

—{1}— **Luke 2:21-38..... Christ Recognized**

A. Introduction

1. children's Christmas presentation this morning; also much appreciated special music; unsure of time, so more informal sermon today; lets read

B. Luke 2:21-24 – Joseph & Mary

<sup>21</sup> And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. <sup>22</sup> 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. still in Bethlehem area; flight to Egypt later (Luke does not record it)
  - a. maybe now in better quarters than the stable; but maybe not
  - b. convenient to stay in Jerusalem region
2. in those first weeks after Jesus' birth, Jesus' parents had things to do
  - a. eighth-day circumcision; also then giving Him His special Name
  - b. for a further 33 days Mary would be ceremonial unclean
  - c. period ended with Mary's offering of a sacrifice; a lamb, but, as she was poor two pigeons or two turtledoves
  - d. pay five shekels to redeem their first-born
    - (A) all the first-born males of woman or beast were holy to the Lord
    - (B) this related to deliverance of Israel's first-born males in Egypt

(C) belonged in a special way to God; animals were sacrificed; boys were devoted to God – Levites substituted for nation as a whole

e. these things were necessary for Jesus, the Christ-child

(A) that to be recognized as Christ (Messiah) He fully keep the law

(B) that He be an observant Jew with admission to the synagogue

(C) that He fulfil all righteousness

3. picture this couple, then, as they go into the temple

a. almost six weeks after Jesus' birth

b. no new wardrobe – only what they had carried from Nazareth

c. obviously poor; only a couple of birds for sacrifice

C. Luke 2:25-35, They Meet Simeon – “Hearkening” ie., “hearing and obeying”

1. Verses 25-26 – Who was he?

<sup>25</sup> And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

a. many fruitless speculations about him; probably all wrong

b. but what he was like is clear: he was just; he was devout

c. he had the Spirit's abiding presence; was under divine inspiration

d. he had received a special promise

e. 'consolation of Israel' – Lord's Christ – Messiah – Anointed

2. Verses 27-28 – God kept His promise

<sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

- a. at just the right time, the Holy Spirit leads him to Jesus
- b. despite appearances: a poor couple, a baby; Simeon recognizes Christ
- c. Jesus in Simeon's arms – angkalas – the crook of the arm

### 3. Verses 29-32 – Simeon's Blessing (thankfulness and praise) to God

<sup>29</sup> 'Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, According to Your word;  
<sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen Your salvation,  
<sup>31</sup> Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
<sup>32</sup> «A light of revelation to the Gentiles,»  
And the glory of Your people Israel.'

- a. God's promise fulfilled, Simeon's bondage to life is released
- b. he has recognized the Christ; he has seen salvation
- c. a salvation for all people – Jesus Christ is the Light as
  - (A) revelation to the Gentiles hitherto lost in darkness
  - (B) glory to Israel, the descendants of the Patriarchs

### 4. Verses 33-35 – Simeon's Blesses Them and Addresses Mary

<sup>33</sup> And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. <sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, 'Behold, this *Child* is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed – <sup>35</sup> and a sword will pierce even your own soul – to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.'

- a. this Child is not the conquering warrior expected by most
- b. but He is a stone of stumbling, a rock of offence (from Isaiah 8:14)
- c. many will fall; but also, many will be raised (resurrected)
- d. but the way is by the cross – a sword piercing Mary's soul

D. Luke 2:36-38 – Anna – “Grace”

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with *her* husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. <sup>38</sup> At that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

1. a prophetess; likewise under divine inspiration
2. we know a little more about her than Simeon; but not much
  - a. her father, Phanuel; her tribe, Asher (northern tribe)
  - b. her age – but even that was not clear – 84? 105?
  - c. but it is certain that she was devout in her worship, fasting and prayer – living possibly in the rooms surrounding the temple precinct
3. she recognized this child Jesus as the Christ; her reaction like Simeon’s
  - a. a response of thanksgiving – the essence of praise
  - b. a message centred on Jesus Christ and His being the Redeemer

E. Conclusion

1. both of these people had long, full and devout lives
  - a. but fulfilment really came when they recognized Christ
  - b. that was their ultimate joy
2. you and I can busy ourselves in many ways
  - a. in the secular life; even in religious life
  - b. but fulfilment comes only when we recognize Christ
  - c. seeing Him, not with our physical eyes, but the eyes of faith
  - d. and trusting in Him for salvation

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Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard version, used by permission. Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some of my favourite commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

BM – Biblical Museum, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870

EBC – The Expositor’s Bible Commentary, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan

EGT – The Expositor’s Greek Testament, Philippians by H. A. A. Kennedy, Hodder & Stoughton, 1903

as well as commentaries by Revs. Alfred Barnes, John Gill, Dr. Leon Morris.