

## **Home For Christmas: Advent Series**

### **Part 3**

#### **“A Supportive Home: Jerusalem”**

*“Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.” Luke 2:22*

##### **A. Jerusalem held great support for Jesus...**

*“Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.” Luke 2:22*

1. Jerusalem was a large city with a population of 80,000 to 100,000. The population could swell to over a million during festivals. It was the “City of David” with steep slopes on each side making it a defensible site.
2. *“Herod was on the throne in 37 B.C., and he began the greatest building program Jerusalem had known. He constructed a new city wall, a theater and amphitheater, athletic fields, and a new palace. His reconstruction of the temple and the expansion of its platform made it the crown jewel of Jerusalem.” -Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*
3. Jerusalem to Nazareth was about 70 miles, with Bethlehem about 6 miles from Jerusalem.
4. Jerusalem meant the “City of God” or “Peace” and is mentioned 146 times in the New Testament; 660 times in the Old Testament. Whenever the “Temple” is mentioned in Scripture, it is referring to the city of Jerusalem.

##### **B. Anna and Simeon were two prominent characters mentioned in the infancy of Jesus...**

1. The first ceremony for Jesus would have been the circumcision and took place on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of His life and probably was in his temporary home of Bethlehem.

*“Eight days later, when the baby was circumcised, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel even before he was conceived.” Luke 1:21*

2. The second and third ceremony took place when Jesus was about six weeks old. It was the presentation and sacrifice for the child and then the purification of the mother.

*“Then it was time for their purification offering, as required by the law of Moses after the birth of a child; so his parents took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. The law of the Lord says, ‘If a woman’s first child is a boy, he must be dedicated to the LORD.’ So they offered the sacrifice required in the law of the Lord— ‘either a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.’” Luke 1:22*

3. Simeon’s prophecy and blessing.

*“At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, ‘Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!’ Jesus’ parents were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby’s mother, ‘This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, and many others to rise. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul.’” Luke 2:25-35*

What do we know about Simeon?

- a. He was righteous and devout.
- b. He was a man of faith and hope.
- c. He was filled with the Spirit and led by the Spirit.

4. Anna receives the reward for her faithfulness.

*“Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer. She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem.” Luke 2:36-38*

What do we know about Anna?

- a. She was a prophetess.
- b. She was devout and faithful.
- c. She broadcast the good news of Jesus.

##### **C. Zechariah and Elizabeth played a prominent spiritual and family role in the infancy of Jesus...**

*“At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth.” Luke 1:39-40*

1. Mary is believed to have had family support as Elizabeth was a cousin, living about 70 miles from Mary’s home. Elizabeth’s name meant “the oath of God.”

*“Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God’s eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord’s commandments and regulations.” Luke 1:6*

2. Elizabeth was the daughter of a priest, “advanced in years” and barren. The greatest joy of childbirth had been deprived. The belief that they were hiding something would have been common.

*“They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.” Luke 1:7*

3. Zechariah meaning “the Lord remembers” was a devout priest who chose to live just outside of Jerusalem rather than in the elite section of Jerusalem where other priests lived. Zechariah was chosen to enter the Holy of Holies to serve.

*“As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.” Luke 1:9*

4. God performed the impossible for the couple by giving them “John the Baptist” who would prepare the way for Jesus.

*“For nothing is impossible with God.” Luke 1:37*

*“Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But with God everything is possible.” Matthew 19:26*

**D. How will you prepare for Jesus to be evident in your life?**

1. Simeon was devout in his faith and listened to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

*What is God leading you to do? Are you listening to His voice? Do you have faith to believe His leading?*

2. Anna was waiting on God's promises...even though it took a lifetime to see it fulfilled.

*What promises has God given you that you need to hold on to no matter what the circumstances appear to be? No matter how long you have to wait?*

3. Zechariah and Elizabeth were devout about their faith, and their living choice showed that they cared more about what God thought than what people thought.

*Is God asking you to do something that pushes you past your comfort zone? Is he asking you to be a witness in spite of what people think? Is he asking you to live for Him in spite of what others think?*

4. Zechariah and Elizabeth faced disappointment and disgrace but continued to serve and believe. Consequently, God did the impossible!

*What is God calling you to believe, despite disappointments, that may seem impossible...but to hold on... and keep believing?*

**Coming soon:**

*You can pick up the DVD's in the foyer today!*

December 18: "The Predicted and Celebrated Home: Bethlehem"

December 25: "I'll Be Home For Christmas"