**Luke 2: Adoration of the Shepherds; The Presentation;**

 **Finding the Child Jesus in the Temple**

**Luke 2:8-21; The Birth of Jesus; The Visit of the Shepherds**

* The shepherds are simple and humble people. It was these simple and humble people that God choose to reveal the good news of Christ’s birth.
* God prefers the humble while rejecting those who consider themselves wise.
* Initially the shepherds were struck with great fear when they saw the angel. He assures them that they should not be in fear for he is there to proclaim good news to them.
* ***“For today in the city of David a savior is born for you who is Messiah and Lord.”*** *(Luke 2:11)*Jesus is the savior for he comes to free us from sins. He is the Christ in that he is the Messiah.
* The shepherds went in haste to find Mary, Joseph and Jesus. Once they found them, they made known the saying which had been told to them concerning Jesus.
* And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Mary contemplates the wonderful things that are coming true with the birth of her son. The shepherds affirm what Mary was told by Gabriel. She ponders these things storing them in her heart.
* 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.
* Jesus means “Yahweh saves” or “Yahweh’s salvation”.

**Luke 2:22-35; The Presentation**

* Joseph and Mary take Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to fulfill the prescription of the Law of Moses.
* According to Leviticus 12:1-8 a woman who bore a child was unclean. The period of legal impurity ended in the case of the mother of a male child after forty days with a rite of purification.
* Exodus 13:2, 12-13; It is indicated that every first-born male belongs to God and must be set apart for the Lord. The first-born son is to be consecrated to God. He is to be dedicated to God’s service.

***Simeon’s Canticle – Two stanzas***

* 1st Stanza is an act of thanksgiving to God. Simeon is filled with profound joy for having seen the Messiah. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before seeing the Messiah.
* 2nd Stanza extols the divine blessings which the Messiah is to bring to Israel and to all men.
* The canticle highlights the fact that Christ brings redemption to all men without exception.

***“And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted and you yourself a sword will pierce.”*** *(Luke 2:34-35)*

* Jesus came to bring salvation to all men, yet he will be a sign of contradiction because some people will obstinately reject him. To those who do accept him in faith, Jesus will be their salvation.

**Luke 2:41-51; Finding the Child Jesus in the Temple**

***“Each year his parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom.”***

* Males aged twelve years and older were required to travel to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover.
* On pilgrimages to Jerusalem the Jews travelled in a caravan where there would be two groups – one of men and the other of woman. Children would travel with either group.
* Joseph and Mary eventually realize that Jesus is not traveling with them in the caravan but has stayed behind in Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary search for Jesus for three days. Jesus is found in the courtyard of the Temple sitting with the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

***“Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety. And he said to them, ‘why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”***

* Jesus did not understand why Joseph and Mary did not realize that when he stayed behind in Jerusalem that he would be in the temple. He did not understand why they had anxiety for they should have went to the temple first.
* Jesus shows his determination to fulfill the will of his eternal Father.
* Jesus teaches us that over and above any human authority, even that of our parents, there is the primary duty to do the will of God.

***“He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all of these things in her heart.”***

* Jesus was obedient to them. God the Son has come into the world to obey God the Father and to obey creatures.
* Mary and Joseph are creatures and yet God the Son was obedient to them. We who are creatures often have issues with obedience. Whether it is in being obedient to our parents or to an employer we often struggle or fail to be obedient. In his relationship with his parents Jesus has given us an example.
* *We must love God so as to love his will and desires and to respond to his calls. God’s calls come to us in the duties of our daily life.*
* Duties of state, profession, work, family and social life.
* We know from Scripture that Jesus’ mother Mary was very contemplative. When God spoke to Mary through the Archangel Gabriel, the shepherds or her son she did not necessarily know the full meaning of the message that was spoken but she pondered their meaning in her heart.

The Navarre Bible; The Gospel of St. Luke; Scepter Publishers; New York; 1986

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