

Baby Jesus Is Brought to the Temple

Forty days had passed since Jesus Christ was born. It was the custom in that land to have every baby boy brought to the temple as soon as he was forty days old. The father and mother would bring some gift to the temple to offer God, because they were grateful to have a baby son.

Now Joseph and Mary were ready to go to the temple. They bought a little wicker cage with two pigeons in it. This would be their offering to thank God for their Son.

There lived at this time in Jerusalem a very old man. His name was Simeon. He was a very good and wise man. He had spent many years reading and studying the old holy books in which prophets had told about the coming of Christ. Once, while Simeon was praying, God told him that he would not die until he had seen the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Simeon waited and waited for many years. He had grown very tired of living. He often went to the temple to read and pray. Often he wondered when God's promise would come true.

One morning in the very early spring Simeon knew that God wanted him to go to the temple at once. He went to the temple and prayed and waited.

All at once Simeon saw Joseph and Mary, with the Babe Jesus Christ in her arms, coming up the steps of the temple. He knew then that this was the Savior whom God had promised he would see before he died. Simeon went up to Mary and asked her to let him hold the Child. When Simeon held the Child in his arms, he began praying out loud:

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word; For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, Which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all people; A Light to lighten the gentiles, And the glory of Thy people Israel."

Joseph and Mary wondered at the meaning of the words which were spoken by Simeon. Then Simeon blessed them,

and said to Mary: "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and the rising of many people; a sword shall pierce through your own heart."

There was also a very old woman who lived at the temple. Her name was Anna. She was a very good woman and often received messages from God. Anna also came up to Mary and Joseph and thanked God for letting her see the Babe.

When all was over, Joseph and Mary returned home with their baby Son, wondering at all they had heard.