

Will You Fall or Rise Because of Jesus?

International Bible Lesson

Luke 2:25-38

Sunday, December 29, 2013

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“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; (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:34-35—KJV).

“Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too’” (Luke 2:34-35—NRSV).

When Joseph and Mary took the baby Jesus to the temple in order to obey God’s law, they heard from God when the Holy Spirit guided Simeon to meet them. Simeon prophesied how people would respond to their child after He began His ministry. God wanted to prepare Mary for Jesus’ rejection and acceptance as the Messiah of God. We know from history that when Simeon foretold Jesus’ parents that many would fall because of Jesus that God did not mean that their Roman conquerors would fall in their lifetime. Rather, many political and religious leaders who opposed Jesus would fall further away from God, and some would lose their prominent places in the world. On the other hand, many of those the world considered poor and insignificant would follow Jesus and rise to places of prominence in the kingdom of God as apostles and prophets. Many people learned the inner thoughts of priests, scribes, and Pharisees when they opposed Jesus; their opposition revealed that they were more concerned with their prestige, power, and wealth than prayerfully reading the Scriptures and seeking the truth regarding Jesus’ teachings and miracles. Simeon foretold that opposition to Jesus would lead to Mary’s suffering too; however, the Holy Spirit did not reveal to them that while serving as the Messiah Jesus would suffer and die on the cross in order to save all who would trust in Him as Lord and Savior.

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Thinking Further

1. List five ways that Luke described the type of person Simeon was.
2. Can you think of any others in the Bible (Old and New Testaments) who had some or all of the five qualities that Simeon demonstrated?
3. Can you think of anyone you have known (or have heard about other than those in the Bible) who had some or all of the five qualities that Simeon demonstrated?
4. Why do you think all of these people demonstrated these qualities?
5. What did Anna do that prepared her to speak about the baby Jesus?