



The Quarry Gospel Church

BIBLE STUDY - 16.12.20

BIBLE STUDY - SIMEON & ANNA

1. TIMELINE - In chronological order:

- The birth of John the Baptist
- Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem where Jesus is born
- The shepherds visit
- Joseph and Mary remain in Bethlehem to fulfil the Law's requirements of them (this is when they go to the temple and meet Simeon and Anna)
- The wise men visit
- Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt

2. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS (3)

A) The Ceremony of Circumcision

- To be performed on the 8th day - probably at their house
- As prescribed by Abraham (*Genesis 17:9-14*) and Moses (*Leviticus 12:3*)
- Associated with this was the giving of the child's name

B) The Ceremony of the Presentation of the First-Born Son

- *Luke 2:23* - refers to *Exodus 13:2,12* -
"Every first-born male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"
- following the first-borns that were saved at the time of the plague, they were acknowledging that their first-born belonged to God and had been redeemed.
- the price was 5 sanctuary shekels (*Numbers 18:16*)
- the Presentation ceremony always took place after 31 days, which meant this and the next ceremony could be performed on the same day.

C) The Ceremony of Purification of the mother after the birth of a child

- *Leviticus 12* - a woman is ceremonially unclean after the birth of a child
- After the birth of a boy, she is unclean for 7 days and unable to enter the sanctuary for a further 33 days (14 days and 66 days for a girl). Therefore Jesus would be about 6 weeks old when he is presented at the temple.
- They presented 2 turtle-doves, suggesting they were poor (*Leviticus 12:6-8*)

It is during the 2nd Ceremony of Presentation of the First-Born that Simeon and Anna appear.

3. SIMEON & ANNA

A) Simeon

i) Simeon the Man - we are not told much about him:

- He appears suddenly
- He may probably have been a Jew although we don't know for certain
- He was not a priest (the Holy Spirit directed him to the temple - it wasn't his every day duty to be there)
- Whilst the passage suggests he was old, it is not a fact that this is so
- We are not told of the circumstances of his life - job, marriage etc.
- what is recorded is his faith, character and his relationship with God:
 - v25 - He was righteous and devout - a personal walk with God and integrity in dealing with others
 - v25 - He looked for the consolation of Israel - a man of faith and hope - expected God's promises to be fulfilled
 - v26 - He was filled with the Holy Spirit - his continual guide and helper

We cling to wealth, health and success - what matters to God is faith, character, our relationship with Him and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

John 6:63 - "The flesh counts for nothing".

ii) Simeon's Joy

- we are not told "how" he recognised the Messiah
- Luke places emphasis that Jesus was recognised by a godly man, filled with the Spirit of God
- His joy would have been immense - "A man who knows God holds him in the palm of His hand, now holds God in his arms!" - hence words of praise! So much joy he was ready to die! (*Luke 2:29-30*)

iii) Simeon's Sight

*"For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation , which Thou has prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people, Israel."
(Luke 2:30-32)*

- Others could have visited the Messiah but chose not to - all people knew about Him
- Simeon witnessed what others could have witnessed
- The "others" were those spoken of in *Mark 4:12*
- Simeon understood the Old Testament truth that salvation was for the Gentiles as well as the Jews - see *Psalms 98:2-3; Isaiah 42:6-8, 52:10, 60:1-3.*

iv) Joseph's and Mary's reaction to Simeon

"And his father and mother were amazed at the things that were being said about Him" (Luke 2:33)

- vv.34-35 - Simeon went on to bless them and to give a specific prophecy to Mary

Prophecy to Mary:

- only given to her, not to both her and Joseph - perhaps a prophecy that he would be dead when Jesus was crucified.
- Must have been a shock - until now all talk about the Messiah was about bringing peace and salvation.
- Simeon will have known the prophecies like *Psalms 22* and *Isaiah 53*, which talk of the coming rejection, crucifixion and death of Christ.
- This prophecy views the coming of Christ as revealing the hearts of men, and of dividing men, so that, on account of Christ, some will rise and some will fall.
- Simeon's words prepare Mary for the grief that will be hers when she witnesses Jesus' death on the cross.

B) Anna - opposite to Simeon - we know more about her life:

- widowed young
- an Israelite of the tribe of Asher (one of the 10 lost tribes of Israel)
- now 84
- devoted herself to serving God - fasting and praying - always in the temple
- recognised as a prophet
- facts of her life reveal her character: committed to God

She gave thanks for the child at the temple - she must have recognised who He was. She went on to tell everyone who was interested the "Good News"

4. APPLICATION

1. The event takes place in the temple

- Jesus was presented here and later came here at the age of 12
- it was a fulfilment of prophecy (*Malachi 3:1*)

2. These 2 proclamations of Jesus' identity completely overshadow the 2 ceremonies

- the reporting of the ceremony was not important in light of the proclamation of who Jesus was!
- the law required the ceremonies, but was not the focal point of the story; (We should not focus on "religious ceremony" or "tradition", but on Jesus)
- real purpose was God declaring His Son's arrival and His Word.

3. Simeon and Anna are models of discipleship

- humanly speaking - not people of power or position
- Probably seen as eccentric - divorced from normal life
- probably looked down upon by priests as they focused on Israel's sin and failings

YET: As those who loved the Lord, they are pictures of what God looks for in us:

- faith, hope, devotion, love, worship, praise, a willingness to desire to tell others what they know and have seen.
- May not have been full time workers at the temple, but they were God's people, fully committed to Him and in God's eyes had the right priorities.

4. The Core of their Message

- They knew and said that this event would not be what people expected.
- The Messiah's coming would also bring judgment and righteousness.
- They prayed that God would be merciful and lead people to change while they could.
- Their focus: To prepare for His arrival!

We say the Lord's Prayer:

"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven"

What are we asking for?... see *2 Peter 3:11-12* & *1 John 3:2-3*

Our focus should also be on Jesus' appearing

Like Simeon and Anna, our focus should be:

- **to declare who Jesus is**
- **to share our knowledge with others**
- **to pray and fast that God will be merciful and bring men and women to faith**
- **to ensure we ourselves are found to be busy and right when He appears**

Whoever we are - God just requires our availability and devotion

"Because you have seen me, Thomas, do you now believe? Blessed and happy and to be envied are those who have never seen me and yet have believed and trusted on me."