

The Law Leads To Jesus

Luke 2:22-40 ²² 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 ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD "), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." ²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ 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. ²⁷ So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: ²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel." ³³ And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against ³⁵ "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." ³⁶ Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; ³⁷ and this woman *was* a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served *God* with fastings and prayers night and day. ³⁸ And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. ³⁹ So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their *own* city, Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

Where a couple weeks ago our upcoming events was full of stuff, now there are only a couple things left. One of those that is still to come is the snow tubing. It's not just for kids, your never too old to get on a snow tube and slide down a hill. One of the really great things about this sledding hill is that they have a carpet lift. You put your snow tube on the lift, and it carries the tube right to the top. The purpose of the carpet lift of course isn't just to get you to the top of the mountain. When you get up there you don't just stand there. The purpose of the lift is to take you to the point where you can sled down.

Paul tells us in **Galatians 3:24** ²⁴ **Therefore the law was our tutor *to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.***

Just like the carpet slide at the ski park one of the purposes of the law is not to get us to the top of the mountain, but to bring us to Christ, so that we can be justified through him.

Why were Mary and Joseph in the temple? What was their reason for being there?

There are two reasons for the trip to Jerusalem at this time. The first is that every firstborn male child had to be redeemed. We read about that in our Old Testament reading. Years ago the angel of death passed over the firstborn of Israel. God commanded that because he had spared the firstborn of Israel, that they all belonged to him. Even the first born of the animals born in Israel's flocks belonged to God. Therefore all firstborns had to be redeemed, that is bought back from God.

This however was the lesser the two reason that Mary and Joseph went to Jerusalem. The redemption price was a certain amount of money, and you did not have to go to Jerusalem to do this. You could simply find a priest and pay him the money and show him the child.

The second reason to go to Jerusalem was the purification of Mary. Because blood was involved in childbirth the mother was unclean for a certain number of days, after which she had to make a burnt offering and a sin offering to be clean again. This offering that Luke mentions in verse 22, was that burnt offering and sin offering, which was made for Mary, not for Jesus, a sacrifice for her uncleanness. Thus there were two birds which Mary and Joseph brought one for the burnt offering and one for the sin offering. Wealthier Israelites would have brought one bull for the burnt offering and one bird for the sin offering. But in Leviticus God said that the poor could bring a bird in place of the bull, so they brought two birds.

If you turn back to Leviticus 12:4-8, you will see that this was all about "HER" that is the mother. She needed to make atonement so that she would be clean. But if you turn back to Luke it is not in any way about Mary is it? But rather it is all about Jesus. According to the Law the purpose was the purification of Mary. But Luke understood that all the law was meant to bring people to Jesus. Even this purification was meant to bring people to Jesus. Thus it is all about Jesus.

The law brought Simeon to Jesus as well.

Simeon is called "just and devout."

That first word which is translated "just" is the Greek word "dikaios" which is often translated "righteous." It refers to a life lived according to the law, faithfully doing all those rules and regulations, sacrifices and sabbaths which God demanded.

He was also devout. This word also emphasizes his careful observance. It literally means one who carefully or cautiously holds to the law. That is one who was very careful to do all that God had instructed.

These words were the chief goal of Old Testament Israelites, that they should be devout, carefully following every word of God, and righteous, found to have done these things well.

These adjectives the Pharisees and Priests and Rabbi's would have claimed as their chief attributes. Yet to none of them did the Holy Spirit reveal Jesus but only to Simeon and Anna. The reason why is seen in the third attribute given to Simeon.

He was just and devout but was also “waiting for the consolation of Israel.”

The righteousness and devoutness of the Rabbis’ and Pharisees they thought of as an end in itself. They were like people who ride the carpet lift to the top but then just stay there. But Simeon correctly understood that these laws are not an end in themselves but are rituals of waiting. These are rituals that brought the believe up the path where they could find Christ. Simeon did not seek his own righteousness in the law like the Pharisees, but he sought Christ in the law. The rituals of the Old Testament were a means of waiting. Simeon was just and devout for the purpose of waiting.

These laws brought people to Christ so that they could be justified by faith. Simeon was in the temple because of the Law but he rejoiced because there he found Christ.

The third commandment reminds us to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. This commandment isn’t speaking only about the day of worship but all worship, sacrifices, sacraments and in any other thing that we do to worship Jesus. We ought to remember these things not just so that we do them but so that we remember what their purpose is. Their purpose is to lead us to Jesus. The purpose of Christmas is to lead us to Jesus. The purpose of each and every Sunday is to lead us to Jesus.

Is that what we find when we come to Church? When we celebrate Christmas and easter? Jesus is here waiting for us in the temple. In every festival, waiting with joyful blessings.

Why did Mary and Joseph go to the temple they went because the law told them to. But the thing Mary treasured was those things she heard about Jesus.

Sometimes we go to Church because we have to. Because our parents tell us to. Because we know that we should. OK but the things we treasure are the things that we hear about Jesus

The purpose of the law is to lead us to Jesus. Every time we hear that we should do this or should do that. Every time we feel guilty. Every time we know that we have done wrong. These things are reminder to us that Jesus fulfilled the law in our place.

The Pharisees did the same rituals as Simeon did but without purpose. Simeon and Anna did them waiting for the Christ. The law brings us to Jesus, but the joy is knowing Jesus, and the forgiveness that he gives us.

Amen