

WEEKLY REFLECTION

In this week's passage, we focus on Simeon and Anna, two characters who are often forgotten from the Christmas story. Simeon appears in Luke 2:25, where he is described as being "righteous and devout." The Holy Spirit reveals to him that "he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (v.26) Anna is a prophetess (v.36). She is "advanced in years", and "did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day." (v.36-37).

Both of these characters give thanks to God when the baby Jesus is presented at the temple. Finally, Simeon has seen the salvation which God has prepared as a gift for all people (v.29-30) Like Simeon, Anna recognizes the "redemption of Jerusalem" that Jesus would one day bring about (v.38).

But wait—after Simeon gives thanks to God, he says that the baby Jesus "is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel" (v.34). He will usher in peace with a sword that would pierce through souls, revealing thoughts from many hearts (v.35). Simeon reminds us that part of the Holy Spirit's work is to reveal the thoughts of mankind and to convict them of their wickedness. He points us towards repentance (Acts 2:37-38; Isa. 40:3; Jn. 1:19-23).

As we reflect on this week's passage and the meaning of the Christmas story, can we reflect on what we put our hope in, and what we are waiting for? The people of Israel waited through 400 years of darkness. They longed for peace because they had no peace. Simeon waited his whole life to see the Lord's anointed one. Anna was in her twilight years. To them, God sent His Son. Jesus came in the humblest way possible, not just to usher in peace but shalom: meaning wholeness, wellness, and harmony.

As you consider Simeon, Anna, and the nation of Israel—what do you put your hope in? And what are you waiting for?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Are there some things that you are waiting on God for? What have you waited on in the past, and how did you react when God responded, whether positively, negatively, or in a manner you did not expect? How did you act during the waiting process as well??

QUESTION TWO:

Why do you think Simeon and Anna were willing to devote themselves to waiting on God? How do you think they handled the moments where they were discouraged? What did they do while they were waiting? How does our waiting differ from theirs?

What were their responses towards God's fulfilment of His promises to them? How did that moment impact their lives? Have we seen ourselves react similarly when God makes good on His promises for us? How have those moments impacted our lives?

QUESTION THREE:

If Jesus Himself is peace, in what areas of your life do you think He's come to bring peace in? What wars do you think He has come to end (either within yourself, with others, or with God)?

What specific steps can you take this week to cultivate that peace within yourself, in your relationships with others, or in your relationship with God? Ask the Holy Spirit to lead and guide you, and to open your eyes to any of these opportunities throughout the week.