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2Following the Messiah: Nighttime Announcement and Dedication In The Temple

Opening:

1. In this lesson we are continuing our study using the material by Appian Media.
2. Already you have viewed the video "Following the Messiah Episode 1" at www.appianmedia.org and have worked through the study guide (Lesson Two) available at www.appianmedia.org/free-download.
3. Probably you have realized by now that there are two worksheet lessons for each video episode from Appian Media. We will try to follow this format throughout the quarter (April, May, June).
4. In this class period we will address the nighttime announcement to the shepherds and the dedication in the temple.

Into the Text:

Reading of Lk. 2:8-20

1. It is interesting that this announcement comes to shepherds.
 - Why shepherds? Maybe because they were a conduit of communication.
 - What happens here is much like commissions given both in the O.T. and N.T.
 - For example compare Isa. 6:1ff with this text.

ISAIAH
glory of the Lord
shocked
Seraphim praised God
given message
praised God
hope through Messianic King

SHEPHERDS
glory of the Lord
terribly frightened
angels praise God
given message
praised God
hope through Messianic King

- The example of Saul in Acts 9

glory of the Lord
shocked
sent to Jews and Gentiles
preaching hope through Jesus the Messianic King

Less about Saul's conversion and more about his commission.

Application: Having seen the glory of the Lord's promised King what is your response? Do you go and proclaim the mighty works of God? Do you proclaim His intervention in the history of man?

Reading of Lk. 2:21-24

2. The angel identified his name as Jesus (Lk. 1:31).

Eight days was the usual time prescribed in the law (Lev. 12:2-8).

Circumcision was the mark of the covenant relationship with God.

- Cut off from the world.
- Joined together with God (Gen. 17).

The purification (Ex. 13:2, 12).

The offering of two turtledoves or two young pigeons (Lev. 5:11; 12:8).

The firstborn belonged to the Lord (Ex. 22:29) and had to be redeemed. Reminded of their deliverance from Egypt and the death angel destroying the firstborn of Egypt. Micah 6:7 says that even to give the firstborn for my sin would not be sufficient. We owe that and more. But God provides His firstborn for payment for my sin. Cf. Abraham in Gen. 22 in the offering of his firstborn. God will provide the sacrifice.

When Jesus is presented in the temple at 8 days old he is the firstborn son of God. He is given by God to be the sacrifice for sin. Thus, God provides in Jesus His firstborn for my sin.

Did the death of the firstborn in Egypt occur as a consequence of sin? How were the firstborn of the Israelites spared? Who spared them?

When Abraham was called on to sacrifice Isaac he was to offer him as a burnt offering. Why? For his sin? Was there any other reason for offering such a sacrifice?

Jesus is the provision that God makes for forgiveness. Instead of us giving our firstborn, who would be insufficient, God gives His firstborn who is sufficient!!! Does this make you somewhat aware of the seriousness of sin? Even if you give your firstborn for your sin, he is insufficient. What does this say about the whole concept of child sacrifice in idolatry?

Reading of Lk. 2:25-35.

3. Simeon is looking for the consolation of Israel. He is waiting for the Kingdom of God. He is waiting for the Messiah. It has been revealed to him that he will not die

until he has seen the Messiah. Recognizing Jesus as the Messiah he prays, "Let me die in peace for my eyes have seen Your salvation."

Reading of Lk. 2:36-38

4. The Prophetess Anna speaks of Jesus to all those looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Note 1:68 and Zacharias's prayer—"The redemption of God's people" is equivalent to "the redemption of Jerusalem." Both phrases are associated with the coming of the Messianic King (Lk. 1:69), fulfillment of prophecy (1:70), salvation from enemies (1:71), and remembrance of the covenant with Abraham (1:72-73).

So both Simeon and Anna associate the 8-day-old Jesus with the Messianic promises. Isn't this the point all along in the accounts of the birth narratives in the Gospels?

Application:

One may not believe that Jesus is the Messiah, but it is obvious that the writers of the Gospel accounts are working to convince their readers that He is.

How can you use these accounts to raise the issue with others regarding the identity of Jesus?? If you did that would that be evangelizing?