



November 10, 2010

Their Brief Appearance

By Teresa Hampton

The man was old and single-minded. The woman was well over one hundred years old and led a very habitual life. They probably saw each other often at the place of worship. One thing is certain. They had something in common. Both were extremely focused on a new arrival. The man was Simeon and the woman was Anna. In the dramatic unfolding of events surrounding Jesus' birth, their brief appearance may be overlooked.

Simeon was a "just and devout" man. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would see the Messiah before his death (Luke 2:25-35). So he came by the Spirit into the temple, and saw Mary and Joseph with baby Jesus. He took the child in his arms. Words of praise, hope, and salvation poured from his heart. Then he turned to the parents, blessed them, and prophesied of the child's future, both good and bad.

Anna was widowed at an early age and never remarried. Life had dealt her a cruel blow. However, instead of focusing on the past, she focused on present service and future glory. As an aging widow she never departed from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. After witnessing Simeon's blessing of the child King, she gave thanks to the Lord, and went out to spread the good news of the Messiah's arrival.

Simeon and Anna left examples of great faith. Both of them only spent moments with the Lord, but they leave some profound lessons. They trusted in God's promise. They looked anxiously for the coming of Christ. They were focused on Jesus.

Their brief appearance in scripture prompts some introspective questions. Do we persevere through personal hardship? Do we serve the Lord each day? Do we seek opportunities to spread the good news of salvation in Christ? Do we trust in God's promises? Do we look anxiously for Jesus' coming? Are we focused on Jesus?

Today's Verse: *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-13).*

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