

01-07-2018

**Message: God's Grace to Depart in Peace, Part 1**

**Text: Luke 2:21-40**

### **Introduction**

- A. God has been gracious to keep each of us alive into this new year, and gather us to worship Christ on this first Lord's Day of the new year.
- B. While many Eastern Orthodox churches are celebrating the birth of Christ today, we with Western churches celebrated His birth on December 25<sup>th</sup>. So the text before us in Luke 2:21-40 is appropriate, for it is an "after Christmas story" of Christ, found only in Luke's gospel.
- C. Let's remind ourselves that it is Christ Himself, once crucified, risen, now reigning in heaven Who by His Spirit inspired Luke to record these events. So in every word and verse, Christ is speaking to us, revealing Himself to us, as is the case in all of Scripture. So pray that Christ, by that same Spirit, would give us all eyes to see Him, ears to hear Him, minds to know Him, and hearts to love and receive Him as our great God and Savior.
- D. The following are things I believe Christ in these verses of Scripture is speaking to us. Look and see for yourself if it is so. This will be part 1 of a 2 part message.

### **I. We all need the purification from our sins that only Christ by His blood and righteousness can provide.**

- A. 2:21 Christ has Luke remind us that He became one of us, born under the law (circumcision), to save us as His God given name Jesus is to indicate.

Luke 2:21 And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, **His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.**

Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, **and you shall name Him Jesus.**

- 1. "Jesus" translates the Greek translation of the Hebrew "Yeshua," short for "Yehoshua" (Joshua) which = "Yahweh saves" or "Yahweh is salvation."

Matthew 1:20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.<sup>21</sup> "She will bear a Son; **and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.**"

- 2. He identified with His people under the Old Covenant law, being circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup>

day.

Galatians 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, **God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,<sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law,** that we might receive the adoption as sons.

- B. 2:22-24 Though Mary was highly favor by God, she, like all of us, needed purification from her sins by the sacrifice of her divine Son.

Luke 2:22 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<sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY *firstborn* MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),<sup>24</sup> **and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."**

1. Just as Jesus had Luke hold up Zacharias and Elizabeth up to us as models of righteousness and the obedience by faith in the Lord, so Joseph and Mary are likewise being held up to us as models of a faith that obeys the Lord. They were careful to do everything the Lord commanded in His Word.

Luke 2:39 When **they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord,** they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

- a. They gave their son, not a family name, but the name God commanded.
- b. They circumcised their son on the eighth day as God commanded.

Leviticus 12:3 'On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

- b. They presented their son to God as He commanded, acknowledging that He was not their possession, but belonged to God, as all we parents should view our children.

Exodus 13:2 "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me."

Numbers 3:13 "For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD."

- c. Mary, with Joseph, brought her baby to term. Abortion was practiced in both ancient Greece and in the Roman Empire. Abortion was practiced on a regular basis among the poor, slave, merchant and royal classes. The Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC) encouraged abortion, fearing a population explosion. On the other hand, Caesar Augustus knew from his census that the Roman population was declining and blamed homosexuality, single men not wanting the

responsibilities of marriage, and abortion as reasons for the decline.

- (1) Mary, and certainly Joseph, had to know that for the rest of her life she would be slandered by some as a fornicator, harlot (Cf. John 8:41).

John 8:40 "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. <sup>41</sup> "You are doing the deeds of your father." **They said to Him, "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God."**

- (2) But she did not abort her child. It was not God's will. She did not regard her body or the body within her womb as belonging to herself, but as belonging to the Lord, she as His bond-slave (doulos).

Luke 1:35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ... <sup>38</sup> **And Mary said, "Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."**

- (3) On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1973 the United States Supreme Court in a 7-2 decision sanctioned abortion on demand, the killing of unborn children for economic convenience, social convenience, logistical convenience, recreational convenience - on demand. In the 45 years since roughly 60 million lives and counting in this country have been taken. But listen to Christ, creation's ultimate lawgiver and judge, Who is speaking to us through Luke, holding up Mary and Joseph to every man and woman of how we should regard our own bodies and souls as not our own, because regarding all people, Christ is our Creator, and all believers, because Christ is our Redeemer.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**?  
<sup>20</sup> **For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.**

2. Yet as highly favored and blessed by God as Mary was, as much as a model of faith and obedience that Christ is having Luke emphasize, she showed herself to be in need of purification from her sin by her obedience to God's law ritual laws for purification after child birth. Mary kept herself secluded from the temple and other holy things for 40 days as God commanded.
  - a. Under the Old Covenant, whenever there was an issuance of fluid from a man (seminal fluid) or woman (blood, amniotic fluid), a man or woman had to adhere to or perform certain rituals symbolizing purification. E.g., ...

Leviticus 15:16 'Now if a man has a seminal emission, **he shall bathe all his body in water and be unclean until evening.**

b. For a woman giving birth, God's law stated ...

Leviticus 12:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,<sup>2</sup> "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: 'When a woman gives birth and bears a male *child*, **then she shall be unclean for seven days**, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean.<sup>3</sup> 'On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.<sup>4</sup> **'Then she shall remain in the blood of her purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed.**<sup>5</sup> 'But if she bears a female *child*, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of *her* purification for sixty-six days.

c. Purification for the woman was completed with a sacrificial offering.

Leviticus 12:6 'When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting **a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering.**<sup>7</sup> **'Then he shall offer it before the LORD and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood.** This is the law for her who bears *a child, whether* a male or a female.<sup>8</sup> **'But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons**, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean."

d. Mary, being poor, could not afford a lamb, so she offered up 2 birds for her atonement. The Magi had not yet arrived with their gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Luke 2:22 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<sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY *firstborn* MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),<sup>24</sup> and to **offer a sacrifice** according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "**A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS.**"

e. Mary and all Israelites were to understand by the repetition of such offerings that they never truly purified them from their sins. If they had, there would be no need to repeat them. These ritual sacrifices were symbols of a necessary sacrifice for sin that had not yet been made available.

Hebrews 10:1 For **the Law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things**, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.<sup>2</sup> Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?<sup>3</sup> **But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.**<sup>4</sup> For it is

**impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

- F. But the one, once for all sacrifice that removes our guilt of sin would be made available in Mary's own lifetime, and remains in our own lifetime - the sacrifice of her son, Jesus, the Son of God.

Hebrews 10:5 Therefore, **when He comes into the world, He says,** "SACRIFICE AND OFFERING YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, BUT A BODY YOU HAVE PREPARED FOR ME; ...<sup>9</sup> ... "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." ...<sup>10</sup> **By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**

**Conclusion**

- A. Even if you are as righteous, faithful, obedient as Mary, you, with all of us, are in need of purification from sin. Not the purification of ritual washings and animal sacrifices. Nothing you and I can offer God can repay our devaluing His infinite value by preferring our sin to preferring Him.

Psalm 143:2 And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for **in Your sight no man living is righteous.**

Ecclesiastes 7:20 Indeed, **there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins.**

Psalm 130:3 **If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?**<sup>4</sup> **But there is forgiveness with You,** that You may be feared.

- B. But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, being God Himself, and therefore of infinite value Himself, offered up Himself to God as full, acceptable repayment for sin. God accepts His offering on behalf of all who will come to Christ, confess our sin, renounce our sin, and continually receive Christ for all that He is - God, Savior, Lord, therefore following Him as our Master and King.

- C. Pray that you, I, and all of us might depart from here in peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:23 all have sinned and **fall short of the glory of God,**

Romans 5:1 Therefore, **having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,**<sup>2</sup> through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and **we exult in hope of the glory of God.**