

Luke 2:21~24

(Mt.5) ¹⁷*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.*

There was a great **misconception** about the law among the Jewish people; they mistakenly saw the law as the means by which they were righteous before God. But nothing could be farther from the truth, according to Paul, the law was given to declare us guilty before God...

(Ro. 3) ¹⁹*Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. ²⁰Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

The law is Holy, and we are sinners, thus it only stands to reason that the law would only condemn us and reveal our sinfulness. But where it reveals our sinfulness, *it would declare His righteousness!* Jesus was Holy God in the flesh, thus He was able to fulfill the law in its entirety. Paul says in Romans 5...

¹⁹*For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

Because of ADAM...we all became sinners... And Paul goes on here to declare that God gave the law to manifest our sin. But because of the obedience of Christ, we have been made righteous!

The circumcision of Christ recorded here, was the first act of obedience in the Law, towards bringing about our salvation. God instituted the requirement of circumcision when He made the covenant with Abraham. Abraham and all that followed could not have known the significance of what it symbolized. Circumcision was the “*token*” (**another word for sign**) of the covenant. We all know that a “sign” is not the reality, but is pointing to the reality. A sign points to something, and being on this side of the cross, we know that it was pointing to the work the Savior would do on the cross in dealing with our sin nature. Think about it...the “*first*” thing Christ would do in this world *pointed to the cross*...and the last thing he would do in this world, was lay his life down on the cross!

The late Donald Grey Barnhouse said...“*His circumcision was His first suffering for us.*”

Here we read of the very first act, leading to our redemption... As commanded in the Law of Moses, every male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day, as a token of the covenant between Abraham and God. Even though He had no knowledge of the event, and that it was Mary who fulfilled this obligation, this was His first act of obedience.

As it was with Jewish custom, upon being circumcised, he is officially given his name...Jesus... Then Luke fast-forwards thirty-three days later, when Mary and Joseph come back to the temple, to complete their obligations in the law concerning mothers who have given birth.

²²*And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;*

The law of the Lord required that every woman who had given birth, go through a purification period, a time when she was considered “*unclean*,” and “**according to the Law**”...not permitted to “*touch any hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.*” The time period varied depending on the gender of the child. If it was a female, she is considered unclean for an initial two week period, followed by a 66-day purification time period. If her child was a male, her purification time was 33 days following the circumcision of the child. Either way, whether male or female, the mother at

the end of the prescribed time period, was to come to the Temple to complete the purification process by making an offering before the Lord.

The Levitical law required that she was to bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or dove for a sin offering. The law made provision for mothers who were poor, in that if they could not afford a lamb, they could substitute it with another pigeon or dove. Which in verse 24, Luke tells us is what Mary brought, clearly indicating that they were a poor couple.

The emphasis here is not so much on that of Mary's purification, as it is on them bringing Him to present Him to the Lord in accordance with the Law of the Lord. In saying "*presenting Him to the Lord*", Luke makes it clear that this is in keeping with the commandment of the Lord given through Moses.

²³(*As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;*)

Luke is referring to the commandment given to Moses immediately following God's delivering the children of Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians, setting them free from bondage. The Lord instructs Moses to instruct the people that from that day on, every firstborn, *man or beast*, was to be sanctified (*or set apart*) to the Lord.

Exodus 13...¹*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ²Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: **it is mine.***

The purpose behind this was to serve as a lasting memorial of how God delivered his people out of bondage from the hands of the Egyptians.

Review the story of the Passover... Of all the stories in scripture, there is none that capture the fullness of the essence, of what God would do to bring about the salvation of mankind, than this one. On this side of the Cross, looking back, the Passover has to be one of the clearest and most definitive "*pictures of Christ*" in the O.T. I have a book, which its title really says it all... "*The Shadow of Christ, in the Law of Moses.*" Not only is that accurately describe the events of the law, it is a biblical principle.

(He. 10) ¹*For **the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things,** can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.*

*Paul speaks in the same manner... (Colossians 2) ¹⁶Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: ¹⁷**Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.***

In other words, the events of the O.T. were reflections of Christ, and the work He would do! The reality of those events would find fulfillment in His work!

The Passover, at least in my mind, is one of the greatest and clearest images of Christ we see in the O.T... Most of you are very familiar with this story, but for those who are not, it is a story of how God delivered His people from the bondage of the Egyptians. Through Moses, God sought to deliver His people from the bondage of the Egyptians. He did so by bringing about various plagues on the land, all of which were directed at getting the Pharaoh to let His people go, but with each one, the Pharaoh refused. After nine plagues, the Lord told Moses of yet one final plague that He would bring, the "*death of the firstborn.*" God informed Moses that at midnight, He would go out in the midst of the land of Egypt, and every firstborn of the land would die among the Egyptians, both beast and man. To spare the children of Israel, the Lord commanded them to take a lamb of the first year, and to kill in the midst of the assembly, and put its blood upon the door post of each house, then that night they were to roast the lamb on a fire and eat the lamb. No doubt, this must have seemed very strange to Israel, they must have wondered how this would spare them. But the Lord explained, that as He moved among the land that evening, taking the lives

of the firstborn, He would “*See the blood of the Lamb,*” and Passover that house! The salvation of Israel came about by an act of FAITH... By faith, killing the lamb and putting the blood upon the post of the door, *saved their life*. The Lord moved through the land that evening, and true to His word, not one of the house of Israel was taken. But of the house of Egypt, the scriptures declare that there was not one house in which there was not one dead. Including the firstborn of Pharaoh, which resulting in breaking his will, that evening he called for Moses and Aaron and told them to get out... Israel had been “*set free*” in the truest sense of the word, *by the blood of the lamb!*

Apparently the same day that Israel was delivered, that the Lord gave the commandment pertaining to the presenting of the “*Firstborn*” of women and beast, described here in Exodus 13.

Exodus 12:51, 13:1~2... ⁵¹*And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the LORD did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by their armies.* ¹*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, **Sanctify unto me all the firstborn**, whatsoever opens the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and of beast: it is mine.*

The commandment is given to Israel that all the firstborn (both of man and beast) from this day forward, belonged to the Lord. He further explains this in verse 11...

¹¹*And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, ¹²That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that opens the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S. ¹³And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.*

Moses explains the purpose... ¹⁴*And it shall be when thy son asks thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: ¹⁵And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that opens the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. ¹⁶And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.*

It was to be an everlasting testimony and a constant reminder of how the Lord delivered his people out of Egypt, the “*house of bondage.*” The commandment to sacrifice the “*firstborn of the beast,*” was to serve as a reminder and to “**symbolize**” all the firstborn that were slain, both man and beast.

¹⁵*And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: **therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that opens the matrix, being males...***

Then in contrast to that, they were to offer a lamb as a burnt offering for their firstborn, reenacting in a sense, the events that led to the salvation of their firstborn. ...but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. Beginning with that generation, throughout every generation thereafter, they would be constantly preaching the gospel...*redemption by the blood of the lamb!*

Here in Luke, in keeping with that same commandment, Mary and Joseph bring the small infant, to present him to the Lord, and yet once again preach the gospel... We are told that Mary and Joseph did not offer a lamb, insinuating they were poor. But rather they offered the provisional pair of doves or pigeons. But even so, they presented the firstborn to the Lord, then turned around and redeemed him with blood...

In the midst of telling us that they were bring him to fulfill this commandment, Luke shifts the entire focus to “*two individuals,*” that were present at the temple when they brought Jesus in. A man by the name of Simeon, the other a woman named Anna. That is for next week...