

The Home Builders

Week 7-Roles in the Home

Luke 2:21-38

Sin twisted the positive desire of woman to respond amenable to man into a negative desire to resist and rebel against him.

Sin twisted the positive drive of man to use his strength to lead, protect, and provide for woman into a negative tendency to abuse her or to abdicate his responsibility toward her (Kassian, M., Demoss, N., *Divine Design*, p. 109).

Sin marred God's original design for man and woman. Jesus Christ is God's remedy for man's ruin.

I. Simeon and Anna's Introduction-Luke 2:25-26; 36-37a

"Jesus came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). The Jews, by and large, rejected Jesus as the Messiah but God always has a remnant. Two people among the remnant of Jews who took the Old Testament seriously and believed it were Zacharias and Elizabeth. "They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord" (Luke 1:60). There was a young couple, Joseph and Mary, who were righteous and extremely devout despite their young age. There were a handful of uneducated, uncouth, and ceremonially unclean shepherds tending their flocks on the hillside outside Bethlehem. And there were two very obscure believers introduced to us by Luke, Simeon and Anna.

"Simeon was righteous and devout, looking 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). When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple "to present Him to the Lord" (Luke 2: 22), Simeon "came in the Spirit into the temple"(Luke 2:27). "Then he took Him into his arms and blessed God, and said, "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" (Luke 2:28-32). And there was a woman named Anna, a prophetess. "She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four" (Luke 2:36).

The name Anna means "grace" in the original language. She was of the tribe of Asher, the 8th son of Jacob. Asher means "blessed or happy." Anna had been blessed and graced by God to be a prophetess. A prophetess is defined as "one who speaks." This means Anna was a teacher, a speaker of God's Truth. She was a student of the Old Testament and possibly a teacher to other women. We know she was not a source of divine revelation since none is recorded here, but she was known as one who taught. God did use women to speak divine revelation (see Miriam-Exodus 15; Deborah-Judges 4; and Huldah-2 Kings 22; 2 Chronicles 34). These women spoke for God at some event or a moment in time, but even they were not life-long prophets of God as were Abraham, Moses, etc. Anna was a Bible speaker or teacher.

Anna probably married around the age of thirteen, which was common during Bible times. She was married only seven years before her husband died. Now, at the age of

eighty-four, Anna had been a widow for 64 years. (Some Bible scholars believe Anna was 84 while others believe she was actually 104, adding 84 years as a widow plus 7 years marriage plus 13 years at the age of marriage. We cannot be sure and it appears the text can be interpreted either way.) At any rate, Anna was a godly older woman who loved God and served Him every day. May her tribe increase!

II. Simeon and Anna's Occupation-Luke 2:37b

Simeon devoted his life to the things of the Lord, so much so that “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 2:25b-26).

Like Simeon, Anna had committed herself to serving the Lord. Anna “never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.” We assume Anna lived at the temple from the emphatic nature of the original language used to describe her occupation. Around the temple grounds there were some apartments. They were normally dwelling places reserved for the use of the priests. When the priests came to do their two weeks of service at the temple they needed a place to stay and these small apartments provided lodging for them. Perhaps since Anna was a faithful woman who served at the temple day and night, a decision was made to provide a living space for her on the temple grounds. Anna spent her time occupied with the holy things of God “serving night and day with fastings and prayers.” Anna was part of the Jewish remnant who took the Old Testament seriously. She and Simeon were those who, like Abraham, believed God and it was counted unto them for righteousness (see Romans 4:3, Galatians 3:6, and James 2:23).

III. Simeon and Anna's Proclamation-Luke 2:38

Herod's temple was massive and had a huge courtyard where thousands of people could mill about. By God's divine providence He connected Simeon with two total strangers, Mary and Joseph. Simeon was a righteous devout man looking for the consolation of Israel. He was a regular temple-goer and a believer. Anna had devoted most of her adult life to praying and fasting for the coming of Messiah. She lived on the temple grounds. Simeon would have known his fellow believer, Anna.

When the Spirit of God prompted Simeon to go to the temple to see Jesus he may have spotted Anna and waved her over. Or perhaps God led Anna to the place where Simeon was holding Jesus in his arms. We are not certain but we do know that somehow God connected Simeon and Anna on that glorious day when Jesus was being presented in the temple according to the Law (see Luke 1:21-24). It was “at that very moment” that Simeon began uttering his prophecy, “she came up [heard Simeon's prophecy] and began giving thanks to God and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38). All her many years of petition turned to praise and thanksgiving! This little woman - who had spent years talking to God - now started talking to everyone else who had been yearning for the Messiah to come and fulfill the prophecies of the Old Testament. Isaiah 9:6 says, “For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders.”

While our culture has blurred the lines between the roles of men and women, God and His Word give us a clear understanding of what His plan is in regard to our unique purposes in the Kingdom of God.