

Regarding Jesus – What Is the Truth of Your Heart?

Sunday, 12/30 at 10:00

First Sunday after Christmas – 2018

New Year's Eve – Join us at 6 PM

2019 Divine Services: Sundays 8 & 10:45 and Mondays 7 PM

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Last week we celebrated Jesus' birth; now, *as we focus on the second half of Luke chapter 2*, Jesus is already 40 days old. Today we will learn that *no one is neutral when it comes to Jesus*; instead, people either reject Him – *and remain in their sins*, or, *by God's grace*, they receive Him – and have God's forgiveness!

1. **Their Purification and Jesus' Presentation in Jerusalem**:
²² **And when the time came for their purification** [*Mary and Joseph*] **according to the Law of Moses, they brought him** [*Jesus*] **up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord** ²³ **(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord"** [*that statement is in reference to a required fee for the child's redemption*]) ²⁴ **and to offer a sacrifice** [*in connection with the woman's purification*] **according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."**
 - a. **Purification**: According to **Leviticus 12**, a woman who gave birth to a son was unclean for 40 days, so *Mary needed to be purified*; Joseph was responsible ♠for the purification being done and ♠for providing the sacrifice.
 - b. **Presentation**: According to **Numbers 18**, every *firstborn male child had to be redeemed*; the parents

paid 5 shekels (\$1.33 USD today) – to buy out his required service to the LORD. The redemption was supposed to cause the people to remember *God’s redeeming of the firstborn in Egypt through the blood of lambs.*

2. **Simeon:** ²⁵ **Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation [comfort] of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.** // He was an OT believer, so *he was looking for the coming of the Promised Savior!*
- a. **He was told about Jesus:** 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.** // As some people today are longing for the *second coming of the Christ*, so Simeon was longing for His *first coming* – and the Spirit made it known to him that soon he would see the Christ *with his very own eyes!*
- b. **He spoke about Jesus:** ²⁷ **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 [regarding Jesus’ presentation and redemption],** ²⁸ **he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,** ²⁹ **“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;** ³⁰ **for my eyes have seen your salvation** ³¹ **that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,** ³² **a light for revelation [uncovering, disclosing, revealing] to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”** ³³ **And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.** // We call those words the *Nunc Dimittis*, which are Latin for *Now Dismiss*; Simeon had faith – *believing in what he had not seen (Heb. 11:1)*, but God also blessed him to see and hold His Savior, *the One sent for everyone!*

c. Fall and rising in regard to Jesus: ³⁴ **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 [spoken against]** ³⁵ **(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”**

- i. Simeon blessed them – *all of them*; then he focused on Mary – *possibly implying that Joseph would die before the time of Jesus’ ministry*; the last reference in the Bible to Joseph being alive is when Jesus was 12 years old.
- ii. Fall and rising: Jesus’ life had many purposes; in **vv. 34-35** we are told that ✦many would fall and rise in regard to Jesus, and that ✦people would speak against Jesus – *which would reveal the truth of their hearts about Him (Luke 6:45)*. **Lenski** wrote: **“It is God’s intention in placing Jesus among Israel that he shall cause many to fall and perish and many to rise up and be saved.... [Then he added:] When men reject that grace in unbelief they fall, and it is God’s will that they perish” (153)**. The words of Simeon helped Mary to understand that *some would be eternally blessed through Jesus, but others would oppose Him and perish!*

3. **Anna:** ³⁶ **And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷ and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she began to give**

thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of [in] Jerusalem. // Think about Anna's life: Married for 7 years; then a widow for probably over 60 years, *during which time she was at the temple – worshiping, fasting, and praying night and day!* During that time God had blessed her with much Bible knowledge and understanding, so, when Jesus was at the temple, *God used her to tell the believers about Jesus!*

4. **Their Return:** ³⁹ **And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.** ⁴⁰ **And the child grew and became strong, [being] filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.**
- a. Filling in some details: From the account in Matthew, we know that the lives of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus followed this series of events: After the presentation in Jerusalem, *they returned to Bethlehem and were visited by the wise men*; then, having been warned in a dream about Herod's soldiers, *they fled to Egypt*; then, after Herod died, *they returned to Nazareth!*
- b. Jesus' growth: On one hand it was normal – *like any child*, but, on the other hand, there was no sin, so ✦no reproof, ✦no correction, and ✦no consequences of sin. Since sin has brought much trouble into our lives, *let us rejoice in the forgiveness that is ours through Jesus*; then, *powered by the Spirit*, let us go and sin no more!

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, for all who know Jesus, *grant them growth*; for all who oppose Jesus, *change their hearts!*

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