

# Luke 2:22-40 Has To Be Done

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[ 0 : 00 ] They brought him, that is Jesus, up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord. As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.

And to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. Now, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simon, Simeon, sorry. And this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel. And the Holy Spirit was upon him. 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 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, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word.

Lord, for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

[ 1 : 05 ] And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher.

She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin. And there as a widow until she was 84. She did not depart from the temple worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day.

And coming up at that very hour, she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favour of God was upon him. Amen. This is the reading of God's inspired, inerrant word.

Let's turn in our Bibles, please, to Leviticus chapter 12. Leviticus chapter 12. It is, of course, the third book of the Old Testament towards the front of our Bibles.

[ 2 : 32 ] Leviticus chapter 12. It helps a little bit explain for us what's happening as we come to Luke chapter 2. It helps explain for us a little bit what the sacrifices are about and why Mary, Joseph and Jesus are at the temple.

It's a very short chapter, so we'll read all of it together. Leviticus chapter 12. I'm beginning to read at verse 1. This is the word of God.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days, as at the time of her menstruation she shall be unclean.

And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying. She shall not touch anything holy nor come into the sanctuary until the days of her purifying are completed.

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. 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 turtle dove for a sin offering.

[ 3 : 54 ] And he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her. Then she shall be cleaned from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female.

And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtle doves 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.

Amen. This is the reading of God's inspired, inerrant word. Well, let us turn in our Bibles, please, to Luke chapter 2. Luke chapter 2. And we're going to think about these verses 22 through 40.

Luke chapter 2 and verses 22 through 40. Now, I know this may surprise some of you this morning, but the free church has some pretty archaic legislation around its governance.

Wise rules, don't misunderstand me, but rules that on the surface of it seem a bit bizarre. For example, we have rules on how many people need to be there before a presbytery can legally meet.

[ 4 : 59 ] How many commissioners need to be present at the General Assembly before it's considered a valid General Assembly. About a year ago, I went to the ordination of Gary Brotherston in Bishop Briggs.

There were about 15 or 16 ministers there from the Presbytery of Glasgow in Argyle, but not one single elder. About 15 minutes before the service, everyone was frantically phoning around, all the elders in the presbytery, seeing if anyone was coming so that we could meet legally to ordain Gary to the post.

Now, it seemed a bit silly, didn't it? But if we hadn't done that, then Gary wouldn't have been able to be ordained that night and installed as Minister of Bishop Briggs.

It had to be done to fulfill all righteousness. It had to be done to make it legal in the eyes of the church. And as we come to Luke chapter 2 this morning, we find Jesus Christ doing something similar, or at least we find his parents doing something similar on his behalf.

They bring him to the temple to present him. They bring him to the temple to offer the sacrifice for him. They're fulfilling all righteousness on his behalf. It seems a bit silly because he is, after all, the sinless son of God.

[ 6 : 12 ] It seems a bit silly because he is, after all, the saviour of mankind. It seems a bit silly. But it has to be done. We want to think about three things this morning from Luke chapter 2.

See three things together. Firstly, we want to see Jesus being presented. We want to see Jesus being presented at the temple by his mother and father, as it seems.

Secondly, we want to think about Jesus being praised by Simeon and by Anna, by these two people who were looking for the consolation of Israel. And then thirdly and finally, we want to see Jesus being protected.

That as he grew, he was protected by the Lord. He grew in his role as the saviour of mankind. So the first thing then we want to see is Jesus being presented.

Jesus being presented at the temple. And we see that in verses 22 through 24. These first two verses of the section. So remember where we are in Luke's gospel. We thought last week about the birth of Jesus.

[ 7 : 18 ] How it happened. How at just the right time and just the right place. With just the right people there. Jesus was born. The last thing we saw last week. Verse 21 of Luke chapter 2.

Was Jesus being circumcised. Jesus being named officially, if you like. Given his proper name. And as we come to verse 22 then.

This week, Luke chapter 2 verse 22. The narratives moved on somewhat. The time has come for their purification. Luke tells us. Luke chapter 2 verse 22. The time has come for their purification. Now the question we need to ask ourselves is. Well whose purification is it? We read Leviticus 12 about the purification. That would have to be gone through for a woman. Who had given birth to a boy.

So is it purely Mary's purification that's in mind. Here in Luke chapter 2. Well if that was the case. Why does Luke use the term. Luke who's so careful with his language. Why does he use the term. Their purification.

[ 8 : 18 ] I think in many respects here. What's being considered is the whole family's purification. Mary as we read Leviticus 12. Would have been considered ceremonially unclean. After giving birth to this baby boy.

For seven days. She was unclean. And then she was to avoid touching holy things for another 33 days. So after that was over. After these 40 days were over.

The time came for Mary to be purified. Joseph himself no doubt would have been unclean. Considered impure. Because of the contact that he'd had with Mary.

And Jesus Christ himself. While it's not unclean. Didn't need to be presented. Didn't need to be. Didn't need to appear at the temple. Because every male who opens the womb. Is considered holy to the Lord. So as they come. The whole family's coming for purification. As they come. The whole family's coming to offer this sacrifice. But as we read this.

[ 9 : 19 ] It's a wonderful reminder to us. Of the life that Jesus lived. It's a wonderful reminder to us. Of the family that Jesus was born into. If you like. He lived a life that fulfilled all righteousness.

He and his family didn't cut corners. When it came to the things of God. The house would be a house. Where the things of God were talked about. Where the law of God was discussed. And where the law of God was lived out. In practical ways. Jesus came. To fulfill all righteousness this morning. Jesus came to purify us.

From our sins this morning. But maybe the question is why. Why did his mother and father have to be purified?

Why did Jesus and Christ himself. Have to be presented? Why did Jesus have to go through all this? Well quite simply. He went through all this. In our stand.

[ 10 : 17 ] He was obedient to the law of God. Where we feel. He was the second Adam. As Paul would put it. He was the one who would keep the law of God perfectly. So that we don't have to.

It's in his righteousness this morning. That we are considered righteous. It's in his law keeping this morning. That we are considered as law keepers. You see I am not righteous in and of myself. But I'm righteous in Christ. I'm not a law keeper in and of myself. As a matter of fact. I'm a law breaker. But I'm a law keeper in Christ.

Jesus Christ fulfilled the law. Went through this. So that we might know God. So they've come to the temple.

The time for their purification has come. We see what form that purification presentation takes. Verse 24. They offer a sacrifice to the Lord. According to the law.

[ 11 : 18 ] A pair of turtle doves. Or two young pigeons. So what's the story with this? This is what happens in the law. This is what's said in the law. But it's not the whole story is it?

It's what the law says. But it's not everything that the law says. You see if you could afford it. The offering of choice. Was a lamb. If you had any means at all.

The offering of choice was a lamb. This was the offering presented for the poor. If you couldn't afford a lamb. Then a pair of turtle doves. Or two young pigeons would be acceptable. But it was very much the offering of the poor.

Of those who couldn't afford any better. I saw on Facebook the other day. An advert for a new gas boiler.

It said something like this. If you're on any of the following benefits. Then you can have a free gas boiler. Courtesy of the Scottish government. No strings attached. Now if you weren't on these benefits.

[ 12 : 15 ] You had to cough up. You had to pay the money for the boiler. It was free. But only if you were poor enough. To warrant it. Otherwise you had to pay.

So to here. If you could afford. A lamb. At all. It was a lamb that had to be offered. But if you couldn't.

Then this pigeon. These pigeons. Or these two young turtle doves. Would suffice. To remind her to us. Of the poverty that Jesus is born into.

The king of kings. And lord of lords. The one to whom. One day. Every knee will bow. Couldn't afford a lamb. As an offering. Jesus coming.

Is amazing enough. But coming not. To a life of luxury. And rule. But to a life of grinding. Poverty is astounding.

[ 13 : 20 ] Maybe you're here this morning. And you're poor. I've been there. I grew up in a. Working class housing estate. In Northern Ireland. On benefits at different times. Jesus Christ knows.

What it is to be poor. This morning. He knows what it is. Not to be able to afford. The best. The things that everyone else has. Rest assured of that. This morning. Jesus knows. What it is to be poor.

But maybe you're here. And you're better off in life. The lord has blessed you materially. But remember this morning.

You're not to use that. As a source of comfort. A source of salvation. But we're to use that wealth. We're to use that blessing. That the lord has given us. To bless. And prosper the work of the lord.

We're commanded to give. As the lord has prospered us. To not store and hoard the money for ourselves. But to prosper the work of the lord.

[14:23] So we see Jesus being presented at the temple then. We see Jesus having the appropriate sacrifice being made for him. Secondly then. We want to see how Jesus is praised.

Jesus is praised. And that's verses 25 through 38. Verses 25 through 38. And as you come to verse 25. We're introduced to this character.

And it shows us I think. How we can. Sort of. Unconsciously read the bible sometimes. Because in my head. I've always assumed that Simeon was an old man.

I suppose it comes from. From what we read of his prophecy later. Lord you're now letting your servant depart in peace. I'd always just assumed that he was kind of. This old guy. But actually notice that Luke doesn't tell us anything.

About his age. He just says there was a man. In Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout. Waiting for the consolation of Israel. And the Holy Spirit was upon him.

[15:18] It doesn't tell us he's an old man. Just that he lived in Jerusalem. But notice the character of the man. Notice what he's known for. There was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.

What's he known for? Being righteous and devout. Looking for the consolation of Israel. And having the Holy Spirit upon him. He was a good man.

He was a godly man. He was a righteous man. He was waiting for the coming of the kingdom. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel. He was waiting for the Messiah. He was waiting for God's chosen king.

He was waiting for these years of silence to be broken. And for God to speak to his people again.

What a testimony that is.

What a thing to be known for. Being righteous and devout. But we're told something else about him, aren't we?

[16:17] Because we're told that the Holy Spirit was upon him. How could this be? This is obviously pre-Pentecost. Which is going to come in a few years time in the book of Acts.

The Holy Spirit hasn't yet been poured out. So how could this man have the Holy Spirit upon him? How could this man have the Holy Spirit in him? Believers in the Old Testament had the Holy Spirit come upon them.

But it wasn't the common universal experience of the Old Testament people of God. It was very much the exception, I suppose, rather than the norm. Pentecost would be something new.

As New Testament Christians, we're assured that each of us who believes in Jesus has the Holy Spirit living inside of us. That wasn't the norm. That wasn't common for the Old Testament people of Israel.

Only a few believers in the Old Testament experienced the reality of this. The prophets who were called by God. But what do we notice from the life of Simeon?

[17:20] What can we say? Well, obedience and hunger for God will always bring its own reward. Simeon longed for the consolation of Israel.

He longed to see God's chosen king come. He longed to see Israel return once again for God. And he lived righteously towards that end.

Obedience and hunger for God will always bring its own reward. We should have longed to have this testimony that Simeon has. The people, when they think of us, when people, when they think about our character, say, well, they're righteous, they're devout.

They're people who long for something new to happen. For the dry streams to become flowing rivers.

For the blessing of God to be poured out on our town and on our nation. Obedience and hunger for God will always bring its own reward.

[18:23] Just as it does for Simeon. We notice that he had this very special revelation, if you like, verse 26. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he'd seen the Lord's Christ.

Notice verse 27 then. This is the promise that he's been given. You won't die, Simeon, before you see the Lord's Christ. Then verse 27. He came in the Holy Spirit into the temple.

At just the right time. Just as Mary and Joseph happens to be there. Just as Mary and Joseph happen to be there offering the sacrifice for Christ. He comes into the temple in the Spirit.

It's perfect, perfect timing. I'm sure I've told you this before, but I was driving home from a finance committee one day from Glasgow.

I came round a bend to find a car on my side of the road, a van on my side of the road, trying to overtake another car. Thankfully he managed to miss me, but he did hit the car behind me.

[ 19 : 30 ] The timing from my perspective was perfect. And I mean that literally perfect. Two seconds earlier, two seconds later, it could have been a terrible trash.

The timing was perfect. And the timing was perfect as Simeon goes to the temple. He takes Jesus from the arms of Mary and praises God for who this little baby boy is.

Verse 28. He took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, Lord, now you're letting your servant depart in peace. You promised me that I would see the Christ.

You promised me that I would see the Messiah. You promised me that I would see your chosen king. And here he is. Verse 29. Here this little boy is. He's almost saying, I can die a happy man now.

I can die, rest assured, knowing that the Christ has come. My eyes have seen your salvation. Verse 30. And notice how Simeon describes it.

[ 20 : 37 ] It's something that's actually quite astonishing for a Jewish man to have said. This salvation, he says, has been prepared in the presence of all peoples.

But notice verse 32. A light for revelation to the Gentiles. Here was a Jewish man waiting for the coming king.

Here was a Jewish man waiting for the coming Messiah. Here was a Jewish man waiting for the coming of the consolation of Israel. And what is it that he says? That this baby will be a light for revelation to the Gentiles.

He gets it. He sees the big picture. That this baby wasn't going to be a purely nationalistic figure. That this baby wasn't going to be a purely nationalistic leader. But that he was going to be a light for the Gentiles as well.

That he had come to bring all people to know God. Simeon sees that God is doing something fundamentally new in Christ.

[ 21 : 39 ] That the Gentiles are being brought into, brought under the umbrella of salvation. This baby boy would bring the message of salvation. A light of revelation to the Gentiles.

The message, the gospel of Jesus Christ is for all peoples of the earth. It's for all nations. It's for you this morning. Jesus Christ himself reminds us that he came to seek and to save the lost.

He reminds us in John's gospel that he has other sheep who are not of this sheepfold. Reminds us that there will be a branch grafted on.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. If that's you this morning, Jesus came to seek and to save you, the Jew and the Gentile. Notice what Simeon says to Mary, verse 34.

He's praised God. He's sure that this is the Christ. He's sure that this is God's promised King. And he said to Mary, verse 34. Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many Israel for a sign that is opposed.

[ 23 : 05 ] But notice verse 35. A sword will pierce through your own soul also. As much joy and happiness, as much life and vitality as this baby boy would bring.

There would be pain and suffering as well. Mary's soul would be pierced. In pain for her boy.

So Jesus then has been praised by Simeon. But there's another character who we're introduced to. Another character in verse 36. This prophetess, Anna.

She most likely by this point is an old lady. But she also sees the boy. Like Simeon, she's a righteous lady.

She spends her days in prayer. Spends her days living in the temple precincts. Worshipping and praising God. And what's her response to the baby? Simeon's response had been to assure Mary that this baby was the Christ.

[ 24 : 11 ] What's her response? Well, verse 38. Having seen the boy coming up at that very hour, she began to give thanks to God. And to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

She speaks to all who are looking for a saviour, who are looking for a king. And she says, this boy is it. This boy is the saviour.

That's him, Jesus Christ. Two people come to see this baby. And they see him for who he is.

They see him as the Christ. The king of Israel. When we see Jesus for who he is. When we see Jesus for what he has come to do.

The only real appropriate response is praise. Is to give thanks to God for who Jesus is and what he came to do. You see, we're familiar with Jesus.

[ 25 : 14 ] And perhaps familiarity, it breeds certainly not contempt. But it might breed indifference. We know the story. We know who Jesus is.

We know where this story ends. But when these people for the first time saw Jesus. When these people for the first time realized who Jesus was.

Their hearts overflowed with praise and thanks. I wonder, friends, if we're in danger of losing the wonder of the gospel. The wonder of sins forgiven.

The wonder of God made flesh. So we've seen Jesus being presented.

We've seen Jesus being praised. But thirdly, finally this morning. We want to see Jesus being protected. And we see that in verses 39 through 40. We read verse 39.

[ 26 : 12 ] That they performed everything according to the law. Notice again, they're fulfilling all righteousness. They're doing everything that needs to be done. Verse 39. And then they returned to Nazareth.

There's something missing at this point, isn't there? There's something that Luke doesn't record for us, isn't there? Doesn't record for us the visit of the wise men. Doesn't record for us the slaughter of the innocents under Herod.

So how do we tie this together with what we read in the other gospels? Is Luke lying? Are the other gospels lying? Are the other gospels misinformed? Whenever they tell us these things, no. Rather, it's not Luke's purpose.

It's not Luke's intent under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to include these things. We remember Luke's purpose, verse 1 of chapter 1, is to make Theophilus sure of all the things that he has been taught.

Now, if those events were recorded for us in Luke, the visit of the wise men, the slaughter of the innocents under Herod.

[ 27 : 13 ] If those things were recorded for us in Luke's gospel, it would be very easy to see how Jesus was protected, wasn't it? He's protected from Herod's massacre. He's protected by the angel.

But we also see Jesus being protected in verse 40. Because the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him.

He's being protected in his growth as the Messiah. He's being protected in his growth as God's chosen king. He develops like any other young boy.

Any of you have young boys, know the mischief and the trouble that they can get into, but they're protected by God. And grows into the man, Jesus Christ.

What's our takeaway from this this morning, though? What do we want to leave having seen and remember this morning? That the plans and purposes of God will not be thwarted.

[ 28 : 21 ] The plans and purposes of God would not be thwarted by Jesus being a baby. The plans and purposes of God would not be thwarted by Jesus being born in poverty.

The plans and purposes of God will not be thwarted by Jesus being tempted by the devil. By Herod slaughtering innocent children. The plans and purposes of God will not be thwarted by Jesus being a baby.

The plans and purposes of God will not be thwarted by Jesus being a baby. It's easy for us today to look at the world around us and say, Well, there's so many foes. There's so much opposition.

But remember this this morning. That the plans and purposes of God will not be thwarted by secular humanism. The plans and purposes of God will not be thwarted by godless governments and their ideologies.

The purposes of God this morning will not be thwarted. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. Jesus Christ came to seek and to save a people for himself.

[ 29 : 28 ] And those plans and purposes will not be thwarted. No matter what it looks like. No matter how weak things may seem.

The plans and purposes of God will not be frustrated. In the midst of secular humanism. In the midst of our godless governments.

What do we look to? What do we cling to? We cling to this baby. This boy. Who fulfills all righteousness. This man.

Who keeps the law. So that we might know God. That friends is a plan. And purpose of God. Calling a people to himself.  
And it will not. Will not. Be thwarted. Amen.