

ANNA AND SIMEON

Rev. Frank Rose

Readings: Luke 2:22-38; Arcana Coelestia 10574:9

The baby Lord was born far from the home of Mary and Joseph. When He was a week old He was given the name, Jesus. Later, when He was about six weeks old Mary and Joseph took Him to the temple in Jerusalem about five miles away from Bethlehem. They went to the temple to make a special offering. Two old people met the family there, and both of them knew that the Child was very special.

One of them was a very old woman named Anna. She had been married many years before, but after only seven years of marriage, her husband had died, and she had spent the rest of her life in the temple with fasting (going without food) and prayers, night and day. When she saw the Child, she knew who He was. She gave thanks to the Lord and went around telling everyone that a Savior had been born.

The other old person was named Simeon. He had been told that would live to see the day that a Savior was born into the world. We don't know how many years he had waited, but the hope of meeting the baby Lord was what was keeping him alive!

We can imagine the old man looking up to see the family coming into the temple, Joseph, and Mary and the six week old Baby. He reached out his arms. He wanted to hold the Baby close to him. All his life he had waited for this moment. With the Baby Jesus in his arms, the first thing he said was "Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace" (Luke 2:29). This was a way of saying "Now that I have seen You, I can die in peace." What an amazing experience for the old man!

Simeon was inspired to say some other astounding things. He said that this little Baby was going to save the world, not just the people in that little country, but all people everywhere. He also said that this little Baby would bring light and truth to people who didn't even know about the Lord—people in places that did not know much about God at all. And He said that this Child would bring glory to his own people, and his own country.

Then Simeon blessed Mary and Joseph, and said that the small Boy he held in his arms would grow up to cause great changes in the world, bringing some people down, and raising other people up. And Simeon had one more message—not a very pleasant message, but it was true, and he had to say it—that Mary would feel a lot of pain because of her Son. Somehow Simeon knew

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that the Lord's life would be full of hope and light, but would also seem to end in a painful death, and that this would be very hard for Mary.

Simeon was happy, because he knew that the pain would be a small and temporary thing compared to the light, beauty and peace that the Lord would bring into the world.

Amen.