

Stories of Christmas

Jesus is Presented at the Temple

Luke 2:21-38

Opening

- Gathering: How has it been apparent to you that God's Spirit is upon someone?
- Today's Focus: God reveals His Son to those who love Him and live with His Spirit.
- Key Verses: *My eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to Your people Israel.* Luke 2:30-32
- Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord.* Luke 2:39a

Opening Prayer

Lesson

Ceremonies for Newborn Jews - Every Son

- What ceremony did God command for newborn sons to become part of His family?
Leviticus 12:1-3 = Circumcision, on eighth day (day after mother's unclean week)
- What was the purpose of this ceremony?
Genesis 17:9-13 = Ever-present reminder of God's covenant, (cut-off, separate)
- How important was it for a Jew to participate in this ceremony?
Genesis 17:14 = Critical, to reject circumcision was to reject God & His covenant

Circumcising Christians (*Acts 15*)

- As God's new covenant people, are we required to be circumcised?
1 Corinthians 7:18-19 = *Circumcision is nothing ... Keeping God's commands is what counts*
- Did the early Christians (Jews) have any trouble that this opposes God's command in Genesis 17?
Acts 15:1-2, 5 = Yes, there was a heated debate over circumcision
- What did they conclude?
Acts 15:7, 10-11 = Circumcision doesn't save, only God's grace through Jesus does
- Why did Peter say that circumcision was a yoke that the Jews couldn't even bear?
Romans 2:25-27 = Circumcision has value only if you keep Law – perfect obedience is yoke
- But wasn't circumcision just a sign to remind someone that they were part of God's covenant family?
Romans 2:28-29 (4:9-16) = Yes, but it called for a circumcised heart – cut off from evil

Ceremonies for Newborn Christians

- In conclusion, Christians (God's new covenant family) don't need to be circumcised – right?
Colossians 2:11 = Wrong, Christians are to be circumcised by Christ, cut off the sinful nature
- What kind of circumcision ceremony do we have?
Colossians 2:12 = Baptism
- How important is this ceremony for God's new chosen people?
Mark 16:16 (Matthew 28:19) = Believe & be baptized and you will be saved, Jesus commanded
- What else happened at a normal Jewish circumcision that typically happens at a Christian baptism?
Luke 1:59-60 = The child was named

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Ceremonies for Newborn Jews - Every Mother

- What ceremony did God command for a mother to be purified from her uncleanness?
Leviticus 12:4 = Ceremony of purification, after 33 days (40 days from birth – 7 + 33)
- Were the instructions the same whether the child was a boy or a girl?
Leviticus 12:5 = No, twice as long for a girl - 2 weeks unclean, 66 days for purification
- What was involved in the ceremony of purification?
Leviticus 12:6-7 = Take a lamb for burnt offering & pigeon or dove for sin offering
- What was the purpose of the burnt offering?
Leviticus 1:2, 13 = Pleased God, rededication after long unclean separation
- What was the purpose of a sin offering?
Leviticus 4:27-31 = Even unknown sins have guilt, sin offering brings forgiveness
- Why was a sin offering needed after birth? Was it sinful to have children?
Psalm 51:5 = Child was sinful from birth, even from conception
- What if the family was poor and couldn't afford an expensive lamb?
Leviticus 12:8 = Bring two doves or two pigeons

Ceremonies for Newborn Jews - First-Born Sons

- What claim did God make of every first-born? = Consecrate first-born to the Lord
Exodus 13:1-2, 11-12 = *First offspring of every womb...belongs to me*
- What example did the Israelites have that showed the full meaning of this claim?
Genesis 22:1-2 = God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only son to Him
- Did this mean that every first-born son was to be sacrificed? = redeem is to buy back, to free
Exodus 13:13-16 = No, God told them to redeem each first-born son as a sign
- What example did the Israelites have that showed the meaning of redemption?
Genesis 22:13-14 = God provided a ram for Abraham to sacrifice in Isaac's place
- What was the price for redeeming a first-born son?
Numbers 18:15-16 = 5 shekels (2 ounces, 55 grams) of silver, about \$4.00
- Is it also important for God's new covenant people to be redeemed?
Galatians 3:13-14 = Yes, by Christ's redemption we receive God's promise
- What is the price for our redemption? = God provided redeemer for us as He did for Isaac
Revelation 5:9 = Jesus' blood redeemed of every tribe, language, people, nation

Jesus' Perfect Obedience Begins Early (*Luke 2:21-24*)

- Did Jesus' parents obey God's Law regarding circumcision of newborn sons? = Likely done by Joseph
Luke 2:21 = To the letter, on 8th day, named Him Jesus as instructed by angel
- Did Jesus' parents obey God's Law regarding purification of the mother? = Likely still in Bethlehem
Luke 2:22 = To the letter - *"according to the Law of Moses"*
- Did Jesus' parents obey God's Law regarding consecrating and redeeming first-born sons?
Luke 2:23-24 = To the letter, couldn't afford lamb so presented 2 birds
- How does Luke explain Joseph's and Mary's actions?
Luke 2:39a = *They had done everything required by the Law of the Lord*
- What is Luke's point by including these verses? = Parents kept Law for Him before He was able
Hebrews 4:15, 7:26-28 = Though tempted like us, Jesus was perfect to atone for us

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Old Man Simeon (Luke 2:25-27)

What do we know about Simeon?

Luke 2:25 = Lived in Jerusalem, righteous & devout, filled with the Holy Spirit

Wasn't every faithful Jew *waiting for the consolation of Israel*? Why was this special for Simeon?

Luke 2:26 = Holy Spirit promised he would see the Messiah before he died

Did Simeon just happen to be in the temple when Mary & Joseph brought Jesus?

Luke 2:27a = He went because the Spirit guided him there

Simeon's Life Completed (Luke 2:25-35)

Did Simeon realize the baby Jesus was the Messiah that God had promised he would see?

Luke 2:27b-29 = Yes, told God he was ready to go because his life was complete

Nunc Dimittis = First words of the Latin translation of this verse (*now dismiss*)

What did Simeon claim he saw in Jesus?

Luke 2:30-31 = God's salvation that is given in the sight of all nations

Was Simeon an eloquent speaker or did he plagiarize these words?

Isaiah 52:10 = He was quoting Messianic prophesy from Isaiah, Jesus fulfilled

Simeon's Perception Continued (Luke 2:25-35)

While others looked for a Messiah who would politically rebuild Israel, what did Simeon see?

Luke 2:32 = He would be a light to the Gentiles (non-Jews) and the glory of Israel

Gentile - Hebrew: *goyim*, Greek: *ethnos* = Both mean people, nation

Funk & Wagnalls = Of or pertaining to a gens (blood lineage), tribe or people

Where did he get this idea that the Messiah would also save Gentiles?

Isaiah 42:6 = Messiah would be covenant for the people & light for Gentiles

Isaiah 49:6 = A light for the Gentiles to bring God's salvation worldwide

Was this universal purpose of Jesus understood by the Jews during His time?

Acts 11:1-4, 18 = Even disciples didn't understand until well after Jesus ascended

After seeing angels and shepherds, did Simeon's talk phase Mary & Joseph?

Luke 2:33 = They *marveled at what was said*

What else did Simeon have to say?

Luke 2:34-35 = Blessed Mary & Joseph, Prophesied of Jesus' life & mission

Simeon Says: Fall and Rise (Luke 2:34-35)

What did Simeon mean that Jesus would *cause the falling of many in Israel*?

Isaiah 8:14-15 = *...a stone that causes men to stumble*, difficult to accept Him

How did Paul explain why many Jews fell?

Romans 10:1-4 (also 9:30-33) = Jews zealous for religion, *did not submit to God's righteousness*

What did Simeon mean that Jesus would *cause the rising of many in Israel*?

Malachi 4:2 = Those who revere Christ's name ... will rise ... and *will go out and leap...*

Did Paul agree that some Jews would be saved?

Romans 10:12-13 = *There is no difference...all faithful will be saved* – Jew or Gentile

What analogy did Peter use to describe this?

1 Peter 2:6-8 = Jesus is precious cornerstone rejected by builders, causes stumble

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Meanings of Simeon's Other Great Insights (Luke 2:34-35)

How was Jesus a sign that will be spoken against?

Acts 5:40, 8:1 = Christians have been persecuted for their faith

How would the thoughts of many hearts be revealed?

Revelation 3:15-16 = *Because you're lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I spit you out*

Luke 11:23 = *He who is not with me is against me...*

What was meant by, "And a sword will pierce your own soul too"?

John 19:25-27 = Mary watched her special son crucified

Anna the Prophetess (Luke 2:36)

Who else was in the temple when Jesus was presented?

Luke 2:36 = A prophetess named Anna

What was significant about Anna being of the tribe of Asher? = Israel was dispersed forever

2 Kings 17:22-24 = Christ not only for Judah, but also lost Israelites & non-Jews

Anna Prophecies (Luke 2:37-38)

Why did Luke make a point that Anna was very old?

Proverbs 31:23 = Elders were highly respected for their wisdom from experience

How old (and wise) was Anna?

Luke 2:37 = Either 84, or 84 since being a widow (84+7+15+ = 106+)

How does Paul's instruction for widows help us understand Anna's life?

1 Timothy 5:3-5 = Anna had no one to care for her but the Lord

Being close to God by her age and temple life, how did Anna respond when she saw Jesus?

Luke 2:38 = She thanked God, spoke to others about Jesus

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Do I live with a circumcised heart? (Romans 2:25-29; 4:9-12; 10:8-10; 1 Corinthians 7:17-19; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Colossians 2:11-13; Hebrews 3:12; 4:12)
2. Do I let the Spirit live within me so that I can recognize Christ around me? (Luke 2:27-32, 38; 24:15-16, 31; Deuteronomy 29:4; Mark 8:18; John 1:10-13; Acts 13:27; 28:23-28; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 John 4:1-3)
3. How has Jesus been a light for me? (Luke 2:32; 11:33-36; Psalm 119:105; Matthew 4:16; 5:14-16; John 1:4-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; Acts 26:17-18; 1 John 1:5-7; Revelation 22:5)
4. How have I stumbled and fallen before Jesus? (Luke 2:34; Isaiah 8:14-15; John 16:8-11; Acts 15:10; Romans 7:7-25; 1 Corinthians 10:12-13; 1 John 1:8-10)
5. How does Jesus raise me up? (Luke 2:34; Exodus 9:16; Psalm 3:3; 113:7; John 6:39-40; Galatians 5:1; Colossians 3:1-2; James 4:10; 5:15)

Next Week - *Wise Men Visit Jesus* (Matthew 2:1-23)