

They Met Jesus

Life-Changing Encounters

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They Met Jesus: Life-Changing Encounters
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Scenes from Luke 2—3; John 1; Matthew 11

Simeon, Anna, John the Baptist

Throughout the history of the Jewish people, there were at least a few individuals in every generation who retained the expectation that Jehovah would provide a Savior for his people. They lived with such sensitivity to the reality of God that they were able to recognize his presence. Included in this number were Simeon and Anna. We see them meeting the infant Jesus as he is brought into the temple in Jerusalem, in fulfillment of the Law of Moses.

Jesus makes a tremendous impact on these two elderly people. They do not hear him preach or watch him heal, yet seeing him gives them a sense of fulfillment. They believe that all of life's questions are answered in him, that life has meaning and purpose because he has come. Though Simeon and Anna are old, they are alert to the new and startling thing that God is about to do in their world. They are not set in their ways, immovable, and convinced that all change is bad. All their lives they have worshiped the God who is Creator, and they expect him to act creatively.

John the Baptist's whole life, even from before his birth, is linked to Jesus. The Gospels indicate his personal contact with Jesus is rather limited, but John is faithful to his mission of preparing the way for Jesus' public ministry.

Simeon and Anna

Read Luke 2:22-38

1. What details do you learn about Simeon?

How do our longings affect our lives?

2. Why was Simeon in the temple when Mary and Joseph bring in Jesus?

What is the connection between Simeon's desire and the guidance he receives?

Can you describe a time when the Holy Spirit made similar connections in your life?

3. What facts about Jesus does Simeon reveal (verses 29-35)?

In what ways are Simeon's words later fulfilled?

4. What details do you learn about Anna (verses 36-38)?

Why do you think she responds as she does?

5. From Anna's example, what can we learn about influencing others?

John the Baptist

Read Luke 3:1-17

6. How does John fulfill the Old Testament prophecy of verses 4-6?

7. In John's preaching, what warnings and advice does he give to the various segments of society of his day?

How is true repentance demonstrated in daily behavior?

Note: In Luke 3:7, John takes his figure of speech from the way that snakes in the Jordan wilderness would flee to safety from spreading brush fires.

8. How does John clarify the difference between himself and **the Messiah** (verses 15-17)?

Read John 1:29-36

9. What does John know and not know about the one for whom he has been preparing the people?

What sign identified Jesus to John as the coming one?

10. What do you think John means when he calls Jesus the “Lamb of God”?

How does Jesus take away the sin of the world?

Read Matthew 11:2-6

11. How does John deal with the doubts that come over him in prison?

How does Jesus answer John’s question? Compare verse 5 with Isaiah 35:4-6.

12. How should we handle doubts, which especially trouble us when we are isolated and struggling physically or emotionally?

How can Scripture help us?

SUMMARY

1. What do you learn about Jesus from Simeon, Anna, and John the Baptist?

What can others learn about Jesus through you?

2. How did the devotion of Simeon, Anna, and John prepare them to receive the news of Jesus' coming?

CONCLUSION

Simeon, Anna, and John the Baptist represent a unique group standing at the end of the long line of faithful people looking forward to the promises of a Deliverer and a Redeemer. These three stood “on tiptoe” to see God’s promises fulfilled in ***the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world***. The heritage of their faith has been captured in Scripture so that, like them, we have the opportunity to recognize who Jesus is and to respond to him as they did.