

Luke Chapter 2 Continued

Luke 2:21 "And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb."

Abraham had promised God that all the male children would be circumcised on the 8th day after birth. The children were named during this special ceremony. The angel had told Mary what the babe's name should be, and she has followed his instructions.

Luke 2:22 "And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present [him] to the Lord;"

A woman who bore a son was ceremonially unclean for 40 days (twice that if she bore a daughter, Lev. 12:2-5). After that she was to offer a yearling lamb and a dove or pigeon (Lev. 12:6). If poor, she could offer two doves or pigeons (Lev. 12:8). Mary's offering indicates that she and Joseph were poor (verse 24).

"To Jerusalem": A journey of about 6 miles from Bethlehem.

"To present him to the Lord": The dedication of the firstborn son was also required by Moses' law (verse 23; Exod. 13:2, 12-15).

Mary was a woman who pleased God. She lived as close as possible to the Law of Moses. Moses, in the law God had given him, gave a law of purification after childbirth; and Mary followed this law. This can be found (in Leviticus 12:2-3).

The temple was in Jerusalem, so this is where they brought Jesus for dedication to the Lord. Mary's purification would have been complete 40 days after Jesus' birth. This temple dedication was on the 40th day.

Luke 2:23 "(As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)"

Exodus 34:19 "All that openeth the matrix [is] mine; and every firstling among thy cattle, [whether] ox or sheep, [that is male]."

Luke 2:24 "And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

In (Leviticus 12:6-8), we see the Levitical law that covers the gift Mary brought for her atonement, She could not bring a lamb so she brought the lesser expensive sacrifice.

Luke 2:25 "And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name [was] Simeon; and the same man [was] just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him."

“Simeon”: He is mentioned nowhere else in Scripture.

“The consolation of Israel”: A messianic title, evidently derived from verse like (Isaiah. 25:9; 14:1-2; 66:1-11).

The consolation of Israel was Messiah. This man believed that during his lifetime Messiah would come. Today in Israel the devout Jews are again expecting Messiah. He was just and devout and that brings the Holy Ghost.

Luke 2:26 "And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ."

“That it was revealed unto him”: It is significant that with messianic expectation running so high (3:15), and with the many Old Testament prophecies that spoke of His coming, still only a handful of people realized the significance of Christ’s birth.

Most of them, including Simeon, received some angelic message or other special revelation to make the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies clear.

This devout believer, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit of God, had been informed by revelation that he would not die before he saw the Lord (anointed one), Christ. He believed and expected this to be true.

Luke 2:27-29 "And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law," "Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said," "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:"

Simeon was very old, possibly over 100 years. At any rate, so old that he came by the power of the Spirit of God. This was to dedicate Jesus. Simeon immediately recognized through the Holy Spirit that this child is the Savior of the world; the Messiah. He says, now that I have seen Him, I am ready to go home to heaven.

Verses 29-32: Simeon’s psalm is known as the Nunc Dimittis, from the first two words of the Latin translation. It is the fourth of 5 psalms of praise Luke included in his birth narrative. It is a touching expression of Simeon’s extraordinary faith.

Luke 2:30 "For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,"

“Thy salvation”: I.e., the One who would redeem His people from their sin.

Luke 2:31 "Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;"

“All people”: I.e., all nations, tongues and tribes (Rev. 7:9), both Israel and the Gentiles (verse 32).

Luke 2:32 "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel."

This type of Light here, is the Light of the knowledge of God. The Gentiles have never had an opportunity up until then to know God and to be children of Light. Jesus is the hope of the Gentile. Israel knew God. Messiah will come as an Israelite.

Luke 2:33 "And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him."

Notice that Joseph is not Jesus' father. The Scripture does show Mary as Jesus' mother. Mary realizes that Jesus is special, but even now does not know just exactly what He came to do.

Luke 2:34 "And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this [child] is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;"

“Rising again of many in Israel”: To those who reject Him, He is a stone of stumbling (1 Peter 2:8); those who receive Him are raised up (Eph. 2:6; 8:14-15; Hos. 14:9; 1 Cor. 1:23-24).

“Sign which shall be spoken against”: This was synecdoche. Simeon mentioned only the verbal insults hurled at Christ, but the expression actually embraced more than that, Israel’s rejection, and hatred, and crucifixion of the Messiah.

Luke 2:35 "(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

“A sword”: This was undoubtedly a reference to the personal grief Mary would endure when she watched her own Son die in agony (John 19:25).

“That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed”: The rejection of the Messiah would reveal the appalling truth about the apostate state of the Jews.

Simeon speaking a blessing is blessing Mary and her husband Joseph. Notice that this prophecy given by Simeon is given to Mary who is the mother of Jesus. Simeon doesn't speak to Joseph, because this is not his child.

So many (the supposedly religious people in Israel), will not accept the Savior. They will fall. Those who receive Jesus will rise. The disciples are a good example of those who are built up. This sword which will pierce Mary is the grief she will feel when they crucify Jesus. Simeon is speaking through the power of the Holy Ghost.

We are told throughout the Bible that by two witnesses a thing shall be established (2 Cor. 13:1), is an example of that.

"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

We have seen one witness in Simeon and now we need another witness. Many denominations stop with Simeon and do not mention the other witness. The other witness is a woman, and it would blow their theory that women are not to minister in the church. Nevertheless, let us look at the Bible account of the second witness here.

Luke 2:36 "And 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 an husband seven years from her virginity;"

“A prophetess”: This refers to a woman who spoke God’s Word. She was a teacher of the Old Testament, not a source of revelation. The Old Testament mentions only 3 women who prophesied: Miriam (Exodus 15:20); Deborah (Judges 4:4); Huldah (2 Kings 2:14; 2 Chron. 34:22).

One other, the “prophetess” Noadiah, was evidently a false prophet, grouped by Nehemiah with his enemies. (Isaiah 8:3), refers to the prophet’s wife as a “prophetess”, but there is no evidence Isaiah’s wife prophesied. Perhaps she is so-called because the child she bore was given a name that was prophetic (Isa. 8:3-4).

This use of the title for Isaiah’s wife also shows that the title does not necessarily indicate an ongoing revelatory prophetic ministry. Rabbinical tradition also regarded Sarah, Hannah, Abigail, and Esther as prophetesses (apparently to make an even 7 with Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah). In the New Testament, the daughters of Philip prophesied.

There were not as many gifted women called to the ministry as men, because most women were not educated in the Holy Scriptures.

Anna, as we will see in the next few verses, never left the temple; she prayed and fasted. She also told everyone who wanted salvation about Jesus, which is preaching. She preached in the church, because the Scripture says she never left the temple. Anna had been a married woman and was now a widow. Anna was a descendent of Asher.

Luke 2:37 "And she [was] a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served [God] with fastings and prayers night and day."

“Departed not from the temple”: Anna evidently had her living quarters on the temple grounds. There would have been several such dwelling places for priests in the outer court, and Anna must have been allowed to live there permanently because of her unusual status as a prophetess.

She was eighty-four years old. It seems she was very devoted to God and His work. Fasting and prayer is possibly the most important ministry in the church and is greatly neglected today in our churches.

Luke 2:38 "And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem."

This "Anna" quickly realized who Jesus was. She not only recognized Him and accepted Him for herself, but preached to everyone in Jerusalem who looked for redemption. She was one of the first to preach the good news of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer.

Luke 2:39 "And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."

“They returned into Galilee”: Luke omitted the visit of the Magi and the flight into Egypt (Matt. 2:1-18). The theme of early rejection, so prominent in Matthew, was not where Luke focused his attention.

This does not say exactly when they went back to Nazareth except to say that after they had fulfilled the law given by Moses. We can assume that the wise men spoken of in Matthew came to see Jesus before Mary and Joseph's return to Nazareth, and even the stay in Egypt to avoid Herod Killing Jesus occurred before their return to Nazareth.

Luke Chapter 2 Continued Questions

1. On what day was Jesus circumcised?
2. What other thing did the family do on this day?
3. Whose covenant with God did this fulfill?
4. On what day did Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple for dedication?
5. Where can the law of purification be found?
6. Every male child is _____ to God.
7. What sacrifice did they take?
8. Who was the elderly man in the temple?
9. What was this man waiting for?
10. How had it been revealed to him that he would not die before seeing the Savior?

11. How was he able to come into the temple?
12. When Simeon took the baby in his arms. What did he do?
13. What would Jesus be to the Gentiles?
14. What does verse 33 tell us about Joseph?
15. What did Simeon say that this child was set for?
16. What did he tell Mary would happen to her?
17. By how many shall a thing be established?
18. Why do many denominations not tell about Anna in the temple?
19. What was Anna called in verse 36?
20. What tribe was she from?
21. Had she ever been married?
22. What two things did she do continually?
23. How do we know that she preached in the church?
24. How old was Anna?
25. What is greatly neglected in our churches today?
26. What was the message she preached?
27. In verse 39, where did they go back to live?
28. What 2 things (not mentioned in Luke), happened before Mary and Joseph went home?