

Prophecies and Blank Pages

Week 10; Luke 2:21-39

21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. (Luke 1:31)

The commandment to circumcise male children was given to Abraham in the Torah (Genesis 17:10-14) and repeated in Leviticus 12:3. Rabbinic Judaism viewed the *brit milah* (covenant of circumcision) and the accompanying ceremony as a joyous occasion and the sages believed it important to circumcise converts and slaves as well. According to rabbinic legislation it is a Jewish father's duty to have his son circumcised (Sh. Ar., YD 260:1). It is not a sacrament, and any child born of a Jewish mother is a Jew, whether circumcised or not. Although circumcision may be performed by any Jew (including a woman, if no man is available) It is desirable that the operator, called a *mohel*, be a loyal adherent to the tenets of Judaism (Sh. Ar., YD 264:1). Even in Talmudic times, he was described as a craftsman. The operation must be performed on the eighth day, preferably early in the morning (YD 262:1), thus emulating Abraham in his eagerness to undertake a divine command. If the eighth day is a Sabbath or festival, the circumcision must nevertheless take place (266:2) unless the child is born by Caesarean section, when it is postponed to the next weekday. A Jewish boys name is traditionally given at the *brit milah* ceremony.

22 And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (Levit. 12:6-8) 23(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"), 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, " A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS." (Lev 5:11; Exod. 13:2, 12; Num 3:13, 8:17)

- *In light of the scandalous appearance of Jesus conception and birth, why do you think all of this was important to record?*

- *(See Matthew 5:17-19, and Acts 16:1-3) In light of the scandal of our own sinful background, in what ways does God still lead us to comply with His attention to the law? _____*

For next time, **Matt. 2:1-23**

25 And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. 26 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. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, 28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

29 "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; 30 For my eyes have seen Your salvation, 31 Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, 32 A LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES, And the glory of Your people Israel."

- How could Simeon have known Jesus' identity? _____
- So far, **when** has Jesus been the "glory" of God's people Israel? When will this be fulfilled? _____

33 And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. 34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, "**Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed — 35 and a sword will pierce even your own soul — to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.**"

- (Read Matthew 10:34-36) How do you think this landed on Mary, who had been "pondering" all these things...? _____

36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. 38 **At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.**

- Do you ever wonder what happened to these people later in Jesus' life, when He was being questioned and doubted by so many? _____
- Consider this in light of Jesus reaction to His mother in John 2:1-11 when she wanted Him to use His "powers"; Why do you think the revealing of His mission was delayed or "kept low" until an appointed time? _____

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- Do you think there is an "appointed time" for our calling from God to be seen? _____

39 When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. 40 The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

- This is all that is said about Jesus' life from the age of 12 until about age 30. What do you make of this silence? _____
 - Does there seem to have been blank pages as far as God's work in your life since coming to faith in Christ? What do you make of that? _____
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