CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
JANUARY23 2021

Scripture Story: Luke 2:21-39.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages,* chapters 4, 5.

what you seek is what you get



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flashlight

"As Simeon enters the temple, he sees a family presenting their firstborn son before the priest. Their appearance bespeaks poverty; but Simeon understands the warnings of the Spirit, and he is deeply impressed that the infant being presented to the Lord is the Consolation of Israel, the One he has longed to see" (*The Desire of Ages,* p. 55).

keytext

"And behold, there was 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. 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."

(Luke 2:25, 26)

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what do you think?

***Voting*—Agree or disagree (explain your response):**
The awareness of people about Christ at the time of His birth is likely to be similar to people's preparedness before the second coming of Jesus. Please explain your answer.

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did you know?

In the days of Noah, a people loved God, kept His commandments, and got into the ark. In the days of Abraham, a people loved God, stepped out from the majority, and kept His commandments. In the days of ancient Israel, a people loved God and kept His commandments. God called them His chosen, His special people. In the days of the New Testament, Peter preached powerfully. Three thousand were baptized on the day of Pentecost. As they were baptized, they stepped out and became God's special people to keep His commandments." "God's special people were always characterized by obedience. They loved Him enough to obey Him. They were carved out from the majority. They were a commandment-keeping people. God called them from darkness to light—from error to truth—from commandment-breaking to commandment-keeping." "Just as in every generation God has had a special people, He has a special chosen people today" (Mark Finley, *What the Bible Says About,* pp. 380, 381).

INTO THE STORY

"And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb."

"And behold, there was 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. 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. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he 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 to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.'

"And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.'

"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 eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

"So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth."

(Luke 2:21, 25-39)

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OUT OF THE STORY

Read the story and try to imagine the scene. Envision the sights of the Temple, and the story as it might have played out.

Underline what you think are three key phrases in this passage.

With so little information about the childhood events of Jesus, why do you think this story is recorded in the Bible?

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Examine the words spoken by Simeon to God, and his words to Mary. When you consider these prophetic statements, what can you discern about the kind of person Simeon was?

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Consider also Anna's response (although her exact words are not recorded). Were Simeon and Anna typical people with common expectations about the Messiah, or were they somewhat unique for their time? What do you think? Explain.

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How do you think Anna's lifestyle—always living at the Temple, fasting, and praying—affected her influence on others? The last part observes that she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. How do you think people responded to her words?

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Since it was revealed to Simeon that he would not die before seeing the Messiah, imagine how eagerly he must have been looking at the end of his years, knowing that any day he would witness God's Son. How does this anticipation relate to those of us living in the last days of earth's history?

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punch lines

"You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart" **(Jeremiah 29:13).**

"Indeed He says, 'It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth'" **(Isaiah 49:6).**

"I have waited for your salvation, O Lord!" **(Genesis 49:18).**

"But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" **(Matthew 13:16, 17).**

"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" **(Romans 11:5).**

"But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" **(1 Peter 2:9).**

further insight

"Having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. No truth essential to our salvation is withheld, no miracle of mercy is neglected, no divine agency is left unemployed. Favor is heaped upon favor, gift upon gift. The whole treasury of heaven is open to those He seeks to save" (Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages,* p. 57).

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connectingtolife

Sabbath

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20.

Think about ways you can be a messenger of hope for Jesus in these last hours of earth's history.

"Every believer is called to have a personal part in this worldwide witness" (Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs, The Remnant and Its Mission).

Read and respond to the voting question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. To what degree do you think "the remnant" at the first coming will be like "the remnant" that are alive when Christ returns?

God declares in Jeremiah 29:13: "And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart."

How common is it in your life to witness someone who lives by this passage? Why do you think seeking God "with all your heart" is such a challenge?

Sunday

Read Luke 2:29-35, 38 and Luke 12:40.

As you read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study, you may notice the response that Simeon made to Christ as well as the response of Anna. Compare the two reactions and note how they are similar and how they are different. What do you think is the central lesson in this story for the church? What is the message you think God is trying to say to you in this week's lesson?

Monday

Read Matthew 25:13 and Luke 2:25, 26.

The *Key Text* shows that there were a few people at the time of Christ's birth living with active expectation of the Messiah. Why do you think they referred to the coming Messiah as "the Consolation of Israel"? There were many words and names used to describe the coming Savior. How were these names significant? What were the messages contained in the names associated with the Savior?

Tuesday

Read Matthew 24:14.

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section of this lesson and imagine how Simeon and Anna must have lived each day. How would you describe their experience as they discovered that the Messiah had been born and was before their very eyes? What lesson is there in this passage for you today? How can you share the hope about Jesus' coming with someone whenever the opportunity arises?

Wednesday

Read Revelation 14:6-12.

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson, which verse speaks most prominently to you today?

Rewrite Jeremiah 29:13 in your own words, but try not to use any of the major words or phrases already in the text. (If you need more space, use the Notes section in the back of your book.)

Thursday

Read 2 Peter 3:10-14.

Imagine if this story were to take place today. Based on the way you currently watch and wait for God to reveal Himself to you, would you be among those who recognized Christ, or those who were preoccupied with other things? Show where you would be on the continuum.

1	2	3	4	5
Actively Expecting			Complacent and Distracted	

What would it look like to be actively seeking Christ in your life today?

Friday

Read 1 Peter 2:9.

Reflect on this Bible passage. What does it mean to you that you are part of God's remnant people? How can your life show that you are part of a chosen generation that lives purposefully and calls others to prepare for Jesus' soon return?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 4, 5.

**Humble Hero* is a special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages,* created by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companionbooks#.URIhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.