

Sermon Notes Lk.2:22-40. Jesus God's salvation 27/12/20

**Background.** 1. **Two separate ceremonies:** presentation of the child and the purification of the mother. 2. Presentation of the child- first born male 'holy to the Lord' (see Ex. 13:2, 12, 15; - child is 'bought back' Num. 18;15). 3. After a period of 7 days (in which the mother was seen as ritually unclean after childbirth) and a further 33 days keeping away from holy things/religious services (double for a daughter) she would offer a lamb or a dove (if poor) to expiate her uncleanness (Lev. 12:1-1).

**Text.**

1. (vv. 22-24). The temple Ritual
2. (vv. 25-38) main focus- Simeon and Anna witnessing to the Christ-child. Simeon – three specific 'acts of the Spirit'
  - i. He is assured he will live to 'see' the Messiah.
  - ii. He recognises in Jesus the fulfilment of the promise.
  - iii. He utters a prayer (vv. 29-32) = which is prophetic, and a specific prophecy to Mary (vv. 34-35)

(1) Simeon announces the presence of God's salvation in this baby Jesus.

- a. This salvation is for 'all nations' – a light revealing the truth to Gentiles, and the fulfilment of God's glory to the Israelites (see Jn. 1:14) – seen in Jesus the Messiah.
- b. The joy of the prayer is in stark contrast to the prophecy.
- c. The Messiah, the instrument of Israel's' glory, will cause division and be rejected by 'many in Israel'. Jesus will be attacked, because the type of redemption he represents will not be accepted by all. His rejection will bring pain for Mary, but through the opposition people will be brought to decision. People's true selves will therefore be revealed in the way they respond to Jesus.
- d. Mary's pain, described as a large sword piercing her heart, seems to be referring to Jesus' future death which she will witness.
- e. At this point neither Joseph nor Mary fully realise the significance of their Messiah-child's destiny.

(2) Anna a prophet –no prophet for hundreds of years. The Talmud (Jewish writings) only recognises 7 prophetesses. She looks forward to the deliverance that would be won by the Messiah.

(vv. 39) Joseph and Mary return to Galilee (see Mt. 2:13ff)

(vv. 40) Jesus grew and became strong like a normal child. The reference to him being 'filled with wisdom' becomes clearer in the following episode when Jesus visits the temple with his parents (2:41-42). What enables him to grow as God intended is that the 'grace of God was on him'. This emphasises his human nature alongside his divine nature (see 2:7 and 11).

**Reflection/Response.** How do we make ourselves open to the leading of the Holy Spirit? What results from having the grace of God on us? BB