

2:10-11

The Announcement of the Birth:

Luke presents the announcement similar to that of a child of the Emperor in Rome:
“Today, in the City of Rome, a child has been born to the divine Caesar!”

By doing this, Luke challenged the Empire to recognise one who was greater than Caesar!
Countless numbers of Christians would give their lives to proclaim this truth.

2:10

God’s message is Good News! **“I bring you news of a great joy...”**

This **great** joy is the fact that the Messiah has come. The Saviour of ALL the world is here.

Since this is a significant World Event, Luke gives it in its political, social and spiritual context.

“Today, in the town of David (fulfillment of prophecy) a Saviour has been born TO YOU: he is CHRIST (Messiah) the LORD (Kyrios)”

(i.e) your Messiah is both human and divine!! Jesus’ identity is fully revealed here.

Question: Where would you go looking for the most important person on earth?

- In a palace?

Matthew relates that foreign kings thought this would be the case and they were wrong.

In Isaiah 55:8-9 God says ***“my ways are NOT your ways. My thoughts (ways) are as different from yours as the Heavens are from the earth”***

2:12

The Angel gave the descriptive sign **“wrapped” in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger**”.
Who would look for Jesus in a no-place place?!!

2:15

“Go to Bethlehem”. Forevermore, the poor, the lowly, the spiritually needy would ‘go to Bethlehem’ to the House of Bread to be saved...

Notice:

a) **In His Birth:** - wrapped in swaddling clothes
- laid in a manger
- no room for Him in the Inn

b) **In His Death:** - wrapped in linen cloths
- laid in a rock-tomb where no other had lain

Cf. Ps113:7: ***“He raises the poor from the dust to put them sitting with princes”***

Luke 1:52: ***“He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly”***

- 300 years later God will have pulled down the mighty Roman Empire
and raised up the lowly Church

2:16

“So, they hurried away...” It would TAKE a divine intervention to get those Shepherds to abandon their sheep to investigate anything – because it could cost them their jobs – even their lives!

2:16

The shepherds **found** A FAMILY! Jesus is hidden in the tabernacle of the family... still!

2:17

“When they saw the child...” they evangelized Mary and Joseph!!

2:18-19

Mary listened... treasured their words in her heart.

God Himself, Yahweh, confirmed the mystery for Mary and Joseph

2:20

“The Shepherds went away glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard...”

The Gospel ENDS in 24:53 with the Apostles – the new shepherds of the New Flock of God glorifying God...

Glorifying God is a favourite theme in Luke's Gospel

Luke 1:64; 2:28; 5:25-26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15, 18; 18:45; 19:37; 23:47; 24:53

2:21

Circumcision of Jesus cf. Gal 4:4

- this was His official entry into the Chosen People, as Baptism is the entry into Mystical Body of Christ.
- it was also the naming ceremony
Jesus's name was chosen by His Father: 1:32
just as John the Baptist's was also: 1:13. Both were revealed ahead of time.
- Mary and Joseph obeyed God and the Covenant simply and without fuss.

The Presentation in the Temple

- The Ark brings the Presence of God to Jerusalem
- The Son is presented to His Father in the Temple.
- Under the Mosaic Law the first-born belonged to God and must be 'redeemed' back from God with sacrifice. Why?
- Because the first-born of Egypt died in the 10th plague (Ex 13:15). The first-born of Israel were saved by the blood of the Paschal Lamb: Ex 12

Ex 13:1-2 "Consecrate all the first-born to Me, the first issue of every womb among the sons of Israel". Whether man or beast, this is mine".

2:24 Mary and Joseph make the offering of the poor...

- In His Infancy Jesus was exchanged for a pair of turtledoves and 2 pigeons.
- In His Martyrdom he was sold for 30 silver pieces.

(NB) Jesus' silent appearance in the Temple in His Mother's arms began the fulfillment of **Malachi 3: 1**
"The Lord you are seeking will suddenly enter **his** temple; and the Angel of the Covenant (the Lord) whom you are longing for, yes, he is coming says Yahweh Sabaoth, who will be **able** to resist the day of his coming?
Who will remain standing when he appears?
For he is **like** the refiner's fire and the fuller's alkali.
He will take his seat **AS** refiner and purifier;
he will purify the Sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver
and **then** they will make the offering and the Lord (Adonai) as it **should** be made..."

- a) Jesus' **first** appearance in the Temple: Luke 2:22-40.
He is a silent infant with the Temple priests doing things to **him**... ie. naming him, circumcising him...
- b) Jesus' **second** appearance was his CLEANSING of the Temple.
Jn 2:13-16; Mt 21:12-17; Mk 11:15-19; Luke 19:45-48
- c) Jesus' **third** appearance was in His Passion when judgement came to the Temple... whose final fulfillment was 70-135 AD when the Temple was destroyed and the population killed or deported from the Promised Land.

Purification of the Mother after Birth

Lev 12: this ritual signified the end of a period of uncleanness associated with childbirth.

(NB) It was **NOT Moral** uncleanness but part of restoring **Ritual Purity** and be able to participate fully in community and religious life.

Childbirth involved **Blood**: cause of temporary uncleanness

- this was **NOT** a judgement on the mother's worthiness but a practical and symbolic way to maintain **ORDER** to facilitate participation in religious life.

Duration: **For a Son:** the mother is impure for 40 days [7 days for uncleanness + 33 for purification]
For a daughter: 80 days [14 " + 66 "]

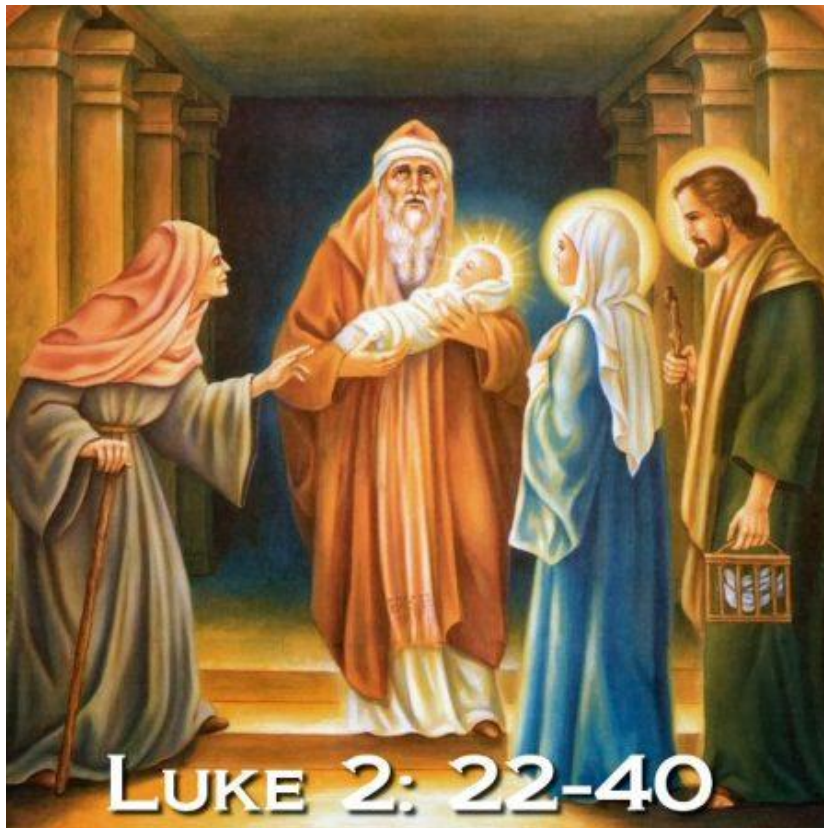
Sacrifices/Offerings:

- typically a lamb → cf. Ex 12 because the first-born belonged to God.
- the poor could substitute the lamb with a turtle-dove and 2 pigeons

(NB)

God did not require a lamb from Mary because she would offer Him THE LAMB for sacrifice on Calvary later.

THE MESSIAH RECOGNISED AND ACKNOWLEDGED



He was recognized by those living a true Spiritual Life.

Simeon: Was this person a priest or a layman?

Luke – who is writing after the judgement of Jerusalem appears not to be interested in whether he was or not! Yet the infant HAD to be put into the arms of a priest, since only the priest could circumcise and name him...

- it was fitting for the Fathers' only-begotten Son would be presented to the High Priest...
- yet Luke merely says that Simeon
 - (i) was "an upright and devout man
 - (ii) that he looked forward to Israel's comforting: Is 40:1-11
 - this is Essene language about the coming of Messiah!
 - (iii) that the Holy Spirit rested on him
 - (iv) God had revealed to him that he would not die until he, himself, had seen the Christ of the Lord...

A Pointer to Simeon as a Layman

Lev 12:6 "she shall bring to the priest at the door of the tent"

Luke uses the word HIERON which means the entire temple grounds –

NAOS would be the sanctuary accessible only to priests...

Simeon would have met the Holy Family where the laity gathered in the Temple.

This information reveals an exceptional person.

The description points to him as **an Essene** for they were the group anxiously waiting for Messiah's return...

- they lived spiritual lives and taught the people...

2:27 **"Prompted by the Spirit":** Simeon's life is led by the Holy Spirit

- this is picked up hugely in St Paul's Letters later... Example: Romans ch. 8

However, historically, there **was** a famous holy HP called Simeon the righteous, or Simeon the just.

He was high priest during the Second Temple period – that 400 years before the Coming of the Christ.

This Simeon is referred to in the Mishnah – where he is described as a member of the Great Assembly – later known as the Sanhedrin.

The Talmud, Josephus and the Book of Sirach all have accounts of him. He helped to restore the temple walls, and he was known for his charity to the people... but it seems that he died about 200 years before Christ!! There is just the similarity in name and character...

2:29-32 **The Nunc Dimittis:**

Elizabeth had been deeply touched by Jesus in his Mother's womb... and she prophesied over Mary. Simeon is also deeply affected by the presence of the God-Man in his own arms!

He turns to Yahweh (God, the Father) whom he knows and loves, accepting that God's promise to him has been fulfilled, so he does not need to wait until this Child grows up... he **knows** that God will fulfil His promises to Israel also...

"My eyes have seen His Salvation = Saviour = Yeshua = Jesus!"

Zechariah had said in Lk 1:69 that God had raised up a **power of salvation in the house of David**

Jesus is recognised by those in communion with God...

As an Essene, Simeon was aware that the time had come for *the inclusion of the Gentiles* into God's People – hence he continues **"the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see..."**

2:32 Jesus, the Saviour will be a LIGHT for the pagans and the Glory of Israel

- Israel had the light of God's Word from the call of Abraham
- Wisdom 18:4 "the imperishable light of The Law "had been given to them.
- With Jesus, the Light of God's Presence, God's Word and God's Law would be accepted by all nations.

Where is Israel's Glory?

When she wakes up to realise that when God became Man – He became an ISRAELITE!

- Jesus is everything the true Israelite should be.
- Before Jesus, God gave them His Holy Word.
- With Jesus, **THAT** Word became Flesh...
Jesus is ISRAEL, the Chosen One, the favoured One...

Simeon's Prophecy: 2:33-35

The Magnificat showed Mary's joy in the Incarnation...

Simeon introduced Mary's sorrow as her Son became the Redeemer – the sacrificial Lamb of God...

- Miriam, the exalted one would experience bitterness at its deepest...

2:34 As a priest Simeon blessed them...

Notice that Elizabeth, Zechariah and Simeon were all touched by Prophecy at the presence of Jesus.

Simeon presents the SWORD of SORROW to Mary

(1) Her son "is destined for THE FALL of many in Israel"

- as we go through the Gospel we will see the fall of the priestly classes and the whole Temple system...
- and THE RISING of many... the rising of the poor... and the despised Gentiles...

(2) Jesus will be "A SIGN that is REJECTED"

- he will be rejected by the ruling, priestly classes, who will sacrifice the Lamb of God.

(3) His Ministry will uncover deceits and darkness – even in high places – hypocrisy in so-called "religious" people. Cf. Heb 12:3 "consider him who endured such opposition from sinful man..."

Therefore Mary will be the Queen of Martyrs: Jn 19:25-27

Hannah: (Anna for us). Her name means 'Grace'. She was from of the tribe of Asher: 84 years old

- She is like Simeon in her dedicated prayer-life and her commitment to praying for the Messiah's coming.
- She sounds like an Essene also, in her Spiritual Life and her expectation of the Messiah.

2:38

Instant Recognition of the child – just like Simeon

- She proclaimed what she found – just like the shepherds
- Maria Valtorta gives us an insight here:
It seems that Anna was one of Mary's teachers and guides in the Temple...
She knew Mary's commitment to celibacy and recognised prophecy fulfilled...
that a virgin would give birth: Is 7:14
- However, Maria Valtorta tells us that others present were not insightful or kind.

2:39-40

Hidden Life of Jesus: Two sentences cover **MOST** of Jesus's life!

- He was 3 years on return from Egypt
- He was 30 years at the beginning of His Ministry
- He was 33 years when he died – according to Tradition.

So, he spent 27 years in preparation for His great work.

- He lived in silence, prayer and obedience to God and to two human beings... so infinitely below His divine stature.
- These years explain the success of His Ministry later.