

### Lesson 3 – December 21, 2025 – Dedication of Firstborn

**BIBLE BASIS:** Exodus 13:11–15, Luke 2:22–32

**BIBLE TRUTH:** Simeon experienced an overflowing joy when he dedicated Jesus.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord” (Luke 2:22)

**Lesson Aim: Key Takeaways** – God redeems His people, and we remember His salvation through obedience and dedication.

1. **God owns what He redeems.** The firstborn are His because He spared them.
2. **Redemption requires a substitute.** A lamb redeems the donkey—just as Jesus redeems us.
3. **Faith must be taught.** Children need to hear the story of salvation from those who lived it.
4. **Worship is remembrance.** Every sacrifice is a reminder of God’s mighty hand.
5. **Faithful Waiting:** Simeon models patient trust in God’s promises.
6. **Spirit-Led Life:** His actions show how the Spirit guides believers into God’s purposes.
7. **Messianic Fulfillment:** This moment reveals Jesus as the long-awaited Consolation of Israel, the hope of salvation.

## Historical & Scriptural Background

- **Setting:** Israel has just been delivered from Egypt. God institutes practices to remind them of His saving power. Exodus 12
  - **Command:** Every firstborn male—human or animal—belongs to the Lord. Clean animals are sacrificed, unclean animals are redeemed, and firstborn sons are redeemed by substitution. Exodus 13:1-10
  - **Purpose:** This ritual was a living reminder of God’s redemption in the Exodus, when He spared Israel’s firstborn during the Passover.
- 

## THE LESSON

### I Dedication of the Firstborn

#### Exodus 13:11-15

**11**“This is what you must do when the LORD fulfills the promise he swore to you and to your ancestors. When he gives you the land where the Canaanites now live,

**12**you must present all firstborn sons and firstborn male animals to the LORD, for they belong to him.

**13**A firstborn donkey may be bought back from the LORD by presenting a lamb or young goat in its place. But if you do not buy it back, you must break its neck. However, you must buy back every firstborn son.

**14**“And in the future, your children will ask you, ‘What does all this mean?’ Then you will tell them, ‘With the power of his mighty hand, the LORD brought us out of Egypt, the place of our slavery.

**15**Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, so the LORD killed all the firstborn males throughout the land of Egypt, both people and animals. That is why I now sacrifice all the firstborn males to the LORD—except that the firstborn sons are always bought back.’

## Filling in missing pieces:

### Vs. 1-2 – The firstborn was set apart

- God commands Moses: “Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the Israelites, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.
- The Lord lays claim to the firstborn as a continuous reminder of the night He struck Egypt’s firstborn yet spared Israel.

### Vs. 3-10 - Unleavened Bread and the account Remembered

- Moses tells the people never to forget “the day you came out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”
- For seven days they are to eat bread without yeast;
- On the seventh day they are to hold a feast to the Lord.
- Each year, in the month of Abib (around March and April which was later called Nisan), this feast will retell the account to future generations and be “as a sign on your hand and a reminder on your forehead.” Like unto a sign. Something that is always visible.

## What’s Happening here?

### 1. God’s Promise Fulfilled (v. 11)

- God reminds Israel that He will bring them into the land of the Canaanites, just as He promised their ancestors.
- **Meaning:** This sets the stage—obedience to these commands is rooted in God’s faithfulness.

### 2. Dedication of the Firstborn (v. 12)

- Every firstborn male animal that “opens the womb” must be set apart for the Lord.
- **Meaning:** The firstborn belongs to God as a symbol of gratitude and recognition of His deliverance. (First 10%)

### 3. Redemption of the Unclean (v. 13)

- Donkeys (unclean animals) must be redeemed with a lamb. If not redeemed, they must be killed.
  - Donkeys were considered *unclean animals* under Israel’s sacrificial system, meaning they could not be offered directly to God. Because the firstborn of every creature belonged to the Lord, the donkey had to be **redeemed**

**(bought back) with a lamb**—a clean, sacrificial animal. If the owner refused to redeem it, the donkey had to be killed, symbolizing that nothing unredeemed could remain in use. This law reinforced God's ownership of all life, the seriousness of redemption, and foreshadowed Christ as the Lamb who redeems us.

- If not redeemed, the donkey's neck was broken—symbolizing that what is not redeemed cannot live.

- **Donkeys in Israel:** Donkeys were common beasts of burden, essential for daily life. Killing them outright would be costly, so God allowed redemption with a lamb.

- **Firstborn sons must also be redeemed.**

- Unlike animals, human children could not be sacrificed. Instead, they had to be **redeemed**—bought back with a substitute (often a lamb or later a set payment, Numbers 18:15–16).
- The firstborn sons were bought back (redeemed) with a payment of five shekels of silver given to the priests.
- This ransom symbolized substitution- acknowledging God's ownership while allowing the child to remain with his family.
- The Levites served in the tabernacle/temple, representing the dedication of all firstborn sons.
- **Meaning:** The Levites became a living substitute for Israel's firstborn, devoted to God's service.

- 

- **Meaning:** Redemption is necessary for what cannot be sacrificed. This points forward to substitution—ultimately fulfilled in Christ, the Lamb of God.

- The redemption of the firstborn pointed forward to Jesus, the **true Firstborn Son** (Colossians 1:15), who was not redeemed but offered Himself as the perfect substitute for all humanity.
- Romans 8:14- "For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God."

- **Meaning:** Just as lambs redeemed sons, Christ redeems us from sin and death.

- *Exodus 13- Dedicate the firstborn*
- *Numbers 18 – Redeem with five shekels*
- *Numbers 3 – Levites as substitutes*
- *Luke 2 – Jesus presented, the ultimate Firstborn Redeemer*

#### 4. Teaching the Next Generation (v. 14)

- When children ask, “Why do we do this?” parents are to explain: *It was through the strength of the Lord’s hands we are free today; and because of that, we offer unto him the first male both animal and human as a way of honoring Him for what he did for us in Egypt.*
- **Meaning:** Rituals are meant to provoke questions and pass down the story of God’s salvation.

#### 5. Remembering the Cost of Deliverance (v. 15)

- God struck down Egypt’s firstborn to deliver Israel.
- Israel responds by sacrificing the firstborn of animals and redeeming their sons.
- **Meaning:** Worship is a response to redemption. The cost of freedom was great, and Israel must never forget it.

#### Reflection Question:

1. In what ways can we honor God today for delivering us from the bondage of sin through Christ?

#### LUKE 2:22-32

#### Historical & Scriptural Background

- **Jewish Law:** Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple to fulfill purification rites and dedicate Him as the firstborn (Exodus 13:2, Leviticus 12).
- **Simeon:** A righteous, devout man waiting for the “consolation of Israel.” The Holy Spirit had revealed he would see the Messiah before he died.
- **Fulfillment:** Simeon recognizes Jesus as the promised Savior, declaring Him “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory for Israel.”

## II Jesus Presented in the Temple – Luke 2:22-24

**22**And when the time of purification according to the Law of Moses was complete, His parents brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord

**23**(as it is written in the Law of the Lord: “Every firstborn male shall be consecrated to the Lord”),

**24**and to offer the sacrifice specified in the Law of the Lord: “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

### Filling in the missing pieces

#### **Vs. 1-7 The Birth in Bethlehem**

- Caesar Augustus orders a census, moving Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the prophesied town of David.
- Mary brings forth her firstborn Son, wraps Him in swaddling cloths, and lays Him in a manger because no room is found in the inn.

#### **Vs. 8–14 – Angels Announce Good News to Shepherds**

- While shepherds keep watch over their flocks, an angel announces the Savior’s birth. “Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people” (2:10).
- A multitude of heavenly hosts praises God: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests!” (2:14).

#### **Vs. 15–20 – Shepherds Visit the Manger**

- The shepherds hurry to Bethlehem, find Mary, Joseph, and the infant, and spread the word of what they have seen and heard.
- Mary treasures and ponders these events; the shepherds return, glorifying God.

### What’s Happening Here? Vs. 22-24

#### **1. Mary’s Purification & Jesus’ Presentation (vv. 22–24)**

- According to Leviticus 12, after childbirth a woman underwent a period of purification.
- **If a woman gave birth to a son:**
  - She was ceremonially unclean for **7 days**, similar to her menstrual period.

- On the **8th day**, the boy was circumcised.
- She then continued in purification for **33 more days**, making a total of **40 days** before she could enter the sanctuary or touch holy things. ie 6 weeks
- **If a woman gave birth to a daughter:**
  - She was ceremonially unclean for **14 days**.
  - She then continued in purification for **66 more days**, making a total of **80 days** before she could enter the sanctuary or touch holy things.
- Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, fulfilling Exodus 13:2 (*“Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”*).
- They offer the sacrifice of the poor—a pair of turtledoves or pigeons—showing their humility and obedience.
- **Meaning:** Jesus’ family faithfully obeyed the Law, even in His infancy, underscoring His identification with Israel

#### **Important to know – (vs. 22-24)**

This distinction between sons and daughters is one of those Old Testament ceremonial laws that highlighted ritual purity. It wasn’t about sin in the moral sense, but about ritual readiness to approach God’s presence.

We connect this to how **Jesus’ sacrifice fulfilled and surpassed these rituals**. Just as Simeon recognized in Luke 2 that Jesus was “a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory for Israel,” His coming meant that purification was no longer about days and offerings, but about being cleansed ***once and for all through Him***.

### **III. Simeon the Righteous (vs. 25-27)**

[25](#)Now there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

[26](#)The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.

[27](#)Led by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for Him what was customary under the Law,

## What's Happening Here?

### 1. Simeon's Character (v. 25)

- Simeon is described as *righteous and devout*, meaning he lived faithfully before God.
- He was waiting for the “*Consolation of Israel*”—a phrase pointing to the Messiah who would bring comfort, salvation, and restoration to God’s people.
- The Holy Spirit rested upon him, marking him as a man guided and empowered by God.

### 2. God's Promise to Simeon (v. 26)

- The Holy Spirit revealed that Simeon would not die until he had seen the Messiah (“the Lord’s Christ”).
- This was a personal promise from God, giving Simeon hope and assurance in his old age.
- **Meaning:** Simeon’s life was anchored in expectation—he lived with anticipation of God’s salvation.

### 3. Divine Appointment in the Temple (v. 27)

- Simeon is led by the Spirit into the temple courts at the exact moment Mary and Joseph arrive with Jesus.
- They came to fulfill the Law’s requirements (purification and dedication of the firstborn).
- **Meaning:** God orchestrated this meeting—Simeon’s faith and God’s timing intersected perfectly.

## IV. A Light For All People – Simeon’s Joy and Blessing

**28**Simeon took Him in his arms and blessed God, saying:

**29**“Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, You now dismiss Your servant in peace.

**30**For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

**31**which You have prepared in the sight of all people,

**32a** a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to Your people Israel.”





## What's Happening

### 1. Simeon Takes Jesus in His Arms (v. 28)

- Simeon physically embraces the child, symbolizing Israel's long-awaited hope finally arriving.
- His act is both tender and prophetic—holding salvation itself.

### 2. Blessing God (v. 29)

- Simeon praises God, declaring he can now “depart in peace.”
- **Meaning:** His life's waiting is complete; he has seen God's promise fulfilled.

### 3. Recognition of Salvation (vv. 30–31)

- Simeon declares that Jesus is God's salvation, prepared openly for all people.
- **Meaning:** Salvation is not hidden or exclusive—it is visible and available to everyone.

### 4. Universal Scope (v. 32)

- Jesus is “a light for revelation to the Gentiles” and “glory for Israel.”
- **Meaning:** He fulfills Israel's covenant promises and extends salvation to the nations.

## Reflection Questions:

### Exodus 13:11-15

1. Why did God command Israel to dedicate their firstborn?
2. How does the redemption of the donkey with a lamb point to Jesus?
3. How is giving of the first born like giving tithe back to the Lord?
4. Why were donkeys not dedicated back to the Lord?

**Luke 2: 22-32**

1. Why was Simeon waiting, and what does his faith teach us?
2. How does Simeon's declaration show that salvation is for everyone?
3. Why was it necessary for Mary to purify first?
4. How can we recognize and worship Jesus in our daily lives?