

## **The Birth of Jesus**

**Luke 2:34 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 :35 (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."**

After this initial outburst of praise to God for the Messiah, Simeon blessed the parents, then spoke prophetically to Mary.

The prophecy consisted of four parts: 1. This Child was destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel. Those who were arrogant, unrepentant, and unbelieving would fall and be punished. Those who humbled themselves, repented of their sins, and received the Lord Jesus would rise and be blessed.

2. The Child was destined ... for a sign which will be spoken against. There was a special significance connected with the Person of Christ. His very presence on earth proved a tremendous rebuke to sin and unholiness, and thus brought out the bitter animosity of the human heart.

3. Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also. Simeon was here predicting the grief which would flood Mary's heart when she would witness the crucifixion of her Son (John 19:25).

4. ... that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. The way in which a person reacts to the Savior is a test of his inward motives and affections.

Thus Simeon's song includes the ideas of touchstone, stumblingstone, stepping-stone, and sword.

**Luke 2:36 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; :37 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.**

Anna the prophetess, was, like Simeon, a member of the faithful remnant of Israel who was waiting for the advent of the Messiah. She was of the tribe of Asher (meaning happy, blessed), one of the ten tribes carried into captivity by the Assyrians in 721 B.C.

Anna must have been over one hundred years old, having been married for seven years, then widowed for eighty-four years. As a prophetess, she undoubtedly received divine revelations and served as a mouthpiece for God.

She was faithful in her attendance at public services at the temple, worshiping with fastings and supplications night and day. Her great age did not deter her from serving the Lord. What can we learn from this?

**Luke 2:38 And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.**

Just as Jesus was being presented to the Lord, and as Simeon was speaking to Mary, Anna came up to this little cluster of people. She gave thanks to the Lord for the promised Redeemer, then spoke about Jesus to the faithful ones in Jerusalem who were expecting redemption.

**Luke 2:39 So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth.**

After Joseph and Mary had performed the rites of purification and dedication, they returned to Galilee, to their home town, Nazareth. Luke omits any mention of the visit of the wise men or of the flight into Egypt.

## **The Boyhood of Jesus**

**Luke 2:40 And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**

The normal growth of the Child Jesus is set forth as follows: Physically He grew and became strong in spirit. He passed through the usual stages of physical development, learning to walk, talk, play, and work.

Because of this He can sympathize with us in every stage of our growth.

Mentally He was filled with wisdom. He not only learned His ABC's, His numbers, and all the common knowledge of that day, but He grew in wisdom, that is, in the practical application of this knowledge to the problems of life.

Spiritually the favor of God was upon Him. He walked in fellowship with God and in dependence on the Holy Spirit. He studied the Bible, spent time in prayer, and delighted to do His Father's will.

**Luke 2:41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. :42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.**

The Old Testament law required all Israelite males to appear before the Lord three times each year (Deut 16:16). Mary and Joseph were in the habit of attending Passover. At age twelve, Jesus accompanied them.

**Luke 2:43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; :44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. :45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. :46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.**

Mary and Joseph had lost track of Jesus on the way back to Nazareth.

They traveled a day out and a day back, and searched the city a third day before they found Jesus in the Temple.

He was engaged in a profound discussion of theological topics with the greatest religious leaders of the day anywhere on earth. They knew the Old Testament and Jesus questioned them, as well as answered their questions. What can we learn from this?

**Luke 2:47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.**

Christ's understanding astonished everyone, even as His miracles would two decades later.

**Luke 2:48 So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."**

Even His parents were amazed when they found Jesus participating so intelligently in a discussion with those who were so many years older than He.

Yet His mother expressed her accumulated anxiety and irritation by reproving Him. Didn't He know that they had been worried about Him?

**Luke 2:49 And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"**

The Lord's answer, His first recorded words, show that He was fully aware of His identity as the Son of God, and of His divine mission as well. "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" She said, "Your father and I." He said, "My Father's business."

**Luke 2:50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.**

At the time, they did not understand what He meant by His cryptic remark. It was an unusual thing for a twelve-year old Boy to say!

**Luke 2:51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.**