

Called to Witness

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—**Luke 2:34**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 2:22-38

THESE VERSES REMIND US

of the Heavenly Father's great care in preparing those who would be his chosen instruments. As following the Law, all of the firstborn are represented as belonging to the LORD, to be devoted to God and his service. (Lev. 12:1-4; Luke 2:21) Although the firstborn of the entire nation were passed over at their deliverance from Egypt (Exod. 12:31,32), they had been exchanged for the one tribe of

Levi, which was especially dedicated to God's service. (Num. 3:12,13) The same principle is represented in respect to the firstborn of each mother. It was to be devoted especially to God and his service.

Similarly, the elect church is pictured here also: they are referred to as the “church of the firstborn.” (Heb. 12:23) They have their lives dedicated to God when they make a full consecration to him and then, having that consecration accepted, go on to strive to make their “calling and election sure.” (II Peter 1:10) As New Creatures in Christ Jesus and begotten of God, they have been called out from the world that they might be developed for God's purposes. James tells us that these are “a kind of firstfruits of his [God's] creatures.” (James 1:18) The implication is that after the church has been gathered to

heavenly glory by the power of the first resurrection; the kingdom to be established will bring blessings to all the families of the earth. All people will then have the opportunity of becoming sons of God on earth by the restitution of all things.—Acts 3:19-21

At the time of his consecration ceremony at the Temple, an aged prophet came forward, took the babe in his arms and praised God. Simeon was one of the kind of characters to whom God reveals his Truth, a just and devout man. By some manner, God revealed to him that the accomplishment of the gracious promises made to Abraham was at hand, and that he would not die until he had seen the deliverance of Israel. Under Divine inspiration, Simeon declared this child to be “a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.” (Luke 2:32) John also pointed to him as “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.”—John 1:9

Simeon, addressing Mary, then prophetically declared that the child was ‘set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against.’ It should remind us of the words of Apostle Paul, that our Lord is “a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence” to many in Israel. (I Pet. 2:8) The world has witnessed the fall of Israel from Divine favor, and the hard experiences that have occurred because of their rejection of Christ. The prophetess Anna, a devout and faithful servant of God, also recognized and pointed out the infant Redeemer. She spoke “to all them that looked for redemption [who were looking for deliverance] in Jerusalem.”—Luke 2:38

As Simeon and Anna were in their day, we are also witnesses of the events that have taken place. Israel is once again a nation, and one day they will turn away from their blindness and come again into Divine favor and blessing. Then the words will be fulfilled of which all of the world will be witnesses—“Through your mercy they also may obtain mercy.”—Rom. 11:31 ■