



CHRISTMAS LESSON 2

The Son of Man is presented in Jerusalem

LUKE 2:21-38



The righteous ones testify that Jesus is the human Savior.



“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; 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” (Luke 2:29–32).

Supporting Truths

1. Jesus is the human Savior.
2. The righteous ones testify that Jesus is the Messiah.
3. Jesus is the light and salvation of all nations.
4. Jesus is the glory, consolation, and redemption of Israel.
5. Jesus saves through great suffering and despite much opposition.

Objectives

1. List at least three descriptions of Jesus as Savior.
2. Describe the righteousness of Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and Anna, and state why it matters to us.
3. State that Jesus offers salvation to all people.
4. Explain how Jesus came especially to save His chosen nation of Israel.
5. Contrast the two responses to Jesus and their corresponding results.

STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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Lesson Summary

God had already sent an angel to announce Jesus' destiny to Joseph and Mary, and He confirmed this through the shepherds. But the message is so incredible it is hard to believe. So He provided more evidence through the testimony of Joseph and Mary themselves, as well as through faithful Simeon and prayerful Anna. Their testimony compels us to listen and acknowledge that Jesus is indeed the Comforter, Savior, Light, and Redeemer, for the Jews first but also for all nations.

Spotlight on the Gospel

The testimony of these witnesses reveals the greatness of the gospel, which God accomplished through His Son. Jesus came to live and die for humans. He brings relief from sin and the curse. He is the Messiah, dying to save but rising to rule. He satisfies Israel's hopes, and He extends grace to all nations. He lifts up those who believe, and He crushes those who rebel. He redeems, rescuing by His blood so that what was broken can be made whole.

LAST WEEK



The Son of Man is born in
Bethlehem
Luke 2:1–20

THIS WEEK



The Son of Man is
presented in Jerusalem
Luke 2:21–38

NEXT WEEK



The Son of Man is
identified in the temple
Luke 2:39–52

THE SON OF MAN IS BORN

Lesson Commentary

The righteous ones testify that Jesus is the human Savior.

Many people enjoy Christmas even though they do not care what it is about. But they must care. According to the Old Testament, if two or three witnesses agreed, then the judge had to consider their testimony (Deut 19:15). Luke applies this same principle to the birth of Jesus. He already gave the testimony of holy angels (Luke 1:35; 2:9–14) and faithful shepherds (2:16–20). Now, he adds the testimony of three more godly witnesses: Jesus' parents, Simeon, and Anna. Since these trustworthy witnesses agree, we must listen to their message. So who do they say Jesus was born to be?

Law-abiding parents testified that Jesus is Savior (2:21–24)

The first witnesses are Jesus' own parents. They are truthful witnesses because they are righteous and love God (Matt 1:19; Luke 1:47). They are careful to follow God's law in everything regarding the birth of their firstborn son (Luke 2:22, 23, 27, 39; Lev 12:1–5). So what do they say about Jesus? First, by naming Him Jesus, which means "the LORD saves," they confirmed that Jesus was born to "save His people from their sins" (Luke 2:21; Matt 1:21).

Second, they circumcised Jesus according to God's command to Abraham (Luke 2:21; Gen 17:12–13). This shows that Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham who will fulfill the Abrahamic Covenant by restoring all Israel to their God (Gal 3:16; Isa 49:5). Jesus' circumcision also identified Him with sinful humanity, because circumcision shows that all humans are born with sin that needs to be removed (Deut 10:16; Ps 51:5; Col 2:11). Although Jesus was sinless from birth (Luke 1:35; 1 Pet 2:22), He came as a human to bear the sins of humans (John 1:29).

Third, they dedicated Jesus to the Lord (Luke 2:22). Although all firstborns were to be dedicated (Exod 13:1–2, 12–15), Jesus was especially set apart for God. His whole life would satisfy the righteous demands of the Law (Matt 5:17; Gal 4:4). He would live and die in utter submission to the Father's will (John 5:19; Matt 26:39). So Jesus' parents testified by their words and actions that their baby was set apart to the Lord in order to provide salvation from sin.

Righteous Simeon testified that Jesus is Savior (2:25–35)

Simeon's testimony can also be trusted. He was righteous (Luke 2:25–26), a man of true faith (Gen 15:6). He was also *devout, thoughtful and careful to live according to God's commands*. He had godly *hope*, his life characterized by *confident expectation that God would keep His promises*. Finally, He was sensitive to God's leading, yielding to the special influence of the Holy Spirit in his life.

So we must listen to Simeon's testimony. First, Simeon identified Jesus as Israel's *consolation* (Luke 2:25). Because of Israel's rebellion and apostasy, they have suffered greatly, as the prophets predicted. But the prophets also promised *comfort, encouragement, and relief* (Isa 40:1–2) when God Himself would come to save and care for His people Israel (40:9–11). This prophecy began to be fulfilled during Jesus' earthly ministry (Luke 4:18–21), but it won't be completely fulfilled until all Israel looks to Him and finally accepts Jesus as their Messiah and Savior (Zech 12:10; 14:11; Rom 11:26).

Second, Simeon identified Jesus as the Lord's Messiah (Luke 2:26). *Messiah* literally means *anointed one, the one appointed by God both to save and to rule*. By His suffering and death He would set free from sin (Isa 61:1; Dan 9:26). By His righteousness and power He will rule as Israel's king over the entire world (Ps 2).



THINK ABOUT IT

Is your hope in Jesus? There is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:12).

THINK ABOUT IT
God will not fail to keep His promises to Israel.



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON



The Son of Man is presented in Jerusalem • Luke 2:21–38

Third, Simeon rejoiced that Jesus is God's salvation (Luke 2:30). **Salvation** is a broad term, the complete undoing of sin and the curse that first came into the world in Genesis 3. Jesus is called God's salvation because God alone is Savior, the only one to whom we should look to be saved (Isa 45:21–22). So when Jesus was born, God Himself became a man to live a sinless life (Rom 5:19), die to pay the penalty for sin (1 Pet 3:18), and rise again to conquer death (Rom 6:9). One day He will return (Rev 19), reign over the earth (Rev 20), and establish the New Creation (Rev 21, 22).

Then salvation will be complete, because all the redeemed will be perfect people living in God's perfect presence on a perfect Earth, just like they were designed to do in the beginning (Rev 21:1–22:5; Gen 1:26–28). This is the salvation that God prepared (Luke 2:31).

Fourth, Simeon rejoiced that Jesus came to save both Jews and Gentiles (Luke 2:31–32). He would be a light for revelation to the **Gentiles**. Even believing Jews were shocked that salvation could come to non-Jews, but this was something promised long ago (Gen 12:3). God considered it too small a thing for the Servant Messiah to rescue Israel; He would be a light of salvation to all nations (Isa 49:6). But He would also be a light for the glory of Israel. Israel was still God's special nation. After all, Gentile nations are saved through Israel's witness, covenant, and Messiah (John 4:22; Rom 9:1–5). Thus Israel will be radiant with God's glory and honored by all the nations (Isa 60:1–5).

Fifth, Simeon warned that Jesus was destined for conflict (Luke 2:34–35; cf. 12:51). Although He brings God's salvation, He also brings God's justice, causing some to rise and others to fall. The humble submit to Him and are raised up, resting upon Him as their

precious cornerstone (Isa 28:16). The proud refuse to submit to Him and are brought low, stumbling over the rock of offense (8:13–15; 1 Pet 2:8). Jesus was destined to offend because He would expose the great unbelief among God's people (Luke 2:34–35). This is why people so often respond to Jesus with such hostility: He exposes their sin (John 3:19).

So Simeon tells us much about this newborn baby. He was born for Israel, but also for the whole world. He was born to save, but He was also born to be rejected, suffering and dying at the hands of wicked men. As Messiah He would be both the sacrificial sin offering and the sovereign judge of all.

Prophetess Anna testified that Jesus is Savior (2:36–39)

The testimony of Anna is also true (Luke 2:36–37). It's likely she was over 100 years old, having spent the majority of her life in prayer and fasting. So what did she testify? She called Jesus the **redemption** of Jerusalem (2:38), the One who would rescue and deliver His people. However, this deliverance would come at great cost. God had made Jerusalem His city (1 Kings 11:36) and promised to redeem it (Isa 52:9; Rev 21:10), but few Jews at that time realized that this redemption would require the precious blood of a spotless, unblemished lamb (52:13–53:12; 1 Pet 1:19).

So as we enjoy the Christmas season, we must also consider the testimony of these faithful witnesses. Do we embrace Jesus as the certain answer to all of our hopes and fears? We must, for Jesus is the Savior of men. Do we contemplate the magnitude of the salvation He provides? We should, for His plan encompasses the entire universe. Jesus will restore Israel, rescue all nations, crush the wicked, rule the earth, and undo the curse. In the end, His glory will radiate through the New Jerusalem to the great delight of all the redeemed (Rev 21:23). That was the destiny for the baby in Mary's arms.



THINK ABOUT IT

All of history—including Christ's rejection and crucifixion (Acts 2:23)—is part of God's plan of salvation through Jesus.

Lesson Outline

The righteous ones testify that Jesus is the human Savior.



AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

We know Jesus is the Savior because...

1. Jesus' parents called Him "the LORD saves" (2:21–24).
2. Simeon called Him the light for all nations (2:25–35).
3. Anna called Him the redeemer of Jerusalem (2:36–38).



AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Law-abiding parents testified that Jesus is Savior (2:21–24, 39).
 - True witness: Jesus' parents obeyed God's instructions (2:21–24, 39).
 - Jesus is the promised seed of Abraham and representative of all mankind (2:21).
 - Jesus means "the LORD saves" (2:21).
 - Jesus is dedicated to doing the Father's will (2:22–24).
2. Righteous Simeon testified that Jesus is Savior (2:25–35).
 - True witness: Simeon was righteous, devout, hopeful, and sensitive to God's leading (2:25).
 - Jesus is Israel's consolation and Messiah (2:25–26).
 - Jesus is light and salvation to Gentiles, but especially to Israel (2:27–32).
 - Jesus is the cause of the rise and fall of many (2:33–35).
3. Prophetess Anna testified that Jesus is Savior (2:36–38).
 - True witness: Anna was devoted to the Lord (2:36–37).
 - Jesus is the redemption of Jerusalem (2:38).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. What does Jesus mean?**
Yahweh saves.
- 2. Who did Simeon say Jesus would be?**
He said Jesus would be a light for all nations.
- 3. Who was Anna?**
She was a very old prophetess and widow. She prayed and fasted all the time.
- 4. What did Anna say Jesus would do?**
She said He would rescue Jerusalem.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why did God provide many different witnesses to testify concerning Jesus?**
To demonstrate the validity of Jesus' person and work and to demonstrate the necessity of believing that Jesus is the Savior.
- 2. How were Jesus' parents trustworthy witnesses?**
They trusted God, loved God, and carefully followed God's commands.
- 3. How was Simeon a trustworthy witness?**
He was righteous, devout, hopeful, and sensitive to God's leading.
- 4. Who was Simeon waiting for?**
The consolation of Israel: someone to give comfort and relief from sin and the curse. The Lord's Messiah: the one anointed to suffer, save, and rule over Israel and the world.
- 5. What does it mean that Jesus came to save?**
It means that He came to completely overcome sin and undo sin's curse.
- 6. Who did Simeon say Jesus came to be a light to?**
He was a light of revelation to all nations and a light of glory to Israel in particular.
- 7. Would everyone welcome Jesus as the Messiah? Why not?**
No. Most people would hate Him because He exposes the sin in their hearts (John 3:19).
- 8. How would Jesus provide redemption?**
He would pay the price of His own blood to set sinners free from sin and death.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

CAN YOU TRUST ME?

Pretend to be the following characters (one after the other) and ask the children if they can trust what you say: policeman, pastor, criminal. Tell the children that today we're going to meet three groups of people in our lesson, and we can trust what they have to tell us about Jesus.

"A LIGHT OF REVELATION"

In our lesson today, Simeon calls Jesus "a light of revelation." To help the children understand this concept, turn off the lights and ask the children if they can see what's in your hand (you might hold a Bible or a small cross). Next, turn on a flashlight and shine the light on what's in your hand. Did the light help the children see it better? In a similar way, Jesus is the "light" that has come to reveal God and His salvation to all the people of the world.



ILLUSTRATE

ACT IT OUT

Pretend to be each of the three different groups of witnesses in today's lesson and share your testimony about Jesus with the class. If there is more than one teacher in the room, one teacher might dress up as the witnesses while the other teacher "introduces" them to the class. Bring different visuals to help the children identify each witness: Jesus' parents (staff for journey, stuffed birds for sacrifice), Simeon (clock to symbolize waiting, glasses for eyes that have seen the Lord's salvation), Anna (cane, empty plate, folded hands, megaphone).

RISE AND FALL

Although Jesus came to bring God's salvation, He also brings God's justice, causing some to rise and others to fall. Tell the class that the humble (those who trust in Jesus) are lifted up, while the proud (those who trust in themselves) are brought low. This can be illustrated by allowing the children to stand or sit when your back is toward the class. When you turn around and face the class, all the proud (those standing) must sit down while all the humble (those sitting) may stand up.



APPLY

BEHOLD, THIS CHILD IS APPOINTED

See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*.

Materials: Craft sheets, black and yellow construction paper, scissors, glue, and crayons.

Directions: Pre-cut pieces out of the craft sheet. Cut pieces for a flash light from construction paper. Have children color the pieces and glue them to the appropriate locations on the other craft sheet.

Behold, This Child Is Appointed
See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

The Son of Man is presented in Jerusalem • Luke 2:21–38



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

Make a special announcement to the class. Begin small, but slowly build it up to unbelievable proportions. Ask them, “Does this sound too good to be true?” Yes. That’s because it is. Ask the children if they’ve ever experienced something like this. However, tell them that in today’s lesson we’re going to learn what the Bible says about Jesus, and though it sounds too good to be true, it is true. We can trust what the Bible says about Jesus. Now, let’s see what our three witnesses in our story today have to tell us about Jesus.

DESTINED FOR CONFLICT

In our lesson today, we’re going to learn that Jesus was destined for conflict (Luke 2:34–35; cf. 12:51). His life and ministry would divide people based on their responses to God’s offer of salvation through Jesus. Introduce this concept by dividing the class over two favorite local sports teams, foods, music, movies, etc. While these divisions over trivial things can be fun, the division that Jesus creates is very serious. Those who deny Jesus and reject Him will spend all of eternity separated from Him.



ILLUSTRATE

A ROCK OF OFFENSE

Although Jesus brings God’s salvation, He also brings God’s justice, causing some to rise and others to fall. The humble submit to Him and are raised up, resting upon Him as their precious cornerstone (Isa 28:16). The proud refuse to submit to Him and are brought low, stumbling over the rock of offense (Isa 8:13–15; 1 Pet 2:8). You can illustrate this by bringing a cinder block (or other large stone) to class. Point out this block can either serve as a solid foundation to lift up or tripping hazard to bring low.

PINOCCHIO

Is the name of a fictional character featured in many popular children’s stories, cartoons, and movies. This wooden marionette, supposedly created by a woodcarver named Geppetto, dreams of becoming a real boy. However, he is also prone to telling lies and getting into mischief. Ask the children if they remember what happens to Pinocchio when he lies (his nose grows). Unlike this make-believe character, we can trust the testimony of Joseph, Mary, Simeon, and Anna. These people really lived and were chosen and prepared by God to tell the truth about His Son.



APPLY

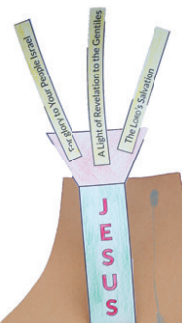
A LIGHT OF REVELATION

See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2.

Materials: Craft sheet, tan construction paper, scissors, glue, tape, and crayons.

Directions: Copy craft sheet onto cardstock. Have children color and cut out the flashlight and light beams. Cut a tan sheet of construction paper with a curve and add 2 small bodies of water to make it look like the land of Israel (see picture below). Glue light beams on flashlight. Fold the bottom of the flashlight along the dotted line and attach a strip of spare white cardstock to the back to add support to help it stand up. Glue the base of the flashlight to the construction paper.

A Light of Revelation
See Year 2 Craft Book,
Book 2



AGES 9–11



HELLO, MY NAME IS

Bring four stickers to class that read, “Hello, My Name Is.” Write the names of the four different witnesses on the stickers, one name per sticker. As you come to each witness in today’s lesson, put on the appropriate sticker(s) and introduce yourself to the class.

LIGHT OF REVELATION TO THE GENTILES

Jesus came to save all people—every nation, tongue, and tribe (Rev 7:9). Introduce this truth by asking the children to name as many different countries as they can (the class could be split into two teams to compete to see which team can name the most countries). There are currently 196 officially recognized countries



SCHINDLER’S LIST

Oskar Schindler was a German businessman who saved the lives of more than a thousand Jews during World War II. Deeply affected by the Nazi’s mistreatment and murder of innocent Jews, Oskar used his influence and immense fortune to rescue Jews from certain death in Nazi concentration camps. His effort to save the Jewish people is an amazing example of what it means to redeem: to buy back something for a price. He risked his life and sacrificed his fortune to redeem the Jewish people. His life is remembered in the book *Schindler’s Ark* by Thomas Keneally and the movie, “Schindler’s List,” directed by Steven Spielberg.

CONSOLATION PRIZE?

Ask the children what a consolation prize is. Explain that it is a prize given to someone who fails to win or finishes last. Then ask the children if this is what Simeon was waiting for in Luke 2:25. It was not. Tell the class that Simeon identified Jesus as Israel’s consolation because He would bring comfort, encouragement, and relief (Isa 40:1–2) when God Himself would come to save and care for His people Israel (Isa 40:9–11).



DESTINED TO DIVIDE

Simeon warned that Jesus was destined for conflict (Luke 2:34–35; cf. 12:51). He causes a division between those who trust in Him and those who trust in themselves. Read Luke 12:51–53 as a class and discuss how the person and work of Jesus may even create divisions within the family. Explain that all the people of the world can be placed in one of two categories: humble lovers of Jesus or prideful lovers of self. As Simeon explained to Mary, the opposition to Jesus was destined to expose the rampant unbelief present among God’s people (Luke 2:34–35).