

## 8. Jesus Was Taken to the Temple

In our last topic, we saw how the Lord worked to introduce the Christ to the world. He did not cause Jesus to enter the world in the palace of a king. Instead, God chose to give Christ a humble birth where the only place to lay Him was in the manger where the animals were fed. Then, God chose to introduce Christ to the world through some humble shepherds. In this topic, we are going to see that other humble godly people were also given the privilege to tell others about the coming of the Christ to this world.

Luke 2:21-24 says, “And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, ‘A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’” Here, we see that the Child was circumcised and named when He was eight days old. All Jewish males were circumcised on the eighth day just as God had instructed Abraham. Genesis 17:12 says, “He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.” It was at this time that He was also given the name of Jesus as the angel had instructed.

A male child that was born to a Jewish woman was to be presented to the Lord when the days of the purification of the mother were completed. Leviticus 12:3-4 says, ““And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. She shall then continue in the blood of her purification thirty-three days. She shall not touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purification are fulfilled.”” Here, we see that the days of purification for a male child were a total of 40 days. After the time of purification, the couple was to offer a lamb and a pigeon or turtledove as a sin offering. However, Leviticus 12:8 says, ““And if she is not able to bring a lamb, then she may bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons--one as a burnt offering and the other as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.”” Here, we see that a very poor couple could bring either two turtledoves or two pigeons instead of bringing a lamb. This made it possible for even the poorest person to offer a sacrifice.

As a result, when Jesus was forty days old Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. Exodus 13:2 says, “Consecrate to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine.” Since Jesus was the firstborn son of Mary, his parents brought Him to the temple to present Him to the Lord. We see that Mary and Joseph were very poor because they brought two birds instead of a lamb as a sacrifice.

Some unexpected things happened while Mary and Joseph were at the temple. Luke 2:25-32 says, “And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ‘Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.’” Here, we see that one of the people that Mary, Joseph and Jesus met at the temple was Simeon.

Simeon was a very godly man. The word translated “just” is usually translated “righteous” and means *one who is approved by God*. The word translated “devout” means *one that has a great reverence for God*. The word translated “Consolation” means *to encourage or comfort and the word was used by the Jews to speak about the promised Messiah*. Here, we see that Simeon was eagerly looking forward to the coming of the Messiah (Christ). We also see that the Holy Spirit was upon Simeon. Throughout the Old Testament, we see that the Holy Spirit came upon people when God gave them a special responsibility.

The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the One that would be the Lord’s Christ. Here, we see that the Holy Spirit caused Simeon to know that he would see the Messiah before his death. To fulfill this promise to Simeon, the Holy Spirit led Simeon to go to the temple just before Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to present Him to the Lord. When Mary and Joseph came into the temple, the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that this was the baby that would be the Messiah. Simeon went to Mary and Joseph and asked to hold their baby. Then, Simeon held Jesus and blessed God for what God was going to do through that Child.

We are told the words that Simeon spoke as he held Jesus that day. Simeon thanked God that he could now die in peace. He thanked God for the fact that God had fulfilled His Word. He thanked the Lord for the privilege that He had to see the One that God had sent to provide God’s salvation. This meant that He recognized the fact that Jesus would pay the penalty to redeem all mankind from sin. Simeon shows from His statement that He clearly understood that Jesus would pay the penalty for sin for the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The word translated “revelation” means *to reveal something that was previously unknown*. The Gentiles had not known that One would come to pay the penalty for their sin. The Jews who looked for salvation would also rejoice because of the fact that Jesus was the One who would reveal the glory of God.

Luke 2:33-35 says, “And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’” Joseph and Mary were filled with amazement and wonder because of the words that Simeon spoke about Jesus. They realized that God had revealed to many others what He was going to do through Jesus.

Simeon also gave a blessing to Mary and Joseph. Simeon told Mary that her Child had been appointed by God for the fall and rising of many in Israel. Simeon here spoke of the fact that those who rejected Christ would be judged. Matthew 21:44 says, “‘And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.’” Isaiah had warned several

hundred years earlier in Isaiah 8:14, ““He will be as a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, as a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.”” Those who rejected Jesus would experience judgment. In contrast, those who turned to Jesus would experience life. 1 Corinthians 1:22-24 says, “For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

Simeon told Mary that a sword would pierce her soul also. Jesus understood the great grief that His mother experienced as He hung on the cross. As a result, He told John in John 19:26-27, “When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, ‘Woman, behold your son!’ Then He said to the disciple, ‘Behold your mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her to his own *home*.” In these verses, we also see that Simeon pointed out the rejection and crucifixion of Christ when he said that Christ would be spoken against and the soul of Mary would be pierced. We see that God revealed through Simeon what would later happen.

We see that God also brought another person to see Jesus at the very moment that Simeon was giving this blessing to Jesus. Luke 2:36-38 says, “Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.” We see that Anna was a prophetess from the tribe of Asher. She had been married for seven years and then her husband had died. After her husband died, she had spent the rest of her life serving the Lord in the temple. We see that she was now eighty-four years old. Her most important ministry was fasting and prayer as she served the Lord.

She came just in time to hear the words that Simeon spoke about Jesus as he blessed Him. As a result, for the rest of her life we see that Anna had a new ministry added to her ministry of fasting and prayer. At that moment, she gave thanks to God for providing the One who would pay the penalty for sin so that mankind could be bought back from the penalty of sin. However, a part of her ministry for the rest of her life now included telling others about Jesus. She gave this message to all the Jews who looked forward to the One that God would send to redeem Israel that Jesus had come to pay the penalty for sin.

We want to help our physical and spiritual children also learn how to share that same message with others. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 5:20, “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God.” This will give our children a purpose in life as they tell others how they can have their sin forgiven and receive eternal life. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to tell others about the salvation Christ provided.