

## **Christmas Simeon Anna And The Child 12-12-16b**

We continue now our study of the nativity of the Lord Jesus and as Friday night we looked at the wise men and the means by which God communicated to them and their faithfulness in response and making this great journey and arriving through divine guidance at the place where the Lord Jesus was and they were able to see with their own eyes the hope of Israel, the shepherds we saw in our first session this morning, the message of God was delivered to them, they responded in faith, they made a short journey and were able to see with their own eyes the hope of Israel and they communicated to others, they left praising and glorifying God, not only for the things that they had heard and seen but that which was told to them, what this portended for the future, what it meant. Well, when you continue in Luke chapter 2 verse 21, when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the child, his name was called Yeshua, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. His name was given before he was conceived.

I wish I had time to elaborate on that, it is a point to ponder. God's purposes for us were in his mind and in his eternal plan before we were conceived. Your name was known to God, he decided in what family, in what generation, in what nation each of us would be born, he knew who our parents, our siblings, our children, our friends, our extended families, he knew all of that, he wove it together in the perfection of his plan, our name was known.

But the Lord Jesus name was known and communicated and in obedience and in faith, his parents and siblings, give him the name that was given to them before he was conceived. Verse 22, now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, this goes back, you might just keep your finger here and turn back to Leviticus chapter 12, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, this is Leviticus chapter 12 verse 1 and following, the Lord spoke to Moses saying, speak to the children of Israel saying, if a woman has conceived and born a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days, as in the days of her customary impurity she shall be unclean, and on the eighth day, the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised, she shall then continue in the blood of her purification 33 days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.

Then it goes on to talk about a female child and in verse 6, when the days of her purification are fulfilled, whether for a son or a daughter, she shall bring to the priest a lamb of the first year as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtle dove as a sin offering to the door of the tabernacle of meeting. Then he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her, and she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who has born a male or a female.

If she is not able to bring a lamb then she may bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons, one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her and she will be clean. So from the night that we just studied where the angels inform the shepherds and they go and they find the Lord Jesus in swaddling cloths lying in a manger, that

is the night of his birth.

Eight days later he is circumcised and 33 days after that they go to offer these offerings. So this is after 40 days. This is the 41st, total of 41 days pass.

So the child is now a little over a month old, right? Well, this is where we are in Luke chapter 2. Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord. This is the law of the firstborn.

This is why, by the way, the blood of Passover, who did that protect? The final plague in Egypt, the firstborn. It wasn't everybody in the house, it was the firstborn because they are the representative. They stand for their family.

They stand for their parents and their siblings. The firstborn was, you know, we have a representative democracy, well that was the representative individual in a family, the firstborn to open the womb. To offer a sacrifice, verse 24, according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.

Isn't it interesting that you have the shepherds, they've got flocks and flocks of sheep, but Mary and Joseph, 40 days later, 41 days later, don't have a lamb to bring. You would think, well, it ought to be the richest sacrifice, this after all is the Lord Jesus, but they couldn't afford a lamb, and so they brought the turtle doves or pigeons. Now verse 25, and behold there was a man in Jerusalem, by the way, just as a side note, there is a reason why God did not afford them enough money to be able to afford a lamb.

They've got the lamb with them, don't they? And the two birds, you can't help but think of the two identities. He is the suffering servant, he is the conquering king, he is God, he is man, he is the one who dies and he is the one who lives, just like those two birds that were slain for the cleansing of the leper in Leviticus 14. But those two birds, there is a reason why God wanted those offerings.

Why couldn't God have made Mary and Joseph insanely rich? Why couldn't they have traveled in style? Why couldn't she have ridden in a litter borne by four men? If man was orchestrating and producing the arrival of the Messiah, if you had Steven Spielberg putting this thing together, how would it be done? Utterly, totally the opposite of how it happened. If you put the Pope in charge of it and you had a conference of bishops and cardinals and they said, well, you know, the Messiah is coming, so let's figure out how we're going to do this. Can you imagine the parade? Can you imagine the, well, they'd have to stop every mile or so and build a church and name it something.

Church of the Annunciation, Church of the Birth, Church of the Wayside Stop, Church of the Watering the Donkey, Church of the Haying the Donkey, Church of the, we had to stop and tie a sandal, you know. Man just wants to gild and overbuild and overdo and overcelebrate and miss

the significance. These things are significant.

Every single thing has significance. Why eight days? Why were male children circumcised on the eighth day? Why did God pick that? Why isn't it the ninth day? By the way, if you hear some rumor that that's the optimum day for circumcision because of the baby leaving its mother's antibodies and its own have kicked in and all that, it's a wife's tale. It's kind of like when they were running the computers back and forth through the eons of time, they found a day missing and it turned out it was Joshua and the son standing still.

It's a miss the point. Why the eighth day? What is eight the number of? It's the number of renewal. It's the number of newness.

A seven has been completed and you're starting something new. You're starting something fresh. Seven has been completed, now it's number eight.

You're starting a new week. I have an upcoming study on that that I think you'll enjoy. But here, in fact, I got so fascinated by it I spent part of my review time this morning reviewing that which makes me want to talk about it.

But having the ironclad self-discipline I have, I won't. Eighth day, and so then 33 days. Why 33 days? It doesn't divide by seven evenly.

Seven fours are 28, seven fives are 35. It seems to be kind of in the middle there. You'd have to kind of add, you just can't really get there with any kind of a minute.

Why 33? Well, why was the Lord 33 years old when he went to the cross? One of the things is after 33 there is a seven until you get to 40, and 40 is a number that does have great significance. 33 is significant because 40 is significant and 40 minus a seven is significant. But again, if I digress too far we won't cover our material.

And behold there was, verse 25, Luke chapter 2, a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel and the Holy Spirit was upon him. Think about that. What dispensation is this? What age is it? Age of Israel.

What is the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the age of Israel? Is it universal? Does everybody get it because they believe? Who gets the Holy Spirit in the age of Israel? The kings get it, the prophets, the tabernacle workmen, Bezalel and Aholiab, and rarely others. A few of the judges, the Spirit came upon them and Samson started swinging that jawbone. But it is a rare gift, but Simeon has it.

The Holy Spirit was upon him and it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. How many times has the Holy Spirit been mentioned here? The Holy Spirit is upon him, been revealed by the Holy Spirit and he came by the Spirit.

That's three mentions and operations of the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit told him that he would live to see the Lord's Christ and the Holy Spirit compels him, impels him to the temple on this day. And you think about the milling throngs in Jerusalem.

You think about how many people are there for baby dedications and offerings and they've got young children. And in this myriad, in this Christmas mall crowd of people, God the Holy Spirit brings Simeon down there. If he was like me, he wouldn't be caught dead in that big of a crowd.

But there he is. And somehow he, not somehow, God's how, he runs into Mary and Joseph in this milling throng. They are there to offer these sacrifices and apparently have, when the parents brought in the child, Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, which is these sacrifices that complete the period of purification and so on.

Simeon took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light unto revelation, a light for the purpose of revelation. You notice that bring is in italics.

It's a light to revelation, a light for the purpose of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel. Why isn't it a revelation to Israel? Why is it a revelation to the Gentiles? It's already been revealed. You don't need a revelation when you've already got it.

The second person that comes to tell you, hey, did you hear? You say, don't bother. Yeah, I did. I already heard it.

It's not a revelation to Israel. This light is the shining forth of the glory of God to the people of Israel, the glory that they already know. They've got the entire canon of the Old Testament, the law, the prophets, and the writings that have foretold this.

It's not a revelation. It's a fulfillment to Israel and a shining forth of the glory of God. It's a revelation to the Gentiles because unlike anything that has happened before, this episode, this happening, this occurrence is going to affect and make an issue of God and of salvation to the Gentiles.

There is going to be a great change. This is one of your first hints of the church age. Simeon proclaims it prophetically in the power of the Holy Spirit on this day when the child Jesus is brought to the temple.

Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. Now, Simeon, where does this name first appear? You have Leah, the first wife of Jacob, and then you have Reuben. She bears her first son and she names him what? Reuben.

She has another son and what does she name him? Simeon. And she says the reason she names him Simeon is because the Lord has heard her prayers. She knows that it's her sister who's the favorite and the one that Jacob was after.

But she's vindicated because she has the firstborn and now she's got a second son and her sister Rachel still hasn't had any. But she says the Lord has heard my prayers. And Simeon means he who hears.

The one who hears. And it's really a reference to God. He who hears.

Shimon is the one who hears. So, Simeon is the one who hears. Simon is a variation on this name.

Why is he notable and the foremost of the disciples? Because he is one who hears. This is a name that shows up in various forms and various ways. What tribe is Simeon from? Is he from the tribe of Simeon? Doesn't say.

Where does he live? He lives in Judea. He lives in the environs of Jerusalem. And he is a man of great faith and a man of great knowledge.

And God has given him a special dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is dispensed, is present, is resident with him and gave him this unique promise. He is one of the foremost believers in this generation.

And he's waited a long time. He would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple and he pronounces this prophetic greeting.

He blesses God. He took him up in his arms and blessed God. This is your salvation, he says to God, which you have prepared before the face of all peoples.

Twice, Simeon references the fact that this goes beyond Israel. That's how full of the Holy Spirit he was. That's how knowledgeable he was.

He knew from his Old Testament scriptures. He knew from the promise to Abraham that he would be a light to the Gentiles. That this was the fulfillment, this was the closing of that prophetic circle.

A light for the purpose of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people Israel. And Joseph and Mary marvel at those things which were spoken of him. Then Simeon blessed them, blessed them, the parents, and said to Mary his mother, Behold this, notice child is in italics, this is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign which will be spoken against.

You know why Simeon understands about the Gentiles? Because he also understands about the rejection. Simeon, by God's grace, has figured out what's going to happen. There will be a fall before there is a rising.

He doesn't say the rising and fall. He says the fall and rising of many in Israel and a sign which will be spoken against. He's not going to be welcomed.

He's not going to be received. A sword will pierce through your own soul also. A sword will pierce.

This is, what does a sword represent universally in scripture? This is violent judgment. There's a sword that issues forth from the, metaphorically, in the mouth of the Lord Jesus in the Revelation. Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword.

This is judgment and it's violent judgment. And a violent judgment is going to pierce your soul also, pierce your heart. And that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

As Jesus said, he brings a sword that will divide households, divide relatives. Well, why this record? Of all the people that were told, why Simeon? Why does God put him in that generation? Why does God grant him that presence of the Holy Spirit? Why does he issue these two statements? One about the child, which is basically a praise to God, and the other to Mary specifically. He tells Mary, not Joseph.

Why? Because under the ministry of God's Holy Spirit, Joseph isn't going to be around when these things are fulfilled. Joseph is going to pre-decease. It's very clear from later scriptures that Mary and the brothers are around and Mary is still alive 33 years later when Jesus is crucified.

Joseph is not. Never mentioned again. After the visit to the temple at the age of 12, we don't see Joseph anymore.

And apparently he passed away. But these things are communicated to Mary. She's the one that will see their fulfillment.

Well, we keep that on board. What do we learn from Simeon? Ask and it shall be given. Seek and you will find.

Knock and it will be opened. It wasn't the dispensation for the Holy Spirit to visit individuals, but Simeon's faith and his interest and his hunger for the things of God is so great, God gives it to him anyway. God can do what he wants to.

That's why we don't try to make proclamations and say, well, there is no such thing as a miracle in the modern day. God can do what he wants to. There are general rules that define a dispensation, but God made the rules and he's free to make exceptions.

And Simeon is an exception. God is the God who hears. And he hears the plea and the prayers of Simeon and he grants him this special privilege to hold the Christ child in his arms and to pronounce this great blessing and this prophetic statement.

In verse 36, Now there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity. And this woman was a widow of about 84 years who did not depart from the temple but served God

with fastings and prayers night and day.

Another similar heart. Now, look at all the information we're given about Anna that we're not given about Simeon. They are given to us sequentially and it invites comparison and contrast.

Was Simeon married? Did he have any children? We don't know. How old was he? We don't know. What tribe was he from? We don't know.

We would assume he was from the tribe of Judah. Most people in Judea are Judean. But look at Anna.

We know all kinds of things about her and yet some of it is a little bit murky. Anna is a prophetess. How many prophetesses are there in the Bible? Well, in the Old Testament, how many can you count? There's who? Deborah.

Is she a prophetess or a Jehovah's Witness? She's a Jehovah's Witness. Where does she fit in? Here's my point. It's a really rare thing.

It's a rarity. Occasionally you see a reference where somebody has daughters and they prophesy. So Deborah counts.

Rare thing. Very rare. Is Simeon exceptional? Yes.

Is Anna exceptional? Yes. Very much. Yes a prophetess in Israel rare and As we saw when we study the the book of Judges It was also something of a rebuke because it meant there weren't enough guys to fill the job that they were supposed to fulfill And God says that's not going to stop me a woman can do it as well as a man It's not the it's not the protocol, but he raises up Deborah There with rare exceptions you see one or two in the New Testament and here you have Anna and she is a prophetess She is the daughter of Faneuil Faneuil is very interesting in the book of Enoch to which I alluded on Friday he is a Fourth archangel with Michael and Gabriel you've got Uriel and Ariel and There's some Confusion about which one is the fourth archangel that it appears to be Faneuil Faneuil means the face of God the face of God Sometime during this holiday season you will hear that great song that was written by Mark Lowry and in part of that song that Christmas song he talks about Mary did you know and and When you look into the face of your child you're looking at the face of God Faneuil means the face of God Why is her father mentioned for his name? Faneuil the face of God We're also told that she's of the tribe of Asher What's that got to do with the price of tea in China wasn't Asher one of the ten northern tribes? Ten you know lost tribes of Israel, and what why is why is the tribe mentioned? Asher is one of the sons of Jacob obviously and Which son? He is the eighth son He is the eighth son Asher the eighth son Asher was assigned kind of an indistinct and hard to Determine area of Israel in which to dwell which interestingly was Western Galilee Asher's territory was Galilee but the but the borders are kind of hard to determine now This seven years from her virginity and 84 years was she a widow for 84 years or was she 84 years old It's really hard to tell both interpretations If she was about 14 when she got married she was

married for seven years And then was a widow for 84 that would make her about a hundred and five So when Luke says she was very old That would be true.

It could be that she was 84 years old and the marriage and the the seven years She lived with a husband seven years then he died and she'd been a widow ever since and she's 84 years old What's interesting here are? the two numbers Because if you just add them together 7 plus 84 you get 91 right? well more about that Later, by the way 84. What is that? What does that divide by? 7 times 12 7 times 12 84 7 is a good number 12 is a great number when you're talking about Israel and There is another 7 beyond that so you've got 12 7s in the 84 and then you've got an Extra 7 in there beyond that but she is a very devout woman coming that instant Coming in that instant Simeon is just handing the baby back apparently when Anna arrives Simeon and Anna apparently Met may or may not have known each other Maybe she saw Simeon and she sees the look on his face She comes over doesn't say the Holy Spirit let her or guided her at that point I think the prophetess status implies enough that it doesn't need to be stated coming that instant She gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem Now, how did she know that? How does she know who to talk to? All those who look for redemption in Jerusalem She's the oldest woman in Jerusalem. She knows them all doesn't she she is a woman of great faith She's a prophetess people come to her who are interested in the things of God who want to know the Word of God What do prophetesses do is this Gene Dixon and you know, the horoscope type of stuff? Well, let me look into my crystal ball.

You're gonna meet a tall dark stranger. What what does a prophetess do? Prophets were forth tellers they were preachers They were proclaimers if somebody came to the prophet or the prophetess they got the Word of God, right? So she is a woman who knows everybody in Jerusalem who is interested in the Word of God because they come to her and she Can shed light Why is it her because the religious establishment is off on the wrong set of train tracks. They've gone north and She's the one that can communicate and so people come to her and they're not They're not put off by the fact that she's a woman or that she's from the tribe of Asher She's got God's truth and she knows everybody and so she goes and you could imagine, you know the news might have initially traveled somewhat slowly because she's Anywhere from 84 to 105 and she's staggering down the streets of Jerusalem finding everybody and apparently It didn't take a lot of traveling because there weren't that many That's that she could tell them.

This is the sad state of affairs in Jerusalem. So you have these two Anna by the way, her name is actually Hannah Hannah and This is from Hana, which is the word for grace The face of God is her father and her name is grace and it is grace that recognizes those who Look for the redemption in Jerusalem. It is grace that they get the word that God's Promise has been fulfilled Maybe a long time in coming think of the patients.

Why couldn't she been 24? Why couldn't she have been in her prime? why are Simeon and Anna at the end of their life because the Old Testament age is at its end and these to Represent the man and the woman the devout man the prophetess Represent all of those who have waited so long For the fulfillment of God's promise Peter talks about that waiting God waits not because

he's slack concerning his promise But he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance Notice Anna doesn't say anything about the Gentiles Didn't run off and find any Gentiles to tell Anna the prophetess of this is all strictly in-house Israel Those who look for the redemption In the capital city of Israel Jerusalem, and she is a woman of the law fastings and prayers she Lives in Jerusalem, and she is worshipful in that ritual sense She is the best and the fullest of that Old Testament worship Done in a genuine way Simeon he who Is just and devout waiting for the consolation of Israel He's waiting for the consolation She is looking for those who are waiting for redemption Consolation Redemption what is consolation? What's the consolation? This is the vindication. This is the restoration this is the fulfillment of things like the land promises and the kingdom promises and the The land flowing with milk and honey promises relief from oppression relief from Attack relief from war relief from all of the things that have been a scourge and a judgment on the nation of Israel consolation Anna Communicates to those who are looking for redemption. This is the spiritual side solving the sin problem removing sin from God's people redemption both of them bear witness notice Everyone that this message has been delivered to whether it's the wise men the shepherds Simeon or Anna they Get the news they recognize it they take it to themselves and they act upon it and they talk about it to others Every one of them the wise men came.

Where is he? shepherds come and then tell Simeon proclaims right there in the precincts of the temple right there in the temple courtyard Anna Sees the Lord Jesus and Goes throughout Jerusalem. She's sort of the missionary But she has specific targets those who are looking for redemption This is a clue when we have good news to share. Who do we share it with? those who are looking for Redemption that's who we tell about the Lord Jesus she didn't just get a bullhorn and a truck and Drive through the streets Who did the shepherds talk to? People they knew people who were their friends and relatives who shared their love for the things of God So there is a caution.

We've missed this in the Christian world a lot. We we try to Broadcast we want to drop leaflets from an airplane. We want to Bombard the airwaves.

We want to mass market the Lord Jesus. You never see mass marketing in the scripture the most you ever see is someone standing up like Jesus did on the last great day of the feast among his own people and Proclaiming scripture you see Paul in Athens You see him on on Mars Hill Making a proclamation, but it's it's general and those who are interested will come Jesus preaches to the multitudes and those who are interested will come and sit at his feet for more but in this holiday season Wouldn't it be great to be numbered among those that God takes special notice of? because we're Waiting we are people of prayer. We are people who will deny ourselves the usual Entertainments and Provisions of this life to spend extra time seeking out the things of God.

That's what it means to fast you don't have to just deny yourself breakfast or skip a meal Fasting means I have my spiritual priority high enough that normal earthly routine gets bumped I Will do whatever it takes to have my contemplation time my quiet time my devotional

time That's fasting if you set aside what you would normally be able to do what you could rightfully do well It's time for a meal. It's time for my favorite program. It's time for me to do this that or the other If it's not a commitment that we need to honor if it's something that's in the optional category We set it aside and we say well given that option.

I would rather spend my time in prayer I'd rather spend my time looking over my notes reviewing what I've learned Asking myself the question does this make a difference in me? Am I a different person because of what I have learned? These are the people that God looks for these are the people that God spends sends special communication to these are the people who are Inaugurated and initiated into the deeper things of God, and if that's what you enjoy if that's what you love God knows it and You will be a shepherd you will be a wise man. You will be a simian you will be and Anna and What a privilege these people Receive news that others would not get for decades They saw they touched The deliverance of God it was tangible it was immediate for them and It can be the same for us God is looking for those who are looking for him The one who has my word and keeps it like Mary did he's the one that loves me Jesus said and I and my father will come to him and make our home with him and That's the presence of Christ Paul says Christ formed in you is the hope of glory Christ in you the hope of glory Well, it's a great holiday thought I think Somebody's lawn presentation ought to be Mary and Joseph with the child and Simeon and Anna That'd be a great little nativity scene. Maybe when Rebecca feels better.

I'll get her to make me one Do you have Simeon and Anna I want to see it. We'll set it up. It's a wonderful picture isn't it? The shepherds get a lot of airplay and God bless them They were great men, but this is a great vignette a great little snapshot of the culmination the fulfillment of God's promises to the people in the old covenant and that's what we will experience at the end of our age and we look forward to it and we're patient just as they were and we're going to be excited and See the glory of God with our own eyes just as they did.

Let's close here in a word of prayer Father thank you for the gift of your son and for all that he is and for all that he means for the tremendous privileges and expressions of your grace That we have through him and in him we thank you that someday we will see him face to face and We'll ever be with him and with you we pray that we will be ready for that day that we will take this time of Preparation in this time of Experience to learn and to grow to bear fruit to invest in our eternal Citizenship and our heavenly inheritance and that our lives in that way will reflect your glory in the glory of the Lord Jesus Both in this time in this season and forevermore. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen