

☞ *We must take courage and stand for Christ in the godless world in which we live. This scripture tells us that many will reject Jesus and curse Him. They do not hate us. They hate the One whom we represent.*

3. Anna's Thanksgiving (v.36-38)

a. Her description (v.36-37)

- 1) God tells us that Anna was a prophetess. God had revealed truth to her that others did not yet know. Now that the Bible is complete, we no longer need prophets.
- 2) Anna was of the tribe of Asher.
- 3) She was very old.
- 4) After just seven years of marriage, her husband died and left her a widow.
- 5) Whether she had been widowed for 84 years or her total age was 84 years is uncertain. Opinions differ. If she had been widowed for 84 years she may have been between 105-107 years old.
- 6) She departed not from the temple and served God with fastings and prayers day and night. Whether this means she daily came to the temple or as some suspect she lived in one of the chambers of the women's court, we do not know.

b. Her gratitude (v.38)

- 1) She came into the temple at the same time that Joseph and Mary brought in Jesus.
- 2) She with Simeon gave thanks to the Lord for baby Jesus.
- 3) She spoke about Christ to all in Jerusalem who looked for God's redemption.

☞ *Anna is a good example for us to follow in her witness for the Lord. She was not ashamed to tell others about the Christ.*

Conclusion: This evening we have been reminded that obedience brings God's encouraging inner peace. We have been encouraged to take heart when unbelievers curse and reject the Lord. We have also been encouraged to be a faithful witness for the Lord.

Song: Rescue the Perishing - 432

Christmas Story (pt 7) – Temple Visit

18 December 2016 PM – Luke 2:21-38 – Christmas16 – Scott Childs

Introduction: We all enjoy encouragement. When we face difficult circumstances, a word of encouragement can be a huge uplift. A wise person has said that we ought to give ten complements for every one criticism. That is good advice, but not always easy to follow.

Joseph and Mary were going to face difficult circumstances in the near future. To prepare them for those trying times, the Lord send them some special encouragement.

Transition: As we look at the next section of the Christmas Story, we find the required ceremonies, Simeon's prophecies, and Anna's thanksgiving. God used these to be an encouragement to Joseph and Mary.

1. Required Ceremonies (v.21-24)

a. Jesus' Circumcision (v.21)

- 1) When Jesus was 8 days old he was circumcised.
- 2) God had made a covenant with Abraham to be his God, to give him a multitude of descendants who would be his special people, and to give those people Canaan as their homeland. ^(Bridgeway) God first gave circumcision to Abraham as a token or sign of His covenant. (Genesis 17:10-12) "*This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.*" (11) "*And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*" (12) "*And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed.*"
- 3) At the time of his circumcision He was given the name Jesus as the angel had commanded.

b. Jesus' Presentation in the Temple (v.22-24)

- 1) Before taking Jesus to the temple, Mary had to complete her days of purification. This was a ceremonial purification that lasted 7 days plus 33 more days if she

bore a male child. [Turn to Leviticus 12:2-4] If she bore a female child the purification lasted 14 days plus 66 more days (Le 12:5). [Keep your place in Leviticus]

- 2) Verse 23 is a quote from Exodus 13:2.
- 3) Verse 24 is a quote from Leviticus 12:6-8. Here we see again that Joseph and Mary were very poor. They were not able to offer a lamb as usually required. (2 Corinthians 8:9) "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*"
- 4) They had fulfilled God's requirements for parents and now enjoyed the encouragement of inner peace that they had obeyed God's law.

📖 *When we obey the Bible we too will enjoy the encouragement of inner peace.*

2. Simeon's Prophecy (v.25-35)

a. His Revelation (v.25-27)

- 1) God first describes Simeon for us.
 - a) He lived in *Jerusalem*
 - b) He was *just* (righteous) and *devout* (reverent or pious).
 - c) He was waiting for the *consolation* of Israel. This refers to the coming of the Messiah who would save His people and give them comfort.
 - d) The *Holy Spirit* was upon him. Evidently the Holy Spirit was upon him for the purpose of make this prophecy. Remember, this was still before the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers.
- 2) The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would live to see the Lord's Christ. Let's remember that Christ is the N.T. name for the Messiah.

b. His Proclamations (v.28-35)

- 1) The Holy Spirit told him to go to the temple when Joseph and Mary were there with Jesus.
- 2) He took baby Jesus up in his arms and blessed God (v.28).
Read Luke 2:29-32.
 - a) He had now seen God's salvation – Jesus Christ.

- b) God prepared that salvation for all people.
 - c) It would lighten the Gentiles and glorify Israel.
- 3) Joseph and Mary *marvelled* at the words of Simeon. This word means to wonder at or to admire.
 - 4) Simeon made a second proclamation.
 - a) He blessed Joseph and Mary.
 - b) He then he spoke a prophecy to Mary about Jesus. It appears that Simeon knew that she was related to Jesus but not Joseph. **Albert Barnes** explains this prophecy. "*It seems to be supposed, in our translation, that the "same persons would fall and rise again; but this is not the meaning of the passage. It denotes that many would be ruined by his coming, and that many "others" would be made happy or be saved. Many of the poor and humble, that were willing to receive him, would obtain pardon of sin and peace – would "rise" from their sins and sorrows here, and finally ascend to eternal life.*"
 - c) Jesus would also be a sign that is spoken against. Again **Barnes** notes, "*Never was a prophecy more exactly fulfilled than this. Thousands have rejected the gospel and fallen into ruin; thousands are still falling of those who are ashamed of Jesus; thousands blaspheme him, deny him, speak all manner of evil against him, and would crucify him again if he were in their hands;*" Yet today, two thousand years later, the ungodly still curse using the name of Jesus Christ in vain.
 - d) Simeon said that a sword would pierce through Mary's own soul. Little did she know that one day she would stand near the cross that held her Son and like a sword it would cut her to the heart.
 - e) The common hatred for Jesus Christ is still revealing the thoughts of many. Every person is called upon to decide for himself what he or she will do with Jesus Christ. Will they humbly receive His atonement or will they curse Him as a fraud?