

The Christmas Experience

Week 6: Gold, Frankincense, Myrrh

1. What jumped out at you from this presentation? Is there anything you learned? Any misconceptions that were made clear?
 - Read Luke 2:21-38.
2. How does the Bible describe the faith of Simeon and Anna?
3. Simeon's first words recorded by Luke are "sovereign Lord." How do he and Anna both show their belief that God was sovereign (in total control) of their lives?
4. If you had been Joseph and Mary listening to their words, what would you have been thinking and feeling?
 - Read Matthew 2:1-12.
 - Note that this passage includes a section about King Herod that was skipped over in the presentation. While King Herod and his actions are an important part of the good news, in this lesson, stay focused on the fact that the Magi were searching for spiritual truth (vv. 1, 2) and finally reached their destination in Bethlehem where they met the Christ child (vv. 10, 11), not on the circumstances along the way.
5. How would you describe the Magi's quest for spiritual truth? Why would they travel all that way to see a baby?
6. Again, let's consider the responses of Joseph and Mary, now as the Magi arrive and present their gifts. They've met with angels, shepherds, Simeon, Anna, and these "mysterious foreign guests." If you were Joseph and Mary, what would you be thinking and feeling now?
7. Believers sometimes think that as long as they follow Christ, everything in life will work according to their plans. What do you think Mary and Joseph would say about that?
 - Simeon, Anna, and the Magi represent many people who were eagerly awaiting the coming of the long-awaited King of Kings. What did they all have in common?
 - They had studied the Scriptures about this coming event, they believed what God's Word said, and they kept their focus on God's promises, not on life's circumstances.
8. As we live our everyday lives, how can our knowledge of God's Word help us to be prepared for whatever circumstances come our way?

- When it seems God is not keeping his promises, how can you continue to believe in the truth of God's Word? How can we as a group help one another with this?
 - How can you live your life in such a way as to keep your focus on God's promises, not on life circumstances?
 - These people were all waiting for something--or Someone--they could not yet see. This is how faith is defined in Scripture (Hebrews 11:1). They were anticipating the coming of the Messiah, but they did not know when or how he would arrive. Coming to the world as a baby, born in humble circumstances, may have been a bit of a surprise to them. Today, we await the Second Coming of our Messiah, Jesus.
 - Like the people in the Christmas story, we do not know exactly when or how he will return, but like them, we can study the Scriptures, believe in what revelation we have from God's Word, and stay alert for that day to come. And, like Simeon, we can keep our hope in the life that is to come, not in this life. Kyle said, "Simeon reminds all of us who now wait for Christ's return that God always keeps his promises."
9. How do Simeon and the other people we've talked about serve as models for you to eagerly anticipate Jesus' Second Coming?
10. Think back through this series. How did each of the following people worship Jesus? What words or phrases did they ascribe to him in praise? What were their postures toward Jesus? How did they show honor to him?
- Mary and Joseph
 - The Shepherds
 - Simeon
 - The Magi
 - Elizabeth
 - The Angels
 - Anna

After the Meeting Options

- Take a few moments to reflect on and respond to this question: What if Jesus had never been born? How would my life be different today? Journal your thoughts. Ask your family members or a friend or two this question and discuss the implications.
- Those who lived through the miraculous events of that first Christmas experienced firsthand the impact of Jesus' life. Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men--all of them would be forever changed. But I hope you know that can still happen today.

It can happen to me, it can happen to you. It can happen to anyone who turns their eyes to Jesus, God with us, and travels with him through The Christmas Experience.

- Consider what you have learned and how you have been changed through The Christmas Experience series. Write down whatever comes to your mind. Share with a few others-those in your group or people who have not experienced this series-what you have learned or how you have grown.
- Think about someone, either in your group or not, who is experiencing difficult circumstances during this Christmas season. How can you encourage him or her with what you have experienced through this series? Call and/or meet with this person to show love to him or her.
- Take time throughout this week to continue to worship Jesus. Repeat the praise time at the end of the meeting with your family or friends. Make worship your priority as you experience and celebrate Christmas!