

DREAMS COME TRUE Sunday School- December 29, 2013

Unifying Topic: JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

Lesson Text

I. A Dream Fulfilled (Luke 2:25-35)

II. Anna Sees The Christ (Luke 2:36-38)

The Main Thought: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. (Luke 2:30-31, KJV).

Unifying Principle: All people desire to live in freedom. In what way and through whom is this desire fulfilled? Simeon and Anna anticipated the presentation of the baby Jesus in the temple because they recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy of the coming Messiah.

Lesson Aim: To help students understand the significance of Jesus' dedication and Joseph and Mary's decision to follow the Jewish customs regarding Him.

Life aim: To help students recognize that God is faithful to those who are faithful to Him.

- 2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.
- 2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
- 2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,
- 2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,
- 2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
- 2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
- 2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
- 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.
- 2:33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.
- 2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
- 2:35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.
- 2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
- 2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.
- 2:38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

HISTORY:

Chapter 2:18-24 The shepherds rushed to see the infant Christ, and then made known what they had heard concerning the child. Shepherds became the first New Testament evangelists! To those who knew nothing about the Lord but heard it from the shepherds were full of wonder at the things they heard. They never responded and never moved to find Him for themselves. And Mary pondered; quietly treasuring all those things in her heart. The excited shepherds were still rejoicing; glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen as they returned to their flock (vv.18-20).

¹Luke tells us that eight days after the baby was born, He was circumcised and given the name "Jesus"; named just as the angel had said (v. 21). Every boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day after his birth (Lev. 12:3; Luke 1:59-60). Circumcision symbolized the Jews' separation from Gentiles and their unique relationship with God.

Mary and Joseph go to the temple. They make the five-mile journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem with Jesus, to go through two ceremonies. The first was Mary's purification rite following childbirth, which is described in the Old Testament in Leviticus 12. For 40 days after the birth of a son and 80 days after the birth of a daughter, the mother was ceremonially unclean and could not enter the temple. Mary's forty-day purification was over. At the end of her time of separation, the parents were to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or pigeon for a sin offering. If

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/jesus-is-circumcised/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

the individual could not afford a sheep, two doves or pigeons could be offered instead. Apparently because they didn't have much money, Mary and Joseph bring two birds (vv. 22-24). The second reason for coming to the temple was to consecrate or dedicate their firstborn son to God, just as had been done in Exodus 13, and much like we do in church today when we dedicate a baby to the Lord.

LESSON:

Luke 2:25-35 A Dream Fulfilled

2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. Simeon was a man in Jerusalem who walked closely with God. He walked so closely that God was able to use him in a most magnificent way to encourage Joseph and Mary. Five things are said about him personally.

1. Simeon was a just and devout man. The word "just" (*dikaaios*) means righteous, well-behaved, living as one should live. He treated other people as he should: justly. The word "devout" (*eulabes*) means cautious and careful in relation to God. It means reverence for God, being pious or religious.
2. Simeon was a man who looked for the coming of the Messiah (Matt.1:18). This is what is meant by "the waiting for the consolation of Israel." Faithful believers among the Jews felt that Israel could find consolation only in the Messiah. They "waited for the kingdom of God" (Mk.15:43).
3. Simeon was a man filled and led by the Holy Spirit; The Holy Spirit was upon him continually. This shows just how closely Simeon was living to God.

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

4. Simeon was a man who was given an unusual promise. Apparently, Simeon was constantly studying the Scriptures, in particular searching the prophecies concerning the coming salvation of the Messiah (1Pt.1:10). At some point, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.

2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,— It's nothing like the nudging of the Holy Spirit! Again Simeon was a man led by the Spirit to go to the Temple. This was the day the parents were to bring the child Jesus to the temple. A first-born child was to always be taken to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord. This was after the custom of the law (also vv.22-24).

2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,—This was the day God's promise comes true for Simeon. He had been waiting a long time. ²Day by day he had prayed for the Lord's Christ to finally appear. Year after year his prayers went unanswered. As he grew older, his anticipation grew stronger because he knew he couldn't live forever. That day Mary and Joseph came into the temple. ³There was nothing outwardly to distinguish them, no marks or signs that indicated they were anything other than another poor young couple coming with their newborn son. However, Simeon was able to recognize and see God's Salvation—Jesus.

5. Simeon was a man who saw and held the Messiah.

He took the child up into his arms and proclaimed Him to be the long-awaited Messiah.

2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:— Once Simeon had embraced the Messiah, he broke out into song. The song is called the *Nunc Dimittis* being known by the opening words of the song in the Latin. Therefore, his reply is that he was now ready to die in peace. He called himself God's servant. He trusted God and God kept His promise.

2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,— He praised God for seeing God's salvation for the people. His eyes had seen Christ the Messiah, the One who come to save!

2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;—The child, God's sent salvation was prepared for all people. The Messiah had come to save all men. Prejudice and favoritism were unknown to God. He was not willing

² <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1991-12-22-The-Cradle-And-The-Cross-Simeons-Song/>

³ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1991-12-22-The-Cradle-And-The-Cross-Simeons-Song/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

that any should perish.

2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. The child was to be the light to the Gentiles; to the unbelievers of the world. This simply means that He came to be the Revelation of God, to reveal the way, the truth, and the life to men. And the child was to be the glory of God's people Israel (Jews) who truly believed. In this baby, Simeon sees the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people across the centuries (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Micah...).

2:33 And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. The parents marveled at the blessings and predictions. The predictions would amaze anyone, but they were given for an additional reason. Joseph and Mary needed to be assured, encouraged, and strengthened. They had been through a lot and still, there would be more experiences to go through because of the child! In the *Nunc Dimittis*, first, the song (vv.29-32); then a personal word of prophetic blessing to Mary (vv.34-35).

2:34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;— Simeon's blessing amazed them. He wanted them to pay close attention to this child, for He would be the cause for many falling and many rising. He would be the Great Divider of Men! This child was to be what the Scripture calls the *"stone of stumbling"* and the *"chief cornerstone."*

1. Many would stumble and fall over Him in Israel. They would not notice, look, study, prefer, choose, believe, or trust Him, and the salvation He brings. They would simply choose another way other than God's way.
2. Many would rise because of Him. They would take notice, choose, and believe Him and the salvation He brings. Therefore He would become their foundation their cornerstone.
3. Many would speak against Him. The child's fate was sealed. The child was to be opposed and eventually killed. Jesus was a sign of both God's love and judgment. And therefore, He was to be a sign that will be spoken against.

This would be like the preacher saying after reading the scripture, *"you accept or reject."*

2:35 (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Mary may be happy at this moment in time but there will come a time when she will experience sorrow. When many speak against Him, the hidden thoughts of many hearts will be revealed, but it will also be like a sword that pierces through Mary's own soul. She will experience deep sorrow at the cross, seeing her Son, the only begotten Son of God, rejected and killed by men. This certainly revealed the inner thoughts of men's hearts.

Luke 2:36-38 Anna Sees The Christ

2:36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;— Nothing is known about Anna except what is given here.

1. Anna was a prophetess. There had not been a prophet in Israel for some three hundred years, yet God is seen raising up a prophetess, a woman at that! You notice the prophetess title came first before she is the daughter of...? She was apparently a very special person, for women leaders were very rare in that day! She was evidently a spiritual and saintly woman of God! As a prophetess, she was constantly studying the Word of God. The main role of a prophet was to speak for God proclaiming His truth!
2. Anna is the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: ⁴Phanuel means *"the face of God"* while Anna means *"Grace."* For grace proceeds from the face and from the mouth of God, and is breathed into the faithful. The place where Jacob saw God face to face was called by him Peniel or "Phanuel." The tribe of Aser (or Asher) is among the ten lost tribes of Israel, who originally inhabited the western portion of the region of Galilee [it is west of Naphtali and north-west of Zebulun].
3. Anna was of a great age—over 100 yrs.
4. Anna had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. This means that she and her husband had 7 years of marriage; *"from the years of her virginity"* meant that she married at the proper time at the end of

⁴ <http://newtheologicalmovement.blogspot.com/2011/09/feast-of-prophetess-anna-who-was-she.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

one's virginity and became a woman, and she never remarried again after her husband died.

2:37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

5. Anna was a widow for 84 years. It doesn't say how old she was when she had gotten married, but it had been 84 years since her husband had died and she may be well over 100 years old about now. Widows didn't have it easy in that day; often neglected and exploited in spite of the commandment of the Law.
6. Anna didn't leave the temple. This either means that they set up some kind of room for her. She never ceased to worship night and day in the temple; never missing a service; totally devoted to God.
7. Anna served God with fastings and prayers night and day. This meant that she was extremely disciplined, possessing the consistency in devotions that so many lack. Despite her age; being elderly, she did not give herself to the flesh—overeating, oversleeping, immoral gratifications, meaningless activities that waste time. She devoted herself to serving and hoping in God, praying and bearing witness as His servant.

2:38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. After Simeon had blessed the child, Anna in that instant came into the group giving thanks unto the Lord. She ⁵quickly realized who Jesus was. She not only recognized Him and accepted Him for herself, but preached to everyone in Jerusalem who looked for redemption. She was one who preached the Good News of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer.

SUMMARY:

Simeon is introduced in this passage. It says that he is a just and devout man in Jerusalem, which speaks of his personal walk with God and integrity among men. It was time for the child to be dedicated and offered up for God's keeping and care. Forty days had passed since the birth of Jesus which was the Law's requirement of a woman's purification after giving birth to a son to enter into the temple. The parents, Joseph and Mary bring the child to the temple. Somewhere in the temple, they come across Simeon. Just who Simeon was is not known. Some think he was a priest, but Scripture does not say. We do know that he was a man that loved God very much and walked closely with God. By this time we can assume that he is an old man, for he had been waiting on the promise of the Lord for a long time. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ! And he being led by the Spirit on this day sees the blessed child with His parents. He took the baby into his arms and blessed God for Him. Simeon was ready to die in peace for God's Word had come to pass; death is no longer an enemy. His eyes had seen God's Salvation; the One prepared for all people; the light to the Gentiles, and the glory to the people of Israel. The parents marveled at the song of praise from Simeon and he continued to also bless the parents; then saying to Mary—the child was to be the cause of many falling and many rising in Israel. He will be a sign which men will refuse to acknowledge and pain like a sword will go through Mary's own soul (**vv.25-35**).

Anna a prophetess is introduced in this passage. She is the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Aser. She was only married for 7 years. She was a widow for 84 years. After her husband's passing, she never departed from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. Also like Simeon, she sees and recognizes the baby child as the fulfillment of prophecy, and gave thanks unto the Lord for the coming of the Messiah; speaking and sharing the message to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem (**vv.36-38**).

APPLICATION:

If there was something you only dreamed to see in your life-time, give it to God. You've heard the saying; Wait for it, Wait for it, Wait for it...Get ready, Get ready, Get ready. It's always in God's timing, so don't give up on God! Our Savior has come to us to set us free!

⁵ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/luke/05.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>