

Week #:	247	Series:	The Gospels	Title:	Circumcision & Dedication
Scriptures:	Luke 2:21-40; Leviticus 12:1-8; Exodus 13:11-16; Exodus 6:6-8; Leviticus 12:6-8; Isaiah 8:13-14				
Songs:					

## Jesus' Circumcision & Dedication at the Temple:

Luke 2:21 (CJB)

<sup>21</sup> On the eighth day, when it was time for his *b'rit-milah* [circumcision], he was given the name Yeshua, which is what the angel had called him before his conception.

This is the second circumcision recorded in Luke. The first was the circumcision of John the Baptist (Luke 1:59). Why is it so significant that Jesus was circumcised? It is because this rite identified Him with the Abrahamic Covenant — the promise that God had made to Abraham concerning an eternal kingdom.

Circumcision was the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (Genesis 17:9-14). It marked Jesus as a member of that covenant community. It was a personal covenant made between God and the family of Abraham. Outsiders were excluded. Because this was a personal covenant, the sign of the covenant was also of a personal nature – it was carried upon the body of each Jewish man. It was not the sort of sign you displayed publicly to others. It was very private.

Just as Abraham and Sarah had received new names at the time circumcision was first instituted, so the Jews always waited until the day of circumcision to name their male children.

So, just as with John, the name of this male child, Yeshua, was made public at His circumcision ceremony, eight days after His birth.

It is of significant medical importance that male circumcision be carried out on the eighth day after birth since the level of vitamin K is highest on this day and **vitamin K plays a pivotal role in regulation and control of the important clotting factors in the coagulation pathway that helps in stopping bleeding.** Another interestingly to note as well is that this higher clotting factor occurs in males not females. It's almost as if the Creator knew what the male body would need and provided it naturally for them from the beginning.

Luke 2:22-24 (CJB)

<sup>22</sup> When the time came for their purification according to the *Torah* of Moshe, they took him up to Yerushalayim [Jerusalem] to present him to *ADONAI* <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the *Torah* of *ADONAI*, "**Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to *ADONAI***") <sup>24</sup> and also to offer a sacrifice of **a pair of doves or two young pigeons**, as required by the *Torah* of *ADONAI*.

Every firstborn male was to be consecrated to Adonai. This *Ordinance of Purification* was given to Moses by Adonai, and had been followed since.

Leviticus 12:1-8 (CJB)

<sup>1</sup> *ADONAI* said to Moshe, <sup>2</sup> "Tell the people of Isra'el: 'If a woman conceives and gives birth to a boy, she will be unclean for seven days with the same uncleanness as in *niddah*, when she is having her menstrual period. <sup>3</sup> On the eighth day, the baby's foreskin is to be circumcised. <sup>4</sup> She is to wait an additional thirty-three days to be purified from her blood; she is not to touch any holy thing or come into the sanctuary until the time of her purification is over. <sup>5</sup> But if she gives birth to a girl, she will be unclean for two weeks, as in her *niddah*; and she is to wait another sixty-six days to be purified from her blood.

<sup>6</sup> "When the days of her purification are over, whether for a son or for a daughter, she is to bring a lamb in its first year for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or dove for a sin offering to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to the *cohen*. <sup>7</sup> He will offer it before *ADONAI* and make atonement

for her; thus she will be purified from her discharge of blood. Such is the law for a woman who gives birth, whether to a boy or to a girl. <sup>8</sup> If she can't afford a lamb, she is to take two doves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; the *cohen* will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

According to the Mosaic Law, the mother of a child was considered to be unclean. Why is this? The scripture never tells us, but perhaps it was to serve as a reminder that she had just given birth to a sinful, fallen creature.

Thus, in the case of the birth of a son, the mother was banned from performing any religious duties for a period of 41 days (8 days prior to the circumcision plus 33 days following the circumcision).

After the 41 days had elapsed, then it was necessary for the mother to go to the temple and offer up a sin offering and a burnt offering for an atonement. Why were these offerings so important? They were to teach that sin must be dealt with. Any uncleanness demanded separation from God. The animal was a temporary substitute for our sin. This sacrificial system was really an illustration of what Jesus would do for us on the cross. He became our sacrifice for sin. He substituted Himself on the cross on our behalf, dying instead of us.

Exodus 13:11-16 (CJB)

The Law of the Firstborn

<sup>11</sup> When *ADONAI* brings you into the land of the Kena'ani [Canaanites], as he swore to you and your ancestors, and gives it to you, <sup>12</sup> you are to set apart for *ADONAI* everything that is first from the womb. Every firstborn male animal will belong to *ADONAI*. <sup>13</sup> Every firstborn from a donkey, you are to redeem with a lamb; but if you choose not to redeem it, you must break its neck. But from people, you are to redeem every firstborn son. **(Maftir)** <sup>14</sup> When, at some future time, your son asks you, 'What is this?' then say to him, 'With a strong hand *ADONAI* brought us out of Egypt, out of the abode of slavery. <sup>15</sup> When Pharaoh was unwilling to let us go, *ADONAI* killed all the firstborn males in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of humans and the firstborn of animals. **This is why I sacrifice to *ADONAI* any male that is first from the womb of an animal, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.'** <sup>16</sup> This will serve as a sign on your hand and at the front of a headband around your forehead that with a strong hand *ADONAI* brought us out of Egypt."

The male firstborn of every man or animal belonged to the Lord, therefore their lives must be purchased from the Lord. Numbers 18 tells that the cost of this redemption of the male child is to be five *shekels* of silver [two ounces], and it is to be made at the Tabernacle (or later at the Temple).

What powerful significance Adonai places on the act of redeeming. Firstborn animals are given as a sacrifice, and if they are not a kosher animal then a kosher animal is sacrificed in their place (a lamb in the place of the donkey, for instance). If they chose not to redeem the animal, then it was not allowed to remain alive. The firstborn son is not sacrificed, but is instead always redeemed.

I am reminded of the portion of the Passover Seder in which the middle section of the matzah that is divided in the three-part bag is removed, broken and hidden, just as Jesus was broken in death and was hidden in the tomb. Then, when it is found, that matzah must be redeemed by the father at great cost.

Imagine how much of a sacrifice it would be for Mary and Joseph to get together two ounces of silver in order to offer their child at the Temple on His eighth day.

One way in which we can find God's definition of a word is to look at where it is first mentioned in scripture. God always defines His meaning for us. If we look in the Strong's Concordance, the word **REDEEM** is first mentioned in Exodus 6:6-8

<sup>6</sup> “Therefore, say to the people of Isra’el: ‘I am *ADONAI*. I will free you from the forced labor of the Egyptians, rescue you from their oppression, and **redeem** you with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. <sup>7</sup> I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am *ADONAI* your God, who freed you from the forced labor of the Egyptians. <sup>8</sup> I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Avraham [Abraham], Yitz’chak [Isaac] and Ya’akov [Jacob] — I will give it to you as your inheritance. I am *ADONAI*.’”

God’s definition here is in multiple parts:

- **He will be the source of your redemption** – with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. This refers not only to God in rescuing them from Egypt, but also Jesus rescued us with an outstretched arm on the cross. Jesus brought redemption, but it comes with judgment for our sins as well. We cannot come into covenant relationship with God unless it is through Jesus, and we cannot enter that covenant without dealing with our sins.
- **He will take us as His people and He will be our God.** This transcends just the Hebrew people. We as Christians can claim this as well.
- **He will bring us into a land of inheritance** which was sworn to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Our promised inheritance is not the physical land of Israel, but is instead the land of Heaven and eventually the renewed heavens and earth.

Redemption is the cornerstone of our salvation. Without God’s redemption, we could not be with God in eternity. He knew this, and He chose to be the redeemer for us.

Notice that the scripture tells us in Luke 2:24:

<sup>24</sup> and also to offer a sacrifice of **a pair of doves or two young pigeons**, as required by the *Torah* of *ADONAI*.

This is important to note – the particular sacrifice made by Mary and Joseph. The ideal sacrifice was a lamb, but the Law made exceptions for those unable to afford that (Leviticus 12:8). According to this verse, **Jesus' family offers the two birds allowed for those too poor to offer a lamb.**

Leviticus 12:6-8

<sup>6</sup> “When the days of her purification are over, whether for a son or for a daughter, she is to bring a lamb in its first year for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or dove for a sin offering to the entrance of the tent of meeting, to the *cohen* [priest]. <sup>7</sup> He will offer it before *ADONAI* and make atonement for her; thus she will be purified from her discharge of blood. Such is the law for a woman who gives birth, whether to a boy or to a girl. <sup>8</sup> If she can’t afford a lamb, she is to take two doves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; the *cohen* [priest] will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.”

This is just one indicator to the fact that the Magi had not yet visited. It is thought that they arrived a year to a year and a half after Jesus’ birth, as indicated by Herod ordering the death of all males under two years of age. Mary and Joseph did not yet have the gifts they brought, and they offered the sacrifice reserved for the poor. Knowing the integrity these two people possessed, as indicated by the angel who visited them and the fact that God chose them to be Jesus’ parents, we can correctly ascertain that they did not have a lot to give. However, they knew the significance of following the law, so they offered their sacrifice in accordance with it.

Luke 2:25 (CJB)

<sup>25</sup> There was in Yerushalayim [Jerusalem] a man named Shim’on [Simeon]. This man was a *tzaddik*, he was devout, he waited eagerly for God to comfort Isra’el, and the *Ruach HaKodesh* [Holy Spirit] was upon him.

**Tzaddik** צדיק is a form of the Hebrew verb צדק [TzDK], which carries the meaning of *doing what is correct and just*. In referring to a person in this form, it says of them that they are a **a righteous and saintly person by Jewish religious standards**. So Shim'on was a righteous man. The importance of pointing this out is that it gives credit to what is going to be revealed in this exchange.

Luke 2:26-35 (CJB)

<sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the *Ruach HaKodesh* [Holy Spirit] that he would not die before he had seen the Messiah of *ADONAI*. <sup>27</sup> Prompted by the Spirit, he went into the Temple courts; and when the parents brought in the child Yeshua to do for him what the *Torah* required, <sup>28</sup> Shim'on [Simeon] took him in his arms, made a *b'rakhah* [meaning: expression of praise or thanks directed to God] to God, and said,

<sup>29</sup> "Now, *ADONAI*, according to your word, your servant is at peace as you let him go;

<sup>30</sup> for I have seen with my own eyes your *yeshu'ah* [salvation], <sup>31</sup> which you prepared in the presence of all peoples — <sup>32</sup> a light that will bring revelation to the *Goyim* [Gentiles] and glory to your people Isra'el."

<sup>33</sup> Yeshua's father and mother were marvelling at the things Shim'on [Simeon] was saying about him. <sup>34</sup> Shim'on [Simeon] blessed them and said to the child's mother, Miryam,

"This child will cause many in Isra'el to fall and to rise,  
he will become a sign whom people will speak against;

<sup>35</sup> moreover, a sword will pierce your own heart too.

All this will happen in order to reveal many people's inmost thoughts."

Adonai promised him that he would see the promised Messiah before he died. So when Holy Spirit prompted him to go to the Temple, he did, and he saw the family coming. He took the baby in his arms and, without even knowing the name they had chosen, replied that he had see with his own eyes God's salvation – which in Hebrew is Yeshua, Jesus' name. He says that this babe will bring revelation to the Gentiles and glory to the people of Israel.

He says that Jesus will cause many is Israel to fall and rise – in other words, he will be a stumbling block to many. This is in reference to what Isaiah said:

Isaiah 8:13-14

<sup>13</sup> but *ADONAI-Tzva'ot* — consecrate him! Let him be the object of your fear and awe!

<sup>14</sup> He is there to be a sanctuary. But for both the houses of Isra'el he will be a stone to stumble over,

a rock obstructing their way; a trap and a snare for the inhabitants of Yerushalayim [Jerusalem].

Certainly Simeon knew this writing from Isaiah.

Accordingly the Jews did stumble at his birth, parentage, and education; at the meanness of his person, and the obscurity of his kingdom; at the company he kept, and the audience that attended him; at his doctrine and miracles, and at his sufferings and death.

Simeon also strikes a more somber note, prophesying to Mary that with her joy would come anguish. The imagery is again taken from Isaiah. There would still be those who would oppose the Messiah, an opposition that would pierce her soul. We are there too, for all of us brood over his violent death. There is much weight in Simeon's words. Jesus' work lies ahead, far greater in scope than any of the participants mentioned so far in this account. Luke continues to draw us in to read and ponder the rest of the story.

Luke 2:36-38 (CJB)

<sup>36</sup> There was also a prophet named Hannah Bat-P'nu'el, of the tribe of Asher. She was a very old woman — she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage <sup>37</sup> and had remained a widow ever since; now she was eighty-four. She never left the Temple grounds but worshipped there night and day, fasting and praying. <sup>38</sup> She came by at that moment and began thanking God and speaking about the child to everyone who was waiting for Yerushalayim [Jerusalem] to be liberated.

This 84-year-old widow stayed there at the Temple waiting for the Messiah to be revealed. Though it doesn't say as it did with Simeon that she was promised by God that she would see this Messiah, it is clearly the highlight of her life that God allowed her to do so. She lived a long time! Especially in that day and age. She saw the exchange with Simeon and these parents and baby, and she began to tell everyone about the liberation that would come – though it would not come physically as most expected.

Luke 2:39-40 (CJB)

<sup>39</sup> When Yosef and Miryam had finished doing everything required by the *Torah* of *ADONAI*, they returned to the Galil [Galilee], to their town Natzeret [Nazareth].

<sup>40</sup> The child grew and became strong and filled with wisdom — God's favor was upon him.

After everything they needed to accomplish in the southern portion of Israel had been done – the census, their attendance in Jerusalem for the festival, and the Temple sacrifice that was required to be made after the birth of their son – they returned home to Nazareth. We are not given much information during Jesus' childhood years, but it does state that He grew in strength and wisdom and that God's favor was upon Him.