

## The Best Gift of All...Jesus (I wrote)

A couple of weeks ago, I started telling you about two special people from the Bible.

One person's name was Simeon. Simeon was a priest who's only desire was to see the Savior before he died.

Simeon knew that a Savior was coming...and he knew that the Savior would come some time during his lifetime.

He would not die before the Savior came...he knew that...because God Himself had told him.

But the problem was that Simeon was now an old man...how much longer would it be?

The second person that I told you about was a woman...her name was Anna.

Anna was a priestess. She spent all of her time in the temple...she too was waiting for the Savior.

Now over the next few weeks, you are going to hear a lot about Jesus' birth...about His mother Mary...and about Joseph and Mary's long trip to Bethlehem where Jesus was born.

You will hear about the shepherds and the wise men and about the angels.

So...I'm not going to repeat everything that you are learning in Sunday School.

Instead, we are going to hear about His life right after His birth.

After Jesus was born, the days slipped by one by one.

People went about their work as they always had.

The sun rose in the morning and set in the evening.

The shepherds continued to pasture their flocks in the fields around Bethlehem.

Life continued its usual course, just as if nothing had happened.

Most people didn't even know that a savior had been born.

And even if they did...they didn't know that Jesus...the tiny baby that Mary was holding...WAS the promised savior...the redeemer of the world.

Like any other child in those days, the baby was given a name on the eighth day...and Mary and Joseph named their son; Jesus, just like the angel Gabriel told them to do.

Jesus means Savior...and Jesus was indeed the Savior. The Redeemer of the world.

On the fortieth day of His birth, Mary and Joseph brought Him to Jerusalem; to the temple which was two hours away from Bethlehem.

They were going to “present” their child to the Lord. In other words, He was being dedicated to the Lord.

Which means that Mary and Joseph were promising to raise their child in a way that would be pleasing to God. They would raise Him in a Godly home.

This trip to Jerusalem would be Jesus’ first trip there...but it wouldn’t be His last.

As Mary and Joseph walked the streets of Jerusalem...no one knew that He was the Savior.

To them, He was just another baby...just like all the rest.

When they entered the temple, they offered the usual sacrifice for poor people. Which was either a pair of pigeons or turtle doves.

The Sacrifice offering for the Rich would be a lamb; but poor people were allowed to offer a pair of pigeons or turtle doves.

A priest approached Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus.

Unthinkingly he laid his hands on the child and blessed Him.

Imagine...He had touched the Messiah...and He didn't even recognize Him.

Suddenly an old, gray haired man entered the temple with great haste.

He hurried straight to Mary. It was Simeon.

He knew who the child was!

He knew because God had told him.

He had waited for the Savior for many, many years. The shadow of death was creeping toward him.

But now...the great day had finally come...the most beautiful day in Simeon's entire life.

Mary offered the baby to Simeon.

Reverently the old man took the child in his arms.

Full of joy...Simeon praised God.

“Now I can die in peace,” he cried out, “for my eyes have seen Your salvation, O Lord.”

Simeon was so excited that he began to sing.

He sang of the light, the great and beautiful light that descended from heaven to beam down not only upon Israel but upon all the nations.

That light was Jesus.

As he sang, Simeon said that many would come to love this child and would receive happiness through Him.

But there would be many others who would hate him.

Simeon knew that Mary's joy was greater than anyone else's joy.

But he also knew that her sorrow would also be greater than anyone else's sorrow.

Simeon knew that she would suffer intense pain, when Jesus was placed upon the cross and crucified.

He felt sorry for Mary....And he fell silent.

When Simeon fell silent, another voice was raised.

This voice belonged to a little old, gray haired women...it was the prophetess Anna.

Anna was an 84 year old widow at this time.

She came to stand by the baby Jesus.

Like Simeon, she saw much more than a child who was six weeks old.

She didn't just see a baby...she saw the Son of God. The Savior of the world.

Anna began to sing too. She sang about this great wonder.

And from that moment on...Anna told everyone that she met...that she had seen the Redeemer.

God had told both Anna and Simeon that a Savior was coming...He was coming because God had a plan.

And that plan was to send a Savior...to save man from his sins. Why?

The Bible tells us in John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

God sent His Son...His only Son...brought to earth as a little tiny baby... to die for you and for me so that one day...we can live in Heaven with Him throughout all eternity.

How many of you have ever sinned? Ever told a lie, ever disobeyed, ever cheated on a test? We all have, haven't we? Each of these things...plus a lot of other things... are called sin.

The Bible tells us that we have ALL sinner.

God does not allow sinners into heaven does He? No

So not one single person can ever enter into heaven when they die can they?

Yes they can...and this is how... You see, God LOVES us SOOO much that He didn't want us to be separated from Him throughout eternity.

So He sent His own Son...Jesus Christ...the only person who ever walked upon this earth that has never sinned to be a sacrifice for each and every one of us.

He came as a tiny baby...to live among us...to walk among us...to teach us about His Heavenly Father...to teach us how to go to heaven when we die.

He was perfect...He was sinless.

And He willingly died for each and every one of us...an awesome...cruel death upon a cross.

Why? Because He wanted to pay the price for our sins. When Jesus died on that cross, He died for our sins. He paid the price for us.

That's would be like if we committed murder or something terrible...and we were going to have to be put to death for that crime. But then someone steps forward and says  
"No wait, put me to death instead."  
"I will die for their sin"

That's exactly what Jesus did for us. He died because of all of our sin.

And why? Because He loves us that much!!!

But...even though Jesus died for our sins...that doesn't mean that we will automatically go to heaven when we die.

There is more to it than that.

We can't just KNOW that Jesus died for us...have to admit that we are a sinner. We have to pray and say "Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I know I have messed up, and I

know that you died for my sins. Please forgive me of my sins...please come into my heart and be my Lord and Savior."

And when we pray and admit that we are a sinner, when we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and be our Lord and Savior...He will do exactly that...He will live in our hearts forever...and when we die...we will live in Heaven...with Him...for all eternity.

So when we celebrate Jesus' birth each year...let's not forget why He came...

Yes...We decorate trees on Christmas.  
And Yes...we have lots of fun parties

And Yes...we give and we receive gifts.

But...I want you to remember that the very best gift is the gift of Jesus Himself.

Because if it weren't for the gift of Jesus then we would not have ...the gift of eternal salvation and a life in heaven with Him forever and ever!!