



**IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH**  
**SERIES: ADVENT: JESUS, ONLY JESUS**  
**LESSON: AWAY IN A CASKET**  
**TEXT: LUKE 2:22-35**  
**DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2025**

## **INTRODUCTION**

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Christmas often draws our attention to Bethlehem with angels singing, shepherds running, and a newborn lying in a manger. But Luke doesn't let us stay there long. He moves us from the manger to the Temple. In our story we see Mary and Joseph quietly obeying God and an old man who is faithfully waiting on God.

In this scene, nothing looks extraordinary. Mary and Joseph appear as two ordinary parents fulfilling ordinary religious duties. Simeon appears as an ordinary man standing among many others in the Temple. Yet in this ordinary moment, God reveals something extraordinary.

## Text

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### Luke 2:22-33

*<sup>22</sup> 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<sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,*

*<sup>29</sup> “Lord, now you are letting your servant<sup>[e]</sup> depart in peace,  
according to your word;*

*<sup>30</sup> for my eyes have seen your salvation*

*<sup>31</sup> that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,*

*<sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and for glory to your people Israel.”*

*<sup>33</sup> And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.<sup>34</sup> And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed <sup>35</sup> (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”*

## Explanation

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### MARY AND JOSEPH

In Mary and Joseph, Jesus had law-abiding parents. We see several examples of their obedience to God's commands.

The first thing we notice is that they waited until after the time of purification before going up to the Temple. This may seem strange to us and even difficult to explain, but according to the Old Testament, a woman became ceremonially unclean following childbirth. After the birth of a male child, God instructed that she wait about forty days before entering the sanctuary.

Leviticus 12:1–4 gives these instructions:

*The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. 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. She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed.”*

Our point here is simply that Mary and Joseph followed common Jewish purification laws.

In addition to the purification law, Mary and Joseph followed another Old Testament command about presenting Jesus, their firstborn. This biblical command comes from Exodus 13:11–16, which explains:

<sup>11</sup> “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, <sup>12</sup> you 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. <sup>13</sup> Every 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. <sup>14</sup> And 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. <sup>15</sup> For 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.’ <sup>16</sup> It shall be as a mark on your hand or frontlets between your eyes, for by a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt.”

The Law prescribed that Israel present their firstborn children and make an offering to God. The offering “redeemed” the child—symbolizing a payment on behalf of the firstborn. God commanded this so Israel would remember His salvation in the Exodus, when He redeemed them through the judgment placed on Egypt’s firstborn. Jesus is being presented in remembrance of God’s past salvation. This is deeply ironic because He Himself will be the salvation to come.

So Mary and Joseph are again seen obeying the Law.

Another thing we learn about them is the kind of offering they brought. They presented a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons (Lev. 12:8). In the Old Testament, a family was supposed to offer a lamb unless they lacked the means. If they could not afford a lamb, they were permitted to offer the birds mentioned instead. This reveals the humble, modest status of Mary and Joseph.

From these verses we see that Jesus belonged to law-abiding parents. He truly was, as Galatians 4:4-5 says, “born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law.” We also get a glimpse into God becoming man and dwelling in humility. He belonged to the meek and lowly.

## **SIMEON**

Next, we are introduced to a man named Simeon. We know nothing about him apart from this brief account. The Bible describes him as righteous and devout. There is no indication that he was a priest, prophet, or held any religious office. Yet the Holy Spirit chose to reveal to him that he would see the Lord’s Christ before his death.

The impression we get from the story is that Simeon’s life was centered on this promise. He waited expectantly. He waited hopefully—knowing the Christ would bring the consolation of Israel.

The text emphasizes that the Holy Spirit was upon him. Through Simeon the Spirit was doing a special work. The Spirit revealed the promise to him, and the Spirit led him into the Temple “coincidentally” on the very day Mary and Joseph brought Jesus. The Spirit evidently impressed upon Simeon that Jesus was the One he had been waiting for.

What a special moment this must have been for Simeon—to hold baby Jesus in his arms. Imagine getting to hold baby Jesus and knowing that He would be your personal Savior and the Savior of the world!

Amazingly, that seems to be all Simeon wanted from life—simply to see the Christ. He blesses God and expresses how meaningful the moment is to him. He knows he can now die in peace. No other goal or achievement could surpass what he has just experienced. His faith has become sight.

Amazingly, he also seems to understand what kind of Savior Jesus will be. Presumably still led by the Spirit, he announces that Jesus will be a Savior for

both Gentiles and Jews. Anyone, just like Simeon, can die in peace if they look to Jesus.

Hearing Simeon must have been encouraging to Mary and Joseph. Every parent enjoys hearing good things about their child, but this was on another level entirely. How incredible to be chosen as the mother and earthly father of Jesus. They marveled at what they heard.

Yet Simeon also gives Mary a somber message. Though he blesses her, the message likely felt heavy. Simeon tells her that many will rise and fall because of Jesus. Some will celebrate His coming and believe; others will oppose Him. Eternal life will depend on one's response to Jesus. And Mary herself will have her own heart pierced.

Up to this point, Mary may have heard only joyful proclamations about the salvation Jesus would bring. Now she hears a hint of His suffering—and her own. The irony is striking: Simeon may die in peace because Jesus will not. Jesus must die in suffering. And Mary will experience the unique grief of a mother watching her child suffer.

### **Discussion Questions:**

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- Does anything stand out to you about Mary and Joseph in this story?
- Does anything stand out to you about Simeon?
- Why do you think the Holy Spirit would choose to reveal to Simeon that he would see the Christ before dying? What might God's purpose have been?
- Is there any goal you have in life that might cause you to say, "Now that I have done \_\_\_\_\_, I can die in peace"? How does that compare to Simeon's goal?
- Try to put yourself in Mary and Joseph's shoes. What might they have been thinking after meeting Simeon?
- Read Luke 2:36–38 about Anna. What comparisons can you make between Simeon and Anna—their message, their character, their devotion?

### **Conclusions or Application**

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| <b>GOD HONORING PARENTS PROVIDE THE BEST HOMES FOR CHILDREN</b> |
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The Gospels tell us little about Jesus' childhood. Most of what we can infer about His upbringing comes from the birth accounts.

From today's story we observe that Jesus was not born into a wealthy family—hence the offering of turtledoves and pigeons. Yet we also see a family that loved God and desired to obey His commands. Jesus was raised in a home marked by faithfulness.

This reminds us that the best gifts we can give our families do not have to be expensive. The real gift is transferring our faith and living God-honoring lives. That is what makes a home truly good.

### **JESUS WAS BORN TO DIE**

As exciting and warm as it must have been for Mary and Joseph to be the parents of Jesus, it also came at a price. What a privilege and yet what a burden. God entrusted them with a noble task.

In our story today, we learn something that God had planned long ago—that Jesus' birth as celebratory as it was, also meant that he had been born to die. Jesus' coming was met with tremendous celebration and awe. A special star was placed in the sky, angels sang, and shepherds had begun to announce Jesus' birth. Still more, wise men would soon be traveling with gifts to bear. Yet, amidst all the excitement, the reality of Jesus' coming should not be forgotten. He had come to bear sins and to die.

His actions and message would prove to be controversial to many. In the end, it would cost him his life and thus grief for his mother.

### **SALVATION IS FOR ALL**

Of course, as painful as Jesus' death would be, it also meant salvation is extended to all who will believe. Jesus came to a Jewish family who abided by the law. But he came save both the Jews and the Gentiles. Simeon makes this clear in his Spirit inspired blessing that Jesus would be a "light for revelation for the Gentiles."