

THE SAVIOR IS PRESENTED

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

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.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Luke 2

+ **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.

DAY 1

READ:

Luke 2:8-21

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 2:21

NOTES

What's in a name?

For many of us, our names denote something important about us. Some have family names that tell us about our parents or grandparents. Some are named after a person that our parents thought was worthy or important. Some names have meaning based on the etymology that our parents used to communicate something about their hopes and dreams for us. Some of our names are a living testimony to a great person whose life and death had an impact on our family.

Names carry meaning. They do now and they did even more so in the time when the Bible was written. Names were given by God to communicate something about His work in a person's life. Parents based names on the future dreams or plans they had for their child. In a communal culture, names communicated something vital about the identity of the child and his or her family of origin.

The Bible makes a big deal about the name "Jesus." The name itself indicated Jesus's mission. He came to save, and His life and work would be a fulfillment of His great name. His name would be His identity, and throughout all of the rest of the history of the world, there would be people like us who would base our salvation on that great name. Not only was Jesus's name critical for those who lived around Him, but the name of Jesus is the God-ordained name that is given among men whereby all people must be saved (Acts 4:12). No one is saved except through Jesus Christ.

Why does the name of Jesus matter for you?

DAY 2

READ:

Luke 2:22-35

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 2:25

NOTES

Simeon is described as a righteous and devout man. As a result, he was looking for God's Messiah and noticed Jesus when He came. Certainly, we are told that God had revealed to Simeon that he would see the Messiah before his death. So Simeon's attentiveness to Jesus is attributed to God's faithfulness to keep His promise. Yet Simeon also was faithful. He was intent on upholding his commitment to God.

In many ways, this parallels the sending of Jesus. In part, Jesus came as the fulfillment of God's promises. Yet Jesus also was faithful to keep the law and obey God perfectly. Luke 2 describes Jesus and His family obeying the letter of the law down to the very little details.

Simeon certainly did not obey perfectly like Jesus did, but his life is a model for us nonetheless. He was righteous and devout, and this gave him unique insight into God's purposes and plans for the world.

Like Simeon, we are apt to notice God's activity around us when we are repenting of sin and walking faithfully with God. When we are not, we are blinded to much of what God wants to do in and around us. It's worth considering how much of Jesus's activity we miss because we allow sin to fester in our lives.

How are you fighting sin and pursuing righteousness?

DAY 3

READ:

Luke 2:22-35

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 2:32

NOTES

If people are trapped in darkness and do not have a light, then the only hope for them isn't that they are able to find a light in the darkness but that someone with a light makes the way to them. You might think of someone who is trapped underground after a natural or human disaster. They are trapped—hopeless and helpless. Darkness obscures any hope they have of finding a way out. Even if the answer to their predicament were right under their noses, it's unlikely that they could find it because they can't see.

This is the picture of Jesus's mission. People who are dead in trespasses and sins can't find salvation on their own (Ephesians 2:1-3). They can't find a light they don't have and often don't know what they need because of their spiritual darkness. They live in the dark, and tragically, they have grown accustomed to the dark.

Their only hope is that someone on the outside—someone with a light—makes a way to them and brings them hope and help. Jesus, the One described as a light sent from God (John 1:1-5), is just that. He enters the darkness to bring the light of life.

He doesn't merely bring light to the deserving. In fact, there are none who are deserving. Even the nation of Israel was trapped in darkness. He comes to all people and sets about the mission of bringing light to the nations. He's intent on saving anyone, everywhere, who will reach out to Him in faith and cling to the light He offers. Sadly, many will reject the light and live and die in darkness.

How did Jesus bring light to you, and how are you bringing that light to others?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Grace is the good pleasure of God that inclines Him to bestow benefits upon the undeserving."¹

—A. W. Tozer (1897-1963)

DAY 4

READ:

Luke 2:39-40

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 2:40

NOTES



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 (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 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 (Matthew 4:2), thirst (John 19:28), weariness (Matthew 8:24), sorrow (John 11:35), and pain (the crucifixion).

Is it strange for you to think of the perfect Son of God growing and developing? Probably so. We have a hard time grasping how the Messiah would grow and develop in human form. It's an astounding testimony to the humility of God that He would put on flesh and enter the world and subject Himself to the painful process of human development and maturation. But this is what Jesus did. He spent His developing years growing, not merely in physical size and stature but Luke records He also grew in strength and wisdom. This development of strength and wisdom would allow Jesus to enter the temple and speak with the religious leaders of the day with a maturity and insight that would set Him apart from His peers (Luke 2:47).

Luke then says that a defining feature of Jesus's life was that God's grace was on Him.

Paul often shared this reflection when speaking of the church. He prayed that God's grace would be with them, among them, and in them (2 Corinthians 13:13). In the previous session, we saw that Jesus came bringing this grace (John 1:14). So, God gave Jesus grace, and that grace was the basis for Jesus's interaction with the world. He brought God's grace to God's people, who then extend that grace to the world. Like Jesus, those who bring God's grace to the world give evidence that God's grace is in them.

How does your life testify to the grace of God?

DAY 5

READ:

Luke 2:41-52

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Luke 2:50

NOTES

Those who were close to Jesus did not fully grasp who Jesus was and what He had come to do. Who could blame them? It's hard to get your mind around the fact that the Holy Spirit gave Mary a child who was born as a normal baby and grew up to be the Savior of the world. There is no paradigm for such a miracle. Even the angel's declaration could not prepare Mary and Joseph for the totality of who Jesus is.

Those alive today have a different privilege. Yes, we do not have Jesus living among us, and we do not have angels announcing truth to us, but we do have God's full Word to the world in the Scriptures. We have the complete testimony of all that Jesus has done to save sinners and all that He will do to rid the world of sin and Satan. We have the full picture.

With this knowledge, are we more understanding? Do we humble ourselves to acknowledge the truth of who Jesus is said to be in the Scriptures? There is danger for us in that Mary and Joseph and those who were closest to Jesus—even His disciples—did not seem to grasp all that He said and did. Proximity to Jesus does not automatically produce belief in Jesus. Many times, our unique vantage point can blind us to the truth of Jesus's person and work.

We need to ask the Spirit of God to help us see Jesus for who He is and continue to give us eyes to see and ears to hear so that when Jesus is presented among us, we understand and obey.

Because of your understanding of Jesus's person and work, what will you do today in response?

GROUP

NOTES

POINT 1: The Messiah will fulfill the law entirely (Luke 2:21-24).

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? What benefits might we discover in dwelling upon Jesus's humanity?

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

POINT 2: The Messiah will bring salvation globally (Luke 2:27-32).

Simeon praised God because He recognized that _____ was God's promised plan to bring _____ to all people.

? What are some ways we should respond to the good news of salvation?

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)

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 _____ and then to the entire _____ .



What do we learn about God when we see Him keep His promises?

POINT 3: The Messiah will obey the Father completely (Luke 2:41-50).

Jesus was _____ in thirsting for knowledge of God as He grew in _____ .



What character traits are demonstrated by Jesus's listening and asking questions in the temple?

Jesus knew His _____ and was obedient to Him, _____ and foremost.



How should we reconcile our obedience to God and our expected obedience to human authorities?

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.

- **HEAD:** Why does it matter that Jesus was perfect, even as a child?
- **HEART:** Why should Jesus's perfection on your behalf help you fight temptation?
- **HANDS:** How will you be involved in testifying of Jesus to the nations?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

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."³

—J. O. Sanders (1902-1992)