

Luke 2:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

Analysis

Simeon's Nunc Dimittis begins: 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word' (νῦν ἀπολύεις τὸν δοῦλόν σου, δέσποτα, κατὰ τὸ ῥῆμά σου ἐν εἰρήνῃ). The verb 'apolyō' (ἀπολύω, let depart/release) can mean dismissal from service or peaceful death. Simeon had received God's promise (rēma, ῥῆμα, specific word) that he would not die before seeing the Messiah (v.26). Now, having seen 'thy salvation' (τὸ σωτήριόν σου, v.30), he is ready to die in 'eirēnē' (εἰρήνη, peace/shalom)—complete fulfillment and rest. This expresses the deepest satisfaction of completed purpose. Simeon's life mission was to witness Messiah; now he can depart content.

Historical Context

Simeon's age is unspecified, but tradition depicts him as elderly, having waited decades for this moment. His words became part of Christian evening prayer (Compline) in liturgical traditions. The phrase 'depart in peace' echoes Jacob's words after seeing Joseph alive (Genesis 46:30): 'Now let me die, since I have seen thy face.' Simeon's peaceful readiness for death contrasts sharply with worldly fear of mortality, demonstrating how encounter with Christ transforms death's meaning.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. What does Simeon's peaceful acceptance of death teach about how seeing Christ should affect our view of mortality?
2. How does Simeon's example challenge us to evaluate whether we have found our life's true purpose in Christ?

Interlinear Text

Νῦν	ἀπολύεις	τὸν	δοῦλόν	σου	δέσποτα	κατὰ	τὸ
now	depart	G3588	servant	thy	Lord	according	G3588
G3568	G630		G1401	G4675	G1203	G2596	
ῥῆμά	σου	ἐν	εἰρήνῃ·				
word	thy	in	peace				
G4487	G4675	G1722	G1515				

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 14:13 (References Lord): And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

Genesis 15:15 (Peace): And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age.

Luke 2:26 (References Lord): And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

Philippians 1:23 (Parallel theme): For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: