

## Introduction

In a recent conversation with a mother of four, I asked her if they were going to have any more children. She replied that she was not sure, and mentioned the heavy burden of responsibility that they are. I said that they are a gift from God, and she readily agreed with that. Children are a blessing and a gift, but God instructs mothers and fathers to bring them up in the ways of the Lord. For Jewish parents, under the Law, there were far more requirements and responsibilities than parents face today.

In our previous message of the Christmas Series, Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem to register in a census ordered by Caesar Augustus. While there, Mary gave birth to Jesus and wrapped in cloths and laid Him in a manger. Meanwhile, in a nearby field, an angel of the Lord appeared to some shepherds who were watching their flock at night. He told them that he was bringing good news of great joy, that a Savior, Christ the Lord, had been born in the city of David. Then a heavenly host suddenly appeared, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” The shepherds hurried to Bethlehem and found Jesus laying in a manger. They shared with Mary and Joseph what the angel had told them, and what they had seen. Mary treasured all these things in her heart.

Our text today begins with the naming of Jesus, eight days later, just before His circumcision, something required of all male children. Next, when the days of purification were completed, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. After presenting Him, and offering the prescribed sacrifices, a devout man named Simeon came, took Jesus into his arms, blessed God, and prophesied over Jesus. Then, an elderly prophetess named Anna came and gave thanks to God and continued to speak about Jesus to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

I have titled the message, Jesus’ Prophetic Confirmation. We will look at His circumcision. Second, we will look at His consecration. Third, we will look at the prophetic confirmations by Simeon and Anna.

## Presentation of Jesus to the Lord

1. Jesus’ Circumcision
2. Jesus’ Consecration
3. Jesus’ Confirmations

(Lk 2:21) “And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

(Lk 2:22-24) “And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, 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 that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”), {24} and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

(Lk 2:25-32) “And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. {26} And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. {27} And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and

when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, {28} then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, {29} “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart 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 of revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”

(Lk 2:33-38) “And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him. {34} And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed— {35} and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.” {36} And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, {37} and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. {38} At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

(Lk 2:39) “When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.”

### 1. **Jesus’ Circumcision** (Lk 2:21)

On the eighth day, before Jesus was circumcised, they gave Him the name, Jesus, the name that was given to Mary by Gabriel before Jesus was conceived.

(Lk 2:21) “And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was *then* called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

(Lk 1:31) “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.”

The eighth day was the day prescribed by God to Moses to circumcise all male children. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant, and for Jesus to be born under the Law and to complete all requirements of the Law, He had to be circumcised. Any uncircumcised male was cut off from the people, because he had broken the covenant with God. Mary and Joseph were righteous, keeping all the commandments of the Law, and they had brought Jesus to be circumcised on the eighth day. However, before they circumcised Him, they gave Him the name, Jesus.

(Ge 17:10–14) “This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. {11} And you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you. {12} And every male among you who is eight days old shall be circumcised throughout your generations... {14} But an uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant.”

In Galatians 4, Paul wrote that when the fullness of time came, God sent for His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. Jesus was born under the Law, which meant that He had to

fulfill all the requirements of the Law. The circumcision of Jesus was a significant event, because it was a requirement of the Law, and for Jesus to redeem those under the Law, He had to satisfy all the requirements of the Law.

(Ga 4:4–5) “But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, {5} so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”

Earlier in Luke 1:59, we saw that John the Baptist was also circumcised on the eighth day. In keeping the Law, it was very important for Zacharias and Elizabeth to circumcise their son. It was also on the eighth day that they gave him the name, John. It was the normal custom for the Jews to name their son on the day he was circumcised. The name, Jesus, was the name that was given to Mary by Gabriel. Gabriel did not name Jesus. The word angel simply means messenger. Gabriel, who stood before the presence of the Lord, received a message from God to give to Mary, and He went and delivered the message to her. God, the Father, named His Son. Fathers had the final say about the naming of children. If you recall, when John the Baptist was named, they asked Elizabeth, and she told them that his name was John. Then, they asked Zacharias, and he wrote down on a tablet, “his name is John.”

(Lk 1:59–63) “And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. {60} But his mother answered and said, “No indeed; but he shall be called John.” {61} And they said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.” {62} And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. {63} And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, “His name is John.” And they were all astonished.”

The name, Jesus, is a compound word. The first word is Yehowshua (Strong’s H3068), which is a name for God. The Jews would not use the vowels, because of their reverence for a holy God; and so they just wrote YHWH. The second word is yasha (Strong’s H3467), which means to save or deliver. Together, the name, Jesus, means God that saves or Savior. Jesus came to save us from our sins.

Before going on, I want to make a few comments about circumcision. Circumcision was the sign of the Old Covenant, and Jesus was born of a woman, under the Law, and was circumcised. God was not concerned about the outward circumcision as much as He was about the circumcision of our hearts. God wanted us to cleanse our hearts and to love Him with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength. In Deuteronomy 10, Moses exhorted the people of Israel, saying, “So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.” The word, “So,” links this exhortation to the previous verses. Moses told them five things that God requires of them. First, they were to fear the Lord. Second, they were to walk in all His ways. Third, they were to love Him. Fourth, they were to serve the Lord with all their heart and withal their soul. Fifth, they were to keep the Lord’s commandments and His statutes. The children of Israel were disobedient and stubborn, so Moses told them to circumcise their hearts and to stiffen their neck no longer. God is looking for changed hearts and lives, not just an outward sign.

(Dt 10:12–16) “Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, {13} and to keep the Lord’s commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good? {14} Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it. {15} Yet on your

fathers did the Lord set His affection to love them, and He chose their descendants after them, *even* you above all peoples, as *it is* this day. {16} So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.”

The circumcision of the heart is something that God has to do; it is not a physical circumcision that we or a doctor can do. In Deuteronomy 30, Moses told Israel that the “Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your god with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”

(Dt 30:6) “Moreover the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”

In the New Testament, when a person becomes a believer, God circumcises our heart. In Colossians 2, Paul wrote that we were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, and that we were buried with Jesus in baptism and raised up with Him through faith.

(Col 2:11–12) “and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; {12} having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.”

In Romans 2, Paul wrote that a Jew is not one outwardly, and that circumcision is not that which is outward in the flesh. A Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter. God is looking for changed lives, not outward appearances. Jesus fulfilled the Law, and was circumcised. We are no longer under the Law, and do not have to be circumcised. However, God is still looking for circumcised hearts, i.e., people that will love Him with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength; who will fear Him; who will serve Him; and will walk humbly with Him.

(Ro 2:28–29) “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. {29} But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God.”

## 2. **Jesus’ Consecration** (Lk 2:22-24, Dt 15:19)

The first requirement of Jewish parents was to circumcise their male babies on the eighth day. The second requirement that Jewish parents had to do was to present their first-born son to God. In Exodus 13, the Lord told Moses, “Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.” In verse thirteen, God said that they were to devote to the Lord the first offspring of every womb. So, the Jews were required to bring their firstborn sons to the Lord and sanctify, present, devote, or dedicate them to the Lord.

(Ex 13:1–2) “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, {2} “Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me.”

(Ex 13:11–12) “Now when the Lord brings you to the land of the Canaanite, as He swore to you and to your fathers, and gives it to you, {12} you shall devote to the Lord the first offspring of every womb, and the first offspring of every beast that you own; the males belong to the Lord.”

This command was given when they left Egypt. After God established the service by Levites and priests, He gave further instructions. The tribe of Levi was chosen to serve God. They were not given an inheritance in the Promised Land. Instead, they received the tithes for their service. Moses conducted a census, and found that there were 22,000 Levite men who were a month old and upward. Then, he conducted a census of all the firstborn sons from the other tribes, and there were 22, 273 men. Instead of taking the firstborn sons from all the other tribes, He chose the Levites. Since there was an excess number of firstborn sons from the other tribes, they paid the Levites five shekels for each of the 273 men in excess. That was their ransom price to be excluded from service to the Lord. From that point on, every firstborn son had to be redeemed from the Lord for five shekels.

(Nu 3:11–48) “Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, {12} “Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine.... {39} All the numbered men of the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron numbered at the command of the Lord by their families, every male from a month old and upward, *were* 22,000. {40} Then the Lord said to Moses, “Number every firstborn male of the sons of Israel from a month old and upward, and make a list of their names. {41} You shall take the Levites for Me, I am the Lord, instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel.” {42} So Moses numbered all the firstborn among the sons of Israel, just as the Lord had commanded him; {43} and all the firstborn males by the number of names from a month old and upward, for their numbered men were 22,273. {44} Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, {45} “Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel and the cattle of the Levites. And the Levites shall be Mine; I am the Lord. {46} For the ransom of the 273 of the firstborn of the sons of Israel who are in excess beyond the Levites, {47} you shall take five shekels apiece, per head; you shall take *them* in terms of the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel is twenty gerahs), {48} and give the money, the ransom of those who are in excess among them, to Aaron and to his sons.”

All the firstborn sons from that point on still belonged to God, but they were to be redeemed from serving, since the Levites had been chosen to serve. In Numbers 18, God commanded that all the firstborn sons of men were to be redeemed from service, and their redemption price was five shekels in silver.

(Nu 18:15–16) “Every first issue of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the Lord, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem. {16} As to their redemption price, from a month old you shall redeem them, by your valuation, five shekels in silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs.”

We pick up our text again, and find that when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. Notice that they did not present Jesus to the Lord until their days of purification were completed.

(Lk 2:22-24) “And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, 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 that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”), {24} and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

In Leviticus 12, the Law stated that a woman who gives birth to a male child was unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation. The male child was to be circumcised on the eighth day, and the mother remained in her uncleanness for another thirty-three days, making a total of forty days. For newborn daughters, the mother was in her uncleanness for fourteen days, and then an additional sixty-six days, making it a total of eighty days. During that period of uncleanness, she was not allowed to enter the temple. Anything she touched would also be unclean, so she was isolated from others. Then, when her days of uncleanness were over, she was to go present a one-year-old lamb for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon or turtledove for a sin offering. If she could not afford a lamb, then she was to take two turtledoves or two young pigeons and present them to the priest, and then she would be clean.

(Le 12:2–8) “Speak to the sons of Israel, saying: ‘When a woman gives birth and bears a male *child*, then she shall be unclean for seven days, as in the days of her menstruation she shall be unclean. {3} On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. {4} Then she shall remain in the blood of *her* purification for thirty-three days; she shall not touch any consecrated thing, nor enter the sanctuary until the days of her purification are completed. {5} But if she bears a female *child*, then she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; and she shall remain in the blood of *her* purification for sixty-six days. {6} ‘When the days of her purification are completed, for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the doorway of the tent of meeting a one year old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering. {7} Then he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her, and she shall be cleansed from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears *a child, whether* a male or a female. {8} But if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two young pigeons, the one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering; and the priest shall make atonement for her, and she will be clean.’”

Joseph and Mary presented Jesus to the Lord after the forty days were completed. They went to the temple, and they went to the court of women, as women were not allowed in the other courts. It was there, by the Gate of Nicanor, on the eastern side of the temple, that they offered up a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. This tells us that Joseph and Mary were poor, and could not afford to give a lamb.

(Lk 2:22-24) “And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, 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 that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”), {24} and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Joseph and Mary did everything that the Law required. They circumcised Jesus on the eighth day, waited for the completion of the days of uncleanness, and then presented the sin and burnt offering, and then presented Jesus to the Lord, which would have cost them five shekels.

Today, many people dedicate their children, male and female, to the Lord. The idea of redeeming them from service to the Lord, and offering five shekels for the redemption price is long forgotten. The dedication services today are more of a commitment of the parents to raise their children up on the ways of the Lord. It is also a time where a local congregation makes a commitment to help these parents train up the child in the ways of the Lord. This is something that parents should do, regardless of whether there is a special dedication service or not. I think there is merit in having the services because they remind parents of their duties as parents to bring their children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord. (See Proverbs 22:6, Ephesians 6:4, and Deuteronomy 6:7.)

In regard to the congregation making a commitment to help the parents raise a child, it should be clearly understood that the primary responsibility of raising children, and training them up in the ways of the Lord rests upon the parents. While Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and other church programs can bring additional training, they do not replace the training that parents are commanded to do.

In Deuteronomy 6, God instructs parents to diligently teach God's commands to our sons. Parents are to talk of them when they sit in their house, when they walk by the way, when they lie down, and when they rise up. Parents are to incorporate training of their children in everything they do. Many parents have never seen this modeled, and most have never been taught how to train their children. Churches can be the greatest help to parents by teaching them how to teach God's commands to their children. I have conducted "Father Seminars" for churches, where I help fathers learn to study and teach the word of God, lead their families in worship, and discipline their children. It is, and always has been, the parents responsibility to train up their children in the ways of the Lord.

(Dt 6:6-7) "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. {7} You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up.

### 3. **Jesus' Confirmations** (Lk 2:25-40)

In John 8, Jesus taught, "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true." This was based on Deuteronomy 19:15, where God said, "a single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed."

(Jn 8:17) "Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true."

(Dt 19:15) "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed."

Joseph and Mary have presented their Son to the Lord. They are righteous witnesses that He is the Messiah. In Matthew 1:19, Joseph is described as being a righteous man. His testimony could be accepted because he is a righteous man. Mary is also a righteous woman. She was a virgin, and she was a bondservant of the Lord. They gave him the name, Jesus, as they had been commanded by the angel. We have their testimonies about who Jesus is, but Luke goes beyond the requirement; he confirms that Jesus is the Messiah through the testimony of two other righteous witnesses: Simeon and Anna.

(Mt 1:19–21) “And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. {20} But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. {21} She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

#### **a. Simeon’s Confirmation**

Luke introduces Simeon as a righteous and devout man that was in Jerusalem. Simeon’s name is Hebrew, and means one who hears. There are various speculations about who this Simeon was, but we do not know for sure who he was. What we do know is that he is righteous and that the Holy Spirit was upon him, and he had heard a prophetic word from God that He would not see death until he had seen the Messiah, the Lord’s Christ. Therefore, he was looking for the consolation of Israel. The consolation of Israel is another name for the Messiah. The Jews believed that the Messiah would comfort and console the Jews. Simeon was looking, watching, and waiting for the Messiah to come.

(Lk 2:25-26) “And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. {26} And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.”

Simeon came in the Spirit into the temple. The Spirit was upon him, and he was in the Spirit when he came into the temple. He was being led by the Spirit, and the Spirit led him to go into the temple at the time that Joseph and Mary brought Jesus into the temple to present him to the Lord. We see God’s hand in all of this; He was directing everything.

(Lk 2:27) “And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,”

Simeon took Jesus into his arms, and blessed God. People that are full of the Holy Spirit bless God. Praising God and being filled with the Holy Spirit go hand-in-hand. Simeon said, “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”

(Lk 2:28-32) “then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, {29} “Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart 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 of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.”

Simeon prophetically declares that Jesus is the Savior, the One that brings God’s salvation, and that his eyes have seen it. He is bearing witness that he is looking at the Messiah. He declares that Jesus is a light of revelation to the Gentiles. The Jews did not understand that the Messiah was going to save Gentiles also. The early church did not understand it, until God began revealing it them through Peter, Paul, and others. Paul referred to this as the mystery of the gospel. In the Spirit, Simeon sees and prophesies about it. Lastly, Simeon prophesied that Jesus was the glory of God’s people Israel.



Joseph and Mary were amazed at the things that Simeon was saying about Jesus. Both of them had heard from angels. Gabriel had announced to Joseph that Mary had conceived by the Holy Spirit, and was going to bear a Son, and they were to name Him, Jesus. He told Joseph that Jesus would save His people from sins. Mary had heard from the angel, Gabriel, that the holy child was the Son of God, and that she was to name Him Jesus. He also told her that the Lord God would give him the throne of His father David. They are again being amazed at what they are hearing, this time from Simeon.

(Lk 2:33) “And His father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about Him.”

(Mt 1:20–21) “But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. {21} She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

Then Simeon blessed both of them, and then said to Mary, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed, and a sword will pierce even your own soul, to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed. For those that do not accept and believe in the Jesus as the Messiah, it will be their fall. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 2:14-16, that those that are being saved are the fragrance of Christ, and were a sweet aroma. However, for those that do not believe, they are an aroma of death. The gospel message is one of eternal consequences. Those that believe will have eternal life with God, and those that reject the Messiah will die in their sins, and will suffer eternal damnation.

(Lk 2:34) “And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed”

(2 Co 2:14–16) “But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. {15} For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; {16} to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?”

Jesus was also going to be a sign to be opposed. In Isaiah 7:14, the Lord gave a sign to Ahaz, and the sign was that a virgin will be with child. This prophecy was fulfilled with the birth of Christ.

(Is 7:14) “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.”

In Isaiah 11:10, the prophet wrote that the nations will resort to the root of Jesse (i.e., the Messiah), who will stand as a signal or sign for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious. Jesus was a sign that was spoken against by many of the Jewish leaders, and Romans. He was called a deceiver, and other things.

(Is 11:10) “Then in that day The nations will resort to the root of Jesse, who will stand as a signal for the peoples; and His resting place will be glorious.”

Then Simeon said that a sword will pierce even your own soul, to the end that thoughts from many may be revealed. Scholars say this refers to when Jesus was crucified on the cross, and

Mary was watching Him. It had to be painful for her to see and bear. It was going to be bitter to her soul.

(Lk 2:35) “and a sword will pierce even your own soul—to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

However, I believe that there is another way of looking at that verse. In John 1, Jesus is revealed as the Word that was in the beginning. In Hebrews 4:12, we find that the word of God is piercing as far the division of soul and spirit, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. The thoughts of many are revealed through Jesus. There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to His eyes.

(Jn 1:1) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

(Heb 4:12–13) “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. {13} And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

#### **b. Anna’s Confirmation**

The next witness was the confirmation by Anna, a prophetess. She was the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. For the past four hundred years there have not been any recognized prophets in Israel, yet this woman is described as a prophetess. She had lived with her husband for seven years, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four, so she is advanced in years. Anna never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. Only the Levites and priests stayed in temple, so she was not living in the temple, being of the tribe of Asher. However, when the temple was open, she was there. She would come early in the morning, and be there until it closed at night. She served the Lord with her fastings and prayers.

(Lk 2:36-37) “And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, {37} and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.”

Some elderly people have come to me apologizing that they cannot do more. They can’t serve in the traditional sense, but they are constantly praying for people and our church. What they are doing is extremely important, and we should never diminish the value of their service to the Lord and to all of us. Prayer is vitally important, and I am grateful for people like Anna that intercede for all of us.

At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God. This refers to the moment that Simeon was prophesying to Mary and Joseph about the Messiah. She is giving her Amen and agreement to what he is saying to the. She is confirming the words being spoken. After Simeon finished, she continued to speak about Jesus to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. Jesus is the Redeemer, and He came to redeem us from our sins. She was speaking about the Messiah to all those who were looking for the Messiah to come.

(Lk 2:38) “At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

After Joseph and Mary had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth. Luke does not talk about the visit of the Magi, and their visit would have been before they returned to Nazareth.

(Lk 2:39) “When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.”

Luke’s statement that they had performed everything according to the Law is another statement about the righteousness of Joseph and Mary; they kept the Law of the Lord. Luke mentions that they followed the Law of the Lord five times. Mary and Joseph were righteous and kept the Law. They were credible witnesses, and their witness was that Jesus was the Son of God, the Messiah.

- Lk 2:22: Kept the Law of Moses regarding purification.
- Lk 2:23: Presented Jesus according to the Law of the Lord
- Lk 2:24: Offered sacrifices according to the Law of the Lord
- Lk 2:27, Brought Jesus into the temple to carry out for Him the custom of the Law
- Lk 2:39: Performed everything according to the Law of the Lord

### **Conclusion and Applications**

Our passage was about the prophetic confirmation that Jesus is the Messiah. At his circumcision He is given the name, Jesus, which means Savior. He was given that name by the Lord God, and the message was relayed to Mary by Gabriel, and to Joseph through a dream. God told Joseph in that dream that Jesus was going to save His people from their sins. Joseph and Mary are righteous, and they did everything according to the Law. They were righteous and credible witnesses.

Joseph and Mary circumcised Jesus on the eighth day, according to the Law. After the days of purification according to the Law of Moses were completed, they brought Jesus to the temple to present Him to the Lord. They gave the sacrifice prescribed in the Law, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.

After they had presented Jesus to the Lord we have two more witnesses. Simeon, a righteous and devout man who was looking for the consolation of Israel, i.e., the Messiah came and took Him in His arms. Simeon was full of the Spirit and told the Lord that his eyes had seen God’s salvation, and was now free to depart in peace. He also said that Jesus was a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel. He prophesied that Jesus was appointed for the fall and rise of man and was a sign to be opposed. He was prophetically confirming that Jesus was the consolation of Israel, the Savior of Israel, the Messiah that he had been waiting for.

The final witness was Anna, who came in at that moment. She was an elderly prophetess, who served day and night in the temple, fasting and praying. Anna continued to speak of Jesus to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. She was also a trustworthy and credible witness that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.

The purpose of two or three witnesses is to confirm every fact. What God was confirming through the circumcision, naming, and presentation of Jesus was that He is the Messiah. He is the Savior. In order for us to be saved from our sins and have eternal life, we need to believe that Jesus is the Savior, that He came in the flesh, died for our sins, and was raised up on the third day. Paul wrote that we must believe in our hearts and confess with our tongues that Jesus is Lord. If you believe that Jesus did come in the flesh, die for our sins, and was raised from the dead, but have never confessed Jesus as Lord, I invite you to confess Him as Lord this morning. Pray with me:

Jesus, I believe that You are the Messiah, the Son of God, and that You came in the flesh as a baby. I believe that You died for our sins, and were raised from the dead. I confess You as my Lord today. I ask You to come into my life, forgive me of my sins, and to be my Lord and Savior. I ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Closing Prayer**

Father, thank You for Luke's account of the birth of Christ. Thank You for Your love for us, and for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die for our sins. Thank You for all the witnesses that You provided to confirm the fact that Jesus is the Messiah. Help us to be witnesses to our family, relatives, friends, and neighbors that Jesus is the Messiah. Like Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and Anna, help us to be righteous and credible witnesses. Fill us and lead us by the Holy Spirit so that we can bear witness, prophesy, and encourage others. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Discussion Questions**

- Why were the witnesses of Simeon and Anna so important?
- Since Mary had not sinned, and Jesus was born of the Spirit, why did Mary still have to give a sin offering and a burnt offering?
- What is the difference between baby dedications today and the presentation of firstborn sons to God in the Old Testament?
- Why did firstborn sons have to be redeemed from God?
- While we are free from the Law, are there principles from these Laws that we should apply in our lives?
- What was Simeon living for? What can we learn from his goal and purpose in life?
- What was the fruit of Joseph and Mary in Jesus' life? (See Luke 2:40.)

## **Presentation of Jesus to the Lord**

### **Introduction (Lk 2:21-39)**

1. **Jesus' Circumcision** (Lk 2:21, Ge 17:10–14, Ga 4:4-5, Lk 1:59–63, Dt 10:12-16, 30:6, Col 2:11-12, Ro 2:28-29)
  
2. **Jesus' Consecration** (Lk 2:22-24, Ex 13:1–12, Nu 3:11–48, Nu 18:15–16, Le 12:2–8, Pr 22:6, Eph 6:4, Dt 6:6-7)
  
3. **Jesus' Confirmations** (Lk 2:25-40, Jn 8:17, Dt 19:15, Mt 1:19–21)
  - a. **Simeon's Confirmation** (Lk 2:25-32, Mt 1:20–21, 2 Co 2:14–16, Is 7:14, 11:10, Jn 1:1, He 4:12-13)
  - b. **Anna's Confirmation** (Lk 2:36-39)

### **Conclusion and Applications**