

## 6. Waiting on God

November 1, 2015

We live in the "Instant" culture. Instead of oven cooking, we have a microwave for instant cooking. I am NOT a good cook, but I am decent in barbequing steaks and using the microwave. Here is a cooking tip for using a microwave in reheating leftovers. Before you put your food in the microwave, sprinkle some water over the food, because while the microwave heats your food, it will prevent your food from being dry. This cooking tip is for no extra charge.

We don't like to wait on anything and anyone, can I hear, "Amen"? Because the Lord knows our impatient mindset, one of His curriculums is making us wait on Him. Let's be honest, don't you hate that curriculum? We want God to take care of our prayer request immediately, actually, take care of it before it even comes out of our mouth. How about that for being impatient, huh?!?!?

This morning we are going to meet several people who waited on the Lord and they were glad. They met the Lord in person. At the same time, there were people who could care less about the Messiah, much like the majority of the people now.

### A. FULFILLING THE COVENANTS HE INSTITUTED

*Luke 2:21-24 And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. 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."*

Jesus was born a Jew and as a Jew, He was subject to the commandments He created during the OT time. But He redeems us from the Law's judgment, not by getting rid of the Law, but by fulfilling its demands.

*Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."*

As any new parents Joseph and Mary had to observe three ceremonies according to the Law of Moses. Let's look at them one at a time:

#### 1) Circumcision

Every Jewish boy was circumcised on the eighth day after his birth. So sacred was that ceremony that it could be carried out even on a Sabbath when the law forbade almost every other act which was not absolutely essential.

#### 2) The Redemption of the First-born

According to Exodus 13:2, every firstborn male, both of human beings and of cattle, was dedicated to God. The ceremony called the "Redemption of the Firstborn." It costs the parents five shekels to redeem their son from God. The sum had to be paid to the priests.

#### 3) The Purification after Childbirth

When a woman had borne a child, if it was a boy, she was unclean for 40 days, if it was a girl, for 80 days. Don't complain to me, ladies. I didn't write the OT laws. She could go about her household and her daily business, but she could not enter the Temple or share in any religious ceremony according to Leviticus 12.

At the end of that time she had to bring to the Temple a lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon for a sin offering. That was a somewhat expensive sacrifice, and so the law also allows another option that if she could not afford the lamb she might bring another pigeon. The offering of the two pigeons instead of the lamb and the pigeon was technically called "The Offering of the Poor."

From the offering they brought, we could tell Joseph and Mary were not rich like some Word of Faith movement teachers claimed to get money out of their followers.

But what Joseph and Mary didn't realize is that when they brought little Baby Jesus to the Temple for this Purification Ceremony even though they didn't have a lamb because of their poverty, they brought the Perfect Lamb of God.

One more important thing I must go over here:

If you have been attending our church for some time, you've noticed that we do not do "Baby Baptism," because it is not done in the Bible anywhere. With all due respect to those who had it done, Baby Baptism is not biblical. It is to satisfy the parents' religious mind only.

But we do a baby dedication to the Lord in our church according to this portion of the Scripture. When they do this, the parents are promising to the Lord and in the presence of all of you that they would raise their child in God's way that he or she may follow the Lord for the rest of their lives.

## **B. SIMEON WAITED ON GOD'S SALVATION**

*Luke 2:25-35 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."*

To the mass of people swarming through the temple that day, Jesus was just another baby nestled in the arms of a young mother. No one would have noticed Him – no one, except Simeon, because he was led by the Holy Spirit.

Like the prophets of the OT, Simeon was uniquely anointed by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came upon him to meet the Savior in the Temple. During this period when the Scriptures were still under formation, the Spirit sometimes revealed His will to godly people through dreams and visions.

How did Simeon recognize this infant as the promised Savior? We don't know. But the moment he saw the Baby Jesus' face peeking through the folds of the infant's

blanket, he knew. And, filled with the Spirit, he took Jesus in his grandfatherly arms and sang a beautiful song of blessing and gave a bone-chilling warning to the young mother.

This prophecy must have sent a shiver down Mary's spine, who, with motherly instinct, surely yearned to gather up her little One and shelter Him from whatever evils might come. One day she would stand below a bloodstained cross, watching in horror as life spills out of her precious Son, she would remember Simeon's words.

### **C. ANNA WAITED ON THE REDEMPTION**

*Luke 2:36-39 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.*

Anna had endured her own heart-piercing experience when she lost her husband after only seven years of marriage. But she had remained in the Lord for service and devotion. Over the years of working at the temple, she had seen many parents come through with their firstborn sons. But, like Simeon, she knew this One was special.

### **D. THE WISE MEN WAITED ON THE KING**

*Matthew 2:1-2 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."*

Misconceptions and legends are plentiful about these wise men. They were Magi, Oriental astrologers who studied the stars and sought to understand the times and meanings. They were Gentiles who had been especially called of God to come and pay homage to the newborn King. There were not just three, but probably a great company from Babylon areas.

These wise men probably had been alerted to the prophetic significance of their times by the prophecies of Daniel and other OT prophets. The bottom line is that they received the guidance from the Lord and obeyed it.

Some people use this v2 to justify their excuse for reading horoscopes. It is nothing more than just a dumb foolish excuse. Let me make it plain and simple: horoscope is from the devil, not from God. Stay far away from it. Is that clear enough for you?

These wise men's experience is a good lesson in finding the will of God:

- 1) **They followed the light God gave them.**
- 2) **They confirmed their steps by the Word of God.**
- 3) **They obeyed God without a question and He led them each step of the way.**

### **E. THE ONES WHO DID NOT WAIT ON GOD**

*Matthew 2:3-8 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be*

born. 5 So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet: 6 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.'" 7 Then Herod, when he had secretly called the wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. 8 And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

Whenever Herod got trouble in his heart, it usually meant that some people's heads were about to roll. His arrogance and insecurity were working overtime and grinding an ax.

Sadly, these religious experts have the right information – quoting from Micah 5:2, but they were personally not interested in meeting the Messiah for themselves, just like many religious people today, because they rely on their religion for their eternal salvation more than the Redeemer Jesus. On the contrary to the wise men who traveled a long distance to seek the King of the Jews, these chief priests and scribes would not travel even 5 miles from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. The wise men were both hearers and doers of the Word!

God bypassed proud Jerusalem and chose humble Bethlehem. King David had come from Bethlehem, and Christ was from David's lineage.

The wise men went out their ways to find the truth and show their homage to the King of the Jews. I often feel sorry for those who will not go out of their ways to seek God like these chief priests and scribes. When it rains, they don't go to church; when there are some sports games on TV, they don't go to church; when they have a little headache, they don't go to church. It seems that they would find just about any excuse not to go to church. Am I wanting them to be here so that we can boast about high attendance? No, a thousand times no! I want them to come to seek Jesus Christ for their lives, not for Calvary Chapel, certainly not for me.

Satan had no idea how God was going to bring salvation to mankind as all the prophets of the OT didn't know. Now that the devil heard that the Son of God came into the world in a helpless newborn baby form, he wanted to make sure that Jesus wouldn't be able to grow up to be the Savior of the world.

## **F. THE SAVIOR DESTINED TO DEATH FROM HIS BIRTH**

*Matthew 2:9-12 When they heard the king, they departed; and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. 12 Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.*

The idea that there were three wise men comes from the fact that there were three gifts. How do you know that they all chipped in and brought three gifts? Gold represents royalty and the heavenly kingdom, frankincense representing priesthood and the sweet fellowship with God, and myrrh representing His death for our sins.

More important than their gifts is the fact that they worshiped Jesus. It must have been a curious sight to see these impressive dignitaries bowing before a young child.

The events of this took place over at least a year from Jesus' birth. How do I know?  
Reason 1) Joseph and Mary are living a house, not in a stable at the inn.  
Reason 2) Jesus is referred to as a child, not an infant.  
Reason 3) Herod murdered all the male children two years and under.  
Reason 4) Joseph and Mary offered a pair of turtledoves, or pigeons as the sacrifice of the poor. If the wise men had just given them gold, frankincense, and myrrh, they'd have brought a lamb and a young pigeon.

These wise men's worship was also manifested in obedience. They were obedient to the heavenly dream and left without telling Herod anything about the Child Jesus.

Please note that they went home by "another way." Anyone who comes to Christ will go home another way and be a new creature.

*2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

## **G. APPLICATIONS**

**1) As we listen to God in His Word and obey Him, we'll discover His goodness and power as we wait.**

**2) Time spent "waiting on God" is never wasted.**

*Romans 5:3-4 And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; 4 and perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*