

## **The Presentation of Christ in the Temple - Gospel of Luke chapter 2, verses 22 – 40:-**

Those of you who regularly read these studies will know that I regard knowledge of the 'Old Testament' scriptures as essential to our understanding of the 'Salvation History' of the people of God. This knowledge is vitally important as we look at the Readings used for what is variously called 'The Presentation of Christ in the Temple', 'Candlemas Day', or in the Book of Common Prayer 'The Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin'.

We take a look at the people involved in the scene in the Gospel Reading from St. Luke chapter 2, verses 22 - 40. If we look carefully we will find clues that point us to the Old Testament scriptures.

MARY:- The mother of the babe. Come for 'purification' after the shedding of blood in childbirth. See Leviticus 12, verses 2 - 8. The offering of 'two young pigeons' was the poor people's offering for the purification after childbirth. (The offering for the 'First Born' was '5 shekels of silver' - see below). The clue? - "She brought forth her first-born son . . .".

JOSEPH:- The babe's 'father'. 'Step-father'? 'Foster-father'?  
He was given the care of the babe by God. Matthew 1, verses 20 - 21.  
The clue? - "You shall call his name Jesus (again see below), for he will save his people from their sins."

SIMEON:- "The Holy Spirit was upon him". A gift of prophecy given for the occasion. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to be in the Temple at the very moment that the babe was brought in.  
The clue? - He was "looking for the consolation of Israel". Isaiah 40 and the following chapters. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people . . . " The very chapter used by Mark as the introduction to his Gospel.

ANNA:- An old woman of at least 84. A 'prophetess' in the right place at the right time!  
The clue? - She was looking for the "redemption of Jerusalem".

So, if we put them together Candlemas is about:-

REDEMPTION

ISRAEL (GOD'S PEOPLE)

JESUS - Jeheshua = 'Saviour'

FIRST-BORN

The 'Presentation of Jesus' was about an offering - 5 shekels of silver - Exodus chapter 13, verse 2 and verses 12 – 16: Exodus chapter 22, verse 29 and Exodus chapter 34, verse 20: Numbers chapter 3, verses 46 – 47 and Numbers chapter 18, verses 15 - 16.

The redemption of the first-born was to be kept as a remembrance that - "By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage. For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all males that first open the womb; but all the first-born of my sons I redeem." Exodus 13, verses 14 – 15. (Read Exodus chapter 12 for the whole story).

Candlemas then has a direct link to the redemption of God's people. A direct link to the 'passover lamb' slain and its blood smeared on the door posts and lintel of all the dwellings of the people of Israel.

**The price of redemption was a lamb. Foretold in the Old Testament fulfilled in the New.**

**See Hebrews chapter 9, verse 12.**

John the Baptist - 'a prophet and more than a prophet' saw the implication! "Behold, the Lamb of God" he said, pointing to the Lord Jesus. (Gospel of John chapter 1, verse 35)

The Apostle Paul saw the implication, he wrote - "Christ our paschal lamb has been sacrificed ". (I Corinthians chapter 5, verse 7.)