

Simeon was convinced that God had told him that he would see the Messiah before he died. He lived and prayed and loved in such a way that he was able to hear what God had in store for him. He lived in a way that the Holy Spirit rested on him, guided him, revealed things to him.

Listen to the letter he wrote after that day in the temple:

My dearest son,

I can die now. Not that I have plans to die anytime soon or any desire to die, but I can die. I have had the epiphany I have been waiting for my whole life.

Remember how I have always told you about this inner feeling that I have had, this particular sense from God that, within my lifetime, I would see the Messiah, the one that we have

been waiting for? We talk about it often at temple. It is part of our identity as followers of Yahwey: to wait for the one who is to come. You have been waiting too. We people of Israel have been waiting for the One to bring in justice, to envelop the exiles, to rebuild the righteousness and worship of our people. Well, I have seen him. He is just a baby, but I know that I have seen him, the one we have been waiting for.

Let me tell you how it happened.

I was not planning to go to temple yesterday. There was no reason for me to go. I had no duties there. I had done my morning prayers at home, but, for some reason, I felt compelled to go. As I arrived, in came this young couple. They had just had a baby so the momma was coming to the temple to be cleansed after childbirth. Because this, their first baby, was a boy, they came also to present him to God, to

God's service, as a priest, if God would will it. I have seen so many of these couples, so many of these families starting out with nothing much to their names, offering two pigeons as their sacrifice since that is the humble family's offering. I was touched by their youth and sincerity. I remembered you when you were that little.

Anyway, there I was watching them out of the corner of my eyes when I felt moved to go be with them. The closer I walked, the more excited I became. I did not know why, but my whole being trembled. (I can see you nodding your head...you have seen me before when I have had these knowings....it is not like I ask for them, they just come). I approached them to offer my congratulations and blessing. I thought that perhaps that was why I was so compelled to address them: as a vehicle for God's blessing on their sacrifice.

But when I looked at that baby, looked into his eyes, I knew. I knew that I was looking into the eyes of the Messiah. As I gazed into that infant boy's eyes, it was given to me to know the path before him: that he would be a truth-teller, and that his truth telling would cause trouble for many who could not stand in the light of his truth. I could tell that he was light, like in God saying "let there be light" and all creation was formed. I could sense the way that Abba God was moving: to en flesh the righteousness of God into the body of this vulnerable baby. As I stood there, I spoke the truth to his parents: their son would change who we are; their son would be a sign, by his life, that would reveal the inner life of all around him. As I looked at that baby, I felt his life trajectory. He would be a healer and a teacher and a prophet and the instrument of God's love. His life would not be an easy one: neither for him or for his parents. The world would be changed because of him.

I spoke this to his parents, not like a proclamation. I was not rude or imposing: don't think that. I spoke with them, telling them about the way that the Spirit of God sometimes gives me knowledge of things I have no right to know....and they told me, hesitant at first, about this little boy's life so far: evidently I am not the first to receive Spirit's guidance for this child. His momma told me about a visit from an angel. His dad told me about a dream. They both told me about being visited by sages who brought him gifts in Bethlehem where he was born. I told the little momma that this boy would do things and be things that she could not even imagine. I also told her that his life would break her heart. I don't know why or how I know all of this, but I had to speak it because I know that it is truth. I held that little boy in my arms and felt the weight of his destiny in my heart. Then I blessed them all.

Anna, you remember Anna, she has lived at the temple since her husband died many years ago? Well, she came upon us right as we were finishing our conversation. She took one look at that baby and started praising God: "Praise you Oh, Gracious God, for keeping your word, for bringing about the redemption of our People. Thank-you God for not abandoning us, but for remembering and fulfilling your promises. Thank-you, God, for this blessing to your people and to your nation. Thank-you, my dear heavenly father, for bringing forth the peace of the nations" Over and over, with joy and delight she prayed prayers of delight and gratitude and praise. Then she ran off and started telling everyone she encountered about the miracle of the baby and how God has brought about the redemption of Israel.

It was something. Anna rose up and prophesied at the same time that I felt this amazing sense of foreknowing myself.

And now, I feel peace. I feel like the waiting I have been holding my whole life is over. The peace and Joy inside of me is so intense and complete. This experience with this baby is what God has been telling me about seeing the Messiah before I died.

I have no idea how this is going to turn out. The parents looked pretty overwhelmed: curious but overwhelmed. Joseph, the dad, a really steady guy, said to me: I don't really know what any of this means: the only thing I know how to do is to go home and raise my child, give him a home, give him food and shelter, clothes and community. I shook his hand and held onto it and said "You do not have to know. All will come to pass in its' own time.

My son, today is heavy with the mystery and the glory of our great and Almighty God.

I wanted you to know. Kiss the children for me.
Hug your wife. Say some prayers. Come visit
soon.

Love, Your Dad, Simeon