

Christmas is a Time for Senior Adults

Luke 2:21-38

Intro:

They say Christmas is a time for children. However, in today's passage, Christmas is a time for senior adults.

[Now Read Text]

- 8th Day: Ceremony of Circumcision and Naming

Vs. 21 “When the eight days were completed for His circumcision, He was named Jesus—the name given by the angel before He was conceived.”

In modern Judaism, as Baby is Brought into the Room...

Guests greet the baby with the words, Baruch HaBa...

“Blessed is he who comes”

Idea: Perhaps the Messiah has been born and the guests are greeting Him Baruch HaBa ...as in, “Hosanna, blessed is He comes in the name of the Lord”

Vs. 22 “Now when the days of *her purification* according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem...”

2 hours, 3 minute walk from Bethlehem

Vs. 22-23 “Now when the days of *her purification* according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem *to present Him to the Lord* (as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD”), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, ‘A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’”

- Purification after Childbirth: 31 Days after birth
- Redemption of Firstborn Son: 5 Shekels –harkened back to the Passover when God spared the firstborn
- These two duties – Purification after childbirth and the redemption of the firstborn – are what brought them to the Temple

Vs. 28 “...when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law”

- And here in the Temple they will meet two senior adults

They encounter the first of the two, Simeon.

Appointment 1: Simeon

What do we know about Simeon?

Vs. 25 A resident of Jerusalem

Vs. 25 Just and devout

Vs. 25 He was waiting for the consolation of Israel (the Messiah). He was living in expectancy.

Vs. 25 The Holy Spirit was upon him

Vs. 26 God had revealed to him he would not die until he had seen the Messiah

On this day...

Vs. 27 He was led by the Holy Spirit to enter the temple complex

Vs. 28-29 Simeon “Took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have *seen Your salvation*”

- God’s salvation is wrapped up in a Person, Made visible and tangible

Vs. 31 Which *You have prepared* before the face of all peoples

- Salvation is the work of God; he prepared it

Vs. 32 “A light to bring revelation *to the Gentiles*, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

- Simeon foresees the gospel going to *all peoples*

Vs. 33 “And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him.”

- Joseph and Mary are amazed he recognizes Jesus
- Other parents brought in other babies to be dedicated every day. There was nothing special-looking about them

Vs. 34 “Then Simeon blessed them,

- He spoke words of blessing on the entire family
- We know the power of words when we are cursed, but, in modern times, have forgotten the power of words to bless.

Vs. 34 He “said to Mary His mother,

- Bruce Barton: Although she could not have known it and Simeon had only a hint of it, Mary would be the only person on earth who would witness both his birth and his death.

Bruce Barton et al., Life Application New Testament Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2001), 250.

Vs. 34 ‘Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against”

- Jesus will be a divisive figure
- His cross would be a stumbling block to the Jews
- Carol: “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight”

Vs. 35 “(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also)”

- Anticipates the cross

Vs. 35 “that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

- Anticipating the judgment
- Jesus would say later that the Father had placed all judgment into his hands

Appointment 2: Anna

Vs. 36 “Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess”

- Probably not that she was a woman preacher, but that she was known to be in close contact with the Lord and people went to her.
- She knew things and could reveal things
- She could give them godly counsel.

Vs. 36 “The daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher”

- A small tribe from the Northern Kingdom of Israel, one of very few families which had retained their identity
- Phanuel = Face of God. She spent her life seeking God’s face (Husband not named)
- God always has a people.

Vs. 36 “She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years”

- This probably refers to her age, as 84

- But it could be she had been widowed for 84 years. If she had gotten married at age 14, and her husband lived another seven years, then 21 plus 84 comes to 105 – that would be “of great age.” Maybe something like that.

Vs. 37 “Who did not depart from the temple”

- The temple complex had large courtyards and colonnades.
- This was where God’s most devout people hung out, *the church within the church*, the meeting place, as they *networked* together.

Vs. 37 “But served God with fastings and prayers night and day.”

- She lived in constant communion with the Lord.
- Probably, if you needed something prayed for, she was the lady you looked up and she would stop and pray with you right then and there.

Vs. 38 “And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord...”

- Her constant communion with the Lord enabled her to have instant recognition of the Lord.

Vs. 38 “...and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.”

- Not everyone was legalistic like the Pharisees...
- Or liberal like the Sadducees...
- Or hypocritical like the Jewish leadership...
- There was a network of the unknown,
- Of those without positions, but with the insight
- Of those without the training, but with a heart for God
- Of those without the prestige and the pedigree, but who regularly met in the courtyards of the Temple complex and talked about the things of God....
- And... who looked forward to the Messiah’s coming
- And the redemption in Jerusalem.
- Anna found those in this group and told them, “He’s here”
- It has begun.

Some Thoughts Toward Application:

1. God saves His best secrets for those who stay the closest to Him.
2. If you want to know those secrets, you will want to be part of the church within the church
3. God's people cling to His promises and live in light of the future.
4. Most Importantly: It's not about the faithful, but about the One in whom they have faith. It's *about Him*. He's the One we've been waiting for...

See: Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple, Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ*. (London: James Clarke & Co., 1959), 344–345.

From: smalltownbaptist.net