

A Historical Study On The Book Of Luke
Teaching #21: Joseph and Mary Were Under Law, Not Grace – Part Two (Simeon)
Luke 2:34-35

When we began our study on the book of Luke, we saw that Luke was writing to Theophilus to provide evidence confirm what he was taught about Jesus.

We also saw that Luke **investigated** the accounts of Jesus by the eyewitness.

We saw that Luke **interviewed** the eyewitnesses to get the accounts.

It is possible he interviewed Joseph and Mary, if they were still alive. Many believe Joseph died before Jesus was crucified.

Luke would have enjoyed sitting down with Simeon and Anna, however, they would have died by the time he conducted his investigations and interviews.

However, it is highly likely Luke interviewed those who knew Simeon and Anna.

It is also highly likely, he interviewed those who were at the circumcision of Jesus and at the temple when Jesus was taken to the temple 33 days after his circumcision.

Following the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary followed the requirements of the Law of Moses, which reveals they were not under the new testament of grace but under the old testament of law.

Remember, the new testament of grace went into effect when Jesus died on the cross. Until then, the old testament of law was in place. Mary and Joseph were following the requirements of the law of Moses.

Joseph and Mary Followed The Requirements Of The Law

In our previous study, we learned that:

1. Joseph and Mary had Jesus **CIRCUMCISED** according to the law.
2. Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple for Mary's **PURIFICATION** according to the law.
3. Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple for **PRESENTATION** according to the law.
4. Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the temple to offer a **SACRIFICE** according to the law.
5. Simeon praised God at the temple for the **SALVATION** Jesus will bring to Israel and the Gentiles.

In this study, we will continue with the words of Simeon.

Luke 2:33-35

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

The Words of Simeon

1. Simeon spoke words of **PRAISE** to God about Jesus (Luke 2:28-32) – (see Luke 20 notes for these words)

- The child would be the source **SALVATION** all nations.
- The child would be the light of **REVELATION** to the Gentiles.
- The child would be the glory of **ADMIRATION** to the Jews.

These words caused Joseph and Mary to marvel (Luke 2:33).

2. Simeon spoke words of **PAIN** to Mary about Jesus (Luke 2:34-35).

Luke 2:34-35

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

Jesus words in **Luke 12:51-53** help us understand the painful words of Simeon.

*Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but **division**. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be **divided**, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."*

The initial coming of Jesus brought division in families as they hotly **debated** if Jesus was the Messiah/Christ of the Jewish Scriptures. These **debates** resulted in disagreements. The disagreements resulted in **division** (see John 7:43).

Let's examine **Luke 2:34-35** about the painful words Simeon spoke to Mary about Jesus.

Luke 2:34-35

*Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "**This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel...***

- The Child is **DESTINED** to cause the **falling** [Jewish people who reject Jesus as the Christ – see John 1:11] and **rising** [Jewish people who accept Jesus as the Christ and will **rise** to live on resurrection day – see Daniel 12:2-3; John 5:29 – the good is to believe – see John 6:28-29; John 11:23-24; 20:9; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:37] of many in Israel.

We will examine the word **falling** later in the study, but let's first look at the word **rising**.

Four Possibilities For What Rising Means

Possibility #1: *Rising*, as used by Simeon, could be those who *rejected* Jesus as the Christ, such as the Pharisees and teachers of the law, as well as those in Israel who shouted for his crucifixion, then *rose* up against him in opposition, having him arrested, “tried,” and crucified.

Possibility #2: *Rising* could mean the people of Israel rising up in opposition to those in their families, communities, and synagogues who believed Jesus was the Messiah/Christ, such as when the Sanhedrin rose up against Stephen and Paul (Saul) rose up believers.

Possibility #3: *Rising* could be those who believed in Jesus as the Christ and will rise to live eternally on the last day. These are the righteous ones. They are righteous because they believed. Those who believe are declared righteous.

Possibility #4: *Rising* could be a combination of possibilities 1-3.

In Matthew-Acts, we see many rising up against Jesus (possibilities 1-2).

Let’s examine more in-depth, those who will rise to live eternally on the last day (the day of judgment).

In the Bible, rise refers the resurrection of believers on the last day, when God’s judges the righteous and the unrighteous. The righteous are those who have believed in Jesus, resulting in being declared righteous by God. The unrighteous or those who have rejected Jesus. **Daniel 12:2-3** refers to this time (the judgment of the righteous and unrighteous), as do many verses in the Jewish Scriptures, such as **Malachi 3:18**.

The books of Psalms and Proverbs make references to the judgment of the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will be saved and the unrighteous will be judged.

Jesus refers to this judgment in Matthew 13:47-50.

Revelation 20:11-15 reveals the judgment of the righteous and unrighteous. The **Book of Life** contains the names of the righteous, those who believed in Jesus. They will be judged as righteous because of their belief in Jesus. The **books** contain the names of the unrighteous, those who rejected Jesus. Those in the books will be judged according to their deeds. The righteous will **RISE** to live eternally, and the unrighteous will be consumed in judgment. Righteousness is a free gift of grace that is received by faith in Jesus. We will see this later in the study.

For now, let’s look at **the conversation between Jesus and Martha** about those who believe in Jesus *rising* to live eternally (remember, we are seeking to understand the word *rising* used by Simeon when speaking to Mary).

John 11:21-27

*“Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus said to her, “**Your brother will RISE again.**” Martha answered, “I know he will **rise** again in the resurrection at the last day [this is a reference to Daniel 12:2-3].” Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and*

whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

In the book of John, the word rise is a reference to believers rising from the dead unto eternal life.

Let's now turn our attention to the word falling that Simeon used when speaking with Mary.

NOTE: Some people think falling refers to falling before God in repentance of sins, then rising up as a forgiven, righteous believer. I don't see any biblical support that falling, as used by Simeon in his words to Mary, means falling before God in repentance of sins and rising up as a forgiven, righteous believer.

Biblically, falling seems to be the people of Israel tripping over Jesus as the Christ [rejection], falling down as a result (symbolically), then rising up against him in opposition.

Let's examine how the Jewish people fell over Jesus as the Messiah/Christ, then rose up in opposition against him.

Luke 2:34-35

Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel..."

Let's examine the Scriptures about Israel stumbling and falling over Jesus as the Messiah/Christ, leading to their rejection of him as the Messiah/Christ.

In the Jewish Scriptures, a metaphor for the Messiah/Christ is a STONE. The people of Israel are described as stumbling and falling over the stone.

Let's read these Scriptures.

Isaiah 8:14-15

...he [Messiah/Christ] will be a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall. And for the people of Jerusalem he will be a trap and a snare. Many of them will stumble; they will fall and be broken, they will be snared and captured."

Isaiah 28:16 (Berean Study Bible)

So this is what the Lord GOD says: "See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation; the one who believes will never be shaken."

Psalms 118:22-23

The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

These verses are quoted by Jesus, Peter, and Paul, referring to the people of Israel rejecting Jesus as the Messiah/Christ.

Psalm 118:22-23 is quoted by Jesus in Matthew 21:45-46 when he spoke to the chief priests and Pharisees about their rejection of him as the Messiah/Christ.

Matthew 21:45-46 (see also Luke 20:17-19)

Jesus said to them [chief priests and Pharisees], “Have you never read in the [Jewish] Scriptures: “ ‘The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvelous in our eyes’?” [Psalm 118:22-23]...When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

Peter quotes all three references from the Jewish Scriptures (**Isaiah 8:14-15; Isaiah 28:16, Psalm 118:22-23**) referring to Jesus as the Stone.

1 Peter 2:1-8

As you [those who recognize Jesus is the Christ and believe] come to him, the living Stone [this speaks of the resurrection of Jesus] —rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— you [believers] also, like living stones [spiritually alive with Christ], are being built into a spiritual house [spiritual family] to be a holy priesthood [free and full access to God as Father], offering spiritual sacrifices [thanksgiving for all God has done for us in Jesus; sharing with and doing good to others – Hebrews 13:15-16] acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture [Jewish Scripture] it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in him will never be put to shame [Isaiah 28:16 – Those who rise to live eternally].” Now to you who believe, this stone is precious [those who rise]. But to those who do not believe, “The stone the builders rejected [those who fall] has become the cornerstone [Psalm 118:22],” and, “A stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them fall [Isaiah 8:14].”

Some people in Israel believed that Jesus was the stone of the Jewish Scriptures. However, many people in Israel stumbled over Jesus, the Stone, as the Messiah/Christ. He was directly in their path. But they rejected him as the Messiah/Christ. By rejecting him as the Christ, they stumbled over the Living Stone and fell. Then many rose up in opposition against him.

Remember, we are examining the meaning of Simeon’s painful words to Mary when he said:

Luke 2:33-35

The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel...

The Jewish people stumbled and fell when they rejected Jesus as the Stone, the Messiah/Christ. They also **stumbled and fell** over the fact that the Messiah/Christ was crucified.

1 Corinthians 1:23

...but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles...

Following the resurrection, Peter, In Acts 4:8-12, quotes Psalm 118:22, referring to the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ by the leaders of Israel. In their rejection of Jesus as the Stone, the Messiah/Christ of the

Jewish Scriptures, they stumbled and fail, which is what Simeon was referring to when speaking to Mary (falling of many in Israel).

Acts 4:8-12

*Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is “**‘the stone you builders rejected**, which has become the cornerstone [Psalm 118:22].’ Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”*

We are continuing to examine **Simeon’s words to Mary** about many people in Israel **falling** over the child – Jesus.

Not only did the people of Israel **stumble and fall** over the identity of Jesus as the Christ, **they also stumbled over the grace of Jesus that brings righteousness and is received by faith**. Paul wrote about this in Romans.

Rather than trusting in Jesus as the Christ and receiving righteousness by faith, the people of Israel pursued righteousness by works.

This still trips many up today.

Today, many believers, especially leaders of churches and ministries, stumble over the truth (righteousness by grace through faith apart from the works of the law, or apart from any works) and fall from grace (this is trying to merit righteousness – it is **not** the loss of salvation) by trying to earn righteousness (see Galatians 5:4).

Let’s read Paul’s what Paul wrote about *stumbling over righteousness by grace through faith apart from the law*.

Romans 9:30-33

*What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. Why not? Because **they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works**. They **stumbled** over the stumbling stone. As it is written: “See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people to stumble and a rock that makes them **fall**, and the one who believes in him will never be put to shame [Isaiah 8:14; 28:16].”*

Is Israel’s rejection of Jesus as the Stone, causing them to stumble and fall over (trip over and fall) the Messiah/Christ, permanent? No. Paul writes:

Romans 11:11

*Again I ask: Did they [Israel] **stumble** so as to **fall** beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression [Israel’s rejection of Jesus as the Christ], salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious [deeply desire righteousness and a relationship with God that is based on grace and received by faith].*

The good news for Israel is that Israel’s fall, because they stumbled over Jesus as the Christ, is not permanent but temporal.

Romans 11:25-27

*I do not want you [Gentiles] to be ignorant of this mystery [Israel's rejection of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ], brothers and sisters, so that you [Gentiles] may not be conceited [think you are better than the Jewish people because you accepted Jesus and they rejected him]: Israel has experienced a hardening in part **until** the full number of the Gentiles has come in, and in this way all Israel will be saved [place their faith in Jesus as the Messiah/Christ and receive his righteousness by faith]. As it is written:*

"The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins [Isaiah 27:9; 59:20-21; Jeremiah 31:33-34]."

After the full number of Gentiles have believed in Jesus as the Christ, the Jewish people will believe in Jesus as the Christ. Jesus will return and rule and reign from Zion – Jerusalem.

God is not done with Israel. Their rejection of Jesus is temporal. Just as he had mercy on the Gentiles, he will also have mercy on the Jews, leading to their salvation.

Romans 11:30-32

*Just as you [Gentiles] who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their [Jews] disobedience [rejection of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ – stumbling and falling over Jesus as the Christ], so they [Jews] too have now become disobedient in order that they [Jews] too may now receive **mercy** as a result of God's **mercy** to you [Gentiles]. For God has bound everyone over to disobedience [Jew and Gentile] so that he may have **mercy** on them all [both Jews and Gentiles].*

Though Israel has rejected Jesus as the Messiah/Christ, there will be a day when they trust him as the Christ and receive his righteousness by faith.

We are examining the painful words that Simeon spoke to Mary about Jesus causing the **falling** and **rising** of many in Israel. We have seen **falling** refers to the people of Israel rejection of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ, and the **rising** is either the rising of the people of Israel against Jesus and one another, or the rising of those who have believed to experience eternal life...or a combination of all three.

We will continue this study on the words of Simeon to Mary in our next study.

Thanks for being a part of this Bible Study!

All verses are NIV unless otherwise noted.

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