This prophetess Anna, under Luke’s pen, was also present when Jesus was brought to the temple for dedication. Not only was Simeon there, but the prophetess Anna was also there, because she was one who did not depart from the temple, fasting and praying, serving God night and day.

Verse 38: “And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

In human eyes she seemed to have nothing, but in God’s eyes she was carrying out the most glorious ministry. The Israelites had always been waiting for their Savior Messiah to come, and God entrusted this ministry to this prophetess Anna. She spoke of this Child to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. She was, as it were, preaching the gospel before Jesus even began His public ministry, while Jesus was still an infant. She received revelation and began to proclaim the gospel.

In the time of transition between the Old and New Testaments, through Luke’s writing God specially records a group of just, devout Israelites who were waiting for the Messiah—their longing heart, their faithful service—through these brief records we know: God remembers His covenant; God takes care of those who have

waited for Him. Our situation is certainly not like Simeon's, and probably not as helpless as Anna's; they truly are very good examples for us.

In the Old Testament, during the four hundred years when God stopped speaking to Israel, they truly lived in a dark age; spiritually there was no word from God, and materially they had nothing. They could only serve God and worship God in the temple, but God remembered them. When the Messiah came, God specially revealed Himself to them, giving them the opportunity to be the first to receive the Messiah, the first to proclaim this great grace for the Messiah. If we are willing to set ourselves aside and do something for God, God remembers it.

Let us pray together: Lord, truly place the heart and aspiration of Simeon and Anna within us. You have let us enjoy so much of Your grace; make us also a group of people who proclaim grace, able to testify of Your grace among all peoples. Bless my life today to be a life of preaching the gospel. Thank You. We pray in the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ.