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| **The Consecration of Firstborn Sons**  *Promise: the price has been paid for our redemption* Pastor Timothy A. Duesenberg Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15; Ps 111; Col 3:12-17; Luke 2:22-40 (First Sunday after Christmas), 12/29/24)  *The Lord said to Moses, “Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”* – vv 1-2  **Lead In –** There have actually been religions that called for human sacrifices, even child sacrifices. The Mayan and Aztec cultures in Central America once did. This was also true of the ancient Celts and Vikings in northern Europe. And in the ancient Near East, it was the case among the Canaanites, for instance to the god Moloch, as mentioned in the Old Testament. But the human sacrifice called for in Christianity, in the words of the Apostle Paul in the Book of Romans, is “to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” That said, there is a lot in the Bible about sacrifices and consecrations. And in the Book of Exodus we will get at the root of Jesus’ consecration mentioned in the Gospel Reading, which is a prelude to His sacrifice…   1. **Remembering What God Has Done in the Past**    1. An African saying concerning an elderly man…    2. Two rituals to be observed to remember deliverance…    3. The reason for the consecration of the firstborn… 2. **Jesus Was the Firstborn, and Firstborn Son of Mary**    1. Circumcision, the purification, and then consecration…    2. Consecration of firstborn, and then the redemption…    3. Jesus not only consecrated, but the lamb of God… 3. **The Exodus Is the Template for Even Greater Salvation**    1. God raised up Moses to deliver Israel from bondage…    2. Their deliverance involved death, water, food, and pilgrimage…    3. Christ delivers us from sin, death, and the tyranny…   **Final Word –** We could take a page from the Old Testament Community of Faith. We need rituals, symbols, and practices to remember what God has done in the past. We can listen to our elders. We can cherish and meditate on the Holy Spirit Inspired writings of the Bible that record our Lord’s acts on our behalf for our deliverance. We can consecrate all our children at the font of Holy Baptism. And we can come often and participate in the Lord’s Supper. In all these ways, we not only remember, but we participate in these events and are sustained until our pilgrimage is over and we are finally and ultimately delivered from sin, death, and the tyranny of the devil. Our Lord Jesus was consecrated for just such a salvation.  **Ex 12:17** And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever.  **Ex 1:22** Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, “Every son that is born to the Hebrews you shall cast into the Nile, but you shall let every daughter live.”  **Ex 11:4-5** So Moses said, “Thus says the Lord: ‘About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. | **Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15 ESV**  *Consecration of the Firstborn*  1The Lord said to Moses, 2“Consecrate to me all the firstborn. Whatever is the first to open the womb among the people of Israel, both of man and of beast, is mine.”  3Then Moses said to the people, … 11“When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, as he swore to you and your fathers, and shall give it to you, 12you shall set apart to the Lord all that first opens the womb. All the firstborn of your animals that are males shall be the Lord's. 13Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. Every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem. 14And when in time to come your son asks you, ‘What does this mean?’ you shall say to him, ‘By a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery. 15For when Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of animals. Therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all the males that first open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem.’  **Lk 2:22-24** 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 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”  **According to Leviticus 12** there was a ritualistic cleansing needed for mothers after childbirth. The length of time for when the cleansing was to take place differed between giving birth to a boy and giving birth to a girl. It was 40 days after birth for a boy, and 80 days for a girl.  **Le 12:6** 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  **Le 12:8** 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.  **Jn 1:29** The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”  **1Co 10:1-4** For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.  **Ro 8:32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? |