

010a Jesus Presented at the Temple [Luke 2:22-38]

In Psalm 12:6, David tells us, “The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times.” If God, in all His wisdom thought about every word seven times, how many times should we think about each word? Isaiah 28:10 tells us, “For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.” For any study in the scriptures, you must study the text carefully and build line upon line, and that’s what we’ve been doing in this study.

We’ve been studying the Gospel accounts in a chronological order. One of the reasons we have to jump around so much to do that is because the different writers were writing from different aspects and for different audiences. They didn’t omit things or remember them differently; they were inspired by God and wrote exactly what they were supposed to write! Although they are all talking about the King and the Kingdom of the Heavens, and how both were being rejected, Matthew presents Christ as king, Mark presents him as servant, Luke presents him as man, and John presents him as the Son of God. When we finish with the Gospels and go on a little further, the book of Acts tells how the Kingdom of the Heavens was re-offered to Israel as a nation and rejected once again.

We have been conducting this verse-by-verse, in-depth study of the Synoptic Gospels for a little more than a year now. We have looked at the authority of Luke, despite the fact that he was not an apostle, we looked at the pre-existent Christ, we looked at the genealogy of Jesus in great detail, we saw angels appear to Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph at different times, we looked at the encounter between Mary and Elizabeth, we looked at the birth of John the Baptizer, and we recently finished a fairly thorough study of the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, and today, we find the infant Jesus being presented at the Temple.

As a side note, Jesus was the first-born son, and as such would have been consecrated to the temple. The first-born could be redeemed for 5 shekels, according to Numbers 3:47, which is about \$1.10 in modern money. That’s about the value that many people place on the Lord isn’t it? That’s a little flippant, actually. The shekel was used as a weight, and later as a coin that was consistent with the rules God laid down about the amount of silver to be paid. In other words, the coin was based on God’s law. In the times that we are referring to, a shekel was worth 4 Denarii, and one Denarius was equal to one day’s wages, so the redemption price was approximately equal to 20 days’ wages. This was in a day that inflation didn’t enter into the equation, and people didn’t work for wages daily. So, it was a lot of money.

“When the days of her purification...” or literally, it says “their” purification. The oldest and best manuscripts, and the general consensus of Greek scholars is that this is the word “their”, not “her”, but it is unclear as to whether it is referring to Mary and Joseph or Mary and Jesus.

When a man and woman marry, they do become one (and indeed, “they” bring the child to Jerusalem later in the passage), but it makes more sense to think of the mother and

child in this situation. The baby couldn't very well take himself, and if the mother was not yet purified, neither would the baby be purified.

[Leviticus 12] The laws in the preceding chapter, the laws covering the clean and unclean animals, were given to Moses and Aaron; the laws in this chapter are given only to Moses. As the creation of man came after the creation of the beasts, fowls, and fish, so the laws concerning man come after the laws concerning the beasts, fowls and fish, and the laws concerning man begin quite naturally with the mother (the beginning of man).

The laws given to Moses and Aaron seem to be laws that separate the people from the world, such as the law not to eat camels as did the Ishmaelites, and the laws given to Moses alone seem to be laws with spiritual applications, such as the laws concerning the cleansing of leprosy, which was considered the finger of God in action. Only God could cause leprosy so only God could cure leprosy; it was a capital offense to even try to cure it. (This is not the same as modern leprosy, otherwise known as Hansen's disease.) There were many societies in the Near East that did not eat pigs, but the laws to the Jews further separated them from the Ishmaelites and further set them apart.

[Leviticus 12:1-3; Speak to the children of Israel – this is not for the nations.] During these days of uncleanness, she was separated from her husband and friends, and those who did have to care for her became ceremonially unclean by the contact. This is one reason why the males were not circumcised until the eighth day; by necessity, they participated in the mother's uncleanness or pollution during the days of her separation. Although the law in no way appoints uncleanness to the baby, being in contact with that which is unclean will make you unclean by association. That's an important lesson for us to remember in life, as we try to live our Christian lives.

[Leviticus 12:4] After the seven days of uncleanness and separation, there was a period of time for purification; 33 days for a male (for a total of 40 days) and double that time if the baby were a female. During this time of purification, they were only separated from the sanctuary and forbidden to eat of the Passover or peace offerings, unless it was a priest's wife, in which case she was forbidden to eat of anything that was holy to the Lord. During this period of time, by tradition, a woman could only ride on something large, such as an ox, which could keep her further from a holy sepulcher, thereby keeping her from accidentally touching it and defiling it, but that's simply the laws of man adding to what God said.

Why was there given this time of ceremonial uncleanness? It was given to signify the pollution of sin under which we are all conceived and born. What does Psalm 51:5 tell us? "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." If the root is impure, so is the branch. (Job 14:4: Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?) God can. We know that Mary was clean, and we know that Jesus was clean, but he observed every little point of law, both the law of God and of man, without flaw.

If sin had not entered, this would not be an issue; nothing but purity would attend all of this. God said in Genesis 1:22 to be fruitful and multiply, but now the nature of man has

degenerated, and the propagation of that nature is laid under these marks of disgrace because sin and corruption are propagated with it; this is a mark of remembrance of the curse upon the woman that was first in the transgression. Genesis 3:16 tells us that in sorrow (and this shame is a sign of that sorrow) the woman would bring forth children.

Why was the time of purification longer if the baby were a girl? [1 Timothy 2:13 -15; hold your hand in Leviticus] This was a ceremonial sign given as a significance of this. Today, is there a difference in God's eyes between male and female? Galatians 3:28 tells us, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

I think the fact that the woman is excluded from the sanctuary for so many days and the fact that she's excluded from all participation in things that are holy, signifies that our original corruption, the sin nature that we bring into the world with us when we are born, would have excluded us forever from the fellowship with God and eventual entrance into the coming Kingdom, if he had not graciously provided a sacrifice for our purification.

[Leviticus 12:5-6] After the days of her purifying, whether it's for a male or female, she's to bring this burnt offering. This burnt offering is for her, not for the child. This burnt offering is in gratitude for the mercies she has received. John 16:21 says, "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a ~~man~~ [human child] is born into the world." This is an offering of thanks for the mercies she has received, thanks for the child, and atonement for the implied sins and perpetuation of sin.

It's the mother, not the child that is unclean. But, this offering is for her restoration to the Lord and his sanctuary. This purification does not so much reference any particular moral guilt as it does that which has been indirectly manifested in her bodily condition, so the sin offering was represented by the smallest of blood sacrifices, whereas a yearling lamb was used for a burnt offering; this expresses the importance and strength of her surrender of herself to the Lord after this long separation.

The word that is translated here as "lamb", is a word that denotes a ceremonially clean animal, which is therefore eatable. It could be a yearling of the goats or the sheep. That's why in Matthew chapter 25, God refers to some Christians as sheep and others as goats. Both are holy, they belong to God, and both can be used as an acceptable offering. (Numbers 18:17 tells us that sheep, goats, and cows are holy, and lost people are going to the lake of fire; they're not holy! Also, remember that even holy animals will make you unclean when they're dead.)

This expression, "lamb of the first year", is "son of his year", or a he-lamb that has not yet reached the first year. What is called for in this offering is a he-lamb, of the goats or the sheep, which has not yet reached a year old; he is still dependent upon the parents. This is very specific, and I want you to remember this for later. We're not going into this in depth at this moment, but we will later.

[Leviticus 12:7; *shall be cleansed, this is the law*] But, there's an exception made in [verse 8]. The word "lamb" in verse 8 is different than the word "lamb" in verse 6. Here in verse 8, it is referring to "one out of the flock" or "flockling" in general.

If she's too poor or is incapable of affording the lamb, for whatever reason, she can bring two turtledoves or two pigeons. I'm sure there were some mothers who could have that did not, but God knows what's in the heart. This was a provision that was a sign of God's mercy to those who were incapable (not simply unwilling) of following the law.

This was the offering made by Mary in Luke 2. This is evidence of the poor and humble origins of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ. His mother took advantage of the mercy that was offered to the poor, and I don't think the mother of the Messiah was simply a cheapskate.

This still leaves the question of why the law in this chapter was addressed to Moses only and not to Moses and Aaron. [Acts 3] Actually, hold your hand in Acts 3 and turn with me to [1 Corinthian 10:11].

"Now all these things..." (The things that are being talked about in the previous verses that happened to the children of Israel) "...happened..." (This verb is in the imperfect tense, so they happened from time to time in a successive unfolding of events.) "...happened unto them for ensamples..." (The best texts read "tupikos" or by means of figure; typically; for types.) "...and they are written for our admonition..." (The same root word as "warn"; they are written to us as a warning. (Acts 20:31 has "warn"; 1 Thessalonians 5:12 has "admonish"; 1 Thessalonians 5:14 has "exhort".)) "...upon whom the ends of the world are come." (Literally, "the ends or the consummations of the ages". The phrase assumes that the second coming of Christ is near. Both "ends" and "ages" are plural, and this marks very distinctly the idea of each age of preparation having passed into the age that follows it; one stage succeeds another in humanity, so now, all the *ends of the ages* have come down to us. It's almost time for the closing curtains on this sin-filled world.)

I promise that we will get to Acts 3 in just a moment, but look with me in [Hebrews 9]. There is a similar expression in Matthew 13:40, which says, "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world." "In the end of this world" is "at the conclusion of this age".

[Hebrews 9:26] "For then must he often have suffered..." In other words, if the previous were true (and the grammar means that it's assumed to be untrue), then it would be necessary for him to suffer often. He doesn't. His sacrifice was plenty. Since sin required atonement by sacrifice, if Christ had not been a perfect sacrifice, then the sacrifice would have to be offered repeatedly. If his sacrifice were good for only a certain amount of time, like the animal atonements, he would have been obliged to repeat his offering whenever the time expired. Since his atonement was designed to be universal, it would have been necessary for him to appear repeatedly upon the Earth and to die repeatedly...

“...since the foundation of the world.” The word “foundation” here is interesting in that it comes from a word meaning “disruption”. In other words, this is not talking about creation. Atonement for sin was not necessary from the beginning of creation; only since sin entered into this world. So, it says, “If this were true, then he would have had to suffer often since the disruption of this world when sin entered in.”

“But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” See the word “world” in the phrase “since the foundation of the world” and the word “world” in the phrase “once in the end of the world”? Those are two different words. The second word “world” is the word “ages”. “But now once in the end of the ages hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” He gave himself as a sacrifice that was good for everyone, once and for all. (This doesn’t mean that we don’t have to confess our sins; his death was for all that all might be saved, but his blood was shed for many as atonement for sin.)

But we’re looking in Matthew 13:40 at the end of this age when the tares will be separated from the wheat; in Hebrews 9:26 we have the end of the ages; and in 1 Corinthians 10:11, we are told that these things happened to the fathers so as to give us types for our admonition; for our warning; for our exhortation; they’re given as types to us upon whom the ends of the ages are come. This is talking about types, and Moses is a type or a figure of Jesus as our prophet.

Now, turn to [Acts 3]. Read with me [Acts 3:22-23]. [Acts 3:22a; like unto me.] In Deuteronomy 18:14-18, Moses claims that God raised him up as a prophet and that another and greater one will come. That one will be the Messiah.

The Jews understood Moses to be a type of the Christ. John 1:21 tells us, “And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias [Elijah]? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.” God spoke to Moses face to face, and he was the greatest of the prophets.

[Acts 3:22b-23: him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed [being exterminated; not appolumi] from among the people.] Every soul. This is not simply talking about being saved; it’s talking about salvation of the soul; rewards; things to come; the coming Kingdom of our Lord and our part in it; our life in the age to come.

This passage of Scripture is a prophecy that was given by Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 18 (verses 15, 18, 19). The apostle Peter, who was quoting this in his second sermon, makes it very clear that the Lord Jesus Christ is the prophet to whom Moses referred. He’s not Moses, but he is a prophet like unto Moses.

Scripture is our authority for saying that Moses is a type or figure of Christ. There are analogies between the lives and ministries of these two. These analogies are very enlightening to the extent that Jesus the Christ is far better understood and appreciated

after studying these things. Let's take a look at some of the corresponding features between these two figures:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moses was recognized by his parents as a goodly child and was greatly beloved of his parents. 2. At the time of Moses' birth, all the male children of Israel were being put to death by the head of the government, Pharaoh. 3. Moses was miraculously preserved by the power of God. 4. Moses found a haven of refuge in Egypt. 5. Moses grew into manhood in comparative silence. 6. When Moses reached his majority he had to choose between his own will and that of doing the will of God for the people of God. 7. Moses aligned himself with the people of God when he forsook the palace and went to the children of Israel, a slave people. 8. Moses was rejected by his own brethren at his first appearance unto them. 9. Moses' life was jeopardized, and he had to flee into a far country. 10. Moses, while in the far country, married a Gentile bride. 11. Moses' appearance to the people of Israel and their rejection of him intensified and aggravated their suffering as slaves. 12. The plight of the children of Israel became so severe during Moses' absence that they cried out to the Lord. 13. The Lord heard the cry of Israel in Egypt and prepared to send Moses back to deliver them. ***See note 14. When Moses returned to the children of Israel the second time they accepted him as their deliverer. 15. When Moses delivered the children of Israel by blood and power, Pharaoh and his hosts were destroyed by the power of God. 16. The children of Israel were made a peculiar people of the Lord upon their deliverance by Moses. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jesus grew in favor with God and man and was greatly beloved of His Father. 2. Soon after the birth of Jesus, the male children of Bethlehem were put to death by the head of the government, Herod. 3. Jesus was miraculously preserved by the power of God. 4. Jesus found a haven of refuge in Egypt. 5. Jesus grew into manhood in comparative silence. 6. Jesus, having obtained full manhood at the age of thirty, had to choose whether He would serve self or the Lord, and He chose to serve the Lord. 7. Jesus at His baptism identified Himself with a people who were slaves of sin. 8. Jesus was rejected by His own brethren at His first appearance. 9. Christ's life was jeopardized and surrendered, but He arose from the dead and went into a far country (His ascension into Heaven). 10. Christ, while in Heaven, is taking out of the Gentiles a people for His name. 11. Jesus' appearance unto His own and their rejection of Him intensified and aggravated their sinful condition. 12. The plight of the Jews during Christ's absence will become so severe (the Great Tribulation) that they will call upon the Lord. 13. The Lord will hear the cry of the Jews in the time of Jacob's trouble and will prepare to send Jesus back. ***See note 14. When Christ returns the second time, Israel as a nation will accept Him as her Deliverer. 15. When Christ shall deliver the children of Israel by blood and power, the anti-Christ and his forces will be destroyed by the power of God. 16. The children of Israel shall occupy a peculiar relationship to God upon their deliverance by the Lord Jesus Christ.
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***Note: In this connection, the Lord calls attention to a very blessed and sublime truth. Neither the wife of Moses, Zipporah, and the wife of Joseph, Asenath (both of whom are types of the bride of Christ), has any part in the suffering of the children of Israel. This reveals to us that the church, which is the bride of Christ, will have no part in the suffering of the children of Israel, which is known as the Great Tribulation.

This brief, but pertinent, analogy reveals many things pertaining to our Lord and Savior, chief of which is the fact that He shall deliver His people Israel, and after that, the Lord Jesus and His bride will occupy a blessed relationship to Israel, which will have been redeemed as a nation.

That's what Simeon, back in Luke chapter 2 was looking for. We'll look at that next week.