

INTRODUCTION

Eight days after Jesus was born, Joseph & Mary took Him to the temple to present Him to the Lord. At the temple, they had two encounters – one with Simeon, the other with Anna. Both were outrageously responsive to the fulfillment of the prophecy of a Savior right in front of their eyes. What is your response to the birth of your Savior?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share with your group someone you know who has lived a long and godly life.
2. Read Luke 2:21-24. Luke is making a point that Joseph & Mary followed the requirements of the law. Why do you think this was important for Luke to include?
3. What did Joseph & Mary offer as a sacrifice for the purification rites? What does this say about their family? (See Exodus 13:2, Leviticus 12:8, Leviticus 14:22, and 2 Corinthians 8:9.)
4. Read Luke 2:25-33. What kind of man was Simeon?
5. Simeon was waiting for “the consolation of Israel”. This name for the Messiah was commonly used by Jewish people, probably taken from passages in Isaiah (12:1, 40:1-2, 49:13). According to Ligonier Ministries, *“Luke’s use of the phrase ‘the consolation of Israel’ is striking, and it is clearly to be taken in a messianic sense. Throughout their history, the people of Israel had suffered greatly, both for their own sin and because of the oppression of others....they were a people in desperate need of consolation and comfort—the kind of permanent comfort that could come only when the Son of David would arrive to guard them and to provide for the forgiveness of their sin.”* (ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/consolation-israel). We live in an age when the story of the birth of the Savior can be all-too-familiar. Imagine being Simeon, waiting, waiting, waiting, to see Israel’s salvation come. Finally, through the leading of the Spirit, you are able to hold that Savior in your arms. Would your response be the same or would it differ from Simeon’s response?
6. In Simeon’s response, he called Jesus “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel”. How does Jesus fulfill these statements?
7. Read Luke 2:34-35 and discuss what you believe the following statements are referring to:
 - *“This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel”*: _____

Study Questions for Community Groups

- “And to be a sign that will be spoken against”: _____

- “So that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed”: _____

- “And a sword will pierce your own soul too”: _____

8. Read Luke 2:36-38. How would you describe Anna? What was her response to Jesus?
9. To paraphrase Simeon, an encounter with Jesus will always reveal your heart (Luke 2:35). What has the study of the stories of Simeon’s and Anna’s response to Jesus revealed to you?

SCRIPTURE

²¹On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived. ²²When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.” ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.” ³³The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” ³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him. Luke 2:21-40

APPLICATION

Meditate on the lives of Simeon and Anna this week. Imagine waiting years (50+) to see the answer to your prayers. Think about how they felt to see the fulfillment of what they had been waiting for. How can you respond so that your life will reflect this kind of hope and commitment?