

10 Following the Messiah Episode 5 (0.00-5:26) Who Is Jesus?

Opening:

1. You have viewed the video "Following the Messiah Episode 5 at www.appianmedia.org, and have worked through the study guide (Lesson 10) available at www.appianmedia.org/free-download.
2. Our study today looks examines the question "Who is Jesus?" in light of the statements made by Simeon and Anna when Jesus was presented at the temple for his dedication.

Into the Text:

1. Reading of Luke 2:22-38.
2. Note that Jesus, Joseph and Mary are at the temple in Jerusalem for the dedication of Jesus and for the purification procedure prescribed in the law of Moses. See Ex. 13:2, 12; Lev. 12:1-8.
3. Note the four-fold description of Simeon given in Lk. 2:25: 1) a righteous man; 2) a devout man; 3) looking for the consolation of Israel; 4) and the Holy Spirit was upon him. All of this is indicative of his relationship with God. Joseph was said to be a righteous man (Matt. 1:19). Zacharias and Elizabeth (Lk. 1:6) are described as righteous. Interesting how God uses righteous people. But Simeon is also described as devout. Cornelius is described as a devout man in Acts 10:2. This combination of righteous and devout suggests that these take hold of the duties and purposes of God.

Simeon is "waiting for the consolation of Israel." Israel was under oppression by the Romans. Israel was looking for God to intervene in this circumstance. Anna was "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." This is equivalent to the "consolation of Israel." In other words, both of them are looking for God to intervene by sending the promised Messiah (see Isa. 7:14; 9:1-7; 11:1-10; 40:1-11; 49:8-13; 51:1-6, 12-16; 52:13; 60:1-3; 61:1ff; 66:13).

So this is the kind of people Simeon and Anna are.

4. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ (Messiah). Now the Holy Spirit led him into the temple at the same time that Mary and Joseph arrived there with Jesus. He took Jesus into his arms. The statement that he made is remarkable. It includes a quotation from Isaiah (9:2; 42:6; 49:6, 9; 51:4; 60:1-3).

“Now Lord, You are releasing your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, A light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”

The statement first recognizes the special communication Simeon has received from the Holy Spirit regarding his living until he saw the Lord’s Christ (Messiah). It involves an acknowledgement that he has seen God’s salvation. Additionally, the quotation from Isaiah testifies to Jesus’ being the fulfillment of prophetic expectation and includes all peoples, even Gentiles.

Joseph and Mary are amazed. Simeon predicts Jesus will be involved in the rise and fall of many in Israel and that “a sword will pierce even your own soul.”

5. Anna is described as a prophetess, daughter of Phanuel, tribe of Ashur, married for seven years, widowed, 84 years old, never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. (Do you think she was praying for the coming of the Messiah?) Interesting that a woman is mentioned in addition to Mary. Interesting that her character is identified and that her service is recounted. For those women who perceive of themselves as having nothing to do in service to God Anna’s long life of service stands in contrast to this thinking.

She gave thanks to God and continued to speak of Jesus to all those looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Note how she continues her work as a prophetess as she speaks of Jesus and His role in the redemption of Jerusalem.

Application:

1. What do these accounts about Simeon and Anna tell you about who Jesus is?
2. How did Simeon’s statement about Jesus being appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel actually come about? Who fell? Who rose? How as Mary’s soul pierced?
3. Do you believe that Jesus is who Simeon and Anna claimed that He was? Like Anna, do you speak of Him to all those looking for “the redemption of Jerusalem?”
4. Simeon and Anna are both models of good character and service to God. How is your life similar/dissimilar to theirs? Do you think this had anything to do with their inclusion in the story of the life of Jesus?
5. What will you do with Jesus?