

Simeon's prophecy

We read in Luke 2

²⁵ And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name *was* Simeon; and the same man *was* just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. ²⁶ And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, ²⁸ Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: ³⁰ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, ³¹ Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; ³² A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. ³³ And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. ³⁴ 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; ³⁵ (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

The key verse in this passage is verse 34, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against."

Let's first understand which Israel is God talking about. Is God talking about the political nation of Israel alongside the Mediterranean Sea? The answer is, absolutely not! Christ spoke in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them (Mark 4:34). A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly or spiritual meaning. All kinds of people read the Bible superficially or literally and think that God is talking about the political nation of Israel. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The Israel that God has in view is *spiritual* Israel consisting of all those who are born from above by the Spirit of the living God and justified by the faith of Christ.

We read in Galatians 6:

¹⁴ But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. ¹⁵ For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶ And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.

The Israel of God consist of all those who are in Christ Jesus, regardless of whatever political nation they may come from. We read in Romans 2

²⁸ For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: ²⁹ But he *is a* Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God.

To be a Jew inwardly, and to be circumcised in the heart, means to have one's sins cut off by virtue of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life that men might be set free from bondage and slavery to sin. It has nothing to do with whatever nation one comes from.

But now return to the prophecy of Luke 2:34, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel,” rising again has to do the resurrection, that is, the resurrection of our soul when we become born from above by the power of God, which is called the first resurrection. When Christ crucified and his body placed in the tomb, he arose on the third day. Even so, those who become saved have experienced the resurrection of their soul to spiritual life.

The fall and rising again of many in Israel can be viewed from at least two perspectives: the fall and rising again of the elect as a consequence of the fall of national Israel, and the fall and rising again of the elect resulting from the fall of the churches and congregations in our day. First, let’s look at the fall of national Israel.

Romans 10 ¹ Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. ² For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Romans 11 ¹ I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, *of* the tribe of Benjamin. ² God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, saying, ³ Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. ⁴ But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to *the image of Baal*. ⁵ Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. ⁶ And if by grace, then *is it* no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if *it be* of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. ⁷ What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded ⁸ (According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day. ⁹ And David saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumblingblock, and a recompence unto them: ¹⁰ Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see, and bow down their back alway. ¹¹ I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. ¹² Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness?

God is declaring, you see, in verse 11, through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles (non-Jews). Now the same is true of the fall of the churches in our day during the great tribulation.

2 Thessalonians 2 ¹ Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and *by* our gathering together unto him, ² That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. ³ Let no man deceive you by any means: for *that day shall not come*, except there come a **falling away first**, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; ⁴ Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God,

shewing himself that he is God. ⁵ Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?

The man of sin spoken of in 2 Thessalonians 2:3 is a reference to Satan, who comes into the congregations as the master deceiver, and because God is empowering him, he will succeed.

Daniel 8 ²³ And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up. ²⁴ And his power shall be mighty, but not by his own power: and he shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people. ²⁵ And through his policy also he shall cause craft [deceit] to prosper in his hand; and he shall magnify *himself* in his heart, and by peace shall destroy many: he shall also stand up against the Prince of princes; but he shall be broken without hand.

This prophecy is taking place, has taken place, in the churches worldwide today. There are no exceptions, and those who think there are exceptions should read again Matthew 24

Matthew 24 ¹ And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ² And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. ³ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

The temple that God has in view are the churches and congregations that are scattered all over the earth. The word “buildings” in Matthew 24:1 is the same Greek root word translated “building” in 1 Corinthians 3:9

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

God goes in verses 10-15 of 1 Corinthians 3 to describe that there are two kinds of materials in this spiritual building: gold, silver, precious stones, typifying true believers, and wood, hay, stubble, typifying those who externally identify with the kingdom of God and yet are not born from above, and are fit to be burned and consumed by God who is a consuming fire.

The statement of Matthew 24:2, “There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,” means that there are no exceptions.

We are living in the period of great tribulation, spoken of in Matthew 24:21-22

Matthew 24 ²¹ For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. ²² And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

The word ‘tribulation’ is the Greek word *thlipsis* translated “affliction” twice in Acts 7:10-11

Acts 7 ⁹ And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, ¹⁰ And delivered him out of all his afflictions [Greek: *thlipsis*], and gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. ¹¹

Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction [Greek: *thlipsis*]: and our fathers found no sustenance.

Jacob's affliction stemmed from the fact that they were forced to leave the land of Canaan, the land flowing with milk and honey, a land that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had dwelt in for 215 years, due to the famine. And in regards to famine, remember Amos 8:11?

Amos 8 ¹¹ Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD: ¹² And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east, they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find *it*.

Amos 8:11 is speaking about our day, which is parallel to Jacob's tribulation in that within the churches there is a famine of HEARING the words of the LORD, meaning the Holy Spirit is no longer present in the churches to give spiritual ears to hear.

Last time we learned that God has provided a time bridge of 1,290 years between Jacob's tribulation and the tribulation of Daniel's day. The 1,290 years comes from Daniel 12:11

Daniel 12 ⁹ And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words *are* closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ¹⁰ Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. ¹¹ And from the time *that* the daily *sacrifice* shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, *there shall be* a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

God occasionally substitutes a day for a year, as in:

Ezekiel 4 ⁴ Lie thou also upon thy left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it: *according* to the number of the days that thou shalt lie upon it thou shalt bear their iniquity. ⁵ For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. ⁶ And when thou hast accomplished them, lie again on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have appointed thee each day for a year.

Numbers 14 ³² But *as for* you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness. ³⁴ After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, *even* forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, *even* forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise.

Thus, we have Biblical validation for substituting a day for a year or vice versa. Amazingly, when we jump 1,290 years from Jacob's affliction, which occurred in 1877 B.C., we land on 587 B.C. What happened that year? There was a physical famine, in that the Babylonians had laid siege to Jerusalem, allowing nothing to leave or come in. Ultimately Babylon destroyed Jerusalem with fire, and took Daniel and Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego captive to Babylon. And even as God cared for Jacob and his family in the land of Egypt, so God was with Daniel and the others taken captive to Babylon. God had made a promise in Jeremiah 42:10

Jeremiah 42 ¹⁰ If [turning back from going into Egypt] ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull *you* down, and I will plant you, and not pluck *you* up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. ¹¹ Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the LORD: for I *am* with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. ¹² And I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land.

That same promise was made in Micah 4:10

Micah 4 ⁹ Now why dost thou cry out aloud? *is there* no king in thee? is thy counsellor perished? for pangs have taken thee as a woman in travail. ¹⁰ Be in pain, and labour to bring forth, O daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail: for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go *even* to Babylon; there shalt thou be delivered; there the LORD shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

The woman in travail are the true believers during this time of great tribulation. God typifies the body of believers as a woman in Revelation 12

Revelation 12 ¹ And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: ² And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

The woman typifies the body of believers. The sun typifies the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Sun of righteousness arising with healing in his wings (Malachi 4:2). The moon typifies the law of God, which is a reflection of the sun. The moon under her feet signifies that the believers are dead to the law; the law no longer has any claim on them. Christ as their substitute has fulfilled all the demands of the law on their behalf. The crown with twelve stars signifies the fullness of all believers, which are typified as the stars of heaven. She being with child cried, travailing in birth, pained to be delivered.

An interesting commentary on Revelation 12:2 is found in Isaiah 66:7-8

Isaiah 66 ⁷ Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. ⁸ Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

God is saying, before she travailed, before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. The man child is the Lord Jesus Christ, whose birth we observe each year at Christmas. The woman being in travail has reference to the great tribulation period. And note God's declaration, **for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children**. When the Bible says, **Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day**, it is a rhetorical statement that has reference to the literal, bodily resurrection of the believers at the last day when Christ appears in great power and glory.

Remember Isaiah 48:10? **I have refined thee in the furnace of affliction**. Remember Zechariah 13:9? I have brought the third part through the fire, the furnace of affliction. These verses coalesce around this present great tribulation in regards to God saving a great multitude which no

man can number outside the churches, which were typified by Jerusalem back that came under judgment in 587 B.C. Referring to Micah 4:10, Jerusalem (typifying the local congregations) is the city that the woman being in travail shalt go forth from, and shall dwell in the field, that is, in the world (Matthew 13:38), even to Babylon, that is, the secular world. There is where she shall be redeemed and delivered. It is crucial to note that it is outside the churches, in the secular world, where God is saving today. The phrase, “as a woman in travail,” means that this woman is about to give birth, and indeed that is the case. Another passage that relates directly to this is Isaiah 49, where God is speaking metaphorically to the woman in travail:

Isaiah 49 ¹⁸ Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together, *and* come to thee. As I live, saith the LORD, thou shalt surely clothe thee with them all, as with an ornament, and bind them *on thee*, as a bride *doeth*. ¹⁹ For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow by reason of the inhabitants, and they that swallowed thee up shall be far away. ²⁰ The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place *is* too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. ²¹ Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where *had* they *been*?

The waste and desolate places have reference to the churches and congregations worldwide, no exceptions, in our day. Spiritually they have become desolate and no one is being saved there. The key verse is verse 20: The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me: give place to me that I may dwell. The children which are lost is a reference to the churches and congregations the vast majority of which have no true believers within them. There may be a few that remain, and they will be brought out or come out before Christ appears. The children which thou shalt have are all those who are being saved outside the local congregations during this final great tribulation period.

Now going back to Daniel 12:11, we saw that if we go 1,290 years from 1877 B.C. at the time of Jacob’s great affliction, we landed on 587 B.C. at the time of Daniel’s great tribulation. Now, if we fast forward 2 x 1,290 years from 587 B.C., we to land on the year 1994 A.D. which is a key milestone in God’s salvation plan. God occasionally employs a 1/3, 2/3 rule, as in:

Zechariah 13 ⁷ Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man *that is* my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. ⁸ And it shall come to pass, *that* in all the land, saith the LORD, two parts therein shall be cut off *and* die; but the third shall be left therein. ⁹ And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, *It is* my people: and they shall say, The LORD *is* my God.

In addition, we can think of **1 Kings 6:1**, where we read: And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the LORD.

1 Kings 6:1 provides a 480-year time bridge from Israel going out of the land of Egypt to the fourth year of Solomon's reign, which was the year 967 B.C., when Solomon began to build the house of the LORD. Israel going out of the land of Egypt represents God's salvation plan. God declares, "**I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage**" (Exodus 20:2). That is like, "I am Jehovah who has saved you." This physical representation of salvation occurred 430 years after the time Jacob went into the land of Egypt (Exodus 12:40-41). It was the year 1447 B.C.

According to 1 Kings 6:1, it was exactly 480 years later, that is, 480 years after 1447 B.C., the year 967 B.C., when Solomon began to build the temple. We have learned that the temple of the Old Testament was a representation of the New Testament congregations and churches. It was also a representation of Christ Himself. Remember, He told the Jews, "**Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up**" (John 2:19). When did Jesus, the spiritual temple, come to this earth to be the temple? While we do not have absolute proof that Jesus was born in the year 7 B.C., all of the circumstantial evidence points to 7 B.C. as the year of His birth. And 7 B.C. is exactly 960 years after Solomon's temple foundation was laid in 967 B.C. Thus, the total period from the going out of Egypt in 1447 B.C. to the birth of Christ in 7 B.C. is 1440 years. The 480-year period is one-third of this 1440 years. The 960 years is two-thirds of this 1440 years.

Thus, there are 1,290 years from Jacob's affliction in 1877 B.C. to the tribulation of Daniel's day in 587 B.C., and $2 \times 1,290 = 2,580$ years from Daniel's tribulation to the year 1994 A.D., which brings us to the heart of what the prophecy of Simeon is referring to. The year 1994 A.D. marked the official end of the church age, when there is a famine of hearing the words of the LORD in all the churches, and the beginning of the latter rain, that is, the final harvest of those that are becoming saved outside the churches.

Outside the churches, God is empowering the true believers to understand the things concerning the end and God is blessing his word to the hearts of those who are God's elect, which are typified by the men of Nineveh, of whom God declares:

Jonah 3 ⁵ So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. ⁸ ...let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that *is* in their hands. ⁹ Who can tell *if* God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

Daniel 11:35 declares: ³⁵ And *some* of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make *them* white, *even* to the time of the end: because *it is* yet for a time appointed.

To purge and make white is the language of salvation. Thus, we see a literal fulfillment of Simeon's prophecy in Luke 2:34: Behold, this child is set for the **fall and rising again** of many in Israel, that is, the Israel of God consisting of all those who name the name of Christ and are chosen in Christ. What a marvelous Saviour we have, whose birth we observe during this Christmas time. May all of us cry mightily to God that God might have mercy on ourselves and our loved ones. It is still the day of salvation!