

The Young Jesus

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Date: 20 July 2008

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[0 : 00] Let's turn again to Luke chapter 2, and we're looking at this as a large section, but as we say, just as an overview as we go through the gospel, which I believe is very important for us to work through a gospel, because this is the gospel of Christ and his dealings with people.

So, and last week we saw the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. In verse 21, we read, And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel when he was conceived in the womb, and so on.

Now, the very first thing we see here is that Jesus has been given his name, and as you see, the name, the naming, the name that he was given was not a name that Mary and Joseph, chose themselves, it was the name that the angel had given. And there's a lot in a name. We probably don't put the same emphasis on names as there used to be.

Certainly within our own culture, many children were given names which linked to somebody within their family.

Maybe it's a father, a mother, a granddad or an uncle. Very often there's this link down. I suppose today, maybe there's a slight movement away from there, and while there is still that, often you'll find people giving names to their children, just names that they particularly like.

[1 : 39] In the Bible times, names meant something. And again, every name means something, and I'm sure most of us have a wee book somewhere in our house giving what names actually mean.

And it's always worth the time to find out what your name actually means. Well, the name that Jesus was given was not, as we say, one that was chosen by Mary and Joseph, but one which the angels announced.

The angel announced that the angel had come to Mary to tell her that she was to conceive and to bear a son, and that we're told that back in Matthew 1, 21, you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Wonderful name. But we're also told back in chapter 2, or this chapter at verse 10, you remember when the angel came to the shepherds, and there's this great announcement, for unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour who is Christ the Lord.

So that in a sense, Jesus, there are three titles. There is Jesus, there is Christ, and there is Lord. Jesus is his human name. The name, this name that identifies him. As Jesus grew up in Nazareth, and other little boys would shout to him, they would say, Jesus.

[3 : 07] They would call him over to themselves. His mother would say to him, now Jesus, on you go, go and do this, go and do that. That was his human name. It was the name that he was called by, the name he was identified by, in the same way as you and I are known by our name.

But Christ is the Greek equivalent of the word Messiah, the Anointed One. The one that was authorised and appointed by God, the great saviour who was to come into the world.

And Lord was the name that God had for himself, the God of Israel. So straight away, when we see this, that while his name is given, we're looking at the human name of Jesus, the angel announced that it is more than the human Jesus that has been born into this world.

It is somebody amazing, somebody special. Because he is also Christ, the appointed, the anointed one of God, set apart as the Messiah, and he is also Lord.

He is God. It's unique. God, man. Human and divine in one person. Great. It's a mystery. And we mentioned that before, and people say, well, explain that to me.

[4 : 29] I can't. A mystery is a mystery. We know, we believe it, but we cannot actually explain it in sort of an ABC and say, we read about it.

In fact, we've been looking at that at the very conception, the marvelous way in which the Holy Spirit, the Most High, was to come upon and overshadow Mary and that she was to conceive. And of course, now we've seen this child being born.

And so we find here is this quite remarkable incident has taken place. The most significant incident, we would say, or the most significant arrival into this world.

The Son of God. The Lord Jesus Christ. God in our nature. And here he is, he's come to deal with what we cannot deal with ourselves.

And he has come, we're told he's going to come again as a judge, but here he has come as a savior. And it's overflowing with God's grace and his mercy and his love towards us.

[5 : 37] And then we also read here that at this particular time that just as his name was given, his name, Jesus, we also read that he was circumcised. Now again, as you remember, this is all part of the symbol or the sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham where God was setting apart a people to himself.

And God told Abraham that through him that all the nations of this world would be blessed. And here we see the coming together of that great prophecy because Jesus was of the seed of Abraham.

And it's all these many, many hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years later that we find here it comes. And it's of course it's through the life and the death and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that this great salvation goes out and all the blessings to all the nations of this world.

And that prophecy that was given to Abraham way back, it's now all coming together here at this particular point. Now of course for Jesus to be made under the law, then this was the right of all males.

that was on the eighth day that they were circumcised so that he was a Jew of very Jews. And so we find that this is what's happened.

[7 : 03] And Jesus of course was made under the law and everything. His whole life was a life that was lived in fulfillment of the law day by day by day. What you and I can't do. But he was there as our representative fulfilling the law.

Everything Jesus did was perfect. You and I can't do that. Although people are upstanding, decent, law-abiding people, still we fall short of what we should be.

Just without even looking at what we say and what we do. When you think of your thought life, you think of some of the things that you actually catch yourself thinking.

And you realize and you say to yourself, oh, glad nobody else is seeing what I'm thinking. And that just shows us what we're like because God is demanding a perfection not only in what we say and what we do but also in what we think.

So you see, we can't fulfill the law. We're breaking it. But Jesus was perfect. Jesus fulfilled it all the time. Jesus honored that law day in, day out.

[8 : 13] And then we see again the keeping of the law when we find that when Jesus was 40 days old, Mary and Joseph came to the temple to offer a sacrifice according to the law for purification.

Now that law was described for us back in Leviticus and I think what it highlights here is that Mary and Joseph were very poor because the actual law prescribed for this particular sacrifice a lamb.

But if the family were too poor then it was to be either the turtle doves or two young pigeons. So when we find that it's a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons that this is what Mary and Joseph sacrificed then it indicates to us that they were poor people.

They didn't have the wherewithal. As we said those who had they were to offer a lamb but if they didn't if they were too poor then this is what they were to offer. So it shows us that Jesus grew up his early years were obviously years that were spent in maybe not what we'd call total poverty but certainly he didn't have much in the way of certainly the world's goods.

but whatever poverty Jesus experienced in his natural life he experienced a far greater poverty in another sense.

[9 : 43] That poverty was speaking of something much more profound because when you look at Jesus' life it was a life that displayed poverty. He said I have nowhere to go I have nowhere to call home I have nowhere to lay down my head.

He was on the move that's what we're talking about his public ministry. He was always on the move. There was one occasion he was asked a question and he wanted a coin and he said will somebody give me a coin?

And you will find that right throughout life even as we were looking at the birth of Jesus there was no room for him in the inn. He was born in an outhouse amongst cattle. Even the great moment when Jesus rode into Jerusalem you would expect that the king would come in on a beautiful white stallion prepared and set for a king to ride on and he comes in on an ass's colt.

There was always a kind of a poverty about his life. But that was speaking of something far deeper. Because the Bible tells us that he who was rich and remember Christ had riches way beyond anything that we could understand with all the spiritual riches of glory he who was rich was made poor.

why? That through his poverty we might be made rich. And of course the fullness of that poverty is seen on the cross where Jesus was crying out my God my God why hast thou forsaken me?

[11 : 17] There was this absolute poverty even the forsakenness of the father. He was made poor in order that we would be made rich.

He wept in order that we might rejoice. He was put to death in order that we may have life. You see it's all what Jesus is and what Jesus has done.

And then after that we then come and we meet this lovely Christian man named Simeon. Simeon was a man we meet him here now in verse 25. and this man had been waiting for the consolation of Israel.

And this man Simeon had had a promise from the Lord that the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he wouldn't die until he had seen the Savior.

The Lord had made that clear to Simeon. You know it's a wonderful thing to have God's promise. Now the Bible is full of God's promises. And there are times when God's Spirit will really bring his word powerfully home to your heart.

[12 : 31] It might be at times when you're praying over something, something that's causing you concern, something that's worrying you. It may be where you're looking for direction or guidance, wondering what to do or where to go.

And as you're reading the word, you're given the faith because God, very quietly, through the Spirit, brings his word with great power as it were to your heart.

And you know that this is God's word. And you know it's a wonderful thing to have God's promise. And my dear friend, you might be here today and life is going in the very opposite direction to what you ever expected.

And God's promise, which you're holding to, may appear to be so far from being fulfilled in your experience. And you're wondering what on earth is happening.

Well, be quite persuaded of this, God will fulfill his word. I don't know in what way, but he will. Even although it may appear to you today that it's becoming less and less and less likely, he will.

[13 : 43] Here was this old, old man, and he was waiting day after day after day. And then one day there, the Holy Spirit would have prompted him to go up to the temple. And on that day, a Simeon came into the temple, who was there but Mary and Joseph with the little Jesus.

And it's a beautiful picture we have where we find Simeon. He takes Jesus in his arms. This is what he'd been waiting for. Waiting and waiting. He was an old man and he was waiting and waiting and waiting without expectation.

Day after day, week after week, month, probably year after year after year. And here it is, it's arrived. Simeon takes Jesus in his arms and he blesses him.

And, you know, the amazing thing is that although Simeon is there with Jesus in his arms, Simeon is also in Jesus' arms.

It's not just Jesus in Simeon's arms, but it's Simeon that's in Jesus' arms. that Simeon is held up in his very life by the power of Christ through the Spirit.

[14 : 55] It's quite a remarkable thing. And so he blesses and he says, oh, thank you, Lord. And then he says, now let your servant depart in peace according to your word.

Great words of faith. And here's this, he's a great man Simeon saying, Lord, this is what I've been waiting for. Now let your servant depart in peace. That's not depart from the temple.

I don't believe that. It's now let your servant die. Lord, you've been saying to me that I won't die till I see the Savior.

Well, my eyes have seen him today. I've held him in my arms. That's it. I'm satisfied. The promise has been fulfilled. Now let your servant depart in peace.

I'm ready to go home. That's a great thing. It's a great way of looking at death, isn't it? Ready to go home. Are you ready to go home today?

[15 : 58] It's a very important question. Death is something that naturally we recoil from. It's not something that we particularly want to think about. And we don't want to particularly think about the day when we're going to leave.

this world. It's one of these things that might flash before our mind but then we just push it away and we don't want to think too much about it. But the fact is we're all going to have to leave. But you know this old man shows us that there's something wonderful in a mature believer, somebody who was ready because it's like the apostle Paul because Paul said you know there was a stage in Paul's life and he was saying I'm ready to go.

But I believe that staying on in this world is more beneficial for other people. But he said if I have the choice to either stay or to go he said actually I'd prefer to go to depart to be with Christ which is far better.

And that my dear friends is the real sort of way that we can work out whether we're ready to go. because to go is to depart and to be with Christ. Now if Christ means a lot to you here in this world then you want to be with him forever.

That's it. But if Christ doesn't mean much to you then the thought of being in his immediate presence forever and ever and ever is not something maybe that appeals.

[17 : 26] And I think a lot of people haven't really stopped and thought it through. Thought what does happen? What is heaven?

A lot of people have I think very sort of airy-fairy ideas of what heaven is and people have this idea of sort of it's a place of kind of bliss and just happiness but it's a happy place.

But what kind of happiness? Well the happiness is centered in Christ. Jesus Christ is the source and the center of our happiness.

And that is why it's so important that we come to know Jesus in this world so that he is the center of our happiness here in this world first and foremost. And so as Simeon is here in the temple he is delighted to have Christ but then he prophesies concerning Christ and he says you are prepared in the presence of all people.

God is prepared. You see this is what the Bible is all about. When you go through the whole of the Old Testament it's all in preparation of the Lord Jesus Christ. The covenants made with Abraham, with Moses, with David all pointing to Jesus.

[18 : 41] The whole sacrificial system, the whole structure and set out of the temple all pointing to Jesus. All the law, all the Psalms, all the prophets they're all pointing to Jesus.

it's all preparation for Jesus. And so he's saying here it is. All this preparation has now come together. And then he says a light for revelation to the Gentiles.

Now you see he's put the Gentiles first before Israel. Israel. And I believe that that is exactly because that's exactly what has happened. That this great gospel has spread out right across this world.

And that by and large, although there's a great work that is going on amongst the Jewish people, that by and large there is still this rejection of the Messiah. Still this waiting as it were for the Messiah.

Still this rejection. But we believe that there will come a day when there will be a great work amongst them as well. and this light, a light, now we saw that before.

[19 : 44] Remember the prophecy when Zachariah was making that prophecy. And he was talking about the day spring or the sunrise. This light that will rise upon the Gentiles.

And that's who Jesus is. The light, the light that dispels the darkness. That's what the light does. Comes in so gradually. It's pitch dark.

And then there's the dawn. And gradually bit by bit by bit shadows and shapes give way to things that you can actually make out.

And you say to yourself, I didn't know that was a tree. All I could see was this kind of shadowy thing. We mentioned that before if you've ever been out through the night and coming across a moor or anything and you're making your way through in the first break of dawn.

And it's wonderful when you see just as it were like the world opening up before you. And gradually the light making everything clearer and clearer. And then eventually when there's full light, the darkness has been completely dispelled.

[20 : 49] And that's what Jesus does in people's hearts. He as a light of the world comes into people. And that's why people will say all of a sudden, you know, I couldn't understand this Bible.

Read it, but it wasn't making sense to me. But it's beginning to make sense. I'm beginning to understand. And sometimes people under the preaching and they're saying, I don't know what's happened to the minister, but I'm beginning to understand him.

Couldn't understand him before. It's at the Lord that's the light. It's the light of Jesus that's beginning to open a person's mind so that they're beginning to see, beginning to understand, beginning to take hold of things.

Spiritual truths, there's this growing development. But then Simeon also speaks a word to Mary herself. And he tells her that a sword will push through your own soul.

That was quite a strange prophecy. Now here is Mary and it's a wonderful experience, a wonderful moment, and what an honor was placed upon her life, where Mary was the one who was chosen to bear the Son of God in human nature.

[22 : 00] But there was a cost involved. A sword was to push through her own soul. And there were times when Mary would discover that there was a cost in bearing her son.

Because Mary was to discover that there was one far higher than her in this world, and that was the Father in Heaven. And that Jesus' first priority was to his Father in Heaven, over and above even his priority to his mother.

Now, as we move on in the chapter, we find just such an incident. Probably this is one of the first of them. When Jesus was 12 and they had gone up to the Passover, the whole family were up there.

And when they were making their way back, we've got to realize that it wasn't just Mary and Joseph and Jesus. And, of course, we know that Jesus had brothers or half-brothers.

It wasn't just them. There were loads of people. There would be huge families and friends on their way. And any parent who has ever, there has been some time when a son or a daughter has gone missing, just the sheer apprehension, the fear within their heart that something has happened.

[23 : 17] It's just a natural instinct within any parent. It's a natural instinct within anybody about any member of a family or friends. But here's this just, oh, this realization, where's Jesus?

Now, people may say, weren't Mary and Joseph very careless? Well, I don't think so. Because if you're traveling this huge group of people, obviously, Mary would have thought that Jesus was with Joseph, or Joseph would have thought that Jesus was with Mary, or that he was with uncles, or aunts, or with cousins, or with friends, or people in the neighborhood, and they were all traveling.

Now, some people think, how come it took three days for them to find Jesus? Well, very simply, they were on a day's journey away from Jerusalem when they discovered Jesus wasn't there.

It took them another day to get back to Jerusalem, and it was then the third day that they found him. So that explains why three days later that they found him in the temple. And he was there with all the great learners, the great men of learning, the great teachers.

And there was Jesus sitting amongst them, holding a discussion with them, asking them questions, and answering some of their questions. And they were amazed. Here's this young boy.

[24 : 35] How did he know all these things? Now, of course, when Mary met with Jesus, she rebuked him. And she's saying, oh, what have you done?

We've been looking for you. Didn't you realize the anxiety you caused? But Jesus says, did you not realize that I must be in my father's house?

Or as it says elsewhere, about my father's business? Mary is being taught, do you not realize that there are greater issues in life?

There are more important issues in life. And mother, he's saying there's going to be times when you've got to stand aside. And here was such a time. And there are various instances of this.

You remember at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, when Mary is saying to Jesus, look, she's more or less telling him what to do. And he says, woman, my hour has not yet come.

[25 : 38] There was another time when Mary and his mother and his family were standing outside a house. And they were concerned about Jesus. They were beginning to get worried about Jesus.

And people said to Jesus in the house, your mother and your brothers are outside. And he said, who is my mother and who are my brothers? He said, it is my mother and my brothers are those who do the will of God.

There's no doubt, but at times like that, the sword pushed into Mary's heart. But of course, the time above all where that sword pushed through her soul was when Jesus was on the cross.

And there was Mary below the cross looking at her beloved son, the one that she had cradled and nursed into this world. And there he was nailed to that cross in awful agony, bearing our sin and bearing her sin as well.

And so this sword pushed her soul on many an occasion. But very interestingly, it tells us right after that, in case people think that Jesus was dishonoring to his parents and disrespectful, it says he went down to Nazareth and he was submissive to them.

[26 : 53] That's what we're told in verse 51. But there's one last thing before we conclude here, and as I say, we're going over this chapter very briefly, we see alongside Simeon an old woman called Anna.

This woman, who had been married for seven years and her husband had died, had then spent the rest of her days in the temple. She was somebody who was totally committed and devoted to the Lord.

We read there that she spent her time with prayer, fastings and devotion. And it's very interesting that this woman was also given a sight of Jesus. This woman, God, and I think there's something loaded in this statement here because it shows us that it's in God's house that we are most likely to see Jesus.

There are some people who say, oh, well, I don't need to come to church. I can see Jesus anywhere. Well, there's an element of truth in that. But my dear friends, the place above all where we're most likely to meet with Jesus and see Jesus is when we gather together in the name of Jesus Christ and meet with his people round his word.

This is where by faith we are likely to meet with him and become conscious, aware of his presence and of his nearness. And I would pray today that that is how it will be with some people in here, that maybe they have come in not having seen Jesus, and yet by the time they've gone out, they have met with Jesus in the quietness of their own soul, where they have come to know and to experience his blessing and his power.

[28 : 39] Let us pray. Oh, Lord, our God, we pray to bless us this day with spiritual and temporal blessings. We pray that our eyes might be open to see and that our heart might be open to believe and help us to understand the word and guide us in all that we're about.

Bless us, we pray, as we go our different ways, and we pray that the safety and the keeping of God might be our portion. Take away from us all our sin.

In Jesus' name we ask all. Amen.