

# A GIFT TOO WONDERFUL FOR WORDS

## “Christmas: When God Came Downstairs with a Baby in His Arms”

### Study Number Five – Final Fulfillment / Response to the Birth of Jesus – Luke 2:21-40

This passage is probably the one that means the most because it's so intimate. It's so special, it's intertwined with people.

In the context of where we're going to be looking in Luke 2:1-20 we have the very familiar account of the Lord Jesus being born in a little manger, in the city of Bethlehem.

The angels announced this wonderful news to the shepherds in the field who then came to find the young child.

In verse 20, which is the verse just preceding today's exposition, we read:

#### Luke 2:20

And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

In verses 21-40 we will uncover the responses of two wonderful people to the birth of Christ. An older man and a

woman up in years, both of whom come before us in the text.

Notice that the text is divided into FOUR PARTS:

I. He is Born Under the Law—verses 21-24

II. Simeon—verses 25-35

III. Anna—verses 36-38

IV. Going Home—verses 39-40

There is an emphasis upon the Mosaic Law in these first four verses. The reason being that if Christ is going to be our redemption, if He in fact is going to accomplish on Calvary our salvation, it is absolutely essential, it is a divine requirement, that He fulfill every part of the Law.

Now when Paul begins to write of this and the ramifications of it in his legal charter, the book of Galatians, he says:

Galatians 4:4

When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law,

Now in order to do that, Jesus before He could even act for Himself, must be acted upon and by parents who were controlling His destiny and fulfilling these requirements.

So Mary and Joseph come into the picture here in these early days of this Christ-child for the express purpose of fulfilling all of the legalistic requirements that are necessary for Christ to qualify.

## **I. Born under the Law—verses 21-24**

**v. 21 And when eight days were fulfilled to circumcise Him, and they called His name Jesus, which He was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.**

“And when eight days were fulfilled to circumcise Him, they called His name Jesus, which He was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”

Now in Leviticus 12:3 the mark of the Abrahamic covenant was circumcision for any male child. When John the Baptist was born, on the eighth day, which is prescribed in Leviticus 12:3, he was taken to the temple, circumcised and at that point his name was declared to be John.

Remember, they all were thinking it was going to be Zach Junior. And he said no and Elizabeth said no, his name was to be John.

Here in the passage Jesus is eight days old. He’s brought up to the temple for this purpose and with the right of circumcision also comes the public declaration of His name. His name is Jesus—Yeshua, Savior, even as the angel Gabriel had told

Mary in our previous exposition.

**v. 22 And when the days of their purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord,**

“And when the days of their purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord,”

Now Jesus is 40 days old—a month and a half. They’re coming to do two things at the temple in one trip. Now living out away from town, we know what it is to go to town to do many things. Doctor’s appointments, hair done, and do seventeen other things to keep from driving back and forth to town.

It's six miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem. They’re going up there with two things in mind. The Law specified that when a woman had a little boy, she was religiously impure until 40 days had passed.

1. There is a right of “purification” that needs to be followed on their behalf, in order to be right religiously.
2. It was necessary to present Christ in the temple, because He was the firstborn son.

When Hannah prayed for a child back in the book of Samuel, the Lord gave her a child. And then she took this child and she

dedicated it to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is dedicated to the Lord and he worshipped the Lord there—1 Samuel 1:28.

**v. 23 even as it is written in the Law of the Lord, that every first-born male opening the womb shall be called holy of the Lord,**

“even as it is written in the Law of the Lord, that every first-born male opening the womb shall be called holy of the Lord,”

That goes back to Exodus 13, right after the Passover, when the Lord said:

Exodus 13:1-2

... “Sanctify to me every first-born, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast, it belongs to me.”

Now what did they do in order to be free from that Law? They had to be redeemed from that Law by paying five shekels of silver. Now if a shekel is 64 cents, five times sixty is \$3.20.

And we think that isn't very much to have to pay, but when sixteen to eighteen cents is the daily wage, we realize that's about seventeen or eighteen days' salary that has to be used. Mary and Joseph have got to come up with that and pay it.

Jesus is of the tribe of Judah not Levi. The tribe of Levi, the first-born automatically went into the ministry. He had no

choice.

But if they were any of the other tribes, they could come and the parents could pay a redemption tax of five shekels and present the Christ, or Jesus the child in this situation, at the temple, pay this, and then he would be exempt from having to fulfill that temple service.

So they're coming to pay for that. But they're also coming to offer a sacrifice—verse 24.

**v. 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what has been said in the Law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”**

“and to offer a sacrifice according to what has been said in the Law of the Lord,”

See how many times that occurs?

“A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

Listen to Leviticus chapter 12, because here is where this applies:

Leviticus 12:6-8

And when the days of her purification [that is the lady who's had a little child] 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. 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 she who bears the child, whether a male or female. But [listen to this] 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 shall be clean.

Mary and Joseph were poor. They didn't have a lot of money. The wonderful thing is the Lord chose to come into such a humble dwelling.

The Law said a lamb and a turtledove would take care of this. But they could get two pigeons for one tenth of the price of a lamb and a turtledove. And the specification of the Law was they could do that if they were poor and poverty-stricken.

So they're coming with the offering of the poor. Doesn't that make that passage in 2 Corinthians 8:9 just come alive?

### 2 Corinthians 8:9

...though he was rich, yet for my sake, he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.

Now it's obvious that it's been quite expensive for Joseph on this trip. He's come down to Bethlehem. He didn't make reservations ahead of time. And so he ended up that first

night in the manger.

Now for the last 40 days he has been spending the night at the Bethlehem Holiday Inn, and that's costly. Staying right there for 40 something days, living in a non-resident situation has cost him something.

Now it's possible that being a carpenter, he hired himself out on a job building condominiums in Bethlehem or something, to make some income during these 40 days in order to pay all the bills. But he certainly is not a rich person. And Christ is born into this very humble home.

The first person that we're going to meet as they've come up to the temple now to do these things—to pay the tax and to offer the sacrifice—and who do they meet first of all but a guy by the name of SIMEON. The shepherds came to the manger, Simeon is the next one.

## **II. Simeon—verses 25-35**

**v. 25 And behold, 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.**

“And behold, 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.”

Here's an old man. He's characterized in FOUR WAYS:

1. he's "righteous,"
2. he's "devout,"
3. he's "looking for the consolation of Israel," and
3. "the Holy Spirit was upon him."

This is a beautiful old man.

One poet put it this way:

Lord, keep me sweet when I grow old,  
And things in life seem hard to bear;  
When I feel sad and all alone,  
And people do not seem to care.

Oh keep me sweet and let me look  
Beyond the frets that life must hold,  
To see the grand eternal joys;  
Yes, keep me sweet in growing old!  
(source unknown)

Some people are not so sweet when they grow old. Some of them are at the height of frustration in their old age. Why? It's because all of their life they've been on a performance basis and they can't perform any more so they have a reason to feel sorry for themselves.

Their body isn't the way it used to be! "I can't do this and I can't do that and I can't do the other thing so I've got a right to just wallow in self-pity and be cranky and cantankerous and critical and tough to live with!"

Paul Tournier, Swiss psychiatrist has fantastic insight in his book called *The Seasons of Life*. He uncovers it and Simeon has lived by this. This is the reason he's such a special example today:

(The Seasons of Life by Paul Tournier)

The die is cast. That which I have been able to do, to learn or to acquire is gradually losing its value. The doing and the having are giving way the way to the being. What is important for the aged is not what they are still able to do nor yet what they have accumulated and cannot take with them. It is what they are. This is the cause of the dreadful feeling of uselessness that so deeply bothers most elderly people. All those concepts of our modern western civilization which effective action is held above all, contributes to their plight. (source unknown)

We need to realize that God designed this to slow our body down so that He could refine the being rather than the doing in our old age, we'd be the greatest witness.

Simeon has learned that. That what a man is, is more important than what a man does. And in his old age he is

beautiful to behold.

1. He's "righteous"—that means when we look at his life, there's some beautiful things that come out of it.

Man looks on the outward appearance, God looks on the heart

2. He's "devout."

What's the difference between being a "righteous" person and a "devout" person?

The word "devout," chasing through the Concordance, occurs in the book of Acts three times. And it's the word *huper-lambano* which means to "take hold of with reverence." It means an anxiety to do well.

Yes, man looks on the outward appearance and all we can see is the righteousness, but God looks on the heart. He knows whether we're devout.

God knows how concerned we are about doing everything the Word says. Or are we sloppy and careless about doing what we think is right and what we don't agree with, we put aside?

A devout person is picky for detail. He has a deep anxiety not to cause offense.

Righteous is the HORIZONTAL.

Devout is the VERTICAL.

Righteous is what MAN SEES.

Devout is what GOD SEES.

Devout is David, a man after God's own heart. A heart perfect toward Him.

“looking for the consolation of Israel;”

When things get bad at least we have one consolation. We've heard that statement a million times. But one consolation that Israel still had, even though they were under Roman domination and things were bad, the one thing they did have was the fact that the Messiah could come. And that was a consolation to them. And Simeon is “looking for the consolation of Israel,” and we'll see why in just a minute.

“and the Holy Spirit was upon him.”

Now the Bible never minces words. The Holy Spirit is not in him because the Holy Spirit has not come to indwell. In the Upper Room, Christ said, “He who is with you shall be in you.” (ref. John 14:17)

Simeon has the experience of the Holy Spirit being upon him for special functions of service because he is a man who's walking with God and God is using him. So the Holy Spirit is there “upon him.”

Isn't he a beautiful man? It's exciting to see a righteous, devout man looking for the coming of the Lord and a man upon whom the Holy Spirit is dwelling.

What's this man going to do?

**v. 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.**

“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.”

Look at that little word “it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit,” and it sends us chasing through the scripture. Back in Genesis 18, after the messenger said to Abraham, “You know your wife's going to have a baby this time next year,” the messenger started to leave and then the Lord asked a question. The Lord said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” (see Genesis 18:17ff) And then he didn't. He told Abraham that they were going to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And of course, Abraham entered into this great intercessory prayer for the city.

Then we see this verse in Psalms:

**Psalm 25:14**

The secret of the Lord is for those who fear Him

and He will make known to them His covenant.

The more we get to know the Lord, the more we love Him and the more He's going to share with us the secrets of His heart.

Part of spiritual growth is the sheer joy of having the Lord share truth with us in times we spend with Him. Precious, secret thoughts only known to us and to the Lord.

### Proverbs 3:32

For the crooked man is an abomination to the Lord, but he is intimate with the upright.

### Amos 3:7

Surely the Lord God does nothing unless he reveals his secret counsel to his servants.

Here he has revealed to Simeon he's getting older. He's saying, "There is a righteous, devout man looking for the Lord. I've put my seal of approval on you. The Holy Spirit is upon you. I'm telling you, you aren't going to die before you get a chance to see the Messiah, the one the prophets spoke about!"

Oh what a special secret!

**v. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, that they might do for Him according to the custom of**

**the law,**

“And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, that they might do for Him according to the custom of the law,”

Now “he came in the Spirit”—the Spirit of God directed him to the temple. “Simeon, get on up there. Today there’s something I want you to see.”

And it just happens that’s just the way Lord does it. Just gets up there at the very time that it’s going to happen and then along comes Mary and Joseph with this little babe in their arms. And they had come up there to do those two things we looked about in the previous verses.

And as they come up there for this purpose:

**v. 28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:**

“then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:”

Hard to keep our hands off a little baby, a month and a half old, isn’t it?

There was a cute little statement:

One little sheep said to the other little sheep: “Ewes is not fat; owes is just fluffy.”

We just love to hold them because they're fluffy. Everybody loves a little baby.

And he took the child “into his arms,” it says, “and he blessed God.” Here’s an old man holding a little baby in his arms and he blesses God. How do we bless God?

Remember blessing God with the P.A.T. FORMULA—P-A-T?

Praise,  
Adoration, and  
Thanksgiving.

And bursting from his lips is:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.  
(source unknown)

He realizes that the time of his own physical demise is here.

**v. 29 “Now Lord, let your bond-servant be departing in peace, according to your word;**

“Now Lord, let your bond-servant be departing in peace, according to your word;”

Over all these years he's learned to surrender his rights to the relationship. He's a "bond-servant" of the Lord. He says, "let me be departing in peace, according to your word."

That word "depart" is the same word that Paul uses in Philippians 1:23 with a different prefix on it. One is *analuó* and the other is *apolyō*. It means to "pull up the stakes." It means to "turn loose the ropes so we can set sail." It's leaving the temporary for the permanent.

Paul says, "I am having a desire to turn loose, to pull up the stakes and go to the house, to be with Christ which is far better." (see Philippians 1:21-23)

Simeon is saying, "I'm ready to depart! My life has been fulfilled! I've seen all that You've promised!"

And that ought to be a description of the death of the believer.

We will notice the reason why in these moments he can have this great act of self-surrender, simply because he recognizes this is the Messiah.

**v. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,**

"For my eyes have seen your salvation,"

"The reason I'm ready to depart is because I have seen your salvation."

Some of us feel like that's been a description of old age because we can't perform like we used to perform. And some of us feel awkward in our relationship to the Lord in our old age because we can't perform for the Lord like we used to perform. Realize that this old man recognized that salvation was in a person! Holding in his arms a little baby he says, "I have seen the salvation of the Lord!"

And the salvation of the Lord is wrapped up in this little baby. Who'd ever thought in the next 33 years, this tiny little child would heal blind eyes, would calm a stormy sea, would feed the multitudes, and would ultimately die on Calvary's cross for man's sin?

Salvation is wrapped up in that blanket and in that little baby. And Simeon has it right, salvation is in our relationship to that person, not our human works and not our human performance.

It's a salvation PAST, it's a salvation PRESENT, and it's a salvation FUTURE, because the same little baby is going to come again and the prophet says, "Every eye shall see Him!"

"It's Your salvation Lord, which You have and You have the right to give it or You have the right to keep it. Your salvation is in a person and we know that person is the Lord Jesus Christ."

Now he says a few things about that as he finishes.

**v. 31 Which you prepared in the presence of all peoples,**

“Which you prepared in the presence of all peoples,”

That is salvation. It’s not for a select group. It’s for everybody.

**v. 32 A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”**

“A light for revelation to the Gentiles,”—its everybody who isn’t a Jew—“and the glory of your people Israel.””

If they’ll just respond to it, the King of glory is going to come in. “Who is this King of glory?” the Psalmist says.

And then the kingdom prayer in Matthew 7, the Lord Jesus said:

**Matthew 6:13**

... thine is the kingdom and thine is the power and the glory forever.

Salvation involves a person. It involves light. It involves glory. And now he’s finished with his talk as he has blessed God for what he has seen.

**v. 33 And His father and mother were marvelling at the things which were being said about Him.**

“And His father and mother were marvelling at the things which were being said about Him.”

**v. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign to be spoken against—**

“And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign to be spoken against—”

And so Simeon turned to them and he blessed them. Why? He probably blessed Mary because she was willing to be this person. He blessed Joseph because Joseph was willing to take her into his life, even though she was pregnant with this child of the Holy Spirit and he was willing to cooperate with the divine program.

And then, as he makes this blessing he says **THREE THINGS**

“Behold, this Child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel,”

What’s that mean? Some people are going to fall and some people are going to rise when they meet Jesus.

The reason being, “He that hath the Son, hath life and that hath not the Son of God, does not have life.”

It's a fragrance of life unto life! It's a fragrance of death unto death to those who are perishing. (see 2 Corinthians 2:15, 16)

It happened on the cross. One guy said, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." And the other guy doesn't say a word. And Christ said, "Today, you'll be with Me in paradise." But this guy is silent. It's falling for him, it's rising for him.

Jesus Christ is going to split humanity. There are two ways. There's the broad way and the narrow way.

"Those who enter into life, few there are who find it."

Then it says, as he's speaking to Mary, it will be "for a sign to be spoken against." Did they speak against His ministry?

### Luke 4:28-29

All in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things, and they rose up and cast him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw him down the cliff.

**v. 35 and a sword shall pass through your soul—in order that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed."**

"and a sword shall pass through your soul—in order that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed."

That's the last thing he says.

1. He says, first of all, some people are going to respond and they're going to rise. And others are going to fall.
2. He's going to be a sign and people are going to speak against Him.
3. But Mary, "a sword" is going to pass through her heart.

The Spirit of God enables us to understand that it took place in John 19.

One little poet put it this way:

At the cross her station keeping,  
Stood the mournful mother weeping.  
Close to Jesus to the last,  
Through her heart His sorrow sharing,  
All his bitter anguish bearing,  
Now at length the sword had passed.  
(source unknown)

She stood there with John. Jesus looked down on her and said "Behold your son. Son, behold your mother." That went to her heart. She lost this Son and now Jesus was being replaced by John. And through her heart the sword went and brought grief and weeping to her.

The next person we will look at is a woman.

Can a woman be beautiful in her advanced period of life? Never call a woman old. We've got a lady who is advanced in days. That's the way the Greek text says it.

One writer said:

A man may go to heaven without health, without wealth, without fame, without a great nature, without learning, without big earning, without culture, without beauty, without friends, without ten thousand other things, but he can never go to heaven without Christ.  
(source unknown)

And here we come to the woman who walks into this same scene and she's got some things to say.

### **III. Anna—verses 36-38**

**v. 36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in her days greatly, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity,**

“And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in her days greatly,”—there's how you say it—“having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity,”

Anna's a prophetess. A prophetess was one who before the

divine revelation was complete would receive a revelation from the Lord and give it. Or a prophetess is one who tells forth the message of God that's already been written. We can basically say a preacher is a prophet.

She is a prophetess. She's "of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in her days greatly, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity."

When she got married, she lived with her husband for seven years and he died.

Now what do they do when their husband dies? Well, she really had two options open to her:

1. She could go home and wait for a second husband or
2. She could go home and wait until she dies and get bitter and resentful.

This is one woman whose name means "favor and grace." She is a woman who is so beautiful in this situation because of what she's been through.

**v. 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she departed not from the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.**

"and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four."—over 60 years she's a widow—"And she departed not from the temple,

serving night and day with fastings and prayers.”

Corrie ten Boom said:

When you find time on your hands, get on your knees.  
(source unknown)

She just decided that the house of the Lord was the place for her! And she spent her time serving the Lord.

What can this do? Make her bitter, resentful, rebellious or it can make her beautiful! It can make her kinder, softer, more sympathetic because the Father’s hand will never cause His child a needless tear.

She might be older but she’s never lost hope.

Psalm 84:1

How lovely are thy dwelling places, O Lord of Hosts.  
My soul longs and even yearns for the courts of the Lord.

Eugenia Price said:

Anna permitted her heartbreak to force her to God. Those of us who have faced tragedy of any kind, particularly those of you who are widows, know that nothing heals the wounds like being consciously with God.  
(source unknown)

Anna was a woman who refused to be destroyed by a broken heart.

### Psalm 147:3

He heals the broken hearted  
He binds up their wounds.

One lady said, “When my husband died my life stopped.”

Did it? The Lord’s still got something for her to do. Anna fled to God. She dedicated herself to the Lord and served in the temple.

When a woman dares to leave the past alone, when she’s not dependent upon memories for happiness, and she dares to face the present and the future with God, a supernatural peace is going to flood her heart.

We can find great therapy for our problems when we immerse ourselves in activity for the glory of God.

She is advanced in years but she’s still serving.

Someone said:

You can tell an old timer. He’s one who can remember the village square as a place instead of a person.  
(source unknown)

John Denver says:

You can tell when you're getting old too when instead of asking how things are, they ask you how things were.  
(source unknown)

Through much self-denial and prayer this precious woman steps before us.

**v. 38 And she, coming up at that very moment, began giving thanks to God, and continued speaking of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.**

“And she, coming up at that very moment, began giving thanks to God, and continued speaking of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.”

Simeon SEES and she SPEAKS.

Did they know each other? Well they probably did. They were at the temple a lot and she probably saw in Simeon a distinguished, elderly gentleman that she deeply admired.

And he probably saw in Anna a woman who had triumphed over impossible circumstances in her life and she was giving glory to God. He admired her.

She had to hear him speaking these words and she said, “What’s Simeon so excited about?” And she came bursting in

on the scene and immediately with her prophetic insight, she started to speak, giving thanks to God. Thanks for what He has provided, looking for the redemption of Israel.

She goes around finding everybody she can talk to. Now that's the way women are when they really get excited. They've just got to share with everybody.

The woman at the well, when she'd come to know the Messiah runs into town and says, "Come! See a man who told me everything I ever did!" That was her response. She was excited.

Anna is so excited. She saw the boy, and she loosened up and told everybody who would listen. She had seen the redemption of Israel.

Well, they're going home in verses 39-40.

#### **IV. Going Home — verses 39-40**

**v. 39 And when they completed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.**

"And when they completed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth."

**v. 40 Now the Child was growing and becoming strong;**

**becoming full of wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.**

“Now the Child was growing and becoming strong; becoming full of wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.”

What are the lessons we got out of that? In summary of the passage, we have these:

Lesson #1: Obedience to the word of God ought to be our primary concern.

We see that as the passage opens.

Lesson #2: Though Mary and Joseph were poor, they gave what they had to the Lord.

Lesson #3: Death for the believer should be a departing in peace.

Lesson #4: Salvation is wrapped up in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson #5: Anna, as a widow for over 60 years, became better instead of bitter through her trials.

Lesson #6: Serving the Lord with intensity can bring therapy to a broken heart.

That's the secret to her success.

Lesson #7: Our lives ought to be characterized by giving thanks to God and speaking for the Lord to those who will listen.

This song called “Who’d Have Ever Thought” fits here well:

Many years have come and gone,  
yet this would remain the same—  
this world remains the same.  
Empires have been built and fallen  
Only time has made a change.  
Nation against nation, brother against brother.  
Men so filled with hatred killing one another.  
And over half the world is starving  
while a banner of decency is torn.  
Debating over disarmament,  
killing children before they’re born,  
And fools who march to win the right  
to justify their sin.  
O every nation that has fallen has fallen from within.  
Yet in the midst of this darkness  
there is a hope, a light that burns.  
The little child, the King of kings,  
some day will soon return.  
(source unknown)

He has paid our redemption price. He has purchased our freedom for a relationship. And He stands at our heart’s door, knocking, longing for entrance into our life. Don’t say with

King Agrippa, “Almost thou persuadest me to become a Christian.” (ref. Acts 26:28)

Recognize now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. (ref. 2 Corinthians 6:2)

I know not how that Bethlehem’s Babe  
could in the Godhead be;  
I only know the Manger-Child  
has brought God’s life to me.

I know not how that Calvary’s Cross  
A world from sin could free;  
I only know its matchless love  
has brought God’s love to me.

I know not how that Joseph’s tomb  
could solve death’s mystery;  
I only know the Living Christ—  
Our immortality.  
(source unknown)

Father, we come before You in these moments and thank You for these two precious people. Thank You for this old distinguished gentleman, reverent in his walk with You. Having learned to give up on performance to become a “BE-er” and not a “DO-er.” Lord, we just pray that at this point You would enable us to recognize that this is life as designed. That we would be those who like Simeon, having seen the Christ, having found the fulfillment of life, would be ready for that

time of departure into Your presence. And thank You for the Annas who come across our path. Whose path is strewn with stumbling blocks and hurts and broken dreams, but who continue on, nearer, still nearer. Sacrificing by prayer and fasting, serving the Lord with gladness, looking forward to the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords. Do now speak to our hearts through this meditation, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

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# A GIFT TOO WONDERFUL FOR WORDS

## “Christmas: When God Came Downstairs with a Baby in His Arms”

### Study Number Five – Final Fulfillment / Response to the Birth of Jesus – Luke 2:21-40

#### NOTES

#### I. Born under the Law — verses 21-24

v. 21 And when eight days were fulfilled to circumcise Him, and they called His name Jesus, which He was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.

v. 22 And when the days of their purification were fulfilled according to the law of Moses, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord,

v. 23 even as it is written in the Law of the Lord, that every first-born male opening the womb shall be called holy of the Lord,

v. 24 and to offer a sacrifice according to what has been said in the Law of the Lord, “A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

#### II. Simeon — verses 25-35

v. 25 And behold, 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.

v. 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.

v. 27 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, that they might do for Him according to the custom of the law,

v. 28 then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said:

v. 29 “Now Lord, let your bond-servant be departing in peace, according to your word;

v. 30 For my eyes have seen your salvation,

v. 31 Which you prepared in the presence of all peoples,  
v. 32 A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.”

v. 33 And His father and mother were marvelling at the things which were being said about Him.

v. 34 And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is set for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign to be spoken against—

v. 35 and a sword shall pass through your soul—in order that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed.”

### **III. Anna — verses 36-38**

v. 36 And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in her days greatly, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity,

v. 37 and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. And she departed not from the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers.

v. 38 And she, coming up at that very moment, began giving thanks to God, and continued speaking of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

### **IV. Going Home — verses 39-40**

v. 39 And when they completed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

v. 40 Now the Child was growing and becoming strong; becoming full of wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

## LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

Lesson #1: Obedience to the word of God ought to be our primary concern.

Lesson #2: Though Mary and Joseph were poor, they gave what they had to the Lord.

Lesson #3: Death for the believer should be a departing in peace.

Lesson #4: Salvation is wrapped up in a person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lesson #5: Anna, as a widow for over 60 years, became better instead of bitter through her trials.

Lesson #6: Serving the Lord with intensity can bring therapy to a broken heart.

Lesson #7: Our lives ought to be characterized by giving thanks to God and speaking for the Lord to those who will listen.

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## ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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