

EXCITEMENT OF CELEBRATION / Sunday, December 20, 2015

Unifying Topic: DEDICATION OF FIRSTBORN

I. Laws Regarding Purification And Redemption (Exodus 13:13-15)

II. Mary And Jesus At The Temple (Luke 2:22-24)

III. The Joy Of Simeon (Luke 2:25-32)

The Main Thought: And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (Luke 2:22, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People today celebrate holidays and special occasions as if they are routine and ordinary. Are there still times for great excitement and celebrations? Luke captures the overflowing joy that the priest Simeon experienced as he dedicated Jesus according to the Law of Moses.

Lesson Aim: To examine the laws concerning purification of women after childbirth and the redemption of firstborn sons as demonstrated in Luke's account of Jesus' appearance at the temple

Life Aim: To experience the joy and excitement that accompanied the coming of the Messiah.

HISTORY:

Chapter 13:1-12 ¹In ancient Israel, as in many other ancient civilizations, the firstborn son held a privileged place in the family. The firstborn son usually had a legal right to his father's inheritance. According to Exodus, the firstborn son was also dedicated to God. God's saving act of delivering the Israelite's firstborn males from death in Egypt causes them to remember the destruction of the first-born male and beast of Egypt (Exodus 13:14-15). God now tells Moses to sanctify all the firstborn unto God. That would include both man and beast. The "consecration" or "setting apart" of the firstborn male, both human and animal are all of God's! Moses spoke to the people to remember the day they came out of Egypt; out of that bondage because it was the Lord's strong hand that brought them out. They were to observe and keep the feast seven days and no leaven bread was to be eaten; celebrate every year in the month of Abib. This was the basic law of the Passover. The festival prescribed was to be to Israel "for a sign upon its hand, and for a memorial between their eyes." Also remember in the time the Lord brings them into the land of the Canaanites, as He had sworn to them and their fathers, and gives it to them. Everything which opened the womb was to be given up to the Lord. Every firstborn animal male, was to be redeemed with a lamb.

LESSON:

Exodus 13: 13-15 Laws Regarding Purification And Redemption

13:13 And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem. A firstborn donkey may be bought back from the Lord by presenting a lamb or young goat in its place. But if they don't buy it back, they must break its neck. And they also must buy back every firstborn son because God saved their lives. He owned them and had a rightful claim to them. This ritual served three main purposes.

1. It was a reminder to the people of how God had spared their sons from the angel of death and freed them all from slavery.
2. It showed God's high respect for human life by distinguishing his people from the heathen religions which sacrificed human lives to make peace with their gods.
3. It looked forward to the day when Jesus Christ would buy us back by paying the price of sin once and for all.

13:14 And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage:— Therefore, when

¹ <http://glzbc.org/wpzion1/wp-content/uploads/Sunday-School-Lesson-20151220.pdf>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

their son asks in future time, what is this all about, they are to tell them that it was by the strong hand of the Lord that brought them out from Egypt, from the house of bondage they were in.

13:15 And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. It all came down to when Pharaoh with willful stubbornness did not want to let the Israelites go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn of man and beast in the land of Egypt. So, Israel's redemption was founded on the death of the firstborn of Egypt. The offering of a lamb foreshadowed the offering of the Son of God on the cross for our redemption. So the fathers would tell their sons, because of what the Lord has done, they immolate; sacrifice every firstborn male of the womb (the conditions of origination) to the Lord. The word "*matrix*" here means belly, *womb*. From *koilos* ("hollow"); a cavity, *ie (especially) the abdomen; by implication, the matrix; figuratively, the heart — belly, womb*. But all the firstborn of their children is bought back by paying five shekels apiece to the priest for them.

²As before observed; and this law continues to be observed with the Jews; the manner of which, as related by Leo Modena (i), is as follows, "*Thirty days being expired after the birth of the child, they call a priest to them; that is to say, one that is descended of the stock of Aaron, whom the father of the child pleaseth; and so, many people being gathered together at the time appointed, the father of the child bringeth before the priest, in a bowl or basin, a good quantity of gold and silver, and then they give him the child into his arms; the priest then calling the mother of it before him, saith unto her, mistress, is this your son? she answereth, yes; then, replies he, have you never had any child before, either male or female, or have miscarried anyone? she saith unto him, no; then doth the priest say, this child is mine, as being the firstborn; then turning himself toward the father, he asketh him, whether he will redeem it or not? who answereth him, saying, see, here is gold and silver, take your own price; then saith the priest unto him, you will redeem it then? the father answereth, I will redeem it; it shall be so then, saith the priest, this child is mine as being the firstborn, as it is written, Numbers 18:16. I therefore take this in exchange, &c. and so he takes the sum of two French crowns, or thereabout, as he thinks good, and then delivers the child to his father and mother, and this day they make a feasting day.*" This custom was used in Christ's time, and was observed with respect to him, Luke 2:27.

Luke 2:22-24 Mary And Jesus At The Temple

2:22 And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;— There were three legal ordinances which were required by every Jewish parent that had given birth to a firstborn son. The Ordinance of Circumcision was an outward physical sign of one's willingness to obey God and be one of His chosen people. ³Every boy was circumcised and named on the eighth day after his birth (Lev.12:3; Luke 1:59-60). Circumcision symbolized the Jews' separation from Gentiles and their unique relationship with God. The son, Jesus was named on the day of His circumcision. The parents did not offer sacrifices until the days of the mother's purification ceremony was complete. Mary and Joseph go to the temple. They make the five-mile journey from Bethlehem to Jerusalem with Jesus. The Ordinance of Purification is described in the Old Testament in Leviticus 12, (*for 40 days after the birth of a son and 80 days after the birth of a daughter, the mother was ceremonially unclean and could not enter the temple*). At the end of her time of separation, the parents were to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or pigeon for a sin offering. The priest would sacrifice these animals and would declare her clean. Lastly The Presentation to the Lord was when the parents brought their firstborn son to the temple to present Him to the Lord after the mother's forty-day of purification was over; acknowledging that he belonged to God.

2:23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the

² <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/13-15.htm>

³ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/jesus-is-circumcised/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

Lord;)– Then, as written in the law of the Lord, every firstborn child that's a boy is to be consecrated; dedicated to the Lord, just as had been done in Exodus 13, and the male shall be called holy to the Lord. This is much like we do in church today when we dedicate a baby to the Lord.

2:24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons. If the individual could not afford a sheep, two doves or pigeons could be offered instead. Apparently, because they didn't have much money, Mary and Joseph offered two doves rather than the more expensive lamb and a dove.

Luke 2:25-32 The Joy Of Simeon

2:25 And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. At this point we are introduced to Simeon. Five things are said about him personally.

1. Simeon was a just and devout man. He treated other people as he should: justly. The word "just" (*dikaiois*) means righteous, well-behaved, living as one should live. He walked closely with God. The word "devout" (*eulabes*) means cautious and careful in relation to God. It means reverence for God; being pious or religious.
2. Simeon was a man who looked for the coming of the Messiah (Matt.1:18). This is what is meant by "the waiting for the consolation of Israel (the Restoration of Israel)." Faithful believers among the Jews felt that Israel could find consolation only in the Messiah. They "waited for the kingdom of God" (Mk.15:43).
3. Simeon was a man filled with and led by the Holy Spirit; The Holy Spirit was upon him continually. This shows just how closely Simeon was living to God. He walked so closely that God was able to use him in a most magnificent way to encourage Joseph and Mary.

2:26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. It's nothing like the nudging of the Holy Spirit!

4. Simeon was a man who was given an unusual promise. Apparently, Simeon was constantly studying the Scriptures, in particular searching the prophecies concerning the coming salvation of the Messiah (1Pt.1:10). At some point, the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah.

2:27 And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,– Simeon being led by the Spirit came to the Temple. This was the day the parents were to bring the child Jesus to the temple. A first-born child was to always be taken to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord. This was after the custom of the law (also vv.22-24). This was the day God's promise comes true for Simeon. He had been waiting a long time. ⁴Day by day he had prayed for the Lord's Christ to finally appear. Year after year his prayers went unanswered. As he grew older, his anticipation grew stronger because of the promise of the Lord and he knew he couldn't die because of the promise.

2:28 Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,– That day Mary and Joseph came into the temple. ⁵There was nothing outwardly to distinguish them, no marks or signs that indicated they were anything other than another poor young couple coming with their newborn son. However, Simeon was able to recognize and see God's Salvation—Jesus.

5. Simeon was a man who saw and held the Messiah. He took the child up into his arms and proclaimed Him to be the long-awaited Messiah.

⁴ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1991-12-22-The-Cradle-And-The-Cross-Simeons-Song/>

⁵ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/1991-12-22-The-Cradle-And-The-Cross-Simeons-Song/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

2:29 Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:— Once Simeon had embraced the Messiah, he broke out into song. The song is called the *Nunc Dimittis* being known by the opening words of the song in the Latin (vv.29-32). Therefore, his reply is that he was now ready to die in peace. He called himself God's servant. He trusted God and God kept His promise.

2:30 For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,— He praised God for seeing God's salvation for the people. His eyes had seen Christ the Messiah, the One who came to save!

2:31 Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;— The child, God's sent salvation was prepared for all people. The Messiah had come to save all men. Prejudice and favoritism were unknown to God. He was not willing that any should perish.

2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. The child was to be the light to the Gentiles; to the unbelievers of the world. This simply means that He came to be the Revelation of God, to reveal the way, the truth, and the life to men. And the child was to be the glory of God's people Israel (Jews) who truly believed. In this baby, Simeon sees the fulfillment of all the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people across centuries (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Micah...).

SUMMARY:

Every firstborn of a donkey shall be redeemed with a lamb. If it's not redeemed, its neck is broken. And every firstborn of man among their children shall be redeemed. And there will come a time when the son will ask the father, "*What does this mean?*" "*What is this all about?*" They were to tell their son that it was by the strong hand the Lord brought them out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. So, when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore, this is why they sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb. And then the firstborn is bought back by the father by paying five shekels apiece to the priest for them (**Exo.13:13-15**).

Mary was a woman, and under the Law of Moses, Mary was required to go through the purification ceremony which is 40days after childbirth. She was considered impure, or unclean; and therefore was not permitted to enter the temple until her days of purification had been accomplished. The task of the parents was to take their son to the temple and present him to the Lord. Then Jesus could be presented; dedicated unto the Lord. And he shall be called holy to the Lord. At the end of her purification, the parents were to bring a lamb for a burnt offering and a dove or pigeon for a sin offering. The priest would sacrifice these animals and would declare her clean (**Lk.2:22-24**).

Simeon is introduced in this passage. It says that he is a just and devout man in Jerusalem, which speaks of his personal walk with God and integrity among men. It was time for the child to be dedicated and offered up for God's keeping and care. Forty days had passed since the birth of Jesus which was the Law's requirement of a woman's purification after giving birth to a son to enter into the temple. The parents, Joseph and Mary bring the child to the temple. Somewhere in the temple, they come across Simeon. Scripture does not say, but some think he was a priest. We do know that he was a man that loved God very much and walked closely with God. By this time we can assume that he is an old man, for he had been waiting on the promise of the Lord for a long time. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Christ! And he being led by the Spirit on this day sees the blessed child with His parents. He took the baby into his arms and blessed God for Him. Simeon was ready to die in peace for God's Word had come to pass; death is no longer an enemy. His eyes had seen God's Salvation; the One prepared for all people; the light to the Gentiles and the glory to the people of Israel (**Lk.2:25-35**).