

INTRODUCTION

In Luke's detailed narrative about this episode occurring 40 days after Jesus' birth, we learn that Jesus is not only going to be a bringer of peace; He's also been appointed to be a controversy. Simeon, like most of the other people alive at the time Jesus was born, knew the prophecies about the coming Messiah very well. For those of us who do not have such awareness, these references related to Jesus' fulfillment of prophecy can get overlooked in the story.

All of the words concerning Jesus as Messiah teach us what we can expect when He comes newly into our lives, whether for the first time or for the first time today. What His presence addresses in us is usually the very thing we most resist changing—and the very thing that will bring us the most peace and liberty if we accept His way through it. What we choose to do with the cornerstone of God's construction in us and for us will determine whether we rise or fall...

SIMEON'S PROPHECY

And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 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. And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Now, Lord, Thou dost let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for my eyes have seen thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed—and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

Luke 2:25-35

Simeon told Mary that Jesus would become a point of stumbling in people's lives. Prophecies from hundreds of years ago indicated that the Messiah would be as solid and foundational as a cornerstone—anyone who disregards Him will build their lives out of plumb with the truth. If we oppose Him and His reign, we will suffer great loss—not because we get "punished" for it, but because of the choice we've made to live outside of the building He has constructed for us.

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES ABOUT MESSIAH

The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief corner stone. This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:22-24

It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread. Then He shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many will stumble over them, then they will fall and be broken; they will even be snared and caught.

Isaiah 8:13-15

Therefore thus says the Lord God, "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a costly cornerstone for the foundation, firmly placed. He who believes in it will not be disturbed. And I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the level; then hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the secret place. And your covenant with death shall be cancelled, and your pact with Sheol shall not stand; when the overwhelming scourge passes through, then you become its trampling place.

Isaiah 28:16-18

WORDS THAT JUDGE US

Simeon also spoke of judgment. Mary and everyone else in the world will be judged according to Jesus and the word of the Lord. When you think of judgment, though, don't necessarily think only in terms of final judgment; think more in terms of what gets revealed about yourself...

And blessed is he who keeps from stumbling over Me.

Luke 7:23

And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

John 12:47-48

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.

Hebrews 4:12-13