

• *Zacharias'*

1. Jesus was born 'under the law'

The first thing that we are told from the events in Jesus' life is that He was circumcised on the eighth day after He was born ^{□1}.

□1 2:21

1. **Jesus was born 'under the law'**. Circumcision began in the life of Abraham. For Abraham it was a sign of newness of life, a seal of his being reckoned righteous in the eyes of God. Later on it was required in the law of Moses for every Jewish boy, so it was a mark of Jewish nationality. In the life of Jesus it was a sign that He was being brought up as a loyal Jew. From the very earliest days of His life He was 'under the law' (as Paul put it in Galatians 4:5).

• *Zacharias'*

If Jesus was to be our Saviour He had Himself to be sinless, totally obedient to God. If the righteousness of Jesus was to be reckoned as ours, then Jesus had to live a life of total righteousness. Since He was a Jew the pathway of obedience required that He obey every detail of the law. Of course He had no choice; He was a baby. But God gave Him parents who were willing to obey the law at every point.

3. Jesus was given a name that highlights his work

2. **Jesus was given a name that highlights His work** ^{□1}. He was called 'Jesus'. The name is a form of the Old Testament name Jehoshua; it means 'the Lord saves'. God had given instructions that this should be His name ^{□2}. It was God's way of marking out from the very beginning that Jesus was coming to be the Saviour from the guilt and power of sin.

□1 2:21b

□2 1:31

3. Luke tells how Jesus kept the law

3. **Luke's story goes on to emphasise even more strongly how Jesus kept the law**. According to Leviticus 12:1–4, after giving birth to a son, a woman had to undergo forty days abstinence from worship at the tabernacle. Then she offered a sacrifice for her ceremonial purification. (Luke says 'their' purification; it simply means that Joseph brought the sacrifice for his wife's purification. It is a compressed way of speaking.)

• *Purification then presentation*

In addition to the purification, the law required that the child be 'presented'. The firstborn son had to be specially offered to God. He was only exempted from working in the temple by being 'redeemed' – by the paying of a sum of money. His mother had to give some silver as a compensation for the fact that he was not going to be left for lifelong service in the temple.

• *Mary's obedience to the law*

Mary fulfils these requirements of the law ^{□1}. Luke specially draws attention to the way in which Mary's acts were obeyed the requirements of the law ^{□2}.

□1 2:22

□2 2:23

4. Jesus' family were poor

• *Financial prosperity is not absolutely guaranteed to every godly person*

4. **Luke makes clear that Jesus' family were poor**. Mary offers a sacrifice of two pigeons or turtle-doves ^{□1}. The law required that a one-year old lamb should be offered. But if a family were desperately poor the law had a special provision for them. Turtle-doves or pigeons were easy to catch. The poor could capture them for no charge. Needy people were allowed to offer two doves or pigeons instead of the more expensive lamb. The fact that Joseph and Mary offer the two birds is a proof that they were not rich people. It is a proof that financial prosperity is not absolutely guaranteed to every godly person. Mary was highly honoured in being chosen as Jesus'

□1 2:25

mother. But her being highly honoured by God did not bring her guaranteed financial prosperity.

5. Jesus was recognised as the long-awaited Messiah

• *Simeon's prophecy*

• *Salvation about to begin*

• *"For all people"*

• *Many will 'fall' and others will 'rise' because of Him*

• *No one stays the same when confronted with Jesus*

5. **Jesus was recognised as the long-awaited awaited Messiah** ^{☞1}. There was a righteous and law-abiding man living in Jerusalem who was specially waiting for the coming of the Saviour. He was expecting Him as the 'consolation' of Israel, the One who would bring many spiritual blessings which would comfort Jewish believers after their centuries of defeat by various pagan enemies ^{☞2}. He was obviously a man close to God, and God had let him know that the Saviour would come within his lifetime ^{☞3}.

He is led by the Holy Spirit to come to the temple at the very moment when Jesus is being brought by His parents for the various legal ceremonies that have to be carried out ^{☞1}.

He takes the child and give a prophecy while the child is in his arms ^{☞1}.

He knows he has been allowed to live long enough to see the era of salvation which is about to begin ^{☞1}.

He rejoices in the fact that such salvation is to be for the whole world. It is 'for all people' ^{☞1}, a light for revealing things to Gentiles ^{☞2}. It is notable that Luke has been stressing how law-abiding Jesus and His parents were. Yet though Jesus was born as a Jew 'under the law', yet His salvation is not only for Jews. The Jewish Saviour is Saviour of the world.

Joseph and Mary are amazed at Simeon's words ^{☞1}. He is a man of the Holy Spirit. When Jesus comes into the world, there is a burst of the Holy Spirit's inspiration. Godly men and women sing His praise as He comes into the world.

Simeon continues. Many will 'fall' because of Jesus. Others will 'rise' because of Him ^{☞1}. He will face much opposition ^{☞2}. Mary herself will suffer greatly ^{☞3}. The secret thoughts and purposes of many people will be brought out and disclosed ^{☞4}.

When Jesus comes people react in one way or another. No one can be neutral or impartial. Some will fall. They will reject Jesus in anger and disbelief. Others will rise. They will find in Jesus One who brings forgiveness, the knowledge of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. In one way or another the true thoughts of the heart get exposed when Jesus draws near. Some reveal their faith; others reveal their unbelief and antagonism. But no one stays the same, when Jesus comes.

☞1 2:25-30

☞2 2:25

☞3 2:26

☞1 2:27

☞1 2:28

☞1 2:29-30

☞1 2:31

☞2 2:32

☞1 2:33

☞1 2:34

☞2 2:34b

☞3 2:35

☞4 2:35b



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