

Verses 2:21-24 give three examples of the Old Testament law being observed by Jesus' parents:

- Jesus is circumcised after eight days, like John, according to God's instruction to Abraham in Genesis 17:12: *He who is eight days old among you shall be circumcised.*
- Mary waits until her ritual uncleanness has passed then presents an offering per Leviticus 12:1-8: *Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days.... And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying ... And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering ... And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean.*
- Jesus, like John and every other firstborn was to be given to the Lord but then "bought back" with an offering as stated in Numbers 18:15: *Everything that opens the womb of all flesh, whether man or beast, which they offer to the Lord, shall be yours. Nevertheless, the firstborn of man you shall redeem.*

We must remember that the Lord was sinless not only

in accordance with God's eternal standards, but also the law of Moses under which He was born. His adult life gives more examples.

In Luke 6 Jesus' disciples pick grain while walking through a field. This is allowed under the law but the Pharisees rebuke them for "threshing" on the Sabbath. The Lord responds with the account of David eating the showbread in the tabernacle when famished. The point is that human needs outweigh strict observance of the prohibition against working on the Sabbath. Then He adds "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath." But he does not invoke this privilege.

In Matthew 17 the disciples are asked why their master does not pay the two-drachma tax, probably a tax levied for upkeep of the temple similar to Exodus 30:11-16. Jesus responds that the kings of the earth do not collect tax from their sons. But in order "not to give offense," He gives them directions to miraculously retrieve a coin from the mouth of a fish to pay the tax.

In both of these instances the Lord **asserts** His authority to exempt Himself from the Law but does not **exercise** His authority. He acts in obedience to the Father. In Matthew 28, after the Lord's resurrection but before His ascent, he tells the disciples. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." There is no doubt that our Lord possesses unlimited authority over creation. It is another question to what extent He now exercises that authority, and whether He will do so more fully at a future time.

Questions:

1. What does the song of Zechariah tell us about the Messiah, or Christ, that he was expecting?
2. Where in the song is Jesus' divinity implied?

3. Verses 2:1-20 tell a very familiar story. Did you notice anything new reading it this time?
4. Jesus' birth is first announced to shepherds. His first disciples are fishermen. What is the significance of this?
5. What has God revealed to Simeon?
6. Explain verses 2:34-35.
7. What is revealed to Anna?