

**Title: Born To Die So That We Might Live****Text: Luke 2:21-35****Introduction**

When people are depressed or discouraged, often a good counselor will help them discover their purpose. Purpose breeds hope. But what if you found your purpose was to die? That your purpose would be wrapped up in your death? Would you find that to be even more depressing? Well, that depends on your eternal perspective about this life.

Jesus had a life of purpose, no question. But why was He born?

He was born to teach. He was born to be an example. He was born to be the manifestation of love. He was born God in the flesh. But ladies and gentlemen, above all these reasons, there was a singular purpose to the birth of Jesus Christ...

**Main Idea: Jesus was Born to Die so that We Might Live**

There are wonderful traditional passages that we look at this time of year that remind us of the birth narrative...

But this morning, I want us to look at another part of the birth story that may not get as much attention. It is found in Luke 2:21-35. It takes place after the birth of Christ and before the arrival of the Wise men. It involves a godly old man and an important message He has for the parents of Jesus. There are three critical concepts in his message that we must understand. Concepts that are so crucial, without them, your Salvation would be impossible. The three ideas can be summarized in three words, and they are...

The Purification

The Consolation

The Revelation

**1. The Purification** (vs.21-24)

*<sup>21</sup> 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. <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."*

In **Galatians 4:4**, Paul tells us that Jesus was born of a woman, born under the Law. Why do you suppose he says this about the Christ? Paul tells us this because it is a crucial part of our redemption.

- He was born of a woman (Jesus was human, and He had to be human to be a sufficient sacrifice for our sins).
- He was born under the Law (He came not to destroy the law and the prophets, He came to fulfill it.) For Jesus to fulfill the law, He had to live under it...flawlessly...

This is why Luke, in this passage, goes to great lengths to demonstrate that Jesus' parents were faithful in following what God had prescribed centuries before in the Law of Moses.

**Leviticus 12:3 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> *And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.*

At this event, the child is also officially named. His parents didn't have the honor to choose his moniker; no, Gabriel communicated the name he would be given to Mary before the Holy Spirit overshadowed her and caused the conception of the God /man. The name? Jesus. This is significant because, in Hebrew, Jesus' name is Joshua. Do you know what the Old Testament name Joshua means? It means **"God Saves."** Isn't that beautiful? From His very conception to now officially at His circumcision, He was to be called Jesus. Gabriel not only told Mary, but he told Joseph as well.

**Matthew 1:20–21 (ESV)** <sup>20</sup> *But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."*

**Verse 22** – Please notice a time difference between verse 21 and verse 22. Here again, we see the Law of Moses and the expectation of God's nation. Leviticus 12:1-8 helps us understand this.

**Leviticus 12:1–8 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup> "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. <sup>3</sup> And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her menstruation. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying for sixty-six days. <sup>6</sup> "And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, <sup>7</sup> and he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. <sup>8</sup> And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."*

So for Mary, a follower of the Law. Jesus was circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, and now thirty-three days later, after she is considered clean, she and Joseph bring an offering. Did you notice the kind of offering they brought? **Verse 24** - *“a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”* Thus signifying they were a family not of great means, they were poor...

Why is this important for Luke to record in his account of the birth narrative? Because it shows that Jesus, through his parents in this instance, flawlessly kept the law of Moses.

We can admire Him (and his parents for this), as we should. We should praise Him as well because if He, at only one point, failed in keeping the law, He would have been disqualified.

**James 2:10 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup> *For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.*

He wasn't...ever! However, you and I are guilty, over and over, because *all have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.*

We need Christ because He did what you and I could never hope to do. Fulfill the Law. We are lawless, and He is the fulfiller of the Law. And if we accept this fulfillment of God's just requirement on our behalf, we will be freed from the penalty of breaking God's law. In other words, trust the finished work of Christ on the cross, and you will be free indeed!

**The Apostle Paul said it best...** *“Sin no longer is your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead you live under the freedom of God's grace.”*

**Review** – **Jesus was Born to Die so that We Might Live**

This first concept is crucial for your Salvation – The Purification

## 2. **The Consolation** (vs.25-26)

<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.*

One of the things I have noticed about God in His Word is He often focuses on one individual to demonstrate some spiritual truth, whether it be a positive example or negative.

In today's passage, we see a clear example of a man who was a faithful follower of Christ. His name is Simeon. His name means “hearing” or “One who hears.” This is certainly true of this man. God made him a promise, and he not only heard it, he believed it!

Luke says that he was righteous and devout. In other words, he was right with God and earnestly, fervently pursued His God.

And He was waiting for something extraordinary, *the consolation of Israel.* This is so important and encouraging.

What do you think this phrase, “*the consolation of Israel*,” means? The Greek word is παράκλησις. I’m not sure if this rings a bell for you, but the first part of this compound word is “para,” which means to come alongside. For example, Love INC is a “para” church organization. It comes alongside the church and helps her.

The second part of the compound word is “klesis,” which means to call. So when they are put together, the idea is “A calling to one’s side” for encouragement, consolation, or comfort.

The *consolation of Israel* or the comfort of Israel is found in God’s promise of sending Messiah to rescue His people. This is the language used in the NLT...

*Luke 2:25 (NLT)* <sup>25</sup> *At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel...*

The comfort Israel has had (starting back to Gen 3:15) is that God would rescue His people. Many Jews, at this point in her history, didn’t understand this, but there was one who did, Simeon! And Simeon, according to Luke, had the Holy Spirit upon him. This was a unique distinction. Remember, the Gospels are still functionally Old Testament, which means the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost isn’t happening for another 33 years.

But understand that the Holy Spirit was alive, well, and active in the OT, just not fully in the same way we enjoy Him today! And the Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he would have the unique privilege of seeing God’s comfort in flesh and blood before he died.

Here are a couple of things to reflect on...

**First**, as dark and cold as situations get, God always has devout and righteous people in every generation...

**Second**, God promised Simeon that he would see the consolation of Israel, and he did! That should encourage you this morning that God is a promise-keeping God...

**Third**, the Holy Spirit has revealed much to us as well...If God kept His word with Simeon, He will with you as well!

*Monica Johnson* - *It's funny how we 'do' Christmas. Christmas is not something that we do; it is something that was done. It celebrates the long-awaited arrival of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. We had nothing to do with it, but what we can do is praise God for the coming of the Lord, who washed away the sins of the world by dying on the cross.*

**Review** – Jesus was Born to Die so that We Might Live

The Purification, The Consolation...

### 3. **The Revelation** (vs.27-35)

*<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 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.”*

**A Revelation of Salvation** – Just like the Spirit of God directed the life of Jesus throughout His ministry, so He, the Spirit, led Simeon to the parents of the long-awaited Messiah. I can picture this feeble older man boldly approaching Mary and Joseph as they enter the Temple. Taking the baby and with tears in his eyes, blessing God and saying, *“Lord, at last! You promised me by the Holy Spirit that before I die, I would see the ‘consolation of Israel,’ and now I have. You have fulfilled your word, and now I can rest in peace. FOR MY EYES HAVE SEEN YOUR SALVATION.”* Simeon understood that God’s Salvation started as a little child, helpless and small. But this One would grow into the man that would rescue His people. This Messianic expectation was in the hearts of all the people. Not only was this **A Revelation of Salvation**, but...

**A Revelation of the Scope of Salvation** – look at verse 32 *“a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”* What an irony! From the voice of a feeble old man, we hear God’s intent His Salvation – for all people, not just the Jews. This is ironic because his words mark the struggle between the Jewish leadership and Jesus. The Jews of that day couldn’t conceive that Salvation was offered to the gentiles, but Simeon knew the truth through the Holy Spirit’s revelation. *“For God so loved the WORLD that He gave His one and only Son that WHOSOEVER believes in Him will not die, but have everlasting life.”* The scope of God’s Salvation? Whosoever believes. Do you?

**A Revelation of pain** – When each of our kids was born, people said very kind and encouraging things like how cute they were and how much they looked like their beautiful mother. Or how smart they were, like their intelligent and talented mother. Come to think of it; I’m not sure they got anything from me!

It is always encouraging for parents to hear kind words about their children. But can you imagine hearing the words of Simeon about your child? That He is Messiah, that He is God’s chosen tool to rescue people from their sin? That His sacrifice is sufficient to pay the sin debt of all humanity for all time? Verse 33 says, *“And his father and mother marveled at what was said about him.”* The NASB says they were *“amazed at the things that were being said about Him.”* Earlier (Luke 2:19), it was said of Mary that *“she was treasuring all these things in her heart.”* From Gabriel’s announcement to His miraculous conception, His ignominious birth, to the shepherds confessing what the angels had testified about Jesus! It was all so much to take in. The One the entire nation of Israel had been waiting for, for centuries, the One who was called God’s Son, was now here, and He was their Son. Overwhelming, to say the least!

Verse 34 – And this older man, whom the Spirit of God rested, spoke a blessing upon them...(Good idea, folks)

But he also spoke the harsh truth about their boy. He directed His comments to Mary, in particular. He said, *“Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of man in Israel and for*

*a sign that is opposed.*” In other words, her Son would be greatly resisted. His life would bring about a great challenge in the lives of many, and that resistance that opposition would bring about His torture and death. As a parent, I can’t imagine seeing my son or daughters going through a torturous death as Jesus did. Can you? Simeon lovingly spoke the truth to Mary. What would take place against her boy would tear her apart. Listen to the imagery Simeon uses in verse 35, *“and a sword will pierce through your own soul also.”*

*“Mary, this is going to be so difficult. Far more than you can imagine, so prepare yourself.”* I know it may seem harsh for Simeon to bring up at a time of celebration, but the Spirit of God compelled him to prepare her for the difficult road ahead. No parent wants to lose their child. But this child wouldn’t just be killed. No, her innocent child would die a criminal’s death. And although it wouldn’t happen for another 33 years, God’s grace allowed a mother’s heart to prepare for that fateful day.

Simeon revealed to Mary the pain she would endure because of who her child really is...

**A Revelation of choice** – Look at the last part of verse 35. *“so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”* Throughout the ministry of Jesus, He proclaimed clearly and quite controversially that there was only one way to the Kingdom of God and that one way was through Him. The ones who believed this would receive His gracious Salvation. The ones who did not believe received eternal condemnation or death. This is Simeon’s point in verse 35. Jesus reveals hearts. Jesus' message is exclusive, and in an inclusive culture, this can be a hard thing to hear. However, it is a simple choice. And it must be a heartfelt decision...

Do you choose Jesus (God saves) as your only hope to have a right relationship with God and eternal life, or do you choose another way? What will you do with the one born to save all people from being eternally punished for their sins? You have only one life to make this eternally important decision.

Remember, **Where’s Waldo?** Pictures of a sea of people and Waldo would need to be found amidst all of them. It was hard at first, but once you had eyes to look for the red and white striped shirt, ski cap, and dark-rimmed glasses, you could find him more easily.

Folks, Jesus has been revealed. He is hidden in plain sight! Once you see Him, you see Him everywhere. And you know what Simeon saw as he gazed into the eyes of the infant, Jesus. *“for my eyes have seen your Salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.”*

**Review** – Jesus was Born to Die so that We Might Live

Three important concepts...

The Purification, The Consolation, and The Revelation. Without these, you and I would be eternally lost. But because God, in His infinite wisdom, grace, and love, has provided a way, the only way to a right relationship with Him and eternity in Heaven. That way? Jesus.

## Conclusion

**We celebrate today the incarnation.** God, who never needed anything, became a frail human with all the exact needs you and I have. God became a man and lived among us. Why? So His

human body could be offered as a sacrifice on the cross so He could fulfill the Law we have broken. So He could be the promised Messiah! So He could be our Salvation! Jesus Christ was born to die so we might live. Do you believe this?

The all-powerful God of the universe who called everything into existence started His journey on the earth as a helpless baby. Why? To save his people from their sin!