

THE ADORATION OF SIMEON AND ANNA

TEXT: LUKE 2:21-35

INTRODUCTION:

1. In Luke 2:21 we are told that after eight days (the regular time for performing the rite of circumcision), our Lord was circumcised.
2. Then in verse 22 we see that Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.
3. And there in the temple, we are introduced to Simeon (2:25) and Anna (2:36). Simeon was a popular name in Bible times. Although Anna is a popular name today, she is the only one in the Bible with that name.
4. "Simeon and Anna are representatives of real piety in this time of spiritual dearth and deadness" (A.T. Robertson).
5. We know very little about this Simeon who appeared in the temple in Jerusalem when Mary and Joseph were there to present the baby Jesus to the Lord (Luke 2:21-24).
6. By the way, Luke 2:24 says Mary and Joseph went to the temple "to offer a sacrifice." This was a sin offering, an offering for the purification of Mary, "of a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons" (2:24). That was all they could afford because they were very poor.
7. The fact that Mary had to offer a sin offering reminds us that Mary was a sinner just like all men and all women are sinners. Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
8. Though not as prominent as the shepherds or the wise men from the east, Simeon and Anna are important characters in the Christmas story.
9. Simeon was an old man. Now that he had the privilege of holding the baby Jesus in his arms, he was ready to "depart in peace" (2:29), that is go to heaven (cf. 2:26).
10. Anna was a woman of "great age" (2:36), who also waited at the temple for the Lord's arrival. "She had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity, we are told, and was a widow of about eighty-four years, so she must have been above a hundred years of age" (H.A. Ironside, *Luke*).
11. We have here an interesting contrast between infancy (baby Jesus) and old age (Simeon and Anna).

I. THEIR GODLY CHARACTER

1. Simeon was "just and devout" (2:25). It has been pointed out that...

- In relation to the past, Simeon was "just," i.e. he was righteous before God. His sins were forgiven and his guilt was all gone.
 - In relation to the present, Simeon was "devout." He trusted God; he walked with God; he was depending on God minute by minute.
 - In relation to the future, Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (2:25). "The consolation of Israel" (2:25) was the promise of the long-awaited Saviour, the Messiah (cf. 2:11, 26).
2. Simeon was not waiting for a conqueror to deliver Israel from Roman bondage, but the "Consolation of Israel" (Messiah) to deliver sinners from the bondage of sin.
 3. Albert Barnes said, "No spectacle is more sublime than an old man of piety and high character looking for the appearing of the Lord, and patiently waiting for the time to come when he may be blessed with the sight of his Redeemer."
 4. Like Simeon, Anna was also a godly believer. She "departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day" (2:37).
 5. Today we would say, "She is in church every time the doors are open."
 6. Simeon, being "just and devout" (2:25), and being led by the Holy Spirit was undoubtedly a good student of Scripture. For example, Simeon said in verse 32 the Messiah would be, "A light to lighten the Gentiles..." Isaiah 42:6 says God's servant, the Messiah, would be "a light of the Gentiles."
 7. The Holy Spirit always uses the Word of God. And the Holy Spirit never leads us contrary to the Word of God.
 8. Daniel 9:26 says, the Messiah shall "be cut off."
 9. It is not possible to say how much Simeon understood about the Messiah being "cut off." But he knew that it would be heartbreaking for His mother Mary (cf. Luke 2:35).
 10. Mary was there by the cross when Jesus was crucified. She was there when they drove the nails through His hands and feet. She was there when one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water (John 19:34).
 11. So Simeon said, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also" (2:35).
 12. Simeon did not know how long he would live, but he knew he would not die until "he had seen the Lord's Christ" (Luke 2:26).
 13. Verse 34 says, "And Simeon blessed them" (Joseph and Mary), i.e., he prayed and asked the Lord to continue to bless them.

II. THEIR SPIRIT-FILLED MINISTRY

1. This is the key to this story of Simeon and Anna.
2. Three times we see the power of the Holy Spirit was upon Simeon (2:25, 26, 27).
3. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen "the Lord's Christ," i.e. the promised Messiah (2:26).
4. Simeon not only had the privilege of seeing the Messiah, he had the great joy of holding Him in his arms (2:28).
5. Verse 27 says that Simeon was led by the Holy Spirit (2:27).
6. Under the power of the Holy Spirit, Simeon prophesied (2:34, 35).

III. THEIR PROPHECIES

1. First, let us consider Simeon's prophecy (2:25-35). Simeon predicted "the fall and rising again of many in Israel" (2:34).
2. Usually people would say, "rise and fall," but Simeon put the "fall" first. Referring to Himself, our Lord said in Matthew 21:44, "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."
3. The chief priests and Pharisees understood our Lord was referring to them, and so they sought to lay hands on Him (Matt. 21:45, 46).
4. Many in Israel fell because they disobeyed their law, and despised their prophets, and finally they even crucified their Saviour.
5. In Matthew 10:34, Jesus said "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword."
6. This statement has puzzled certain people, because the angels proclaimed our Lord's birth by saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14).
7. But what Simeon said is that the Lord Jesus Christ will divide men. Those who deny Him will fall. Those who receive Him will rise (Luke 2:34).
8. The prophet Isaiah said for those who did not believe, the Lord would be "a stone of stumbling" and "a rock of offence" (Isa. 8:14).
9. "And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken" (Isaiah 8:15).
10. Peter referred to Isaiah's prophecy in I Peter 2:8, when he said Christ is a "stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence" to those which stumble at the word.
11. Therefore, Simeon was describing two groups of people: those that are saved and those that are lost.

12. Remember the key verse in the Gospel of Luke is 19:10 -- "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
13. I remember when we first purchased this old fish store. I often had to run down the street to the hardware store for supplies. One day the man at the store said, "The nightclub people are not happy that a church moved in next door to them."
14. I asked the man what he meant. He said to me, "They are going down, but you people are going up." I thought that was pretty good theology.
15. As we consider Simeon's prophecy, note God's "salvation" (2:30) is for "all people" (2:31), not just for Israel, but for the Gentiles too (2:32).
16. Anna was a "prophetess" (2:36). We know nothing about her or her prophesying other than what we read here in Luke 2:36-38.

CONCLUSION:

1. Simeon said to Mary that Christ would be "a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2:34).
2. Our Lord's birth was a "sign." The prophet Isaiah said this over 700 years before His birth. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).
3. The angel told the shepherds, "And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12).
4. The shepherds looked for the sign, and believed the sign, but many people have rejected the sign.
5. Simeon said that Christ would be "a sign which shall be spoken against" (Luke 2:34). Christ was "spoken against" time and again while He ministered on earth.
6. He is still spoken against today.
7. "Sign" here means the Lord Jesus was an object of contempt and rejection by all the people.
8. Isaiah 53:3 says, "He is despised and rejected of men."
9. Christ was "spoken against" when they crucified Him. The Bible says that the passersby spoke against our Lord as He hung dying on the cross.
10. "And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads" (Matt. 27:39).

11. The chief priests and the scribes and elders mocked Him (Matt. 27:41).
12. "The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth" (Matt. 27:44).
13. One thief repented and was saved. He rose up to Paradise, while the impenitent thief died and went to hell.