

THINK ABOUT IT ...

1. Messiah means:
 - A. Savior
 - B. Prophet
 - C. Saint
 - D. Elder
2. What did God tell Saint Simeon?
 - A. That he would baptize Christ
 - B. That he would not die until he had seen the Messiah
 - C. That he would become a saint
 - D. That he would meet the Apostles
3. Scriptures in the Old Testament that foretell the coming of Christ are called:
 - A. Law of Moses
 - B. Commandments
 - C. Prophecies
 - D. Petitions
4. The 84 year old widow in the Jerusalem Temple was:
 - A. St. Anna the Prophetess
 - B. St. Anna the mother of the Virgin Mary
 - C. St. Anna of Novgorod
 - D. St. Anna of Kashin
5. The Prayer of St. Simeon is sung or chanted in Orthodox churches during every:
 - A. Matins
 - B. Vespers
 - C. Divine Liturgy
 - D. Feast Day
6. Gentiles refers to:
 - A. People who are gentle
 - B. People from the city of Genoa
 - C. People who are not Jewish
 - D. Generations of Jewish people
7. St. Simeon was:
 - A. Righteous
 - B. A servant of God
 - C. An Elder
 - D. All of the above

The Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Temple



Prayer of St. Simeon

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.
(Luke 2:29-32, sung at every Vespers service)

The Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Temple

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord in the Temple celebrates an **important event in the life of Christ**.

In Old Testament times, it was the custom of the people of Israel for a woman who gave birth to a male child to come with the child to the Temple to offer a purification sacrifice (usually a lamb or doves).

At that time in history, it was before Christ's crucifixion and Resurrection. So people did not yet know that Christ is God, and it is He who forgives our sins. Old Testament people followed the Law of Moses that said people must offer a "sacrifice" to God in order to be "clean" from their sins.

Did the Theotokos need to be "purified" (made clean from her sins)? No, the Church teaches that the **Theotokos was pure and without sin**, both before and after she gave birth to Christ. She had no need of purification. But **she was obedient to God**. So she followed the commandments of God as they had been given through Moses.

So, forty days after His birth the Christ Child was taken to the Jerusalem Temple.

God had told the **Elder Simeon** that he would not die until he saw the **Messiah (the Savior)** Whose coming had been **prophesied** throughout the Old Testament.

Saint Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Theotokos and Saint Joseph entered with the Christ Child. Saint Simeon took the Christ Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words that are sung in most Orthodox churches every evening at Vespers:

"Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."

Then St. Simeon prophesied to the Theotokos about the salvation that Christ would bring, but that she too would suffer: "a sword shall pierce through your own soul also." His words were a foretelling about the sadness she would feel when she would later see her Son on the Cross.

At the Temple was also an 84 year old widow, **Anna the Prophetess**. She arrived just when St. Simeon met the Christ Child. She spoke about the coming of the Savior "to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem." In the icon of the Feast, Anna holds a scroll with the words: **"This Child has established Heaven and earth."**

Before Christ was born, righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and they awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna were the last righteous people of the **Old Testament**.

Saint Simeon and Anna the Prophetess represent the **connection** between the prophecies of the **Old Testament** and the fulfillment of those prophecies by Christ as recorded in the **New Testament**.

UNDERSTAND THE WORDS

FEAST = a celebration

OLD TESTAMENT = the stories in the Bible before the Birth of Christ

NEW TESTAMENT = the history and teachings of Christ and His Apostles

LAW OF MOSES = the 613 commandments given through Moses in the Old Testament to remind people of righteous (good) behavior

TEMPLE = place of worship, the House of God

PURIFICATION = to make clean, to free from sin

SACRIFICE = in Old Testament times, an animal or food offered to please God and show repentance for sins

RIGHTEOUS = a person who follows God's commandments

PROPHECY = to foretell events revealed by God to righteous persons

GENTILES = non-Jewish persons

REDEMPTION = forgiveness of sins