



**CAPITOL[®]
COMMISSION**

Gospel Hope & Spiritual Strength for Government Leaders



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“And the child [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him” Luke 2:40

Luke 2:22-52 - Accounts from Mary’s Heart Treasure

We left our narrative with the naming of Jesus when he was 8 days old. Now we see two encounters with elderly holy people when Jesus’ parents come to the Temple to observe the firstborn requirements of Judaism. Read vs 22-24. According to the laws of purification for a woman whose firstborn is male required 33 days (Leviticus 12:4) and a sin offering. Notice Mary and Joseph show up with the two turtledove/two pigeon requirement level of offering, which Luke quotes from Leviticus 12:8. So we know that Jesus is at least 33 days old and the family is too poor to afford a lamb sacrifice. And we know these are devout Jews raising Jesus.

Their first encounter is with Simeon (read vss 25-35). He is distinctively described as “righteous and devout” and the Holy Spirit was upon him. This is the second person described this way in Luke: the first was John the Baptist. This man has inside information from God that he would see the Lord’s Christ before passing away. A divine appointment occurs leading him to the temple by the Spirit to rendezvous with Jesus’ family. Imagine you are a new parent and an elderly gentleman takes up your 1-month old to bless God! His “song” is captured by Luke (again likely from an interview with Mary many years later) and Simeon keys in on the fact Jesus is God’s salvation. References to this baby being the “light for revelation to the Gentiles” is reminiscent of the prophecy quoted by Matthew in his gospel (Matthew 4:16, which quotes Isaiah 9:2).

Verse 33 says Jesus’ parents marvel at this but Simeon is not done. He blesses them and then turns to Mary with another prophecy. This likely was received as very cryptic by the young couple but in hindsight, given all that she would witness later, this moment must have been etched in her memory. First of all, saying He will be responsible for the rising and falling of many in their nation sounds like a real mixed bag. Certainly she would have preferred to hear how Jesus would rise in political power and be loved by all. Secondly, Simeon’s words are tintured with a foreboding tone: Jesus will be opposed and Mary’s own soul would be pierced. The

Capitol Commission state ministers are pastor-missionaries who in session teach weekly verse-by-verse Bible studies for all those working in state capitols. The Bible studies are hand distributed to each legislative office and available by email and shared across the Capitol Commission community. This ministry is an extension of the church seeking to proclaim the gospel message and help believers mature through Biblical expositional instruction. Prayer is foundational to this ministry, consistent with proper submission to governmental authority (Romans 13:1-7) and obedient to the command to pray for our appointed leaders (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

Our desire is to witness God’s work in transforming hearts.

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reference to piercing is certainly relevant to the crucifixion. As Jesus' body was abused and pierced it would be soul crushing for His mom, who witnessed it all. Lastly, Simeon states the "thoughts from many hearts would be revealed." In their culture the heart was the center of who you were so the revelation of one's heart is to show who they really are, not just who they portray themselves to be or even how they see themselves.

Next an elderly lady named Anna appears and she is described as a prophetess and long-time widow, who stayed at the temple in prayer and fasting (read vs 36-38). The text indicates she knew immediately who the baby was by divine illumination and began to witness about the redemption of Jerusalem—the 1st evangelist.

Our last section this week shows us how Jesus grew from baby to boyhood under the care of Mary and Joseph in the upcountry of Nazareth (read vs 39-52). Notice Luke does not include the visit of the Magi, the murder of the children in Bethlehem by King Herod, or the young family's escape into Egypt. Luke is writing well after Matthew's account was established and he writes from a different point of view. Matthew's intent is to focus on the kingship of the Messiah and how He fulfilled so many Old Testament prophecies, whereas Luke's goal is to fill some of the narrative gaps to increase our faith. For our part, Matthew 2:23 is helpful to explain why Jesus' family returned to Nazareth, not considered a very good place to live.

Although poor, the family does keep faith by traveling to Jerusalem every year to observe Passover, the feast commemorating the Hebrew departure out of Egypt (Exodus 12 provides the historical details). Luke records one particular incident when Jesus was 12—meaning the year before becoming a man in their culture—and He is separated from them. For four days Joseph and Mary would have been frantic, thinking they had failed the one major job God assigned them; they misplaced His Son! They find Him at the temple, sitting among the teachers having deep theological discussions. The educated men of the time are amazed by His abilities as His parents catch up. His response is not a belligerent one, but a matter-of-fact statement that when we need to search for Jesus, He is always about the Father's business. He knows who He is, the Son of God. Note that He then returns to Nazareth and a life of skilled labor, submissive to them because it honored God's law to do so. The fact Luke notes Mary treasured the accounts in her heart twice is also impactful: vs 19 and 51b.

Applications

1. If you are a parent, how does the example of Joseph and Mary encourage you? Although they did lose track of Jesus, overall these are righteous people who provided a devout home for Jesus to develop into a man, full of wisdom and God's favor. We parents play a huge role in how our kids perceive God.
2. Does the fact Jesus' family was poor change how you see the poor in our culture? How about our theology—is poverty a sin? It could not be since Jesus was sinless. Meditate on Proverbs 28:6 and 30:8.

My desire is to highlight Jesus Christ to you. Toward that end, I am available to discuss any biblical topic or question you may have. I especially want to ensure all who read the studies understand how Jesus Christ is distinctively important to the entire world and to each of us individually. Lastly, all Bible studies are available at Capitol Commission's Alabama page: <https://capitolcom.org/state/alabama>.

"Lunch With Luke": Plan to attend our in-house Bible Study during session: Tuesdays at 11:00 am in Room 123 of the State House. Bring a beverage, a light lunch will be provided.

A key facet empowering our ministry is prayer, especially prayer for our elected leaders. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 commands Christians to obediently pray for all in authority. A tool for America's churches to help consistently pray for you, our elected leaders, is available to all via:

www.Pray1Tim2.org - You can select Alabama and sign up for daily email reminders, courtesy of Capitol Commission.

Share this link with your home church!