

## Luke 19:10 – Jesus says...

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

A big theme in Luke is this idea of “Saving the Lost”

Please, **Turn to Luke 2**

In our text today, baby Jesus is only days old...His parents have him circumcised on the **8<sup>th</sup> day** and then proceed to take him to the temple on the **40<sup>th</sup> day** after his birth.

Title: **Jesus Presented at the Temple**

**Read Luke 2:21 – 35**

Joseph and Mary take Jesus to the Temple...and...

### **1. Mary presents Jesus and goes through a purification rite.**

The baby has been circumcised and named. Now, it is time to present him at the temple.

They offered a sacrifice and went through a purification rite 40 days after Jesus' birth.

<sup>22</sup> And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord

- This is where we get our tradition of doing **baby dedications**.
- Joseph and Mary presented their baby, **Jesus**, to the Lord.
- In 1 Samuel 1, Hannah presented her baby, **Samuel**, to the Lord.

We are **not commanded** to do baby dedications, but following the tradition of Hannah and Mary, many parents desire to do so, and I think it's a nice thing.

It does seem odd to say that they are taking Jesus, God's perfect messiah, for purification.

But it was actually **Mary who needed the purification**. She was ceremonially unclean after giving birth for 7 days. And, she was supposed to keep away from holy things for another 33 days after that (**Lev 12:1-5**).

It's been a 40 day wait. If Mary had birthed a girl, she would have had to wait 80 days.

No sin was committed. Mary was simply ceremonially unclean. And, baby Jesus of course was completely innocent and righteous. His mother just

needed to go through this cleansing procedure in accordance with the OT law.

In [VERSE 23] Luke quotes from Exodus 13

<sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."

According to Leviticus 12:6-8, after the birth of a son, one was supposed to offer a **lamb plus a dove or a pigeon**. But Mary did not offer a lamb.

There was another stipulation... that **if you were poor**, you could offer two doves or pigeons. Mary offered the sacrifice of the poor.

She brought before the priests, her son, the lamb of God ... and no lamb was sacrificed on his behalf.

However, Joseph and Mary did have to pay a **ransom price** of **5 shekels**, which would probably be the equivalent of about \$5-\$10.

40 days after his birth, our redeemer was redeemed.

This was a tradition of the Jews. Not being a Levite, and being from the tribe of Judah, Jesus was **exempted** from temple service. However, because God had **spared the firstborn Israelites in Egypt**, they belonged to him. For Levites that meant that they served in the Temple. For all other tribes, that meant that they paid this ransom price of 5 shekels as a symbolic acknowledgement of God saving the first born and the firstborn belonging to him.

TRANSITION: It has been said that John the Baptist was the first prophet to declare **"The Messiah has arrived."** However, Simeon and a lady named Anna meet Jesus in the temple. And, they actually have the privilege of prophesying over Jesus before John is even old enough to talk.

## **2. Simeon prophesies over Jesus.**

<sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

**Righteous and devout** – He was a man who was saved and **justified by faith** in God's salvation. He **didn't** understand all the details of the working out of the gospel, but he believed, like Abraham, and God credited that faith to him as righteousness.

Also, he was devout – He walked closely with the Lord.

**Simeon** had a **common name** in Israel – One of Jacob's sons was named Simeon, so 1 tribe had that name

Simeon has 3 meanings – obedient; listening; little hyena

And, Simeon fit his name. He was surrendered to the will of the Lord. He was listening for God to speak.

He was God's **little hyena**. Hyenas are zealous little creatures, and they hang out in packs of up to 80.

Simeon didn't go out into the wilderness by himself like John the Baptist. He stayed with the pack. He stayed in the community of Israel and often spent time in the temple with God's people.

He stayed close to God and close to his fellow Jews as he waited for the

**Consolation of Israel** – Consolation means relief, comfort, support

This was much needed in Israel.

**Solomon** was the last great king of Israel. Then, the nation divided. The people went through hundreds of years with mostly bad kings who brought on the discipline of the Lord.

The **Northern kingdom** was obliterated by Assyria and the **Southern Kingdom** was taken into exile by Babylon. Jews later returned, rebuilt the wall and temple.

At this time, there were few devout Jews. Most Jews were legalists like the Pharisees. Others, were secularists like the Sadducees.

The people had gone through 400 years of silence, without a prophet, without a word from the Lord. They desperately needed to hear from God.

Those were dark times.

Israel needed **consolation**. They needed comfort and support from the Lord.

Simeon was waiting for it.

You ever get a direct revelation from God? Well, Simeon did.

**<sup>26</sup> 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.

Simeon was **likely** an old man who walked in close fellowship with God. A man who had received a direct word from the Lord. He would **not die** until he had seen the Messiah.

### **What a way to live your life?**

This promise meant that he was **invincible**. Indestructible.

**Imagine his wife:** "Honey, you're driving a bit fast."

"Honey, you're not going to live too long if you keep eating all that fried food."

"Oh, don't worry about me baby. I'll be fine."

No force on earth could kill him, for the most powerful being in the universe had said, "You will live."

Not only did this remove his fear of death, but it also gave Simeon **something to live for**. Something to look forward to. A vision that filled his heart with great boldness and zeal for the things of God.

**Now, he speaks.** Like Mary in the Magnificat and Zechariah in his prophecy, Simeon speaks in the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit.

His **heart** is overflowing with joy and his every word is chosen by God. As did the Apostle Paul, Simeon speaks under the **inspiration** of the Holy Spirit.

Notice. He doesn't just start **moving in the Spirit** once he gets to the temple. No. The text says [27]

<sup>27</sup> ~~And~~ he came in the Spirit into the temple,

Simeon is already full of the Spirit as he's waking into the Temple.

And, I'd ask you, **Is that how you come to chapel?**

Are you full of Jesus on your way over here? Is the fruit of the spirit budding and blossoming in your life before you leave home and while you're on your way to meet with the body of Christ?

<sup>27</sup> And he came in 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, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God

**Notice Simeon's enthusiasm.** Mary and Joseph had not come to see him. Simeon **could have sat back** for a while and watched. "Well, they did come to make this sacrifice and all. I don't want interrupt what they are doing."

But **Simeon is so excited**. The day has finally come. The moment has arrived. And, he, a complete stranger, **grabs this baby away** from its mother and bursts forth into praise.

- **Mary** knew that look on Simeon's face. It was the same look that had been on her own face when she burst forth in praise at the house of Elizabeth.
- This was the same sort of ecstatic praise that burst forth from **Zachariah's** lips after he completed his 40 weeks of silence and God finally loosed his tongue.

**Later, the Jews** would **take Jesus up** in THEIR arms for a very **different purpose**...so that they could put him on a cross.

Simeon grabbed this baby.

<sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

<sup>29</sup> "Lord, now[! Lord now] you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;

<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation

<sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

Now, I can go be with you God. I've finally seen him! I've finally seen the consolation of Israel. The king of the Jews. The hope of mankind. He's finally arrived!

And, I can **depart in peace**. It is because of this line that most commentators think that Simeon was an old man.

**Jacob** himself as an old man had said something similar after he found out that his precious son, Joseph, was still alive in Egypt.

### **Genesis 45:28**

I will go and see him before I die.

Oh, if they had an open casket at Simeon's funeral, I bet there was a smile on his face. He died a very happy man.

For he had **seen the salvation** of the Lord! The hope of Israel was cooing in his arms.

He says that God prepared this salvation in the **presence of all peoples**. Not in an isolated corner somewhere **BUT** in the middle of the pack. God's little hyena is hanging out in the middle of the pack and that's where the action happens...as the messiah steps onto the pages of history.

Geographically, Israel is in the **middle of the world**. Israel is at the center of God's affections. The Jews are not a white-skinned people or a black skinned people, but they are in the middle...a tan-skinned people...located between 3 major continents: Asia, Europe and Africa.

And, it is in this spot...in the presence of all peoples that God first sends his messiah.

Jesus would be the messiah to Gentiles – **a light for revelation to the Gentiles**

- For the Gentiles were in great darkness before the coming of Jesus

Jesus would be the messiah to the Jews – **the glory of Israel**

- The presence of God had once again descended on the temple
- God's shekinah glory in the person of Jesus Christ had once again come to dwell with his people.

### **John 1:14**

The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us.

- No longer would we cry "**Ichabod**" – the glory has departed
- For the glory has returned and it has returned **to stay**
  - To stay in the person of Christ
  - And later to stay in the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the hearts of his people

Jesus would be for Jews, for Gentiles and for the whole world.

In the midst of the temple, I imagine **Simeon** is dancing around with a baby. Other mother's are stepping back and holding their babies tight. Simeon shouting and drawing **the** attention of lots of people.

And, at this point, Luke turns our attention to **two inconspicuous people** in the crowd. Two young people who are puzzling over all that God is doing. He turns our attention to **Joseph and Mary**. [33]

<sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.

They just stood back and watched. They stood in awe. Their jaws dropped to the ground and they **marveled** at the work of the Lord.

**You who desire to do great things for God.** Have you ever thought about the fact that God may care more about doing great things for you **than** he cares about you doing great things for him?

**My child** comes running up to me. Daddy, watch what I can do? Watch me do a somersault. I've realized that my role as a parent is **not** to do great things so much but to appreciate the great things that my kids can do. To praise them for their accomplishments.

I could say to my kid: That's nice, but watch me. I can do a better somersault than you.

**How inappropriate** that would be!

But it is infinitely more inappropriate when we see **God display** the WONDERS of his creation and the wonders of his salvation, and we say: Well, that's nice God. But focus your attention on me. You watch what I'm going to do for you God. You are a blessed God to have a guy like me in your court.

Do you see my point?

Our **CHIEF ROLE** as the children of God is not to ACCOMPLISH, but to APPRECIATE. Not to work but to worship. **Not to DO but to DELIGHT.**

- Let us become well-trained in the skill of delight. Learn to marvel... like Mary!

Joseph and Mary are in the temple **doing NOTHING!!!** They are just standing there in awe delighting in the wonders of their God. And, **God is very pleased!**

TRANSITION: So God turns to speak to them. He speaks to them through Simeon.

### 3. God speaks to Mary through Simeon.

<sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel,

Simeon cuts to the chase. This child will bring about cataclysmic change.

There are 2 ways to interpret this **Fall and Rising**. Either Simeon is speaking of 1 group that falls and later rises. Or, he is speaking of 2 groups, one group that falls and another that rises.

**RSB:** If the "**fall and rising**" applies to one group, then it means they must be humbled in repentance before they can rise into salvation.

If it describes two groups, then it indicates that those who reject Jesus will fall eternally, but those who accept him will rise to be with God.

Perhaps Simeon is referring to

- **1 Group**: The fall of the Jews (as they reject Christ) and the later rise of the Jews when many come to the messiah.
- **2 Groups**: Or...The fall of the Jewish people and the rise of the Gentiles as the people of God.

Jesus would bring about the fall and rise of many.

- He would bring about the **fall** of the current Jewish establishment
- He would bring about the fall of all works-based religion
- He would bring about the **rising** of a new class of people
- Of people who came to God not by works and exterior embellishments, but who came to God as the bankrupt looking for a handout. Looking for a hand up.
- The greats of this world would **fall** to the depths.
- And, the least of humanity would **rise** to the heights under the leadership of the God of heaven who condescended to become a baby and be born to a poor teenage couple from Nazareth.



I imagine Mary and Joseph had to pinch themselves on many occasions. Is this really happening? We're just ordinary folk. What this baby will accomplish is so beyond us.

Simeon said...

~~<sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."~~

That's thick. There's a lot there. Let me break it down.

Sign that is opposed

Though he is the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the trinity in his own right, fully God and fully man, even still...

**Jesus is a sign.** He is the image of the invisible God. Hebrews 1.

And he will be opposed. People will oppose the sign because truly in their hearts they oppose what he represents. He represents the father.

Jesus made it very clear: I and the Father are one.

If you're with me, then you're with Father. If you oppose me, it is because you oppose God.

This refers to future opposition to Jesus. Persecution that ultimately lead to crucifixion.

TRANSITION: Turning to **Mary** specifically, he says...

A sword will pierce through your own soul – These great things that God would accomplish would not be without cost to Mary.

Simeon says this to Mary and not to Joseph. Mary would see her son go to court and be condemned to die. Mary would watch her son be crucified. Joseph would not.

I have noticed that Facebook is the window to the soul. Often, I have been completely in the dark about someone's spiritual state until I have viewed their facebook page. Then, all of a sudden I know what drives that person.

Jesus is similar to Facebook. He reveals the truth about people.

As the text says, Jesus has come...

So that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed

Jesus is a watershed event. Jesus changed the course of history. And, every person who ever lives will have to decide what they are going to do with Jesus.

Ask someone, "**Why did Jesus die on the cross?**" and very quickly the thoughts of their hearts will be revealed. You'll find out where they stand on Jesus and that will tell you a lot about them.

**Where do you stand on Jesus?** Do you believe that he came to save sinners? Do you believe that he died on the cross for you? Do you believe that he rose from the dead?

Jesus is the Lord's salvation for mankind.

He is a light to the Gentiles.

He is the glory of Israel.

He has come to bring about the falling and the rising of many.

**Do not oppose him.**

Rather fall to your knees and surrender your life to him.

Repent of your sin and become a follower of Jesus Christ!

**Where do you stand on Jesus?**

I'd encourage you to stand with Simeon. Take Jesus up in your arms and embrace him as your Lord and your savior.