

# **Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Gospel of Luke, Session 5, Infancy Narrative, Part 3, Temple Discourse**

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This is Dr. Dan Darko in his teaching on the Gospel of Luke. This is session 5, Infancy Narrative, Part 3, Temple Discourse.

Welcome back to the study of the Gospel of Luke in our Biblica e-learning series.

We have so far looked at a few things in Luke regarding the introduction, and we went through the test and started looking at the Infancy Narrative. At this point we are in the stage where we are looking at the Temple Discourse. Just before we got into the Temple Discourse, we were looking at the birth narratives, looking at how John the Baptist and the circumstances around his birth took effect, prophetic claims or pronouncements that were made in the process, especially the prophetic statements of Zechariah, his father.

Then, we also looked at the birth and the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, what brought them to Bethlehem, and where he was giving birth, right there with sheep in a manger. Then, we ended the session by looking at the visitors to the baby Jesus in the Gospel of Luke. Unlike Matthew, I emphasize the fact that the visitors are shepherds in Luke.

Here, we move on to look at the narratives that look into what happened when Jesus was presented in the temple and when John was presented in the temple. And a few things that will be going on in these encounters. These I have called the Temple Discourse.

So please follow closely as we look at a Temple Discourse in the broader framework of the Infancy Narrative. Here, from verse 21 of chapter 2, Luke draws our attention to the birth of Jesus. And I read, At the end of the of eight days when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Verse 22: 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. As it was 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 turtledoves or two pigeons. 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.

And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord 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. For my eyes have seen your salvation, that you have prepared in the presence of all people a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.

Here, as we look at this event, we begin to look at a very important part of Mary and Joseph's religious life. Mary and Joseph are so devoted to their religious convictions as Jews that having the boy Jesus will fulfill all the religious obligations that are expected of them. They come from Nazareth, imagine 70 to 80 miles away from Jerusalem, and they will still come to the temple to do what is expected of them.

There are three things I'll point out quickly in terms of Jesus being in the temple. The first is the boy's dedication. Every firstborn is supposed to be dedicated to the temple approximately six weeks after the child is born.

It is important that Jews follow this, and the parents of Jesus as Jews, were prepared to follow that. We also know that being the first child coming from the womb of Mary, Mary, within 40 days or after 40 days of giving birth to the child has to go through religious purification, which will also be something that will be done in the temple. These two things come together to bring Mary and Joseph to the temple.

If you want to follow the tradition, this is a tradition that is more stated in Leviticus 12, reminding Jews of that particular obligation. Then, when they get to the temple, we will come into contact with two important figures. Here again, a man and a woman.

Luke likes to make the male-female pair in his infancy narrative, as we see an angel appear to Zechariah, and an angel appears to Mary. Here, in terms of the witnesses, we are going to see a man, Simeon, and a woman, Anna. The other thing you should note when we get to the witnesses is the Jewish tradition that two or three bear the appropriate witnesses to the event.

Here, we will have two witnesses to what is happening as far as the Messiah's coming is concerned. In terms of the dedication of the baby and the two witnesses, I'd like us to look quickly at issues such as circumcision, which we talked about earlier on relative to John the Baptist, and how this child will be presented in the temple as well. Luke 2, 21-24 draws our attention quickly to some of the things that will be going on.

At the end of eight days, it is expected that the child be circumcised. So, Jesus was circumcised, according to the law, on the eighth day. The child is supposed to be called, and naming is important.

He had to be named. Now, the name that the angel had mentioned should be his name. Here, we don't have any debate.

Unlike John the Baptist, whether he should be called his father's name or not, that is not the issue here. The angel had given the name, and the name will be given to him. Yahweh saves.

Jesus is his name. And then we will also see emphasis on the fact that they are going to go to the temple, Luke reminds us, because they are devout Jews. They want to follow the law of Moses.

They want to follow the law of the Lord. For us modern-day Christians, I cannot overemphasize the fact that we should be very, very careful in the idea that some propose and promote that Christianity comes to suppress Judaism or Christianity comes to replace Judaism and even allow room for some people to hate Jews, and to see if they can get rid of Jews so that the church will thrive. That is a misreading of what is going on in the New Testament.

God chose to come into our world as a Jew, and everything that is going on around the life of Jesus is showing parents who are devout Jews, and in Luke in particular, Christianity must be understood within the context of Second Temple Judaism, even in the book of Acts. So, verse 22 of chapter 2 will say, 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. This will be in the Jewish temple.

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 then, in verse 24, we also get a glimpse of what will be offered as a sacrifice. They will offer a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons.

That will tell us something about the economic status of Mary and Joseph. Let me just move on and try to show something about the devout nature of these parents. Four things.

To circumcise Jesus on the eighth day is to show that, indeed, they are descendants of Abraham who are committed to the Abrahamic traditions. Two, to name him is to do according to tradition and according to what the angel had said. Third, following the strict purification laws of the T, as we would see, speaks to the fact that they are devout Jews who want to follow the letter of the law.

And as we were told before in Luke, they were righteous people. And four, the sacrifice they will give, the turtle doves or the two pigeons they will give, speaks to their economic standing. Luke wanted us to know that what they offered as a sacrifice shows that they were poor.

According to Leviticus 12:6 to 8, that is the kind of sacrifice that poor people who cannot afford the first and most expensive sacrifice could bring to the temple for those purification rites. In fact, Leviticus 12:8, in particular, states that if you cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtle doves or two pigeons, exactly as Luke quotes in his gospel. So, baby Jesus is brought to the temple.

Law observance and law expectations are met. That is great, isn't it? But for Luke, that is not enough. They have satisfied the customary rites.

They have satisfied the law requirements. They have satisfied the religious rite. But this is not an ordinary child.

This is the Messiah, the Messiah coming into the world. Luke said there would be two witnesses in the temple whose lives were devoted to waiting to be able to see the Messiah come. These two witnesses are witnesses to whom we should pay close attention.

They don't get enough attention when we look at them in our usual studies of the text. The first witness is Simeon. Simeon, Luke tells us, is a righteous and devout man.

He was a religious man dedicated to doing what is right before the Lord. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel. He was waiting for the time when the Messiah would come and the grieving Israel, the Israel that has been surprised, Israel under Roman rule, the Israel that foreigners are detecting from Judea to Galilee, the Jews that are now under the rule, and the governance of Gentiles.

He is waiting for the consolation when the Messiah will come, and God will usher his own rule into being. Simeon will not see death until the day he will see the Messiah. Luke tells us that Simeon will encounter baby Jesus and his parents, and he's going to say, of course, this is the day.

And he will surprise the parents with his remarks. Continuing with Simeon and his observations, we also realize that Luke is quick to tell us that Simeon was a man of the Holy Spirit. For Luke, if you take the Holy Spirit out, you take a lot out.

He was of the Holy Spirit. We are told that he was prompted by the Spirit to go to the temple. He would praise God, and the way he expressed his praise would even surprise the parents of Jesus.

In fact, in the words of Simeon, perhaps let me read from verses 21 and 25. 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. 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 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 the following: 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 people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles. And by the way, the ESV would translate Gentiles.

But the word actually would be a light of revelation to the nations and for glory to your people Israel. And his father and his mother marveled, namely Joseph and Mary, at what was said about him. 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.

And the sword will pierce through your own soul also, so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed. Simeon will be the first witness to testify about this child in the temple as the Messiah. For the moment, imagine that you are the parents of Jesus, and all these things are unfolding about your son.

And you are in the middle of all these things that you hear from angels, witnesses come, people say these things, and you are not sure what is going on. And you think you are just following the traditional course of action. And so, you come to the temple.

And now to your surprise, this man Simeon comes to the temple. He doesn't always spend his time there. But we are told he comes to the temple like a prophet.

The Holy Spirit was upon him. He was led by the Spirit. Luke tells us that he was even prompted by the Spirit to be at the temple at that time.

And this is what he says about the child. As if to say the Messiah has come, but Mary, Mary should pay attention to the fact that perhaps how this child is going to die is going to cause some trouble for her as well. But it comes as the Messiah.

Luke then goes on to tell us about a second witness, Anna. Anna, in Greek, is the Hebrew Hannah. She will be the second witness, a remarkable woman, a remarkable old woman.

We are told that she was a prophet and quite old. This is remarkable because Luke is one of those who is going to tell us there are prophets. I find it very, very intriguing that Luke tells us there is a female prophet here.

And then, somewhere in the book of Acts, he tells us that there are daughters of Philip who are also prophets. When he refers to prophets again, he refers to prophets like Agabus and some prophets like in Acts 13, talking about the people who are gifted leaders in the church, that they are teachers and prophets. You see, modern-day scholars think they are the most egalitarian.

Welcome to the world of Luke. For Luke, when God is using people, he is using people regardless of gender. Here, he is saying that one of the key witnesses to the dedication and purification rites surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ will be a woman, one of them being Anna, who was a prophet.

Anna, after seven years of marriage, depending upon how you read that sentence in Greek, remained a widow for or until 84 years. So, this old woman and a prophet is going to come and encounter this child. We are told about Anna's religious life.

Anna dedicated her life to fasting and prayer. We also are told that she gave thanks to God and spoke to all people looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. And as it so happened, she was going to be the second witness to the child.

Now, if I will pause here a minute to try to digress, this is where we need to refresh our memories and appreciate the fact that what God is doing in the New Testament is not tied to gender politics, that God has always used men and women who are available and dedicated to him. Right in the second chapter of the Gospel of Luke, next to a testimony about the birth and dedication of Jesus, it's a woman who is no ordinary woman. Simeon spoke as a prophet, but Anna is named as a prophet.

She is not only named as a prophet. She is also described as a person devoted to prayer and fasting. In her prophetic tradition, she looked forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. A prophet indeed.

When we today are speculating on what is the role of men and the role of women, and some say we got it right and some say we got it wrong and all that, please understand that Luke, who gives us the most comprehensive account of the life, work, and ministry of Jesus and early Christianity in Acts, it's careful to show us God has worked with men and women who are available since the beginning. In Luke chapter 2, verses 39 to 40, Luke writes, and when the parents of Jesus had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee and to the town of Nazareth, and there the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him. As if that is not enough, Luke is still

trying to tell us that the Jewish prophetic discourse has shown that a larger prophet will come, and so we cannot forget what is going on with the story of John.

So, we are told that when John's event takes place, and Jesus comes in, Jesus fulfills this important role, and in the second stage, things are going to start following very quickly. Dedicated in the temple, circumcised according to the Jewish convention. Here we see Jesus again in the Temple part 2; it is going to be a whole different story here.

From verse 41, Jesus will now be in the temple for Passover, and we are told that he will be here at 12 years old; well, 12 is significant. The girls could be given out for marriage and betrothal at a time. For the man, you think about what modern-day we talk about by Mitzvah, he is slowly growing into some maturity in one stage of life, a very important stage indeed.

The parents and Jesus will take this pilgrimage and go to Jerusalem, and perhaps I should read the text from 41 to 52. Now, his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover, and when he was 12 years old, they went up according to custom. When the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in a group, they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among the relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem searching.

After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. All who heard him were amazed at his understanding and answers, and when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.

And he, being Jesus, said to them, why are you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house? They did not understand the saying that he spoke to them, and he went down with them. They came to Nazareth and were submissive to them, and his mother treasured all things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. We find here in the second visit of Jesus in the temple that he will stay while the parents leave.

But please, before we accuse the parents of being irresponsible, that they have a 12-year-old traveling with them, and they could go for one day, one full day, without noticing that the child was missing, let me fill you in with some cultural gaps. The culture was such that a festival like the Passover would have friends, relatives, and neighbors traveling in caravans from Galilee to Jerusalem. In that caravan, in a collectivist culture, a young boy, like a 12-year-old, will be trusted to be around friends and relatives.

Security will not be an issue at all, and they will not even be willing to share food because that is just how the culture works. It will not be a problem at all for them to presume that as they came, baby Jesus or young boy Jesus or teenage Jesus is not yet a teenager yet he is 12 years old. He is hanging around with some other boys in their neighborhood, and they are trying to walk with another group. That is not a problem for the parents.

In fact, it would not be unusual for them to make that 70, 80-mile trek without having an encounter with the boy Jesus until they reach home. But I saw what happens when they reach home: they will be expecting that the child will come home too, but then they discover on arrival that he is not there. They looked around, searching for a while, and they went back to Jerusalem.

Remember, they had traveled for a day; they traveled another day. We do not know if they used another day to look for this child. That will amount to the three days that Jesus will be in the temple.

They come and meet him, and Jesus will say something that is quite serious. Now, let me just remind you that Joseph is not the biological father of Jesus. Joseph is the foster father of Jesus.

Mary is the mother. This child is going to immerse himself in the teaching tradition of the temple, and he is asking questions and providing answers that are so profound. They are amazing people.

And when they came, Mary asked Jesus, why do you do this thing to us? Now, imagine being in Joseph's situation when the boy said, why are you worried about me? I must actually be in my father's house. Well, Joseph is supposed to be the father, right? Yeah. He said I must be in my father's house.

By the way, when you look through the Old Testament, you don't have that tradition of frequent reference to God as a father. It is something that is going to develop more later. The image of God as a father is not a huge image that was going on.

But we find Jesus telling the parents; I must be in my father's house. But then Luke wanted to remind us that just in case we think he was going to grow up to be a stubborn, rowdy young boy, Luke said he returned to Nazareth with them, and he lived with them in submission. He lived with them in submission.

I like George Greene's reference to what is happening in the temple when he says Jesus is in the temple, the locus of God's presence. But he's there at a divine compulsion engaged in teaching. The point is that he must align himself with God's purpose.

Even if this appears to compromise his relationship with his parents when he says, do you not know that I must be in my father's house? He's saying, do you not know that I must be in God's house? I must immerse myself in the work of God. Yes, that is what is going on here.

At a critical age, 12, of the baby Jesus. We know that while everything going on in the temple will register and give us a lot of echoes in our thinking of tradition, one should make good observation that the natural parents were quite astonished seeing the performance of a 12-year-old in teaching in the temple. Jesus is involved in doing what traditional Jews would say; if I come to maturity at 12, I can engage myself more in religious activities.

But he's taking that to a whole new level at 12 year old. That doesn't mean Jesus will begin ministry at 12. No, in fact, we will actually hear Jesus beginning his ministry more so at 30.

But we also know that a 12-year-old critical time for a Jewish boy was when Jesus was going to be found in the temple, blowing people's minds by the way he taught and answered questions. He grew up in stature, in wisdom, in favor with God and man. Luke, if you have not noticed already yet, is interested in what we call physiognomy.

Luke is interested in describing the physical stature of people, how they grew up, and the attitude in which they grew up. Luke did that with John the Baptist. If you remember, I mentioned that earlier on, and he talked about how John grew in strong spirit and he grew up.

And you said that's natural. No. He grew to be a man, he's trying to say.

He grew to be a man with a strong will and a dedication to the cause. And he could retreat to the wilderness. Here, he gets into the physiognomy again.

Jesus grew socially; he had the favor of man. Spiritually, he had favor with God. Physically, he was a man of stature.

Mentally, he was a man of wisdom. Luke wants you to know something about the physiognomy of Jesus. Luke is the guy who is going to tell us later on that there was a short guy who climbed that tree.

Do you think he does this by coincidence? He's interested in stature. But that is not only Luke, because we find in the Old Testament, occasionally, the personality the physical stature of a leader is brought to bear to show that the person commands their respect and honor to you. And Luke is saying, yes, Jesus grew up in these areas.

In closing with the infancy narrative, I would like to close with a quotation from Craddock, who writes that at a very significant period of his life, he was in continuity with Judaism. And that is about Jesus. Those periods for a firstborn male child were circumcision at eight days, dedicated or presentation to God.

In this case, at six weeks, when his mother was purified, bar mitzvah at age 12, and even public life at age 30. These are the moments Luke marks in Jesus's life. When Luke does this and shows us that at this point, Jesus's ministry has followed to the T, what is expected of parents who are devout Torah-abiding Jews?

He's now going to fill that gap and take us to the next step, which is to show us the beginning of Jesus's ministry at 30. Let me draw your attention to the fact that as a reader if you were to cut the first two chapters out of Luke, you would not miss the central issues Luke is trying to convey in the gospel of Luke. But it is so important to Luke to establish that all that Jesus came to do was done within the traditions of Second Temple Judaism.

He situates that, he verifies, and he highlights the fact that the prophetic fulfillment is being unfolded. Because Elijah comes in the person of John, and then the Messiah comes, Jesus Christ. That Messiah grows in these areas I have highlighted.

John, that Elijah, in chapter 1, verse 80, also gives an account of how that man grew. And now, as if he's going to give us a decade or so year gap when we open chapter 3, he's going to take us into the preparation ministry to show us how the ministry of Jesus will unfold, and yet still, how that will be preceded by the ministry of John the Baptist. I hope you have been closely following the discussion on the infancy narrative so far.

All three parts of the infancy narrative are meant to give you a very good insight into Luke's discourse on how the ministry of Jesus is situated in the Jewish tradition. He comes as a humble Messiah, and yet he's the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, as we know elsewhere in the New Testament. He comes as a very humble Messiah, born in a manger and visited by ordinaries like shepherds.

Yes, he profoundly influences people in the way he teaches in the temple. Yes, if you think all his background from Nazareth and others should make him somebody people would despise, Luke is telling us that even at this age, 12 years in his life, he was already gaining attention in significant ways in areas pertaining to his knowledge base of the scriptures and his ability to teach. Jesus has come to our world, and as we learn more about him, I hope we grow.

I hope we reflect. I hope we ask ourselves how his message and ministry could impact our lives. So that we can be better people in God's world. My prayer and my

hope is that, together, we will all embrace the message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in humility and serve in God's world for God's glory.

Thank you, and God bless you.

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