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Glory in the Temple

Luke 2.21-40

Series: The Glory of Christ

The Village Church

March 1, 2026

I. Text

A. **Luke 2:21–40** (ESV) —

1. 21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.
2. 22 And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord
3. 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”)
4. 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.”
5. 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
6. 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.
7. 27 And he came in 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,
8. 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,
9. 29 “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
10. 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation
11. 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
12. 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”
13. 33 And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.
14. 34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed
15. 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”
16. 36 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,
17. 37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.
18. 38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and

- to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
19. 39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.
 20. 40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

II. The Circumcised Christ

A. Story about Matt's circumcision

1. Doctor's advice – "I'd do it – but I'm Jewish"
2. Today, no medical reason to circumcise

B. The Covenant Context

1. What's the reason, then, why Jesus was circumcised?
 - a. It all has to do with the covenant, and Jesus' fulfillment of it
2. Covenant is an agreement or a contract between two parties
 - a. But the two parties are not always created equal
 - b. The Old Covenant is structured in the same way as the **ancient near-Eastern suzerain treaties**
 - c. Suzerain treaties are enacted when a conquering king – the suzerain – imposes stipulations on the vassals who have just been conquered
3. Suzerain treaties
 - a. Preamble – the suzerain identifies himself
 - (1) Exodus 20.2: I am the LORD your God...
 - b. Prologue – states the condition under which the covenant is enacted
 - (1) Exodus 20.2: ... who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery
 - c. Stipulations – the requirements imposed on the vassals
 - (1) 10 Commandments
 - d. Oaths – the suzerain and the vassal pledge to fulfill the covenant
 - e. Sanctions – the consequences for following or violating the covenant
 - (1) Blessings and curses – Deuteronomy
 - f. Ratification – a rite or ceremony symbolizing the transaction
 - (1) **Covenant = berith (Heb)** – cutting
 - (2) **Genesis 15:8–10** (ESV) — 8 But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?" 9 He said to him, "Bring me a heifer three years old, a female goat three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 And he brought him all these, cut them in half, and lay each half over against the other. But he did not cut the birds in half.
 - (3) **Genesis 15:17–20** (ESV) — 17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces. 18 On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the

great river, the river Euphrates, 19 the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, 20 the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim,

(4) **Genesis 17:9–14** (ESV) — 9 And God said to Abraham, “As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. 10 This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11 You shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. 12 He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised. Every male throughout your generations, whether born in your house or bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring, 13 both he who is born in your house and he who is bought with your money, shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. 14 Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.”

(5) **Exodus 24:6–8** (ESV) — 6 And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. 7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” 8 And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.”

g. Public readings – reminders of the terms of the covenant

C. **Covenant Humility**

1. Submission to the covenant
2. Willingness to take on covenant obligations
3. Willingness to take on covenant sanctions in place of others
4. Fulfillment of the Law
 - a. **Matthew 5:17** (ESV) — 17 “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”
 - b. **Galatians 3:13–14** (ESV) — 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— 14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

D. **Covenant Glory**

1. Redemptive role as Savior

- a. **Matthew 1:20–21** (ESV) — 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
 - b. **Isaiah 53:10–11** (ESV) — 10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied...
 - c. **Isaiah 53:12** (ESV) — 12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors...
- 2. Name of Jesus – given by God (through an angel), not earthly parents
 - a. God’s naming rights as Creator
 - 3. Birth of Jesus in Mary – overshadowed her by HS
 - 4. All aspects of the glory of Christ

III. **The Dedicated Christ**

- A. **Luke 2:22–24** (ESV) —
 - 1. 22 And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord
 - 2. 23 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”)
 - 3. 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.”
- B. **Leviticus 12:1–4** (ESV) —
 - 1. 1 The LORD spoke to Moses, saying,
 - 2. 2 “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean.
 - 3. 3 And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.
 - 4. 4 Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying. She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed.
- C. The dedication of the Christ-child was another fulfillment of the law of God
 - 1. Was to take place when the mother had completed the time of her uncleanness
 - a. Uncleanness which was due to her discharge of blood in the birth process
- D. **Dedication Humility**
 - 1. The dedication was another element of the humility of the Christ
 - a. Was willing to stay under the dictates of the Law

2. But in addition, the nature of the offering is another indication of the humility of the Christ
 - a. The offering that Mary and Joseph brought was the offering allowed for those who are poverty-stricken
 3. **Leviticus 12:8** (ESV) —
 - a. 8 “And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.”
- E. **Dedication Glory**
1. Now, what was Jesus dedicated *for*
 - a. His dedication was a setting apart for a glorious task
 2. **Luke 2:25–32** (ESV) —
 - a. 25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 27 And he came in 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,
 - d. 28 he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,
 - e. 29 “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word;
 - f. 30 for my eyes have seen your salvation
 - g. 31 that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
 - h. 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”
 3. Simeon is mentioned only here in the scriptures
 - a. But in this brief vignette, we see a man of remarkable character and virtue
 - b. He is said to be “righteous and devout” – one of the highest acclamations given in scripture to anyone!
 4. He lived during a period of silence as far as prophesy was concerned
 - a. 400 years had elapsed since the time of the closing of the OT and the book of Malachi to the birth of Jesus
 - b. Not a peep from God!
 5. Compare that to our own time period – back to the end of the 16th Century
 - a. The Protestant Reformation was in its infancy
 - b. The Pilgrims had not sailed for the New World
 - c. There had not been either our revolution or the French Revolution
 - d. Napoleon had not yet appeared on the scene, no George Washington
 - e. There had been no industrial revolution; no electric lights; no automobiles; no airplanes; no television

- f. No “World Wars”
- 6. That’s an incredible amount of time, and it certainly had an effect on the religious culture
 - a. Most people had grown cold to biblical religion
 - b. With the exception of a few, they had become secular in their thinking and acting – interested more in the decrees of Rome than in the Word of God
- 7. But Simeon was odd
 - a. He was a unicorn in his day
 - b. A godly man who, in spite of the social pressures of his day, was more interested in pleasing God than people
 - c. He was “righteous and devout”
 - d. And he was a man in waiting
 - e. “Waiting for the consolation of Israel”
- 8. One of the tasks of the Messiah was to bring comfort and consolation to the people of God, to Israel
 - a. And while most people had long since forgotten about this Messianic function, Simeon was still waiting
- 9. Simeon was also influenced by the Holy Spirit
 - a. The “Holy Spirit was upon him”
 - b. Which, I think it is safe to say, is tantamount to being filled with HS
 - c. We don’t hear much about the work of the Holy Spirit in the old dispensation, but He was certainly present and active
- 10. Interestingly, when we Christians think of One who brings consolation or comfort we think of the Holy Spirit
 - a. Remember, when Jesus promised the Holy Spirit, He promised that He would send “another comforter”
 - b. Which implies that the first comforter was already with them
 - c. The first comforter was Jesus
- 11. And Simeon was waiting for the first comforter – the Messiah, Jesus
- 12. Now Simeon was not just influenced by the HS; the HS spoke to Simeon
 - a. With great detail and content
 - b. The HS told him that he would not see death until he had seen the Lrd Christ
- 13. And that led Simeon to compose one of the songs of the NT: the **Nunc Dimittis**
 - a. Nunc Dimittis are the first words of the Latin text of this song
 - b. Nunc dimittis seruum tuum, Domine: Now you dismiss your servant, O Lord
- 14. But for Simeon, this was not a resignation or a macabre set of last words before passing from this earth
 - a. This was a glorious song of praise
 - b. It was a declaration of glory
 - c. For he had just seen the fulfillment of the promise of all he had been waiting for!

- d. It was a celebration of unspeakable joy for Simeon
 - e. And we should share in that glory as well!
 - f. And that's why Paul is going to lead us in it in a few moments!
15. Simeon saw and foretold the glorious vocation of the Christ
- a. He saw the salvation that Christ would bring – as indicated his name, Jesus, because he would save His people from their sins
 - b. The salvation for which Christ is set apart was for “a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to ... Israel”
 - c. All of that was about the glory of Christ
16. But there is humility mixed in as well
- a. He saw the hard times ahead
17. **Luke 2:34–35** (ESV) —
- a. 34 And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed
 - b. 35 (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”
18. One can only imagine what crossed Mary's mind three decades later when she stood gazing on her son impaled on the cross of calvary
- a. How the sword pierced her own soul
 - b. What a mixture of humility and glory!
19. **Luke 2:36–38** (ESV) —
- a. 36 And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin,
 - b. 37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day.
 - c. 38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.
20. Then there's Anna
- a. Like Simeon, advanced in years – well into her 80's
 - b. Like Simeon, a genuine worshiper – constant in prayer!
 - c. But when she saw Jesus, she thanked God for the salvation God had provided – and for which she had been praying for the better part of her entire life!
 - d. And started right away witnessing to others about this Jesus who is the Christ!
 - e. Even before the child had been weaned!

IV. **The Return**

- A. **Luke 2:39–40** (ESV) —
 - 1. 39 And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

2. 40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.
- B. Having done everything to fulfill the Law, they returned home to Galilee
1. Luke, of course, skips the issue of Herod's insane murder of the male children and the escape to Egypt
- C. **Matthew 2:13–23** (ESV) —
1. 13 Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.”
 2. 14 And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt
 3. 15 and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”
 4. 16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.
 5. 17 Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:
 6. 18 “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”
 7. 19 But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,
 8. 20 saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.”
 9. 21 And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.
 10. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee.
 11. 23 And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth, so that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, that he would be called a Nazarene.
- D. But Luke's compressed narrative is certainly accurate, even though it leaves out that episode of this young family's exile
- E. The child then grew
1. Went through the normal patterns of human development – but without sin
 - a. He grew up physically
 - b. Grew, certainly, intellectually
 - c. Became filled with wisdom
 2. And he enjoyed the favor of God
- F. **Hebrews 5:8** (ESV) —
1. 8 Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.
- G. Yes, Jesus even had to learn obedience!

1. Now, let's understand that he didn't have to learn obedience the way we have to!
 - a. We usually learn obedience by being disobedient, and suffering the consequences!
 2. But that's not the only way to learn obedience
 - a. One can learn obedience by being reinforced for complying with commands or stipulations
 - b. Psychologists call that "errorless learning"
 3. Well, of course, while we can and do learn occasionally through this errorless learning, our learning is certainly mixed with plenty of error!
 4. But not Jesus!
 - a. Jesus was the ultimate and quintessential example of errorless learning
 - b. For as the Bible indicates, He did not sin
 5. But at the same time, in His humanity, he still had to learn!
- H. In all of these events we see the glory of Christ emerging
1. Emerging in the midst of humility, growth, development
 2. But emerging nonetheless