

Luke 2:21-35

Introduction:

God enables Jesus's parents to submit to God's revelation—2:21 (in Bethlehem)

- 1) To God's covenants with Abraham and Israel regarding circumcision: ²¹ *And when eight days were fulfilled for Him to be circumcised*, (cf. Genesis 17:11-12; Leviticus 12:3; Luke 1:59)
 - a) This clearly identifies Jesus specifically with Israel, not all peoples.
- 2) To God's revelation through Gabriel: *His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel* (cf. 1:31) *before He was conceived in the womb*.
 - a) God's certain knowledge of the future—cf. Ishmael (Genesis 16:11), Isaac (Genesis 17:19), Josiah (1st King 13:2), Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28), John (Luke 1:13)

God gives Jesus's parents further revelation through Simeon—2:22-35 (in Jerusalem)

- 1) They are being submissive to God's previous revelation—2:22-24
 - a) They do more than the Law required—²² *And when the days of their purification* (33 days later than 2:21; cf. Leviticus 12:1-8) *were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem ... [for 2 purposes]*
 - i) Emphasis on dedication of the firstborn—to *present Him to the Lord* ²³ *(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb will be called set apart to the Lord")*, (cf. Exodus 13:11-16)
 - (1) This redemption was to be 5 silver shekels: about \$50 today.
 - ii) Emphasis on the need for forgiveness—²⁴ *and to give a sacrifice according to what was stated in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons* (one for the burnt offering and one for the sin offering)."
 - (1) Apparently too poor to afford a lamb (cf. Leviticus 5:11; 12:8)
 - b) Mary accepted that God considered her unclean for this nearly month and a half. She didn't rebel against it and say, "This isn't fair." She apparently recognized that God accepted no blood but the blood from those animals He commanded as acceptable to Him.
- 2) They meet a godly common man named Simeon—2:25-35
 - a) Simeon is described—2:25-28
 - i) His home and name—*a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon*,
 - (1) We learn nothing of his age or his occupation.
 - ii) His spiritual life (he is a spiritually sensitive God-fearer)
 - (1) Conscientious—*and this man was righteous and devout*,
 - (a) (while) *anticipating the Consolation* [παράκλησις] *of Israel*,
 - (i) His view of God's promise of the future impacted his lifestyle.
 - (ii) His view of God's faithfulness to His Word impacted his lifestyle.
 - (b) Consolation/comfort—cf. Isaiah 40:1-2; 66:1-11
 - (2) Special ministry of the Spirit—*and the Holy Spirit was upon* [ἐπί] *him*.
 - (a) Cf. 1:35; 3:22; 4:18; Acts 1:8; 2:17-18; 10:44-45; 11:15; 19:6

- (3) ²⁶ *And it had been revealed to him by [ὑπό] the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah.*
- iii) His solemn privilege—²⁷ *And he came in [ἐν] the Spirit into the temple courts [ἱερόν]. And when the parents carried in the child [παιδίον] Jesus, to do for Him what was customary according to the law (cf. 2:22-24), ²⁸ he took Him in his arms, and blessed God, and said,*
- (1) “In the Spirit” refers to God the Father’s working in someone’s life through the Spirit (cf. 4:1, 14). Simeon is not parked in the temple looking for Messiah, but rather the Spirit moves him to come to the temple at just the right time.
- (2) This has to take place either in the court of Gentiles or the court of women because Mary is present.
- (3) It was customary in this day to bring your young child to a rabbi that he might bless the child and pray for him. This is similar to what some churches do for baby dedications.
- b) Simeon speaks to God the Father concerning God the Son by the enablement of God the Spirit—2:29-32
- i) Simeon addresses God directly in the 2nd person (You, Your, etc.), unlike Mary (1:46-55) and Zechariah (1:68-79) in the 3rd person (He, Him, etc.)
- ii) God is faithful to His Word—²⁹ “**Now**, You are letting Your bonds slave [δοῦλος] depart in peace, Sovereign Lord [δεσπότης], according to Your word;
- (1) Why? Because salvation in Jesus has come—³⁰ *for my eyes have seen Your salvation,* ³¹ *that (salvation) You have prepared in the presence of all the peoples,* ³² *a light for [εἰς] ...*
- (a) Universally to the Gentiles—*revelation [ἀποκάλυψις] to the Gentiles,*
- (i) God has unveiled Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.
- (b) Specifically to Israel—*and the glory [δόξα] of Your people Israel.”*
- (i) Cf. Isaiah 42:6; 49:6
- (2) He does not praise the Child but God the Father who will do these things through the Child he is holding in his arms. (Garland)
- iii) This faithfulness to His Word has been a primary theme in chapters 1-2.
- 3) Joseph and Mary show unified amazement at God’s revelation—2:33 ³³ *And Joseph and His mother were marveling at the things that were being said concerning Him.*
- 4) Simeon speaks to Mary—2:34-35 ³⁴ *Then Simeon blessed them (both), and said to Mary His mother,*
- a) The Father’s role—*“Behold, this One (Jesus) is appointed ...*
- b) The Father’s purpose
- i) What divisive ministry will Jesus accomplish?
- (1) God’s complete work of judgment and salvation—*for [εἰς] the fall (judgment) and rising (restoration) of many in Israel,*
- (a) The wicked will stumble and fall over Christ—1st Peter 2:8
- (b) The righteous will be raised because of Christ—Ephesians 2:6
- (2) Future opposition—*and for [εἰς] a sign that is opposed*

- (a) ³⁵ (*and a (large) sword will pierce through your own soul also*),
- (b) Jesus is God's hope for people, but not everyone will respond positively to Him.
- ii) Why? *so that [ὅπως] the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.*
 - (1) Jesus is the catalyst that exposes what is inside all of us. His ministry shows where hearts really are before God.
- c) "The messianic Son will be a light to the world, but his shining will bring division as he shines forth. Many will be raised to the Light, but tragically others will fall into judgment, having missed the promise." (Bock, 250)

Take-home truth: It is humble obedience rooted in trusting God's revelation that pleases Him.