

Dec 20, 2015



# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks  
Baptist Church  
Grand Prairie, Texas

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**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**  
The tiny Baby in the manger is the mighty Creator of the universe

**COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:**  
When Jesus took His first breath on earth, a loving promise of God the Father was fulfilled. The Christ-child whom the angels announced and the shepherds proclaimed had come to die. The baby in the manger was the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**  
*And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.*  
**(Col 1:18 NIV)**

*(from "Our Daily Bread", Feb 21, 2014)*

**Series: SACRED GIFTS AND HOLY GATHERINGS**

UNIT: What We Bring to God

NEXT WEEK

**NO CLASS**  
Blessed Christmas  
(Happy Birthday Jesus)

## Dedication of the Firstborn Exodus 13:13-15; Luke 2:22-32

### Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson reviews what God has done in showing us the significance of the **Dedication of the Firstborn**, the Lord Jesus Christ. The **study's aim** is to see that what God has foretold and brought about is far more important than all the secular and social traditions of the season. The **study's application** is to center our thinking and celebrations this season on the Lord Jesus and His work for us.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### Lesson Introduction and Background

The position of the firstborn male was a mark of distinction in biblical times. Our lesson today surveys the Old Testament command of God regarding redemption of the firstborn, and our New Testament text shows it being applied to Jesus. Traditions can provide opportunities to reinforce important foundational truths that a country, a community, a church, a family, or an individual must keep at the forefront of their identity. The practice of sanctifying by redemption every Israelite firstborn male was so important that it was the second observance commanded of Israel following the exodus from Egypt. (The first was the Passover) Exodus 13, from which the first portion of our lesson text is drawn, addresses this. The important role of the firstborn male is further seen in his receiving certain privileges, including leadership responsibilities and a greater share of the family inheritance once the father had passed away (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). Being a firstborn male Israelite had great significance because of the unique history of the nation. Regarding the infant Jesus, the Gospel of Luke notes as being carried out the redemption that Exodus describes. The joy of the Christmas season may cause us to overlook how Jesus, God's firstborn, was treated. The term firstborn in Colossians 1:15 doesn't mean "born first," but highlights Jesus' preeminence as the Son of God and the special privileges that belong to him as a result (compare Exodus 4:22). Yet unlike the firstborn in Israel at the time of the tenth plague, Jesus was not spared from death. He became the substitute for sinful humanity at the cross. He is the Passover lamb who was sacrificed and whose blood now makes it possible for God's judgment and wrath to pass over us (John 1:29; 1 Corinthians 5:7). Jesus is still the true gift of Christmas, the one that keeps on giving—giving eternal life to those who trust in him. The cross, the place where God did not spare his own firstborn from death, results in our redemption, that we may be called "children of God" (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1, 2).

The Old Testament discusses the sanctifying, redeeming, or setting apart of the firstborn (Exodus 13:2, 12, 13), but what about the New Testament? Quite simply, we are no longer under the ordinances of the law (Colossians 2:13, 14), so this practice is not required of Christian families. Even so, some churches celebrate annually (or more often, depending on the size of the church) a "Baby Day" on which parents of newborns are encouraged to bring their infants. Such celebrations may include a special service of prayer as parents dedicate their children to the Lord. The congregation, for its part, may take a vow through responsive reading to pray for the children in that regard. But wait—is it possible for one human being to dedicate another to the Lord's service? Not really! The child will make his or her own decision in that regard later on. Unique dedication decisions by parents in the Old Testament era should be seen as just that (1 Samuel 1:11; etc.). What is possible, however, is that parents can dedicate themselves to rearing children in the Lord. In that light, a Baby Day service can accomplish much in impressing on parents the fact that parenthood is a genuine ministry. Fathers and mothers must see their families as "congregations" to whom they must minister so that the children can come to know and love the Lord.

*(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **Dedication Established (Exodus 13:13-15)**

The command (13)

- Command of being redeemed with a price (1 Cor 6:19-20)
- Command of being redeemed by blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19)
- Command of the pure being offered to God and the Lamb (Rev 14:4)
- Command of the firstborn among humankind (Rom 8:28-30)
- Command of offering the firstborn who belong to parents (Num 18:15)

The reason (14-15)

- Reason of training (Deut 6:20-25)
- Reason of being a sign (Josh 4:6)
- Reason of witnessing (Ps 145:4)
- Reason of telling of God's faithfulness (Isa 38:19)

### **Dedication Practiced (Luke 2:22-32)**

Practice that is motivated by obedience (22-24)

- Obedience that leads to righteousness (Rom 6:16)
- Obedience learned (Heb 5:8)
- Obedience in love (2 John 1:6)
- Obedience that is better than sacrifices (1 Sam 15:22)
- Obedience through putting God's words into practice (Matt 7:24-25)

Practice that is to be anticipated (25-26)

- Anticipated because God is faithful (1 Thess 5:24)
- Anticipated because God cares for us (1 Peter 5:7)
- Anticipated because it develops perseverance (James 1:3-4)
- Anticipated because even small faith accomplishes much (Matt 17:20)
- Anticipated because of the promise of deliverance (Matt 21:21-22)
- Anticipated because everything is possible for those who have faith (Mark 9:23)

Practice that results in fulfillment (27-32)

- Fulfillment through God's love being made complete in us (1 John 2:5)
- Fulfillment through our love for God and others (1 John 4:12)
- Fulfillment because God will always complete the work in us (Phil 1:6)
- Fulfillment through perseverance (James 1:3-4)