

Sunday 12/29/24 – Panama Methodist Church

Sermon Title: “Jesus and our Jewish Roots”

(Slides 1-18 will be listed in order throughout this sermon 😊!)

So, the day after Thanksgiving this year, my parents, Melissa, and I did not rush out to stores early for Black Friday, but we did go to see a movie. Well, ok there might have been a little online shopping, but we did go to see a movie! The movie that we saw was put out by Angel Studios, and is called, “Bonhoeffer.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Lutheran German Pastor during the time of the Nazis and World War II. Bonhoeffer was mortified that the Nazis eventually started trying exterminate all the Jews they could in Europe. Further, in the movie “Bonhoeffer” by Angel Studios, the movie showed how the Nazis took the Judaism or Jewishness out of the Christian faith. The Bible that the Nazi Party wanted the Germans to now use said that Jesus was not Jewish, but that he was “Aryan” or German. Basically, the movie “Bonhoeffer” showed how the Nazis removed all Jewishness from the Bible and our Christian faith.

The big problem with this, and in trying to massacre all the Jews of Europe and anywhere else they went, was that the Nazis were trying to change the Bible and history. This morning, as I often preach on the last Sunday of the year, I want to connect our Christian faith to the Jewish faith, or Judaism. The Christian faith

and the Jewish faith are emmeshed together and cannot be separated from one another. Here is our cover picture for this sermon this morning.

Slide 1 – (“Jesus and our Jewish Roots” – Cover Picture)



Specifically, my message for this morning is called:

Slide 2 – (“Jesus and our Jewish Roots” – Sermon Title)



The question that I want us all to think about during this sermon is this, “How is Christianity connected to Judaism?” Further, is it a conflict to be a

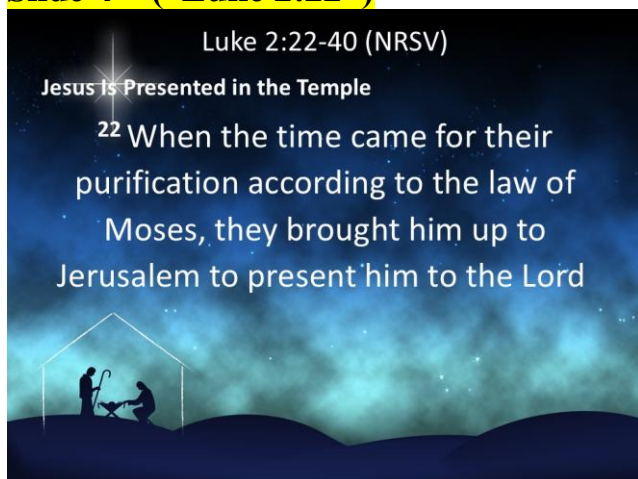
Christian and hate Jews? I would say that we should not hate anyone, but is it a conflict to be a Christian and hate Jews?

Slide 3 – (“How is Christianity connected to Judaism?”)

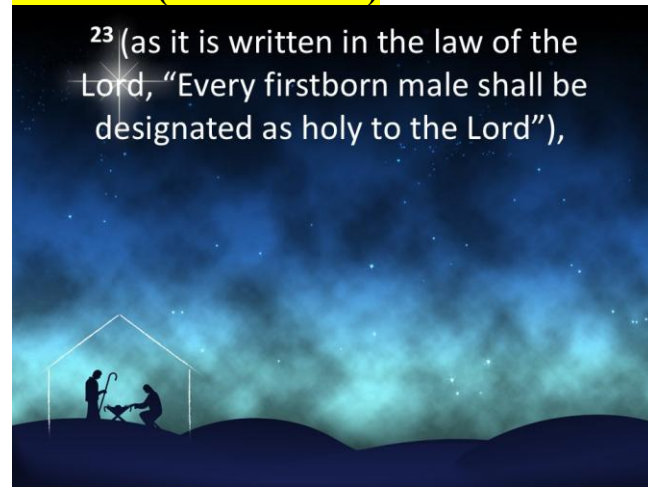


In the two-thousand-year history of our Christian faith, there have been at times real friction between Christians and Jews. This is what I want to talk a little bit about this morning. My main preaching text today is the gospel of Luke 2:22-40. I would invite you open with me your Bibles or your Bible apps to the third gospel in our New Testaments. This is what Luke 2:22-40 says:

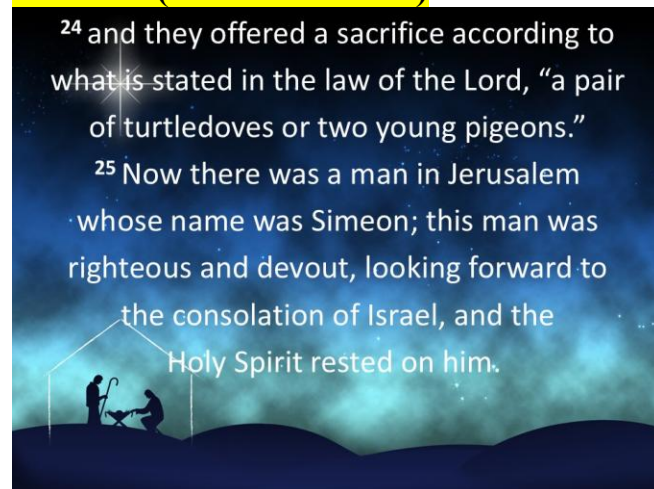
Slide 4 – (“Luke 2:22”)



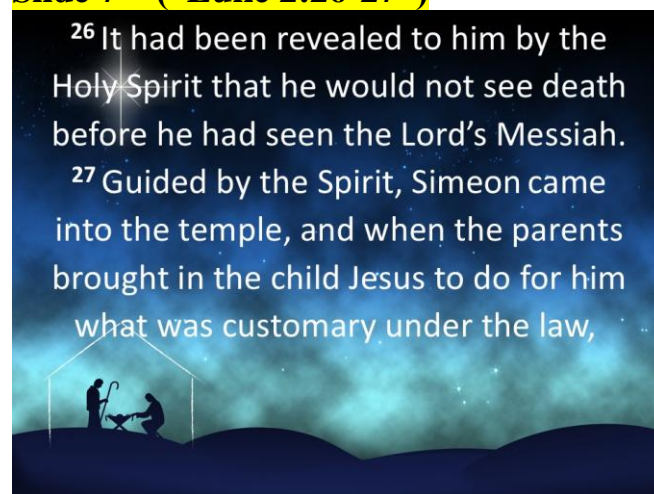
Slide 5 – (“Luke 2:23”)



Slide 6 – (“Luke 2:24-25”)



Slide 7 – (“Luke 2:26-27”)



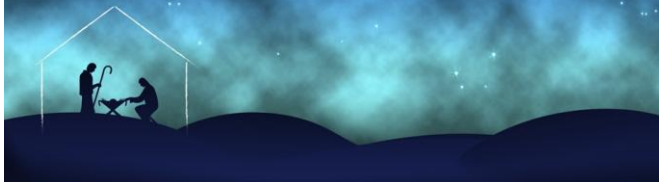
Slide 8 – (“Luke 2:28-31”)

²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹ “Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word, ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,



Slide 9 – (“Luke 2:32-33”)

³² a light for revelation to the gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” ³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him.



Slide 10 – (“Luke 2:34-35”)

³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul, too.”



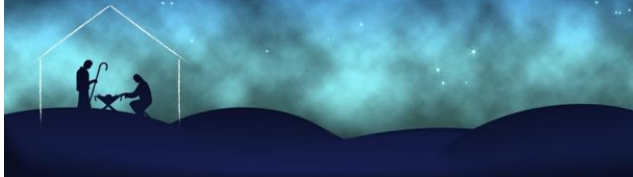
Slide 11 – (“Luke 2:36-37”)

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.



Slide 12 – (“Luke 2:38”)

³⁸ At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.



Slide 13 – (“Luke 2:39-40”)

The Return to Nazareth

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.



Now that we have read through Luke 2:22-40 let us dive deep into God's word.

First, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, and all of Jesus' Twelve Disciples were Jews.

Remember that not until John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan River when he was thirty-years old, did Jesus start his three-year public ministry on earth.

Highlighting that Jesus did not start his public ministry until age thirty, the late

comedian Robin Williams said this of Jesus: "Some have asked me was Jesus

really Jewish? Let us look at the facts, he was thirty, he lived at home, he worked

in his father's business, and mother thought that was God's gift. He was Jewish!"

Robin Williams put a whole lot of Jewish stereotypes in there, but Jesus and all of

his followers were Jews.

Our scripture for this morning from Luke 2:22-40 show us this. In Luke 2:22-24, we hear, once again:

²² 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 firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons'
(Lk. 2:22-24, NRSV).

What in the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, or the Five Books of

Moses is Luke referring to here? In the third Book of the Old Testament, the Book

of Leviticus, is where find the "law of the Lord," or the Law of Moses, that we

hear about in in Luke 2:23. In fact, it says in Leviticus 12:2-4 this:

**² Speak to the people of Israel, saying:
If a woman conceives and bears a male child, she shall be ceremonially unclean for seven days; as at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. ³ On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. ⁴ Her time of blood purification shall be thirty-three days; she shall not touch any holy thing, or come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed (Lev. 12:2-4, NRSV).**

This law of the Old Testament or the Jewish faith, means that if a woman gives birth to a male, she will be ceremonially unclean for seven-days, and then she will have a time of blood purification for thirty-three days. This means 40-days, and Jesus was then present at the great Temple in Jerusalem by Joseph and Mary when he was forty-days old. The gospel of Luke does not say forty-days, but this what the Jewish law is, so we are to believe that Jesus was forty-days old when Mary and Joseph presented him at the great Temple in Jerusalem. With this said, let us turn back to Luke chapter 2, where we will remain for the rest of this message.

in Luke 2:21, which we did not read for this morning, it says:

²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb (Lk. 2:21, NRSV).

We also just heard in Luke 2:24 that Jesus' parents Joseph and Mary brought with them:

a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons' (Lk. 2:24, NRSV).

Animals were only sacrificed at the great Temple in Jerusalem, and this was done according to the Jewish Law or Law of Moses to atone for sins, to draw closer to God, express gratitude, and prepare us the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Since Jesus came to fulfill the Law of Moses and prophets, and his sacrifice on the cross was last sacrifice needed for humanity, we have no more animal sacrifice. In the first three verses of gospel of Luke reading for this morning in Luke 2:22-24, we have a lot of Judaism. Jesus was Jewish, his parents were Jewish, and all his disciples were Jewish.

In moving along with Luke 2:22-40, in verses 2:25-34, we hear about a Godly and righteous man named Simeon. If you know anyone, or have ever heard the name Simeon, it is a Biblical name. Simeon of course was Jew, as he at the great Temple in Jerusalem. Yet, it seems he became a follower of Jesus, what we would eventually call a Christian when we saw Jesus. As Luke 2:25 says again, Simeon was righteous and devout, and the scripture said that the Holy Spirit rested on him. In fact, the scripture tells us in 2:26 that Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that before he died his earthly death that he would see the “Lord’s Messiah”. Forty-day old baby Jesus, getting presented at the temple, with the animal sacrifice, according to the Jewish Law, or the Law of Moses. Now we now have reason to believe that Simeon knew who Joseph and Mary were, or baby Jesus, unless he had already heard about Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, which is possible. Simeon sees baby

Jesus though, and just knows, that this baby is the Messiah, the savior of the world.

This baby will grow up and die for the sins of the world.

So excited is Simeon in fact, that Luke 2:28-32 tells us once again of the baby Jesus this:

Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹ ‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel’
(Lk. 2:28-32, NRSV).

So, it seems that Simeon just grabbed Jesus out of Mary or Joseph’s arms without even asking. The scripture does not say that Simeon asked, but maybe he did.

Simeon that looks upon 40-day old baby Jesus and calls him “Master”. He also tells baby Jesus that He is dismissing him, Simeon, in peace. Why? Well because Simeon finally saw the Messiah before he died, and the Holy Spirit told him that he would.

We then hear in Luke 2:33 that Joseph and Mary are amazed by Simeon holding Jesus and saying what he just said in their presence. After this in Luke 2:34, Simeon blessed them, and said to Jesus’ mother Mary in 2:34-35, once again:

‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too’ (Lk. 2:34-35, NRSV).

Now just what did Simeon mean by this? Simeon meant that Jesus would cause division between people, and some will accept him as Messiah, and some would

not. This will of course bring sorrow to Jesus' mother Mary. Jesus will also reveal what is in people's hearts, and whether they are truly righteous or not. Jesus can see right through us. Simeon already seems to know what Jesus' life on earth will look like when he gets older. This could be because he read the prophecies or predictions from the Old Testament or Jewish Hebrew Bible, and or the Holy Spirit revealed this to him. Either way, Simeon seems to know what the earthly journey of Jesus Christ our Lord, God in flesh will look like, or at least some.

After this, we hear in our scripture reading from Luke 2:26 six about a prophet named Anna, who was the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. The name "Phanuel" means "face of God," which is fitting as the Prophetess Anna is about see Jesus. She is about the look at the "face of God," at Jesus Christ, God in the flesh, who has come among us. I generally referred to Anna as a "prophetess" since she was a woman. Like Simeon it would seem that the Holy Spirit revealed things to her. According to Luke 2:36 Anna was of "a great age." Clearly older than all of the young women in this church, but she was probably towards the end of her earthly life. Luke 2:36 says that Ann had lived with her husband for seven years after he married and widowed at 84-years old. Some scholars believe that Luke 2:36-37 is telling us that Anna was a widow for 84 years, making her over one-hundred years old. One expert that I read said that Anna could have been as old as one-hundred and five years old.

Anna never left the great Temple in Jerusalem according to Luke 2:37, and she worshipped with fasting and prayer there night and day. As soon as she saw Jesus though, Luke 2:38 tells us:

³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem
(Lk. 2:38, NRSV).

Anna, like Simeon, knew that this baby was the savior and redeemer of the world. This must have been quite shocking and heart warming for Mary and Joseph, as it was when Simeon held Jesus and said what he said.

After all of this, our gospel of Luke reading then ends with Luke 2:39-40 saying this, once again:

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him
(Lk. 2:39-40, NRSV).

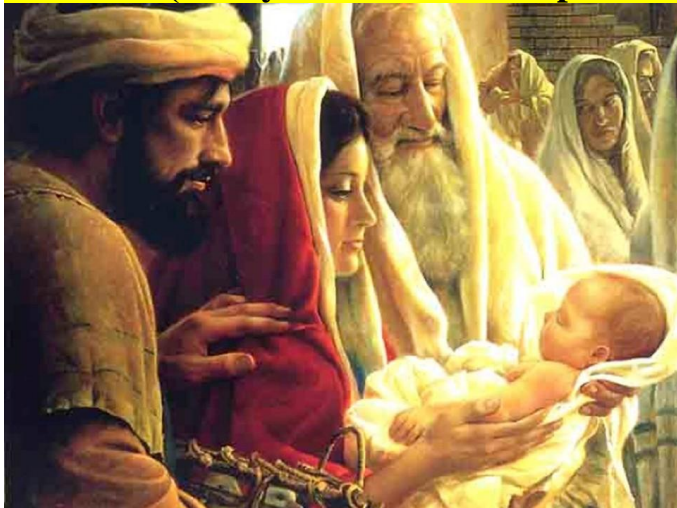
Mary and Joseph then return to Nazareth, to raise Jesus, and Jesus grows up. While Jesus was born in Bethlehem on that first Christmas, Jesus often called “Jesus of Nazareth,” as this is where Jesus grew up. This is also why we have a Christian denomination called, “The Church of the Nazarene,” this is also why there is a college called “Nazareth.”

As we are talking this morning about “Jesus and our Jewish Roots,” let us remember that the entire Old Testament of our Bible are the Jewish or Hebrew scriptures. For about the first ten to twenty-years of our Christian faith, we were

often called “The Way,” as we were a movement within the Jewish faith that believed that Jesus was the Messiah or the Savior. In the city of Antioch we were first called, “Christians” in Acts 11:26, and our faith then spread to non-Jews, and the world. It is important I think to know that the roots of our Christian faith are from Judaism or the Jewish faith.

Even though Jesus was raised Jewish, as I said, He came to fulfill the Law of Moses and Prophets, and he instituted “A New Covenant” is His blood at the Last Supper. He took the Jewish faith and fulfilled the Law of Old on the cross, and he will return to earth one day to usher in the fullness of his kingdom in his thousand-year reign on earth. I have a couple pictures that I found that I want to show you about Jesus being presented at the great Temple in Jerusalem at 40-days old. Here is the first one:

Slide 14 – (“Baby Jesus at the Temple” # 1)



Here is the second picture:

Slide 15 – (“Baby Jesus at the Temple” # 2)



In this picture, Mary, and Joseph, with baby Jesus, encounter Simeon, and they have two turtledoves of pigeons as an animal sacrifice at the great Temple in Jerusalem.

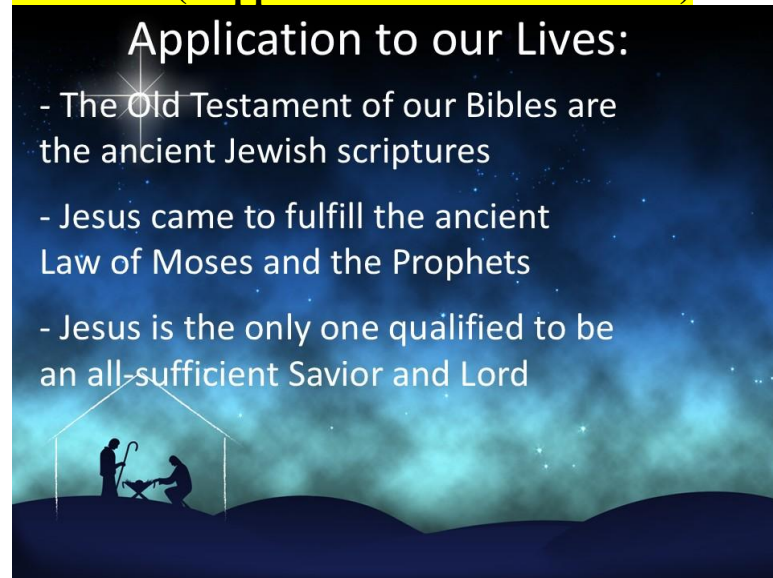
With all of this said about “Jesus and our Jewish Roots,” how does this apply to our lives. Let us look together, as I call our praise team forward:

Slide 16 – (“Application to our Lives: # 1”)

Application to our Lives:

- Jesus and His 12-disciples were all raised in the Jewish faith
- Christianity started as movement within the Jewish faith
- Christianity is rooted in the Jewish faith

Slide 17 – (“Application to our Lives: # 2”)



Friends, as followers of Christ, as Christians, we came out of the Jewish faith or Judaism. The entire Old Testament are the Jewish or Hebrew scriptures that points us to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Here is our closing picture.

Slide 18 – (“End Picture”)



Happy first Sunday of Christmas! Amen.