

Eight Days Later **Luke 2:21-24, 39**

Did any of you see the “Christmas Star” this week? Beverly and I were on the way home from Cary, N.C., and got a great view of it from our car. It really was bright. At one point we thought we were seeing it again so we pulled off the road into a store’s parking lot so Beverly could get a good picture of it. It was so bright and clear. What a great shot. But then I thought I detected some movement. It was a plane.

But it wasn’t a star, of course, but the sun reflecting off two planets, Jupiter and Saturn as they were aligned for the first time in over 800 years. And before that it was 1,200 years. And again, it wasn’t a star. And it wasn’t the Star of Bethlehem. The Star of Bethlehem was an actual star created by God for that one-time event of the birth of His Son. And how long did it appear to the Magi? Two years. They watched the star for two years. How long did this latest event last? A matter of days, just through Christmas. The whole star phenomena was really interesting especially since this same thing happened around the time of Christ’s birth. But planets are just planets. They were created by God but they were not the star of Bethlehem that led the Magi to Jerusalem and then Nazareth. That really was a one-time event.

Lets take our Bibles and turn to the gospel of Luke, chapter 2, and we will read verses 21-24, 39 (repeat).

I would guess that this isn’t a passage that you would normally sit down and read as a family gathered around the Christmas tree. The thought of a tiny little baby boy getting circumcised seems a little inappropriate for a Christmas story with the kids. But there it is. Just eight days after His birth, Jesus was circumcised. I had never made the connection between Christmas and circumcision until this past week. “Christmas and circumcision.”

What’s happening here in our text happened over a period of eight days **after** the birth of the Lord Jesus, so it isn’t addressed by most of us pastors during the Christmas season. But what happened on this day that most of us overlook 2,020 later was an essential part of God’s establishing the New Covenant. There’s much more to what happened

on this day than meets the average eye. And with all that we know about Jesus life and suffering and how He healed multitudes and cast out demons and then died for our sins, what happened when He was eight days old seems awfully trivial. But His being circumcised was absolutely necessary if He was to fulfill all the law of God. Jesus' circumcision was the forgotten first step of a life lived completely for the pleasure of His Father. When Jesus said not one jot or tittle will pass from the law til all is complete, He included this.

Our text:

²¹ *And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.*

²² *And when the days for their purification **according to the law of Moses** were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord*

²³ *(as it is written in **the Law of the Lord**, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT OPENS THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD"),*

²⁴ *and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in **the Law of the Lord**, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."*

Now, drop down to v.39:

³⁹ *When they had performed everything according to **the Law of the Lord**, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.*

(Lk. 2:21-24, 39 NAU)

I'm going to make several observations from this passage will let us see just what was going on with this purification ritual and the trip back to Jerusalem and the temple and how it all has impacted our lives. And this is my first observation,

First, "Anyone, rich or poor, and sinner alike, is welcomed in the throne room of God."

²⁴ *and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in **the Law of the Lord**, "A PAIR OF TURTLEDOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS."*

That verse tells us two truths about Joseph and Mary. #1, they were poor. ⁷ *'But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD his guilt offering for that in which he has sinned, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. (Lev. 5:7 NAU).* Have you ever attended a church service in a wealthy church where everyone was dressed to the nines...but you? I have. And I felt totally out of place. And even worse, I knew I wasn't welcomed there. According to many of the charlatans preaching these days if you're not rich, you may not be saved. One of Kenneth Copeland's buddies once said, "It's a sin to be poor."

#2. It tells us that Joseph and Mary were sinners. That's right. Mary was a sinner just like everyone else born on planet Earth. ⁷ *'But if he cannot afford a lamb, then he shall bring to the LORD his **guilt offering** for that in which he has **sinned**, two turtledoves or two young pigeons, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.*

The Roman Catholic Church teaches what they call the "immaculate conception," meaning that Mary was conceived and born without sin. The original sin didn't touch her. But the Bible says in contradiction to the Roman church that we have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, even Mary. I'll go with the Bible.

Also, the Roman Catholic cult teaches a works+Jesus salvation. It isn't enough to believe in Jesus, you also must earn your justification by doing good works. That, my friends, is another gospel and another Jesus. Paul said let them be accursed. The Roman cult is guilty of the same blasphemy as were the Judaizers of Paul's day who taught the very same heresy.

⁴ *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Rom. 10:3-4 NAU)*

Jesus said He did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. He wasn't about to abolish the ten commandments or any of the 613 laws and ordinances God gave to Israel. The ten commandments aren't meant to save anyone but simply to let us know what sin is. The Jews liked to say how much they loved the law of God but in their hearts they knew

what a burden it was. They praised God well with their mouths but their hearts were far from Him. The law of God was a burden to them and in their hearts they knew it but were clueless as to what to do about it. Jesus told them: ²⁸ *"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.*

²⁹ *"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.*

³⁰ *"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."*

(Matt. 11:28-12:1 NAU)

Are you keeping up with this whole "Defund the Police" nonsense? Have you watched the behavior of those who are demanding that our government defund the police? Now because of these anarchists and thugs we need the police more than ever. Ironic, isn't it?

Our laws are a burden only on those who break them. Our laws are a burden only on those who want to live without law. And if anyone wants a hint at what life would be like without the law, look at Portland and Chicago and Baltimore and Seattle.

And my second observation is this, "Circumcision had been around for thousands of years, beginning with Abraham, and now it was coming to an end as far as the law was concerned."

And the Jews were going to hate it! Justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, didn't sit well with the Jewish rulers of the Lord's day. The Jewish mantra was "Justification by circumcision."

Anytime anyone tells you that you have to do this or that or you have to be doing this or that if you want to know for sure that you're saved, turn away from them and flee. And what they tell you you must be doing can be about good things like manifesting a gift of the Spirit. It's the "must" word that should send up red flags in your mind. There is nothing we "must" do in order to be saved and know we're saved. There's nothing we must be doing as evidence that we're saved other than loving one another. And even that love is the gift of God. We love Him and one another because He first loved us.

Here it is in a nutshell: ⁸ *Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.*

⁹ *For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."*

¹⁰ *Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. (Rom. 13:8-10 NAU)*

¹⁴ *For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (Gal. 5:14 NAU)*

It doesn't say we shall like our neighbor, but we are to love them.

The first eight days of the Lord's life as a genuine human being laid the foundation for His last three days as a Man.

The good news of Christmas is that Jesus did for us what God required of us but what we could not do and cannot do for ourselves.

And I close with this, Jesus' circumcision was our circumcision. ¹¹ *and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;*

¹² *having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.*

¹³ *When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,*

¹⁴ *having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col. 2:11-14 NAU)*

In Jesus' name. Amen.