

The Knowing

It was the Jewish month of Abib, and in keeping with the tradition, the family of Jesus set out for Jerusalem where in the great temple, Jesus, as firstborn son, would be consecrated and dedicated to God.

Joseph held the cage containing the two doves and smiled down at Mary, holding their son in her arms.

“I wish that we could give a year-old lamb as the offering,” Mary said, shifting little Jesus to her other arm. She adjusted her shawl to shield his eyes from the sun. Looking to Joseph for an answer, Mary noticed a weariness in his face. They had been walking steadily since early morning.

“Because we have no flocks of our own,” Joseph explained, “these doves are acceptable. One will be for adoration and the other for a sin offering.”

Mary smiled silently as she thought about tomorrow. Ahead was the immense city and the lofty temple rising up on the mount. Joseph noticed Mary looking, wide-eyed, up at the fortress walls and the towers beyond. Jerusalem was exciting— the Great Temple, the merchants and markets, soldiers and strange people from foreign lands. Tonight Joseph and Mary and Jesus would sleep within its walls.

At the temple the next morning the Saducee priest Simeon eyed the trio coming toward him. He felt tired, wondering why he had risen so early and come to the temple this day. Simeon also noted that they only had caged doves for the offerings.

“Good morning Rabbi,” Joseph said. “We want to dedicate our firstborn.” Mary drew back her shawl so that Simeon could see the child.

Simeon looked down on the little face and a rush of realization swept over him. This was the special child, the one foretold. This was the Anointed of the Lord, the Messiah!

Simeon remembered his years of waiting. He remembered his times of doubt. He remembered the clear promise of the Spirit, now fulfilled before him.



The old man reached out to claim the child. Mary placed little Jesus in Simeon’s arms and the old Rabbi’s eyes brimmed with tears as he gently embraced his God.



We, like Simeon, have heard the promise and we also wait for the coming of the Lord in our lives. The wonder-child waits too. Waiting for us to keep our appointment in that special time and place when we come to “the knowing.”