

COME MEET BABY JESUS

Luke 2:21-28a

INTRODUCTION

One of the most amazing occurrences, perhaps the second greatest gift and wonder given to someone at the human level, after a godly husband or wife, is the gift of a child. The identification of the baby is one of the dynamics around this event. Currently, in hospitals, they take great pains using ID bracelets and other procedures to identify the new baby. Another dimension is invitation – to come and meet the new baby. These two dynamics are precisely what we see in our text today.

READ Luke 2:21-35

Proposition: 2 Acts in our Unfolding Narrative:

- I. The **Identification** of **Baby Jesus**
- II. The **Introduction** of **Old Man Simeon**

So That:

1st Act in our Unfolding Narrative, ...

- I. The **Identification** of **Baby Jesus** **2:21-24**

Point – The identification of Jesus with those whom He was born to save, through →

- A. **Circumcision**
- B. **Designation**
- C. **Presentation**

- A. The **Circumcision** of Baby Jesus

Proof – “^{21a}And when eight days were completed before His circumcision,”

Same pattern as we see in chapter 1 for John the Baptist →
1:59 → birth, circumcision on the eighth day, naming, and praise.

- humble setting → notice the contrast of this event with the circumcision of John
- there is no family gathering of rejoicing family and neighbors
- Mary and Joseph are in a village far from home

Gen 17:12 – “And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations”

Circumcision is physical

→ God is protecting the wife from infections and bacteria from her husband, especially in ancient times without modern hygiene.

- God also protects us by giving us one–man–one–woman–for–life marriage and calling us to purity.

Circumcision is particular (or peculiar in the sense of unique)

→ Circumcision is God’s brand; the mark of God’s ownership.

- to distinguish God’s covenant people in the Old Testament

Circumcision represents something spiritual

→ purification from sin based upon circumcision of the heart

Proof – **Rom 2:28-29** – “He is not a Jew who is one outwardly; neither is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh.

^{29a}But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter;”

But ... why does the One who has no sin to be cut away, the One Who is already pure ... why is this One circumcised?

Point – The purpose of Jesus as the last Adam is to keep the law which the first Adam failed to keep. He was born to bear the law’s curse and to deliver His people from it.

Proof – **Heb 2:17** – “He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

Everything that was required of Israel was required of Israel’s Redeemer and Champion.

Submission to circumcision says this Child is born under the law of God. Jesus’ whole life will be one of fulfilling all righteousness and keeping God’s commandments.

B. The Designation of Baby Jesus

Point – Main point in this verse is the naming of Jesus; this is the emphasis

Proof – “^{21b}**His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.**”

- refers back to Luke 1:31

Num 13:16 – “These are the names of the men whom Moses sent to spy out the land; but Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun, Joshua.” – born in Egypt, in slavery. He was named “Hoshea” which means “Salvation.”

They came out of slavery and passed through the wilderness. Spies were sent into the Promised Land. Moses came to know this man and changed his name. Moses took letters from YHWH and took letters from Hoshea and wove them together to become: Yehoshua, or Joshua → “YHWH saves”

Now, God could have given Jesus the name Moreh (Teacher), or Melek (King), or Melchizedek (King of Righteousness), or (Prophet), or (Priest), Emmanuel (God with Us),

Advocate
Chief Cornerstone
Prince of Peace

Bright and Morning Star
Deliverer
Rock

The Alpha and Omega The First and the Last
→All of which is true – He is!

Matt 1:21 – “you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins.”

Even as we sang this morning in the beautiful hymn: O For A Thousand Tongues To Sing:

*Jesus the name that charms our fears
That bids our sorrows cease
‘Tis music in the sinner’s ears
‘Tis life and health and peace*

C. The **Presentation** of Baby Jesus

Point – this continues the identification of Baby Jesus with those whom He was born to save.

Proof – “^{22a}**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** ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every *first-born* 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.’”**

“**purification**” – from the Greek word καθαρισμός – from which we get the word “cathartic” – a cleansing

Mark 1:44 – “He said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a testimony to them.’”

This refers to the purification of Mary after the birth of her baby. **Turn to: Lev 12:1-8**

Now, there were some compassionate reasons for this law

- it protected the woman for 33 days immediately after the pains and occasional tearing of childbirth
- it sets the stage for loving husbands to not make demands on her during this time

Illustration – *None of These Diseases* – how very very slow medical science was in admitting those who handle patients should have clean hands ... and how in Scripture didn't just require washing of hands, but repeated washings in running water. Also, the regulations of the Law regarding menstruation and childbirth → blessing and protection for the women.

Physical Benefits. Spiritual benefits.

→ Blood defiles ... but blood also cleanses
... and did the final ultimate cleansing in Christ

Moving from the purification of Mary to the presentation of Jesus...

“^{22b}**they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord**”

- about 5.5 miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem

“²³**(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every *first-born* male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord’),”**

“**as it is written**” – grammatically, this is written in perfect passive – “as it stands written” – it has abiding value; enduring commandments

So, what is written??

→ **Exod 13:2** – “Sanctify to Me every first-born, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.”

Now ... the **obedience** of Mary and Joseph on the outside, showcases their **belief** on the inside 😊

“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.’”**

“was said” – same grammar as “stands written” (perfect passive)

“the Law” – mentioned 5 times in Luke 2 – vv. 22, 23, 24, 27, 39

→ Isn't it interesting how Luke the Gentile, writing to Theophilus the Gentile, emphasizes the Law so strongly?!?

He wants all of us to understand the Gospel in not an aberrant sect or branch of Judaism.

This sacrifice is for Mary's purification → **Turn to: Lev 12:1-8**

- The poorest of the poor brought flour.
- The lower and middle class brought birds and the upper class brought a lamb and a bird.
- **Turtledoves** were migrating birds and they aren't always around. **Pigeons** are always around.

Mary and Joseph can't afford a lamb for the Lamb of God

- The Magi had not yet visited with their gifts

Illustration – Thirty years later, Jesus will stand in a line of sinners waiting to be baptized by John in the river Jordan.

As Jesus is standing in line to be baptized, we can imagine the man directly in front of him is a thief. The man behind him is a drunkard. And the man behind him is a liar.

They are waiting to be baptized by John in the river Jordan. And in the midst of this long line of confessing sinners, is the One who has taken the sinner's place and is standing in solidarity with us.

Application – In the same way, we are saved not just by Jesus dying for us on the cross for us but by Jesus living for us, by Jesus actively obeying God on our behalf.

This is part of Jesus' **Substitutionary Atonement**.

His perfect life of obedience is credited to your account.

This is why He is circumcised ... and all the rest → **2 Cor 5:21**.

The life of Jesus begins with the bloodshed of circumcision.
His life ends with the bloodshed of crucifixion.

2nd Act in our Unfolding Narrative, ...

II. The Introduction of Old Man Simeon 2:25-28a

Point – The very best of the Old Covenant passing away, as the New Covenant breaks in ... Elizabeth, Zacharias, Simeon, Anna

Proof – “²⁵**And behold, 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.**”

The name **Simeon** means, “Hear! A son!”

Gen 29:33 – “she (**Leah**) conceived again and bore a son and said, ‘Because the LORD has heard that I am unloved, He has therefore given me this *son* also.’ So she named him **Simeon**.”

This was a very common name in Israel at the time.

We are not told what age Simeon is.

We can assume he is old because of vv. 29-30.

Point – Now, Old Man Simeon is

- A. Saved**
- B. Sanctified**
- C. Seeking**
- D. Singled Out**
- E. Spoken To**

A. Simeon is Saved

Point – This is his **Justification**

Proof – “^{25b}**and this man was righteous**”

Gen 15:6, Hab 2:4

Simeon is part of the righteous remnant of **Mal 3:16** – “those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who esteem His name.”

William Hendrickson – “*To be sure, conditions were bad, very bad, in Israel at the time of Israel’s birth in Bethlehem. Think of loss of political independence, cruel King Herod, externalization of religion, legalistic scribes and Pharisees and their many followers, worldly-minded Sadducees, the silence of the voice of the prophets. And in the midst of all this darkness, degradation and despair, there were men who were hopefully looking forward to and earnestly expecting the consolation of Israel. There were such men ... and women too.*”

There is no conflict between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Luke shows that the most devout people under the old are the most receptive to the new. Elizabeth, Zacharias, Simeon and Anna do not become resentful and angry that the new has come. They rejoice!

B. Simeon is **Sanctified**

Point – His **Justification** and His **Sanctification**

Proof – “^{25c}**and devout**”

“**devout**” – literally – taking hold of well; *cautious, pious*, one who carefully observes the law.

Used twice in the Septuagint

→ **Lev 15:31** – “separated”

→ **Mic 7:2** – “godly”

It is only here in New Testament and 3 times in Acts.

Simeon lived in the same world as the rest of his fellow Israelites. But he marched to a different drumbeat.

Simeon stood out like a star on a dark night.

C. Simeon is **Seeking**

Point – His **Justification**, His **Sanctification**, His **Anticipation**

Point – We live in a world of post-modern philosophy, of deconstructionism, of no absolutes.

The Existentialists don't care about yesterday and they're not sure there will be a tomorrow.

But, everyone has some **anticipation** of the future.

→ Some look to the future with hope ... some with desperation ... some with fear ... some with excitement ...

→ But everyone is looking forward to something!

Proof – **Simeon** → “^{25d}looking for the **consolation** of Israel;”

Literally – “calling someone alongside oneself”;

- exhortation, encouragement, comfort → **2 Cor 1:3-7**

Isa 40:1-2 – “‘Comfort, O comfort My people,’ says your God. ²Speak kindly to Jerusalem; and call out to her, that her warfare has ended, that her iniquity has been removed, that she has received of the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”

This is the application of the tenderness of God to a war-weary people, the application of the pardon of God to a sin-sick people.

This is universal amnesty to all rebellious creatures.

This **consolation** that Simeon is looking for is restoration, emancipation, and redemption

By the way ... **Simeon** is looking both for personal salvation and for national salvation/deliverance

Simeon is not an Amillennialist ... he is not a Postmilleniast
... he is not even a Post-tribulational Premillenniast.
Simeon is a Pretribulational Premillenniast.

→ stay tuned for our five-week summary of Revelation during Bible Hour beginning near the end of April and into May.

D. Simeon is Singled Out

Point – His **Justification, Sanctification, Anticipation, Consecration**

Proof – “^{25e}**and the Holy Spirit was upon him.**”

→ Theocratic empowerment (Simeon is an Old Testament saint).

- also came upon David, Saul...it is a special, unique measure of the Holy Spirit – to set apart

Illustration – **1 Sam 19:20** – “the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul; and they also prophesied”

E. Simeon is Spoken To

Point – His **Justification, Sanctification, Anticipation, Consecration** ... This is his **Revelation**

→ Theocratic empowerment and special revelation

Proof – “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.**”

How long ago had this been revealed? We don’t know.
How many days had Simeon been going to the Temple? We don’t know but most likely regularly – maybe even daily.

“^{27a}**And he came in the Spirit into the temple;**”

Recall of the Temple:

- The Court of the Gentiles for Gentiles and unclean Israelites.
- The Court of the Women or Treasury for clean Israelite women.
- The clean Israelite men could enter into the Court of Israel.
- Only the Priests were allowed into the Court of the Priests.
- The Temple (Proper) – Holy Place and Holy of Holies
→ **Simeon** came into the Court of the Women

Spirit filled → same as we have seen with:

1:15 – John the Baptist

1:35 – Mary

1:41 – Elizabeth

1:67 – Zacharias → now **Simeon**

The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon in v. 25. In v. 26, the Spirit reveals Simeon will not see death until he sees the Messiah. Now here in v. 27, the Spirit moves Simeon to enter the temple at just the right moment to see Jesus.

4:1 – “Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness”

Gal 5:16 – “walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.”

“^{27b}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,”

Illustration – You know how it is. When you’re a brand-new parent, you interrogate everyone with the hand sanitizer before they can hold your baby. By the time you get to the third or

fourth child, you say, “Here you go,” hand him over and say, “It’ll be good for his immune system.” 😊

Now, there was nothing remarkable about baby Jesus. He looked like any other baby.

Illustration – I understand Winston Churchill was once told that a certain newborn baby looked like him. Churchill’s response was, “All newborn babies look like me.” 😊

This is true. All newborn babies are little clumps of pink or brown flesh. All babies look like Churchill for a certain length of time.

CONCLUSION

“^{27b}**the custom of the Law**” → this is 40 days after the birth

This is the custom or instruction of the law that Mary and Joseph are adhering to → **Num 18:15-16a** – “Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless, the first-born of man you shall surely redeem, and the first-born of unclean animals you shall redeem. ^{16a}And as to their redemption price, from a month old you shall redeem them, by your valuation, five shekels in silver.”

→ This is the Redemption of the Redeemer! 😊

This redemption of the first born can be traced all the way back to the Passover sacrifice.