

THE SHEPHERDS, SIMEON, AND ANNA

Luke 2:8-38

IN THE SECOND chapter of his gospel, Luke presents three witnesses to the birth of the Messiah: the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna.

THE SHEPHERDS

With the shepherds we witness that – The Light of the world was born in the night (v8). How fitting since the whole world is in a state of darkness.

The angel of the Lord (KJV) suddenly appears and the shepherds are terrified, as the glory of the Lord shone all around them (v9). The heavenly messenger announces, *“Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”*

How great is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh!

All at once a host of angels appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”* When the great company of holy ones returned to heaven, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to find the holy child. As soon as they found Mary, Joseph and the baby they spread the good news that had been told them concerning the child (v17).

SIMEON

Simeon was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the Consolation of Israel, which is a prophetic term for the Messiah. Luke records that the Holy Spirit was upon him. It was revealed to him that he would not die before seeing the Christ (v26).

Led by the Spirit Simeon went to the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child JESUS to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took the baby in his arms and blessed Him. As he praised God, he bore witness to the fact that the child would be the Savior for all peoples— a light to the Gentiles, for the glory of Israel (vv29-32).

From that moment on Simeon was ready to die and depart in peace; his soul having been satisfied. His waiting was rewarded; his hope was fulfilled. *Those that wait for ME shall not be ashamed* (Isa 49.23).

Then Simeon prophesies (vv34-35). And his prophecy contains 3 important images of what JESUS would be: a) the stone, b) the sign, and c) the sword.

The stone

The nation of Israel would stumble over Him. But many in Israel would fall in conviction and then rise up in salvation.

The sign

That means He would be a miracle. Not so much as a demonstration of God's power, but rather as a revelation of divine truth. Our Lord's miracles in John's gospel are called "signs" because they reveal special truths about Him (James Smith). The sign meant, "His prophecies; His teachings" will come true.

The sword

The image of the sword was for Mary alone. It spoke of the immense suffering and sorrow she would bear as the mother of the Messiah. Her greatest piercing would come at Calvary, at the foot of the cross.

ANNA

Anna was a godly widow of great age, whose name means "grace." She devoted herself to "serving God by worshipping" through fastings and prayers (v37). She spent her time at the temple. She waited for the appearing of God's promised Messiah.

God's timing and leading is always perfect. Anna came up just as Simeon was praising the Lord for the child JESUS, so she joined in the song of praise.

Anna did much more than praise and give thanks to God. She spread the good news of salvation to all those who looked forward to redemption in Jerusalem (v38). She was a faithful prophetess.

Indeed we can say, "Glory to God in the highest, for Christ the Lord has come." Christ is our Salvation; Christ is our Light; Christ is our Glory. To Him the praise, now and forevermore.

