



Luke 2.21-52
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Morning Service
30 December 2012

We'd love to know more about the childhood of Jesus, but the Holy Spirit only caused Matthew and Luke to record what we really need to know **John 20.31**. There are many unhelpful legends and myths about the childhood of Jesus, but we need to focus on the facts which lead to faith. Right from the beginning of his life Jesus was to be under, and would fulfil, the Law in a way no one else ever could Gal 4.4. By his perfect righteousness he was fitted to be a valid sacrifice for our sins which the Law exposes.

Circumcision and naming

Probably done at home or in the local synagogue as it was so soon after the birth and because circumcision could be done anywhere. It was immensely important **Genesis 17:9-12** and note **1b**. The occasion of circumcision was used to give Mary's baby the name given by God through the angel **Lk 1.30b-31** ... **you are to give him the name Jesus.**" a name which meant Saviour. The next stage in the Law was:

Consecration / redemption

v22-23 **as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord" Exodus 13:2a, 13b, 14.**

So this act of consecration spoke of redemption from slavery to remind the Jews constantly how they had been saved when God brought judgment on all the first-born of Egypt. And there was a redemption price **Num 15b-16a**. It is not clear from v27 that when Mary and Joseph presented Jesus to the Lord, that this price was paid, presumably because they were too poor. After baptism and consecration, the third thing they had to do was offer a sacrifice for

Purification

v24 **and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."** The law about ritual purification is explained in: **Leviticus 12:3-4**. Some of this may sound strange and even disagreeable to us in 21st C Northwood, but we need to realise that we are talking here about ritual and symbol and not implying that there is anything sinful or impure about childbirth. Just as it appears that Mary and Joseph could not afford the redemption price for Jesus, they had to opt for the purification sacrifice allowed to poor people **Lev 12.8**.

Simeon

Simeon seems to have been directed by the Spirit of God in a way that was most unusual in the days before Pentecost: see v25b, 26, 27. He takes the baby Jesus into his arms and says: v29 He has received God's promise and can now die in peace – the forerunner of multitudes who have shared that experience. v30-31 There is nothing secret about God's plan of salvation: it is a salvation which will be revealed to everyone v32. Simeon went on and spelt out some of the sobering implications of the arrival of the Messiah v34, 35. Hardly has Simeon finished speaking, when the prophetess Anna comes up to them.

Anna

She is the first person for hundreds of years to be designated a prophet or prophetess and does two things: v38a **she gave thanks to God** and v38b she **spoke about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem** ie the coming of the Messiah.

Jesus in the Temple

v40 **And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.** During the childhood of Jesus the family go up to Jerusalem every year for the Feast of the Passover, and they went there as usual when Jesus was twelve. Having missed Jesus on the way back, they go to look for him. Eventually they find him in v46 **the Temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.** He causes amazement, first to those who heard his v47 **his understanding and his answers,** and then to his parents v48. Mary remonstrates with Jesus about the anxiety he has caused, but his reply v49 is incomprehensible to his parents.

v49 **“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?”** ⁵⁰ **But they did not understand what he was saying to them.**

It was unheard of for a devout Jew to refer to God as *my* Father, rather than 'the Father' or 'our Father'. They were grappling with the fact that their son was far more than even a very gifted human being. But Jesus didn't exploit his position v51. And Jesus continues to grow v52 **in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men.**

This passage should lead us to:

- 1 study the real facts as given in the gospels and treasure them in our hearts. We can think through what the coming of the Saviour means for us personally.
- 2 like Simeon, rejoice in the salvation that helps us to face our greatest fear – what happens beyond death – and know a real peace about this.
- 3 do the same as Anna and speak about the Child, taking every opportunity at this time of year.
- 4 Above all, we can worship Jesus; we can acknowledge him as *our* God and Saviour.