

Take Another Look at Christmas, Pt 6: Do You See What I See?

I. Jesus Came to Earth as a Baby and Grew Up as a Jewish Child.

A week later, when the time came for the baby to be circumcised, He was named Jesus, the name which the angel had given Him before He had been conceived. The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every first-born male is to be dedicated to the Lord." They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord. Luke 2:21-24 (TEV)

II. Jewish Families Performed Multiple Ceremonies after a Baby's Birth:

A. Circumcision. (Leviticus 12:3; Luke 1:59, 60).

1. Circumcision symbolized the Jews' being set apart by God from all other people.

"I will confirm My covenant with you and your descendants after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will always be your God and the God of your descendants after you. And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God." Genesis 17:7-8 (NLT)

2. Male circumcision was the sign of the covenant God established with Abraham.

"This is the covenant that you and your descendants must keep: Each male among you must be circumcised. From generation to generation, every male child must be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth." Genesis 17:10, 12 (NLT)

3. This covenant and its sign were confirmed in the Law for all Israel. (Leviticus 12:3)

B. Dedication. (Exodus 13:2,11-16; Numbers 18:15,16).

"Dedicate to Me every firstborn among the Israelites. The first offspring to be born, of both humans and animals, belongs to Me." Exodus 13:2 (NLT)

C. Purification of the mother.

But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Galatians 4:4-5 (NIV)

III. A Divine Encounter with One of God's Chosen People: Simeon

At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord's Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there.
Luke 2:25-28 (NLT)

A. Forth-telling—declaring what is.

He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying, "Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and He is the glory of your people Israel!" Jesus' parents were amazed at what was being said about Him.
Luke 2:28-33 (NLT)

1. I'm ready to die because You have fulfilled Your promise to me:
2. I have seen Your love: Your salvation (Jeshua) prepared for all people;
3. I have seen Your light: revealing God to the nations (Gentiles) ; the glory of Israel

B. 4 corporate prophecies (foretelling):

Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, the baby's mother, "This child is destined to cause many in Israel to fall, but He will be a joy to many others. He has been sent as a sign from God, but many will oppose Him. As a result, the deepest thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your very soul." Luke 2:34-35 (NLT)

1. He will cause many to fall.
2. He will bring joy to others.
3. He has been sent as a sign from God whom many will oppose.
4. He will cause men's deepest thoughts to be revealed.

C. One personal prophecy:

1. A sword will pierce your soul.

IV. Another Encounter with One of God's Chosen People: Anna

Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher, and she was very old. Her husband died when they had been married only seven years. Then she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer.
Luke 2:36-37 (NLT)

She came along just as Simeon was talking with Mary and Joseph, and she began praising God. She talked about the child to everyone who had been waiting expectantly for God to rescue Jerusalem. Luke 2:38 (NLT)

V. Jesus Was Raised in a Godly Jewish Family.

When Jesus' parents had fulfilled all the requirements of the law of the Lord, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. There the child grew up healthy and strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on Him. Luke 2:39-40 (NLT)

A. The elements of godly families.

1. Mary and Joseph provided a devout home.
2. God will speak into your family through other godly people.
3. Others will praise God because of you.

B. The practices of godly families.

Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Romans 12:11-13 (NIV)

1. Work hard.
2. Serve God enthusiastically
3. Rejoice in our hope.
4. Be patient in trouble.
5. Pray faithfully.
6. Provide for God's needy people.
7. Open your home to others.

C. The challenge for 2012: Restoration

The LORD says, "I will give you back what you lost to the swarming locusts, the hopping locusts, the stripping locusts, and the cutting locusts. It was I who sent this great destroying army against you. Once again you will have all the food you want, and you will praise the LORD your God, who does these miracles for you. Joel 2:25-26 (NLT)