

Luke 2:21-24

²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

²² And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

“ Keeping The Law On The First Christmas”

Just as there are laws concerning childbirth in the state of Washington;

(4) The birth center shall provide or assure:

Registration of birth and reporting of complications and anomalies, including sentinel birth defect reporting under chapter 70.58 RCW.

Prophylactic treatment of the eyes of the newborn in accordance with WAC 246-100-206

For Hepatitis B positive women, HBIG and Hepatitis B immunization for the newborn.

There were also laws, given by God concerning childbirth in the nation Israel.

I. The Law concerning circumcision

1. Origins of the practice – pre law

- * It was a sign of God’s covenant with Abraham being appropriated by every male within the house of Abraham and his descendants. – Genesis 17:9-14
- * It was practiced among the descendants of Ishmael when a young man reached the age of puberty as a rite of initiation into manhood. – Genesis 17:25
- * It was also practiced in Egypt to symbolize dedication to the priesthood or identification of aristocracy.
 - Note of interest: according to the Midrash, Tanchuma, Moses was one of seven prominent characters in the O.T. born already circumcised. Two texts are considered to corroborate this belief: Exodus 2:2 “...she saw him that he was a goodly child...,” and Exodus 4:24-26.

2. Requirements of the practice – Torah

- * The law was consistent with already established practice – Lev.12:3
- * The law was given to identify the nation Israel, not the religion Israel – (Note the significance of Deut. 10:16, and the use of circumcision in the account of Gen. 34)

By having Jesus circumcised, Joseph and Mary demonstrate faith in God's promises to Abraham. Furthermore, they show their support for the nation Israel, and its laws even though they are under the rule of Rome at that time. The context also makes a strong connection between the rite of circumcision and naming the baby boy.

Jesus is the Greek translation of the Hebrew name Joshua, which means Yahweh with us. The name was given to Mary ahead of time in Luke 1:31, and Joseph ahead of time in Matthew 1:21.

II. The Law concerning dedication

1. Dedication was preceded by purification

- * Purification was prescribed by the Torah – Lev. 12:4-8 (33 days she was considered unclean.)
- * Purification was both physical (Lev. 12:4), and spiritual (Lev. 12:7-8).

2. Dedication was mandated – Exodus 13:2

- * “sanctify” – *kaw-dash* – set apart, handled with special care, and belonging to Yahweh
- * It happened with a sacrifice – Lev. 12:7-8

“The offering which they presented for her purification showed that they were a poor couple. They could not afford a lamb, so they bought a pair of doves or pigeons, which were all they could afford. They traveled the short distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem for the presentation and purification at the temple.” – Walvoord and Zuck

- The sacrifice of two doves or pigeons was important so that the sin-offering and the burnt-offering could be made.

The burnt-offering – Leviticus 1:14-17

The sin-offering – Leviticus 5:8-9

Final thought –

This passage bears testimony to the faithful obedience of Joseph and Mary. Jesus needed no atonement, and His circumcision was a matter of parental conformity to the law. He himself is the fulfilment to the promise made to Abraham.