

SIMEON AND ANNA - INTERVIEW

L – Linda

S – Simeon

A - Anna

L: In our Gospel reading this morning we heard about two elderly people who had waited patiently for the coming of the Messiah. They were called Simeon and Anna and they met Jesus in the temple. We are fortunate that they are here this morning to share in our service. Let me introduce to you Simeon and Anna.

L: Simeon, Luke's Gospel tells us that you met Mary and Joseph and their baby in the temple. Can you tell us about this?

S: Yes, I can. I met this young couple and their baby in the outer courtyard of the temple. They were there to offer a sacrifice as part of the purification of their child after circumcision.

L: What sort of people were they?

S: They seemed to be sincere people, not well off. If they had been wealthy, they would have sacrificed turtle doves, but they offered pigeons.

L: I know, Simeon, that you have lived your whole life led by God's spirit. What was the special promise that God revealed to you?

S: I have tried to live my life as God's spirit has led me. Many years ago, the Holy Spirit came to me and revealed to me a certainty that I would not die until I had seen the Messiah, the promised one of Israel. But as year followed year and I grew older, I started to wonder if maybe the Spirit had made a mistake, or maybe I had misunderstood what the Spirit was showing me.

L: So what happened when you saw this baby?

S: Well, at first I thought I was mistaken. This baby came with such humble parents and while all babies are wonderful, this one didn't appear any more wonderful than the others that come each day to the temple. But I felt the Spirit in me with such power saying, "This is the one. This is the Messiah".

L: So what did you do then?

S: I took the baby in my arms and I praised God. I told the parents that this baby was to be the Messiah, not just for the Jews but for all the world's people.

L: How did they react?

S: She was shocked, I think. I warned the mother that the path ahead would not be easy. She was young, but I think she knew this baby was special and the way ahead would involve sacrifice.

L: So Anna, you too were in the temple courtyard with Simeon. Matthew tells us that you were a prophet, the only woman in the New Testament to be given this title. Please can you tell us something about yourself?

A: I am an old woman, very old really. My husband died many years ago, so I have been on my own for most of my life. God has given to me the gift of prophecy and I gladly serve God. I spend my days in the temple fasting and praying.

L: So what happened when you saw this young couple and their baby in the temple?

A: Immediately I saw this child, I knew this was the Messiah.

L: How did you know?

A: It was like God speaking to my heart. I had not the slightest doubt. I knew this child would be the Messiah, the one promised by the prophets. And so I joined my prophetic voice to the messages passed on by the prophets of old and I told all who were in the temple what God had shown to me, that this was the Messiah, the one sent by God to save his people.

L: What sort of reception did you get? Did the people in the temple listen to what you were saying?

A: Some did, but I suspect in the confusion of the courtyard with stalls and people bustling about, not too many people really heard what I was saying. But perhaps later they would remember and they too would know what God was saying through me that day.

L: What about the young couple and their baby?

A: They completed the rituals that the law required for the purification of their baby boy and they set off for home.

L: And what about for you and Simeon?

A: We were both truly amazed at what God had shown us. Together we praised God that the promises God had made to us had been fulfilled. We had seen the baby, the one that would be the Messiah in our lifetimes, and we had had the opportunity to tell others of his coming.

S: It was the fulfilment of God's promise to us. Now we, old people that we are, could rest in peace knowing that God was in control and that this tiny baby was the promise of hope for the world and for all people.

L: Thank you, Simeon and Anna.