

A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS
XI. Christ's Presentation And God's Approval
(Luke 2:22-38)

I. Introduction

- A. The presentation of Jesus Christ to the Lord in the temple following His birth in Luke 2:22-38 was required in Leviticus 12:1-8 of the Mosaic Law, so Mary and Joseph heeded that requirement.
- B. However, God gave His special approval of that presentation with two godly witnesses, testifying to Jesus' calling as the Messiah. We view that passage for our insight, application and edification:

II. Christ's Presentation And God's Approval, Luke 2:22-38.

- A. When Joseph and Mary who carried the infant Jesus came to the temple to offer sacrifices, those sacrifices dealt with Mary's own need for purification following her delivery of Jesus in accord with Leviticus 12:1-8:
 - 1. Moses had directed that after a woman had delivered a male infant, she was considered ceremonially unclean for forty days due likely to her postnatal discharge, Lev. 12:1-5. (Bib. Know. Com., O. T., p. 191)
 - 2. After that, she was required to bring either a lamb (if financially able) or a young pigeon or a turtledove (if poor) to the temple priest as a burnt offering for herself, signifying her devotion to the Lord, Lev. 12:6a, 8.
 - 3. In addition to the lamb or the young pigeon or turtledove as a burnt offering, the mother was to offer a young pigeon or a turtledove as a sin offering for herself, Leviticus 12:8.
 - 4. If the mother was poor, Leviticus 12:8 allowed her to bring a pair of turtledoves or a pair of pigeons, one bird for her burnt offering and the other bird for her sin offering, and this is what Mary did, Luke 2:22, 24.
 - 5. [The fact that one of Mary's two birds was a sin offering for herself means that she was a sinner. Thus, belief in Mary's immaculate conception, that she herself was conceived without sin, is an errant belief.]
- B. However, the Mosaic Law also directed that Mary's "firstborn son" (*bekor*, B. D. B., A Heb. and Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 114; H. A. W., Theol. Wrdbk. of the O. T., 1980, vol. I, p. 244) be presented to God at the temple and redeemed with five shekels payable to the priest, Luke 2:22-23 NIV; Num. 18:15-16. This law recalled God's slaying Egypt's firstborn of man and animals, so He had directed that Israel's people ever afterwards redeem their firstborn to remind them of God's strong redemption of the nation from Egypt, Exodus 13:11-16.
- C. Mary thus presented her purification offerings of the two birds that would then qualify her to enter the temple with Joseph to present Jesus to God. (J. D. Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 64-65)
- D. When Joseph and Mary Who was holding Jesus then entered the temple to present Jesus to the Lord and pay His redemption price as her firstborn son, God the Father signaled His full acceptance of Jesus, Luke 2:25-38:
 - 1. The Mosaic Law directed that every fact be established by two or three witnesses, Deuteronomy 19:15.
 - 2. God thus provided two credible Biblical witnesses, both aged and culturally respected, and both seasoned, godly saints, to show His full acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah Whom He had sent, Luke 2:25-38:
 - a. The first witness was the elderly Simeon, a just and devout man who waited for "the consolation of Israel," a reference to the Messiah Who would deliver Israel, Luke 2:25-35; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 209.
 - i. The Holy Spirit had shown Simeon that he would live to see the Messiah, and he was led of the Holy Spirit into the temple just as Mary brought Jesus in to pay for His redemption, Luke 2:25-27.
 - ii. Simeon took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God, stating that the Lord could take him to heaven in peace since God had fulfilled His Word that Simeon would live to see the Messiah, Lk. 2:28-30.
 - iii. The elderly prophet predicted that Jesus would be a light to the Gentiles and the glory of God's people Israel, an amazing statement to the humble Hebrew couple Mary and Joseph, Luke 2:31-33.
 - iv. Simeon then blessed Mary and Joseph, adding that Jesus was set for the fall and rise of many due to God's judgment, that Mary herself would suffer great inner pain in the process, Luke 2:34-35.
 - b. The second witness then arrived, the elderly, devout prophetess Anna of the tribe of Asher, and she thanked God for Jesus' arrival as the Messiah and made known of Him to all who were looking for the "redemption in Jerusalem," another phrase referring to Messiah's deliverance of Israel, Luke 2:36-38; *Ibid.*

Lesson: *When Mary and Joseph obeyed the Mosaic Law on Mary's purification and the presentation of her Firstborn Son, God the Father testified of His acceptance of Jesus via two credible, elderly, prophetic witnesses.*

Application: *(1) May we thank God for clarifying His full, credible acceptance of Jesus at the temple. (2) May we like Joseph and Mary heed Scripture for blessing and to be used greatly by God. (3) May we like Simeon and Anna live godly lives into old age that God might use us to tell of His truth and faithfulness to future generations.*