

The Messiah's arrival had long been anticipated by the Jewish people, for the prophets had spoken of Him. **Isaiah 9:6-7** declares, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given... His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." With such promises, it is no surprise that when Jesus finally arrived, God provided witnesses to confirm His coming.

One such witness was Simeon. He had been praying and longing for the Messiah, and the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death before seeing the Lord's Christ. **Luke 2:26-32** records:

- 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.
- 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,
- 28** he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:
- 29** "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word;
- 30** For my eyes have seen Your salvation
- 31** Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,
- 32** A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

Joseph and Mary listened as he proclaimed these words. Then Simeon turned specifically to Mary and spoke a prophetic word concerning Jesus' destiny and her own experience:

Luke 2:34-35: "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."

Jesus' earthly parents had to discover the significance of His birth just as we do. These verses show this clearly, as does the later scene when Jesus, at twelve years old, was found in the temple among the teachers. **Luke 2:51 says**, "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."

Why did Mary treasure these things in her heart? And why did Simeon tell her, "a sword will pierce through your own soul also"? Something deeply prophetic is taking place—something that reveals what Christ represents for them and for all of us.

Simeon was waiting for the Lord's Christ, just as the saints of the Old Testament had long awaited Him. Mary and Joseph were no different from us: Jesus' birth meant as much to them as it does to us. **Their souls needed deliverance; our souls need deliverance. And Jesus—the Word made flesh—is the sword that delivers, divides, and reveals the true thoughts of the heart.** This prophetic reality was true for Mary and Joseph in that temple, and it remains true for us today. Hebrews speaks to this revelation, describing the words' action in our hearts. **Hebrews 4:12-13:**

- 12** For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”

The Word of God is the means by which all creation becomes accountable. As **Hebrews 4:13** *paraphrased from the Greek* expresses, “Everything is fully exposed—laid bare and uncovered—before the eyes of Him to whom we are accountable.” Simeon’s words to Mary highlight this profoundly. Even the mother of Jesus would experience the piercing of the Word in her own heart.

This prophetic word speaks not only of the grief and sorrow she would endure as she watched her Son suffer on the cross, but also of the deeper truth that she, like all of us, needed the dividing work of God’s Word within her. In many ways, we are like Mary and Joseph. God gives us an assignment, yet it is along the path of walking out His plans that we come to truly discover Him—and in that journey, the real thoughts and intents of our hearts are revealed.

There is no doubt that this journey includes moments of grief, trouble, and uncertainty, but that is never the whole story of God in our lives. The earliest days of Jesus’ earthly life were surrounded by many challenges: no room in Bethlehem, laying Him in a manger, shepherds arriving with news of angelic visitation. Mary and Joseph were not aware of the full story; they were simply taking each step as God led them—His circumcision on the eighth day, His dedication in the temple, Simeon’s prophecy, Anna’s declaration, the wise men arriving with gifts, escape into Egypt and years later, finding Jesus in the temple at age twelve. Through it all, Mary “kept these things in her heart.”

What was happening in her? Exactly what the Scriptures reveal: she was carrying the Child foretold as “Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” She had delivered the Word made flesh—the very Word that would one day pierce her own heart and bring the Kingdom of God to her.

What a wonderful time of year to reflect on the gift of God—given for Mary, for Joseph, for Simeon and for all of us. May you have a blessed Christmas season, filled with the peace and presence of Christ.

Love,

Pastor Jann and Staff

