

Seeing Jesus, They Knew

KRISTIE ANYABWILE

Parenting is hard, and first-time parenting brings an added weight of difficulty. Everything is new—from feeling those first flutters of life in the womb to holding and seeing your child for the first time to the first bath, first feedings, first words, first steps. There are so many *firsts*!

Imagine what it was like for Joseph and Mary, traveling with their newborn from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. The trip would've taken a few hours on foot. In faithful obedience, they traveled for the first time as brand-new parents, participating in the custom of dedicating themselves and their child back to God.

All went according to custom until the righteous and devout Simeon arrived. He'd been waiting for the

deliverance of Israel, and entering the temple courts, he experienced a first. In that moment, God fulfilled his promise that Simeon would live to see the Messiah. Seeing the infant Jesus, he *knew*.

And Simeon didn't just see him—Simeon *held* him. In that moment, Simeon tangibly understood that God's salvation foretold by the prophets would be not only global in scale but also intimate and personal. Salvation itself was embodied in the cooing and wiggling infant in his arms. As Simeon worshiped and spoke of God's salvation, Mary and Joseph marveled, likely remembering the angels' instruction that they should name their child Jesus, a name that spoke of God's salvation.



*For my eyes have seen
your salvation, which
you have prepared in
the sight of all nations.*

LUKE 2:30–31

While Simeon spoke to Mary, Anna came up to them and confirmed Simeon's prophetic song of worship by praising God herself. For decades, Anna's entire life had centered on worshiping God, praying, and fasting. Seeing Jesus, Anna *knew*. She knew this was the child they'd been awaiting for the redemption of God's people, so she spoke of Jesus to all who would listen. The promised light for the nations had arrived.

In Mary and Joseph, in Simeon and Anna, we see snapshots of what devotion to God and righteous living looks like. We see obedience and faith, discipline and dedication, anticipation and worship. They saw Immanuel. They held Immanuel. They knew Immanuel. They spoke of Immanuel.

As we celebrate Immanuel this Advent, let's walk in faithful obedience like Mary and Joseph. Let's practice being devoted, upright, and worshipful like Simeon. Let's pray, fast, and speak of Jesus to all who will hear like Anna. There is redemption in no other name.

Ponder Luke 2:22–40.

What's most compelling to you about the stories of Simeon and Anna? How does their example—and that of Mary and Joseph—encourage and inspire you this Christmas Eve?