

THE SAVIOR IS PRESENTED

+ SESSION OUTLINE

1. The Messiah will fulfill the law entirely (Luke 2:21-24).
2. The Messiah will bring salvation globally (Luke 2:27-32).
3. The Messiah will obey the Father completely (Luke 2:41-50).

Background Passage: Luke 2

+ WHAT WILL MY GROUP LEARN?

Even from childhood, Jesus fulfilled all of the law, showing that He is the Messiah, the righteous One who came to bring salvation to the world.

+ HOW WILL MY GROUP SEE CHRIST?

Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. His life of perfect obedience and sinlessness pleased the Father and proved that He is the worthy sacrifice for sin. All who trust in Jesus receive life and forgiveness through His death and resurrection and are credited with His perfect righteousness.

+ HOW SHOULD MY GROUP RESPOND?

Because we have been credited with Christ's righteousness, we live knowing that we are fully accepted by God while also seeking to obey God in all areas out of gratitude and love for Him.

GROUP TIME



SCRIPTURE HANDOUT

Scan this QR code for a reproducible handout of this session's Scripture passages.

INTRODUCTION

SETTING: The Gospel writers spent almost no time covering the details of Jesus's life following His birth up until the time He began His public ministry around the age of 30. Their main focus was the three years of Jesus's ministry in and around Jerusalem proclaiming the kingdom of God and, uniquely, His death, burial and resurrection. Mark started his Gospel with Jesus's ministry and spent roughly half of the total time of his writing describing the final weeks of Jesus's life. In Luke's Gospel, however, we are given one of the few glimpses into Jesus's early years to reveal His perfect character.

DISCUSS: Why do you think the authors of the Gospels spent such little time describing Jesus's early years? (these years were time in preparation; the focus of Jesus's work centered on His death and resurrection; Jesus spent time growing and developing like a regular man, proving His humanity; few knew of His divinity and purpose in His early years so few took note)

TRANSITION: Sometimes we feel hidden from God, like the moments of our lives are somehow lost in God's grand purposes. The life and ministry of Jesus reveals that God was at work even in His so-called hidden years to prepare Jesus for the work He would subsequently fulfill. And even during these developmental years, a time when the natural human process of maturation often leads to all sorts of rebellion and chaos, Jesus did not sin. He was growing, maturing, and fulfilling the perfect law of God as a sinless man.

OPTIONAL QUESTION: What might it have been like to raise Jesus as His parents? (awkward to assert a parent's authority; difficult knowing He was the Messiah and yet He was growing and changing like a normal man; uncertain because you had these great promises from the angel about who this Child would be, yet in many ways, Jesus would have seemed normal)

POINT 1

THE MESSIAH WILL FULFILL THE LAW ENTIRELY (LUKE 2:21-24).

NOTES

21 And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 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 **23** (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) **24** and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 2:21-24** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSE 21** commentary to highlight that Jesus grew up from a baby to boyhood to manhood like any other man (*the bold words fill in blanks in the Daily Discipleship Guide [DDG]*):

KEY DOCTRINE #49: Jesus's Humanity: In addition to being fully **divine**, the Bible also affirms that Jesus is fully **human**. Not only does the Old Testament affirm that the Promised One (Messiah) would be a man (Isa. 7:14; 9:6; Mic. 5:3), but the New Testament also affirms that Jesus's earthly life bore all the marks of being a human. He experienced the circumstances **common** to living as a human being, such as hunger (Matt. 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), weariness (Matt. 8:24), sorrow (John 11:35), and pain (the crucifixion).

DISCUSS: What benefits might we discover in dwelling upon Jesus's humanity? (feel understood because He was like us; convicted and encouraged by His constant resistance to temptation; feel loved because He left His throne in heaven to come to earth to save us; recognize the value of being human, made in God's image, and the equal value of others, who are made in that same image)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 22-24** commentary to emphasize the following idea (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Mary and Joseph were faithful to fulfill the law of Moses in raising Jesus, and thus, **everything** about Jesus was a fulfillment of the **law**.

TRANSITION: Since Jesus's life was faithful to fulfill the law, He demonstrated Himself to be God, and as God, He is able to bring salvation to anyone anywhere.

CIRCUMCISION

The ritual of cutting off the foreskin of a male's reproductive organ that God prescribed to Abraham and his descendants as a sign of the covenant they had with God. Though it was meant to be symbolic of spiritual change, some thought the act itself gave them a right standing before the Lord. God, however, through Jesus and Paul, reminded the people that spiritual change and obedience was more important than this one act (see 1 Cor. 7:19).

COMMENTARY

VERSE 21 / Luke presented Mary and Joseph as obedient and faithful to the law of Moses. They waited the appropriate number of days to have their son circumcised. Even though Jesus is God, He also was human and needed to be circumcised according to the law. His physicality reminds us of His humanity. And though He was a child, we're reminded that everything about Him fulfilled the law.

What's also important is the giving of the name. Much more than in our day and culture, the name given to a child in biblical times denoted something important about the circumstances of the child's birth, his family heritage, or the parents' trust in God and prayer for their child. Throughout the Old Testament, names played a significant role in confirming God's blessing and promises. Many times, a significant change in a person's life that was brought about by God's power was signified by changing the person's name (think Abram to Abraham or Sarai to Sarah). There was no more important child ever born than the eternal Son of God, so surely His name would be of great significance. And it was. The name "Jesus" means "the Lord saves," and that's what Jesus would do—save people from their sins. Luke described the interaction between the angel and Mary this way:

And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. (Luke 1:31-33)

These were significant promises dripping with the language of fulfillment. They show that this promised Messiah, this Jesus, is the outworking of the plan of God to save sinners and fix the world.

But it's also worth noting that the giving of the name was significant because it

demonstrated the obedience of Mary and Joseph. They did what the angel told them to do. You might imagine that this was a difficult decision. It was enough to have to try to explain that you got pregnant by the Holy Spirit, and then to name the child based on a promise that He was going to save people from their sins. Talk about big shoes to fill.

VERSES 22-24 / Verses 22-24 feel almost commonplace for a Gospel account. Why include the fact that Jesus's parents dedicated Him to the Lord and offered some sacrifices? Mainly to point to the fact that Jesus's parents were Jews who honored the law and honored God by their obedience.

Mary and Joseph obeyed the laws prescribed for them in three different ways in this passage: "the purification of a woman forty days after the birth of a child (Lev. 12:2-4,6), the presentation of the firstborn to God (Ex. 13:2,12,16; 34:19; Num. 18:15-16), and the dedication of the firstborn into the Lord's service (1 Sam. 1-2)."¹

Everything surrounding Jesus was honoring to God, even in His early years. As Mary and Joseph followed the law in all that they did to raise Jesus, no one could say that He didn't fulfill the law completely. His parents were committed, diligent, and faithful to obey God to the fullest and to raise Jesus in obedience to God's laws. Thus, Jesus in His humanity and divinity was able to fulfill the law in His growing-up years as well as in His three years of ministry to the people.

No other person was like Jesus in this way. No one could claim that Jesus was not perfect in His humanity and divinity. The obedience of Mary and Joseph and Jesus's own obedience points to His perfection. And this perfection characterizes the Lamb without blemish who would one day be the perfect and sufficient sacrifice needed for the restoration and salvation of humankind.

POINT 2

THE MESSIAH WILL BRING SALVATION GLOBALLY (LUKE 2:27-32).

NOTES

27 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, **28** he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, **29** “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; **30** for my eyes have seen your salvation **31** that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, **32** a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 2:27-32** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 27-31** commentary to highlight the following point (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

Simeon praised God because He recognized that **Jesus** was God’s promised plan to bring **salvation** to all people.

DISCUSS: What are some ways we should respond to the good news of salvation? (with praise to God; with a changed life; with feelings of freedom and a weight lifted; with confession of sin; with a renewed spirit to live for God; with a desire to tell others of that good news)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSE 32** commentary to emphasize the following idea (the **bold** words fill in blanks in the DDG):

In Jesus, Simeon saw that God was being faithful to His promise to send a Messiah who would bring salvation—first to the nation of **Israel** and then to the entire **world**.

DISCUSS: What do we learn about God when we see Him keep His promises? (God can be trusted; He’s good and will do good in the world; He’s faithful to do the things He says even when it might seem like He’s forgotten; nothing can keep God from fulfilling His promises; we should trust God to continue to keep His promises because this is in keeping with His character)

TRANSITION: In order to bring salvation, Jesus had to live a perfect life. Though He is God, He was also fully man, so His obedience allowed Him to fulfill the law on behalf of His people.

GENTILES

All non-Jews are Gentiles. The Jews tended to hate the Gentiles because they thought they were impure, or because they had often been oppressed by Gentiles, or because Gentiles during Jesus’s time and before did not believe in the one true God, or because they thought they alone should have a special relationship with God. But those who studied God’s Word well would have understood that God had a plan to save Israel and all nations who trust in Him.

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

“It is an encouraging thought that God never leaves himself entirely without a witness. Small as his believing church may sometimes be, the gates of hell will never completely prevail against it. True Christians in every age should remember this and take comfort.”²

—J. C. Ryle (1816-1900)

COMMENTARY

VERSES 27-31 / Verses 25 and 26 introduce a seemingly skippable figure in the Bible—Simeon. He is virtually unknown, and like John the Baptist, his sole intent in this passage is to point attention to Jesus Christ. He had been told by God’s Spirit that he would live until the Messiah was born. You can imagine that Simeon was looking for that Messiah. He trusted God to keep His word because Simeon was a devout man. Among the many who might have stopped looking and lost all hope, Simeon was still holding on to God’s promise.

Then the day came, and Simeon entered the temple and met Jesus and His parents. We are not told what caught Simeon’s attention. Maybe Mary and Joseph described Jesus’s birth; maybe it was the mere mention of Jesus’s name; maybe something about His countenance marked Him as the Messiah. Somehow Simeon knew.

Verse 30 is a play on words, since the name Jesus means salvation. **“My eyes have seen your salvation”** means the same as “My eyes have seen your Jesus.” Jesus can never be separated from His purpose of bringing salvation to the world.

Simeon then attributed Jesus’s presence to God’s activity. Jesus did not merely show up of His own accord or in His own time or in His own way. Instead, Jesus was prepared by God. Everything about Him—when He was born, how He was born, where He was born, to whom He was born—everything was prepared by God in full view of the watching world for those who had eyes to see it. It was as if God was intent on putting His faithfulness on display in the most remarkable way possible.

VERSE 32 / Seeing the Bible as one consistent story that from start to finish tells of God’s work to save sinners and fix the world through Jesus Christ is essential. While Jesus’s birth doesn’t happen until roughly two-thirds of the way through the Bible, all of the stories leading up to that point are preparing the reader for His arrival.

The unity of the Bible is seen most clearly in verses like Luke 2:32. Way back in Isaiah 42, the prophet described the coming of Jesus as One who will “bring forth justice to the nations” (v. 1) because He will be “a light for the nations” (v. 6). Then again in Isaiah 49:6, God, through the prophet, said:

It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

Simeon, a faithful Israelite, knew these promises. He knew that God’s Messiah would fulfill these promises and that God was faithful to do just what He said He would do. So when Simeon found Jesus, he knew what this Messiah would do.

And what would the Messiah’s mission be? Simeon, in quoting this Old Testament prophecy, pointed out that Jesus would do two things. 1) He would bring God’s salvation to His people, the nation Israel. Even though many of these people would not believe, Jesus would come first to the Jewish nation and declare Himself to be the long-awaited Messiah. But His mission would extend far beyond Israel. 2) He also would bring God’s salvation to the nations. While the clear epicenter of God’s activity throughout the Old Testament was Israel, and this would also be the focus of Jesus’s earthly ministry, Jesus’s saving activity was not meant to stop with Israel alone. His salvation offer extends to all the nations of the earth. Through faith in Jesus and repentance from sin, all people can be united to God and can become His children.

This mission doesn’t stop with Jesus. In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul applied this mission to himself and the church (Acts 13:47). The church continues the mission of God through Jesus to bring the offer of salvation to all the nations of the earth (Acts 1:8).

POINT 3

THE MESSIAH WILL OBEY THE FATHER COMPLETELY (LUKE 2:41-50).

NOTES

41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. **42** And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. **43** And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, **44** but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, **45** and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. **46** After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. **47** And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. **48** And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." **49** And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" **50** And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them.

READ: Ask a volunteer to read aloud **Luke 2:41-50** from his or her own Bible.

EXPLAIN: Use **PACK ITEM 2: JESUS'S EARLY YEARS MAP**, referencing the distance between Jerusalem and Jesus's likely home in Nazareth, and the **VERSES 41-47** commentary to highlight the following point (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus was **obedient** in thirsting for knowledge of God as He grew in **wisdom**.

DISCUSS: What character traits are demonstrated by Jesus's listening and asking questions in the temple? (humility; patience; a desire to learn; respect for elders and authorities)

EXPLAIN: Use the **VERSES 48-50** commentary to emphasize the following idea (*the bold words fill in blanks in the DDG*):

Jesus knew His **Father** and was obedient to Him, **first** and foremost.

DISCUSS: How should we reconcile our obedience to God and our expected obedience to human authorities? (God deserves our utmost obedience; God has told us to obey the human authorities He has placed over us; human authority must be considered as subject to God's ultimate authority; we should pray for God's wisdom and strength to know when and how to reject the unjust laws and commands of human authorities)



THE FEAST OF THE PASSOVER

The Passover was a great act of God's salvation. He delivered His people, Israel, by sparing their firstborn from death. The sign of blood on the house was enough to cause the destruction to pass over the Israelites. God wrote this annual celebration into the Law of Moses because of its significance (Lev. 23:4-8). The celebration was a reminder that God saves.

COMMENTARY

VERSES 41-47 / Once again, these verses paint the picture of a faithful family honoring and obeying the Law of Moses. The law had instructions for the dedication of a child and the offerings that would be acceptable at such a time, and the law also had instructions for annual festivals. These festivals commemorated significant events in Israel's history. Foremost among these was the celebration of the Passover. This annual celebration required the people to stop and remember God's faithfulness to preserve His people during the plagues, and specifically the final plague, to help them escape from Pharaoh's rule over them in Egypt and to lead them to the promised land (see Ex. 12).

The salvation that the Passover commemorated was a foreshadowing of the salvation to come in Jesus. This faithful family brought God's greatest salvation to the temple at the time when a great salvation in history was celebrated. With Jesus's death, the perfect blood to spare sinners from spiritual death was shed, and those covered by His blood will be saved. All others face the wrath of God.

After the festival, Jesus's parents accidentally left him behind in Jerusalem. At this time, it would have been the custom for groups to make this pilgrimage together. In such an event, families often would split up and the husband might go separately, or he might even travel ahead in the journey to ensure safe travel. Somehow, Jesus was overlooked, and He did not go with the family back home, presumably to Nazareth. After some period of time when His parents couldn't find Jesus, they returned to Jerusalem to continue the search for their Son there.

You might imagine a pre-teen boy being left behind and getting into all sorts of mischief. But not Jesus. Mary and Joseph searched for Him and found Him in the temple among the teachers. Unlike the concept of adolescence today, in Jesus's day, it would have been common for boys

of this age to be settling into their family business, learning a trade, and preparing for responsibility and adulthood. Thirteen was the common age of adulthood, and here Jesus was twelve.

What's compelling in this narrative isn't merely the maturity that Jesus showed but the fact that He seemed to be settling into His Father's business already at this age. He was in the temple. He was asking questions of the religious leaders. And His questions and His answers gave some indication of unique wisdom and insight into God's will and ways. He was set apart, and others not only took notice, they were **"amazed."**

VERSES 48-50 / Jesus's parents found Him and spoke to Him, and you can almost hear the frustration in their words: **"Why have you treated us so?"** But Jesus responded calmly, saying, **"I must be in my Father's house."** Luke used the term **"must"** often to show how God's plan must and will be fulfilled (4:4; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5; 22:37; 24:7,26,44).³ Jesus may not have fully known all that was expected of Him at this point, but He did know that He was to teach and point people to the Father and to His kingdom. Despite His parents' frustration, He was obeying the Father by being in the temple. The Almighty God and His will should always be our highest priority.

Jesus also knew who He was and whose He was. Jesus was making a statement of identity. He knew Himself to be the Son of God. He knew that God was His Father. His unique life and mission wasn't lost on Him. Scholars debate the exact point in time when Jesus understood who He was and what He came to do because the text doesn't say exactly. But Luke did give an indication that Jesus knew more than others, even His parents. Here, Jesus was making a statement about His identity to those who would listen, and this pattern of self-revelation would continue throughout His earthly ministry.

MY RESPONSE

Because we have been credited with Christ's righteousness, we live knowing that we are fully accepted by God while also seeking to obey God in all areas out of gratitude and love for Him.

NOTES

HEAD:

Jesus was perfect, and the descriptions of His developmental years, though sparse, paint the picture of an obedient worshiper. We must not think of Jesus as some bionic being who was immune to sin and suffering. Jesus was human. Fully human. And as such, He experienced life in a fallen world and the same temptations that we all face. Yet Jesus's perfect life was necessary for Him to offer and secure for us a righteous standing before God as a gift.

Why does it matter that Jesus was perfect, even as a child?

HEART:

Perfection stirs our hearts. When we see an artist or an athlete do something perfectly, we are impressed, even awe-struck. It's compelling to see someone do something difficult and do it without flaw. Is there anything more difficult for human beings than to be perfect? It's not just difficult for us—it's impossible. We simply can't be perfect, and we know it. So when we encounter Jesus and we see Him living out faithful obedience even in the years when youthful passions tend to lead all people astray, we should be inspired to worship Him as God.

Why should Jesus's perfection on your behalf help you fight temptation?

HANDS:

We should be compelled to action by the truth that Jesus is the only hope for salvation for the nations. He is not merely the light for Israel; He is the light to the nations. He is the only One who can forgive sin and grant a righteous standing before God. Since Jesus is established as a light to the nations, we should consider how we can be involved in God's global work through His church. Whether we go, send, or support, all of God's people are called to making it known among the nations that Jesus is the Savior.

How will you be involved in testifying of Jesus to the nations?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Jesus came to set men free. By interpreting the true spiritual meaning of the Law, He released them from the legalistic bondage under which they had so long been oppressed, without lowering the standard."⁴

—J. O. Sanders
(1902-1992)

POINT 1: THE MESSIAH WILL FULFILL THE LAW ENTIRELY (LUKE 2:21-24).

+ **COMMENTARY**

“Vv. 22–24 generally reflect the protocol of Lev 12, where a birth mother’s purification is followed by an offering in the temple. Luke departs from Lev 12 in two respects, both of which can be explained by his interest in highlighting Jesus rather than Mary. The first is the reference to ‘their purification’ (v. 22; NIV ‘the purification’). Torah required only the purification of the mother, but Exod 34:19–20 requires also the redemption of the firstborn, which Luke appears to include in the purification of Mary, thus their purification. The second departure concerns the offering of ‘a pair of doves or two young pigeons’ (v. 24). This offering, which was prescribed for Israelites of humble means and thus identifies Mary and Joseph with the lower economic classes in Palestine, was prescribed for the purification of a birth mother (Lev 5:11; 12:8). Luke ascribes this offering to the presentation of Jesus in the temple (v. 22) in a manner reminiscent of the presentation of Samuel at the sanctuary in Shiloh (1 Sam 1:22–24). The two exceptions to the protocol set forth in Lev 12 thus accentuate the presentation, even manifestation, of Jesus in the temple.”⁵

+ **ILLUSTRATION**

“Jim was never one for following the rules until he enlisted in the military. After he graduated from boot camp, he had two days to get across country to his next assignment. On the second day, he called his father midmorning from his hotel room. “Why aren’t you on the road yet?” His father asked. “Well, I’m all ready to go, Dad,” Jim replied, “but the sign on the door says ‘Checkout at 11 a.m.’”⁶

Obedience is only right when it considers to whom you’re being obedient. First and foremost, you should be obedient to God. If others try to sway you from that, no matter who they are, you should always prioritize what God says to do.

POINT 2: THE MESSIAH WILL BRING SALVATION GLOBALLY (LUKE 2:27-32).

+ COMMENTARY

“We are not told Simeon’s vocation; all we know is that he is ‘righteous and devout’ (v. 25). Among the ‘righteous’ (*dikaios*) of the Old Testament were Job (Job 1:1) and many of the prophets. The word ‘devout’ (*eulabes*) was used in Greek culture of statesmen (Plato, *Statesman*, 311b); Philo used this word to describe Abraham (Philo, *Who is the Heir?* 6 § 22). Whereas the shepherds symbolized the average person on the street, Simeon represents the testimony of a wise elder who has walked with God. Part of his wisdom is seen in that he is looking for the hope of the nation, the consummation of God’s promise—‘the consolation of Israel’ (v. 25). Saints in touch with God’s heart often await expectantly the completion of God’s promises. This revered saint is led to see what the arrival of this child means. Simeon, like Zechariah and Mary, is expectant that God will deliver Israel. He has not given up believing that God will complete his promise, and his living in light of that hope brings perspective to the present. The Spirit, the source of all revelation and testimony, has told him that before he passes away, he will see ‘the Lord’s Christ.’ Therefore, when the child Jesus arrives, he is there and is led by God to offer a note of praise (known as the *Nunc Dimittis*, a name that comes from the Latin beginning to the hymn). In that song, which includes some prediction, not all the notes are happy, for the career of the Lord’s Christ, though glorious, is not absent of trial and disappointment. The locale of Simeon’s prophecy, the temple, is significant for Jewish readers, for this prophet is testifying to Jesus in the midst of the nation’s most sacred locale. Simeon begins by saying that God can take him now, for he has fulfilled his call of seeing the child who is the Christ. Once again, Luke has emphasized how God has performed his word.”⁷

+ ILLUSTRATION

It’s easy to think of the nations as some remote bush in the back corner of Africa, and that is certainly one way to conceptualize God’s mission to bring salvation to the nations. He makes His way to places like this through the faithful witness of Christians who are willing to go and share the gospel of Jesus, and we should praise Him for their faithfulness (see Rom. 10).

But it’s also interesting to consider that many of us are in supposedly reached parts of the world. It’s easy to see places like the United States as the base of God’s operation, but this is not the case. God’s saving activity began in the Near East, and Jesus’s ministry focused on Jerusalem and the surrounding region. From there, places like the United States are about as “end of the world” as it gets. We should give thanks to God that in His good providence, testimony of the work of Jesus Christ made its way to us. Jesus is a light to our nation—to our hearts—by virtue of the faithful outworking of Jesus’s mission to be a light to the nations. And we can still be a part of that work as many people in United States, whether long-term citizens or new immigrants, still need to hear the good news of Jesus and the salvation and hope He brings.

POINT 3: THE MESSIAH WILL OBEY THE FATHER COMPLETELY (LUKE 2:41-50).

+ COMMENTARY

“As the scene opens, Mary and Joseph are the subjects of the action, but as it unfolds Jesus takes on an active role—for the first time in the Gospel. As the scene closes, he went to Nazareth, accompanied by them; he has become the subject of the verbs. This active role requires explanation, for it distances him from his parents, and this is the function of Jesus’ words in 2:49. Finally, the pericope contrasts two sorts of piety, not in order to negate the one but to underscore the preeminence of the other. It is a good thing to keep the Passover, but the sort of pious environment to which Jesus has become accustomed at home serves and must serve the more fundamental purpose of God. Not even familial claims take precedent over aligning oneself uncompromisingly on the side of God’s purpose. Jesus’ words, then, are pivotal, and contain within them both an affirmation of his particular relation to God and his commitment to God’s purpose. The first is emphasized by the dramatic development of the story, wherein Luke repeatedly refers to Jesus’ parents, Mary refers to Jesus as child and speaks of Jesus’ father, and Jesus counters by naming the God of the temple as his Father. That is, Luke has staged this interchange so as to pinpoint as the primary issue, Who is Jesus’ father? To whom does he owe primary allegiance? Jesus’ aligning himself first with God’s aim comes to the fore especially through his use of the expression ‘it is necessary’—employed regularly throughout Luke-Acts as an indicator of salvation-historical necessity.”⁸

+ ILLUSTRATION

Complete obedience is rare. Parents of little kids know that discipline centers around a failure to obey completely. A child is asked to clean his room and he crams the clothes under the bed, or she is asked to wipe off the kitchen table and makes a singular sweeping motion with a cloth in a general direction of the table. Half-hearted, half-way obedience is normative.

Had Jesus obeyed in this way, He would not have been able to offer perfect righteousness to sinners as a gift. Jesus had to obey all the way and perfectly. He could not cut corners or offer general compliance. He had to be faithful, completely. Imagine how this must have felt for Jesus through these years. Perfect obedience when His peers were surely being foolish. But the glimpses we are given of Jesus demonstrate that He was perfect, down to the letter of the law. This perfect, all-the-way faithfulness is necessary for our salvation and is a model for us to follow in our effort to worship God through our obedience as well.

References

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5. James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, *The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Nottingham, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2015), 82-83.
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