

Jesus--Luke 2:21-38; Matthew 2:1-12

Jesus--Purification of the Temple; Wise Men Visit

I. Additional Scriptures...

1. Jesus, like John, was circumcised on the **eighth day** (v. 21). This was a part of the covenant God made with Abraham (cf., Gen 17:9-14; Lev 12:2-3; Acts 7:8; Ph 3:5).
2. Leviticus 12:2ff.
3. Provision for the poor was made in the law of sacrifices (Luke 2:24; Lev 12:8).
4. **Consolation of Israel** (Lk 2:25)--A name for the Messiah in common use among the Jews, probably suggested by Isaiah 12:1; 49:13. The Greek word thus rendered in Luke 2:25 (*paraklesis*) is kindred to that translated "Comforter" in John 14:16 etc., *parakletos*. [*Easton's Revised Bible Dictionary*, s.v., "consolation of Israel."]
5. Joseph and Mary MARVELLED at things spoken by Simeon about Jesus (Lk 2:33), there are many other times when Jesus caused others to marvel--Mt 8:27; 9:8, 33; 21:20, 42; 22:22; 27:14; Mk 5:20; 12:11, 17; 15:5, 44; Lk 11:38; 20:26; Jn 4:27; 7:15, 21.
6. For more information about the Herods (Mt 2:7) see chart at the end of this lesson.

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: **The Period of the Christ.**

III. Summary.

Jesus is circumcised and presented in the temple according to the law. We are introduced to Simeon who had been given a revelation by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before seeing the Christ. Simeon took the Child in his arms and declared his own readiness to die now that his eyes had seen Christ. His words of praise and adoration caused Joseph and Mary to marvel. Simeon delivered a message to Mary about the future of this Child.

Next the aged prophetess Anna sees Jesus. She had been a widow for many years and was a faithful servant of the Lord. She came in at the same time Simeon was prophesying about Jesus and she likewise spoke about His Messiahship.

Matthew 2:1-12 tells about the visit of the wise men. Of course this is one of the most recognizable events in the life of Christ. Most people think of **three** wise men (perhaps because of the three gifts they brought, v. 11), though we are not told in the text how many wise men came. Their coming again points to the unique nature of this birth. They first came to Jerusalem and declared their purpose of coming to worship the "King of the Jews." Herod was troubled by the title the wise men used and demanded of the chief priests and scribes to know where this Christ was supposed to be born. The Scriptures contained the answer from the prophet Micah and Herod did further inquiring of the wise men for a sinister purpose deceptively stating that he also wished to worship this king. The wise men were further directed to the place by the star and rejoiced for the guidance. They saw Mary and the Child and worshipped him, giving the gifts they had brought. Being warned by the Lord not to return to Herod, they went home another way.

IV. Outline.

1. Jesus is circumcised the eighth day (Luke 2:21).
2. The purification according to the law was accomplished (Luke 2:22-24).
3. Simeon sees the Child and prophesies about His mission (Luke 2:25-35).

4. Anna comes into the temple as Simeon prophesies and she also thanks God and tells others (Lk 2:36-38).
5. Wise men come from the East to worship the “King of the Jews” (Mt 2:1-2).
6. Herod demands that the chief priests and scribes find out when the Christ should be born and receives his answer (Mt 2:3-6).
7. Herod questions the wise men about the timing of the star’s appearance and indicates to them that he also wishes to worship the new king (Mt 2:7-8).
8. Once again the star appears and guides the wise men to Jesus (Mt 2:9-11a).
9. The wise men worship the Child and leave gifts (Mt 2:11b).
10. Being warned of God not to return to Herod, they go home another way (Mt 2:12).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ The wise men disobeyed King Herod.
02. _____ Events recorded by Luke in this lesson took place ten days after Jesus’ birth.
03. _____ The chief priests and scribes were unable to answer Herod’s question.
04. _____ Anna spent most of her time fasting and praying.
05. _____ Herod told a big lie to the wise men.

Who Am I? Who Did it? Who said It?

06. _____ Rejoiced with exceeding great joy.
07. _____ Did not depart from the temple.
08. _____ Was waiting for the consolation of Israel.
09. _____ marvelled at the things Simeon spoke.
10. _____ “Bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.”

Fill in the Blanks

11. _____ was not the least among the princes of Judah.
12. John 14:___ “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another _____, that he may _____ with you for ever.”
13. “A _____ to lighten the _____, and the _____ of thy people Israel.”
14. John ___:27 “And upon this came his disciples, and _____ that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?”
15. “... and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; _____, _____, and _____.”

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be given on next week’s handout

ANSWERS for Lesson 01-23... [01--False, 46; 02--True, 56; 03--False, 60; 04--False, 64; 05--True, 76; 06--c, 42; 07--c, 51; 08--a, 59; 09--c, 61; 10--b, 78; 11--hearts, manner, hand, 66; 12--3, circumcised, eighth, Benjamin; 13--27, written, messenger, prepare; 14--horn, salvation, 69; 15--22, bright, morning, star.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. ... Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord (Luke 2:23). The connection of the firstborn Jewish male back to the history of the nation of Israel is here seen and it teaches Christians something about the meaning of being “an holy nation” (2 Pet 2:9). From the time of the final plague on Egypt, (i.e., the death of the firstborn),

the firstborn of Israelite males was consecrated or dedicated to the Lord (Num 3:13). The substitute for this taking of the firstborn became the tribe of Levi, which was **set apart** for His special service in matters pertaining to the tabernacle/temple and worship (Num 3:12). As the number of the firstborn exceeded that of the tribe, a redemption price of five shekels was to be paid to the priests (Num 3:46,47), which was ordained to be paid for all the firstborn (Num 18:15,16). This is why the firstborn was called HOLY [cf., Boles, GA Commentary, pp. 59-60]. Christians are to be HOLY in behavior (1 Pet 1:15). We are dedicated or set apart for the Lord's service. We have been called out from the world as part of the church (**ekklhsia**), and are dedicated to the Lord. Even in His birth, our Lord teaches us about holiness.

2. And he came by the Spirit into the temple (Luke 2:27). Simeon's appearance at the temple is one more remarkable incident connected with the birth of Jesus. All of Israel looked for the coming Messiah with great anticipation. Simeon had received special revelation from the Lord that he would see the Messiah before his death (v. 26). The joy of this aged man that he could hold in his arms that One who would bring salvation is beautiful to behold. On occasions when we forget how wonderful it is to be saved from our sins, we would do well to read about the joy expressed here by Simeon.
3. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him (Luke 2:33). See the passages above ("Additional Scriptures," I.5) regarding the marvel caused in various settings by our Lord. Any person who studies carefully the life of Christ will be filled with marvel. We serve a marvellous Savior and Lord.
4. ... in the days of Herod the king ... he was troubled (Matthew 2:1, 3). The WHEN of the visit of the wise men is only given to us only in this broad general statement. It was almost certainly not at the same time as the shepherds' visit. This Herod is Herod the Great, who reigned between 37 B.C. and 4 B.C. Herod was an Idumean (i.e., a descendant of Esau). He was named King of Judea by the Roman Senate in 40 B.C. By 37 B.C., he had crushed all opposition to his rule. He had many political and leadership talents, but he loved POWER. In his later years he killed many close associates and family members for fear of losing his power.
5. ... he demanded of them where Christ should be born (Matthew 2:4). When Herod heard the frightening words (to him) "King of the Jews," he knew where to turn to find further information. He called those who had charge of the Scriptures to find his answer. Though Herod had a sinister purpose in his quest for information, at least he did have the good sense to go to the correct source. How helpful it will be to all men to turn to the Scriptures for answers to life's most challenging and important questions. We must treasure the Bible and appreciate the answers it gives us for problems we face. We should let it be our guide because it is able to save (2 Tim 3:15; Jn 20:30-31).
6. ... Where is he that is born King of the Jews? (Matthew 2:2).
 - 1) The Appointed King (Micah 5:2).
 - 2) The Anointed King (Heb 1:8-9).
 - 3) The Assaulted King (Jn 19:1-3).
 - 4) The Ascended King (Acts 5:30-32).
 - 5) The Acclaimed King (Rev 19:11-16; Ph 2:9-11).
7. THOSE WISE MEN... Take a moment to look at the wisdom of these men...
 - 1) In their interest shown toward Christ.
 - 2) In their willingness to search.
 - 3) In that they weren't too proud to seek guidance.
 - 4) In that they would listen to God's Word.

5) In staying with the task till completion.

[From, J. Winfred Clark, *Expositions of the Expositor*, Volume 2, pp. 117-120]

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

P O I U Y T R E H I N Q U I R E D W D Q
 A Z X S W E D C E V F R T G B Y H N I U
 J S M K I O L U R T R O U B L E D J L M
 Y H C N T G B R O R F V C D E W S X I Q
 T A Z R X C V B D N M L K J H G F D G S
 R A G Z I X S W C D E V F R J E W S E R
 E F O V B B G T E A S T T G B N H Y N U
 A J V M I M E J U Y H N N W N H Y T T G
 S B E R S F V S E D C K W S O X Q A L Z
 U Z R X R C M J U N H Y I B G R R F Y V
 R M N N A B V C X Z L W J N H G S F D S
 E P O I E Y T R M E W Q O L G K J H H G
 S G R U L E D E S A M N B R V C X Z I L
 K M J H G F H D S A M N B V S C X Z L P
 P O Y I U E Y T R E W Q L K J H H G F D
 S A M R L N B P R O P H E T V C I X Z L
 K J H H R G F D S A P O I U Y H N P T G
 B R T F V H E D C W S X C D E R F V Q A
 Z E L K J H M N B U Y T R E W Q H G F D
 B A C E R T Y H R E J O I C E D N M V B

[The words listed below are from Matthew's description of the wise men's visit. See if you can find them all above.]

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|---------------|----------------|
| 01. Bethlehem | 02. Herod |
| 03. east | 04. king |
| 05. Jews | 06. worship |
| 07. troubled | 08. scribes |
| 09. prophet | 10. Governor |
| 11. rule | 12. Israel |
| 13. inquired | 14. diligently |
| 15. worship | 16. rejoiced |
| 17. treasures | 18. myrrh |