

Simeon and Anna  
The Supporting Cast of Christmas  
Luke 2:22-38  
December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

1. Mary and Joseph obeyed by \_\_\_\_\_ their child to the Lord. (2:21-24)
  
2. Simeon, Anna, and their long-awaited \_\_\_\_\_ (2:25-38)
  - a. What do Simeon and Anna have in common?
  
  - b. Simeon's prophetic words
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_ in peace (v. 29a)
  
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_ for Gentiles and Jews (vv. 30-32)
  
    - iii. \_\_\_\_\_, opposition, affliction (vv. 34-35)
  
  - c. Anna's \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 38)

Simeon and Anna  
The Supporting Cast of Christmas  
Luke 2:22-38  
December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

1. Mary and Joseph obeyed by \_\_\_\_\_ their child to the Lord. (2:21-24)
  
2. Simeon, Anna, and their long-awaited \_\_\_\_\_ (2:25-38)
  - a. What do Simeon and Anna have in common?
  
  - b. Simeon's prophetic words
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_ in peace (v. 29a)
  
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_ for Gentiles and Jews (vv. 30-32)
  
    - iii. \_\_\_\_\_, opposition, affliction (vv. 34-35)
  
  - c. Anna's \_\_\_\_\_ (v. 38)

Simeon and Anna  
The Supporting Cast of Christmas  
Luke 2:22-38  
December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020

Intro

It's common to hear people speak about their "bucket list" – high value experiences that they want to have before they "kick the bucket." Using the phrase "kick the bucket" to refer to death goes back to at least 1785 and has a somewhat gruesome history. But the idea of a "bucket list" goes back to a movie from 2007 about two terminally ill men on a road trip to accomplish a wish list before they die.

Examples –

George H.W. Bush wanted to go skydiving again and he did at the age of 90.

Others want to visit a famous city – Rome, Paris, New York

Some want to see the Holy Land

Others want to climb Mt Everest

Our two characters today in the supporting cast of Christmas each had one item on their bucket list – they wanted to see the Messiah. Their sweet story is a fitting conclusion to our series, both because of their experience of finally setting their aging eyes on the long-awaited Savior, and because of the pointedness of their words.

1. Mary and Joseph obeyed by **presenting** their child to the Lord. (2:21-24)
  - a. These events take place after Jesus' birth in Bethlehem and the visit by the shepherds but before the Magi come to visit and before the family flees to Egypt.
  - b. Jesus was circumcised in obedience to Leviticus 12:3 and Genesis 17
    - i. **Leviticus 12:3** 'On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.
  - c. Jesus was presented to the Lord in obedience to Exodus 13.
    - i. Circumcision would take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> day then there were 33 more days of purification in which she would be ceremonially unclean. Following that would be the presenting of the child to the Lord.
    - ii. **Exodus 13:2, 12** "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me." ... <sup>12</sup> you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD.
    - iii. As a perpetual reminder of the Lord's deliverance of them from Egypt by the final plague of taking the first born.
      1. Shows the role that tradition can play in presenting truth.
      2. Candlelight service is fantastic. It reminds us of the light of the world.
      3. Communion is a perpetual reminder of Jesus' death for us and our union with him. But it can become routine and meaningless.
    - iv. It wasn't necessary for this to take place at the temple but that they did so shows them going above and beyond what was required. They traveled the 5 miles from Bethlehem.
    - v. Their sacrifice of two birds – either turtledoves or young pigeons – was the alternative sacrifice available to the poor

1. **Leviticus 12:8** 'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'
  2. One more reminder that when Jesus stepped down into humanity, he stepped all the way down. And yet the socio-economic difference between a palace and an impoverished family is negligible when compared to the step down from heaven to earth, from glory with the Father to frail humanity, from an existence removed from physical pain and suffering to one experiencing all manner of suffering, whether rich or poor.
  3. But it is one more reminder that Jesus didn't come merely for the wealthy and comfortable but He came among and for the poor.
- d. Jesus had no indwelling sin nature of His own to cover through sacrifice. He didn't need to go through circumcision and sacrifice as pictures of His own redemption, just like He had no need to be baptized later for his own benefit. He was the sinless son of God from birth. However, He is shown here to be obeying, even passively at this point through the actions of his parents, every facet of the law. He was the perfectly obedient Israelite, satisfying every one of the law's demands.
  - e. Did she know that the time of sacrifices was coming to an end? Did she know her baby would be THE sacrifice that all these small sacrifices dimly pictured?
    - i. When His sacrifice was made on the cross, the thick veil separating the Holy of Holies from the rest of the temple was torn, signifying that there was now access to God because the final atonement had been made. No more need for sacrifices. No more need for temples.
2. Simeon, Anna, and their long-awaited **Savior** (2:25-38)
    - a. What do Simeon and Anna have in common?
      - i. Both were aged.
        1. We're told that Anna is 84, having been a widow since her husband died after 7 years of marriage. Likely that means 60 years of widowhood.
        2. We're not told how old Simeon is, but it's implied he has been waiting for a long time for this day.
        3. Two people who are faithful to the end when it would be easy to grow cynical at the waiting, to grow frustrated at the growing pains in their bodies, to grow weary at the faithlessness of the younger generation
      - ii. Both were devoted to God.
        1. Simeon is described as righteous and devout
          - a. Righteous in the way every believer is righteous – not by a perfect life but by trusting in the God to save Him. He would have followed the OT sacrificial system, presenting an offering for His sin, again looking ahead with the eyes of faith to the Lord's full forgiveness through Jesus.
          - b. Can be translated "cautious" because he cautiously sought to follow God's Word. There would have been a tender heart to follow the Lord.
        2. Anna remained at the temple, serving with fasting and prayer
      - iii. Both prophesied.
        1. Anna is called a prophetess, although her exact words are not recorded for us.
        2. Simeon's song is a prophesy about the identity of this child.

iv. Both were filled with expectancy.

1. Simeon has been waiting for the “consolation of Israel”

- a. **Isaiah 40:1-2** "Comfort, O comfort My people," says your God. <sup>2</sup> "Speak kindly to Jerusalem; And call out to her, that her warfare has ended, That her iniquity has been removed, ...
- b. The righteous Jews looked for the time when Israel's warfare would end and the comforter (messiah) would remove all sins. MacArthur
- c. He was told that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
  - i. How would this promise have charged his life with meaning and anticipation? Would it have given him a certain boldness? If he were sick but had not yet seen the Lord's Christ, would he simply be confident he would recover? Would he look on every child as a potential Messiah, wondering, "Is this Him?"

2. Anna gave thanks and spoke of Him to all who were waiting and looking for God's redemption.

3. What examples of persevering faith.

b. Simeon's prophetic words

In church history this has been known as the “Nunc Dimittis” based on the Latin translation of the initial words “now let depart.” It was often used as the body of a believer was taken from the church for burial after the funeral service.

i. **Departure** in peace (v. 29a)

1. Simeon could depart in peace – He had met Jesus and was ready to die in peace. Profound picture of faith fulfilled.
2. His eyes of seen God's salvation – not that it had already been accomplished but that in the 6 week old infant he held in His arms he saw the means by which God would save the world.

ii. **Salvation** for Gentiles and Jews (vv. 30-32)

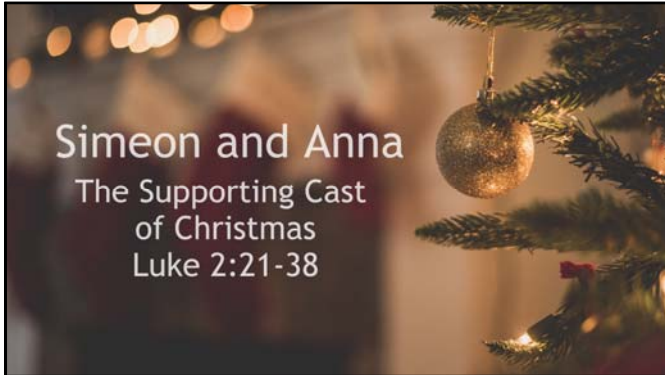
1. He quotes Isaiah 42:6, that the Messiah would be a light of revelation to the Gentiles. It was always God's plan that the gospel would go beyond the borders of Israel to all people. It wasn't an invention of NT apostles.
2. Jesus is both a light of revelation to the gentiles AND the glory of Israel; he reaches out to the gentiles as the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant extend, but he is also the glory of Israel
3. Mary and Joseph were amazed at these things.
  - a. Simeon's message reiterated what they had already been told individually, that Mary's child would save His people from their sins. But this good news continues to sink in.
  - b. Unfortunately, Simeon doesn't bring only good news. For the first time Mary and Joseph hear about the suffering Jesus would experience and that they would as well.

iii. **Separation**, opposition, affliction (vv. 34-35)

1. Separation, as people respond to their child in faith or rejection and therefore “rise” or “fall.”
    - a. The same responses we saw in microcosm with the wise men, Herod, the shepherds, the scribes we would see played out throughout Jesus life, ministry, and death. Some followed and worshiped, others rejected actively, others rejected passively.
  2. Opposition, as he was a “sign to be opposed”
    - a. Mary may have wondered – why would people oppose my baby and our Messiah? Every mother thinks their child can do no wrong, unlike every other mother, Mary just happened to be right.
    - b. **Isaiah 53:3** He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.
  3. Affliction, as Mary’s own soul is pierced.
    - a. They must have been taken aback when they heard this.
    - b. Jesus gently showed Mary that He was more than Her child, He was her savior.
      - i. Age 12 – in the temple – I must be about my Father’s business (Luke 2:46-50)
      - ii. When Mary came to visit with his half brothers,
        1. Matthew 12:48-50 But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?"<sup>49</sup> And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers!"<sup>50</sup> "For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."
    - c. Much more what is in mind is the beating and suffering of his violent death, of which she was an eye witness.
      - i. **John 19:25** Therefore the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, ...
- c. Anna’s **gratitude** (v. 38)
- i. We know much more about Anna’s identity than we do about her message. It’s the opposite from Simeon. We’re told her father’s name, her tribe, her age, her marital status.
  - ii. But all we learn about her message or response is that it was one of gratitude to God after learning about the baby Messiah.
  - iii. Sometimes an event doesn’t live up to our anticipation.
    1. A long awaited trip to Disneyland only to wait in line for 3 hours per ride
    2. A honeymoon spoiled by 3 days of food poisoning
    3. Dreaming about what your parents have wrapped for you under the tree – a new video game, a PS5, only to unwrap a shirt that doesn’t fit.
  - iv. Anna experienced no such disappointment. She saw enough of God’s promise fulfilled that she knew the rest would be also so she was grateful and spread that to others.

### 3. Conclusion

- a. How are you responding to Jesus?
- i. "The thoughts from many hearts will be revealed" through our response to Him.
  - ii. MacArthur – a man took a friend on a tour of Paris. They went to the Louvre and looked at all the great paintings there. That night they went to a concert hall and heard a wonderful symphony. At the end of the evening, the man asked his friend, "well, what do you think?" and the friend replied, "I wasn't all that impressed." In response the man told his friend, "the museum and its art were not on trial and neither was the symphony. You were on trial. History has already determined the greatness of these works of art and of this music. All that your attitude reveals is the smallness of your own appreciation."
  - iii. Likewise, Jesus' isn't on trial, but every soul is. Simeon declared "this child is a sign which will be spoken against that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" ...people rallied to oppose Jesus. . . Others responded in faith and trust, repenting of the sin revealed and receiving the same assurance as Simeon that they can depart in peace.
- b.



1

1. Mary and Joseph  
obeyed by presenting  
their child to the Lord.  
(2:21-24)

2

**Leviticus 12:3** 'On the  
eighth day the flesh of  
his foreskin shall be  
circumcised.

3

**Exodus 13:2, 12** "Sanctify to Me every  
firstborn, the first offspring of every  
womb among the sons of Israel, both of  
man and beast; it belongs to Me." ... <sup>12</sup>  
you shall devote to the LORD the first  
offspring of every womb, and the first  
offspring of every beast that you own;  
the males belong to the LORD.

4

2. Simeon, Anna, and  
their long-awaited  
*Savior* (2:25-38)

5

a. What do Simeon and  
Anna have in common?

6

b. Simeon's  
prophetic words

7

i. *Departure* in  
peace (v. 29a)

8



ii. Salvation for  
Gentiles and  
Jews (vv. 30-32)

9

iii. Separation,  
opposition,  
affliction (vv. 34-  
35)

10

**Isaiah 53:3** He was despised  
and forsaken of men, A man  
of sorrows and acquainted  
with grief; And like one from  
whom men hide their face He  
was despised, and we did not  
esteem Him.

11

**John 19:25** Therefore the  
soldiers did these things.  
But standing by the cross of  
Jesus were His mother, ...

12

c. Anna's *gratitude*  
(v. 38)