

December 27th

The shepherds have come and gone. Mary and Joseph have gotten to see God at work again. And now they are just biding their time.

Because Mary and Joseph are required to stay in the city to complete the required rituals of having a male child.

Luke 2:21 – *And when eight days were completed for the _____ of the Child, His name was called _____, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.*

Matthew 1:25 – *... she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he [Joseph] called His name _____.*

They have done just as the Law requires. He has been presented to the priest. He has been named according to the heavenly instructions. And He has been dedicated to God with circumcision, a tradition started with Abraham as a sign of his committed relationship to God.

Genesis 17:9-12 – ⁹*And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My _____, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This is My _____ which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be _____; ¹¹and you shall be _____ in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the _____ between Me and you. ¹²He who is _____ days old among you shall be _____, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with money from any foreigner who is not your descendant.*

God wanted an outward sign, a visible distinction, between His beloved children and the other people of the world. God wanted a personal demonstration of relationship with Him and commitment to Him. Easy to do when you are eight days old and unable to say no. But it was a great choice for the grown and aged Abraham to make to solidify His covenant.

So Jesus is now marked as Jewish.
As one of God’s chosen people.

But His parent still cannot leave the city and return home to their friends and family.

They still have to wait until Mary’s 33 days of purification are done, as outlined by Moses in Leviticus 12. During this time, she is forbidden to go near or to touch anything holy.

So they wait in the city, counting the days until they can go home.

Going Deeper:

1. *What is the importance of circumcision for God's people Israel?*

2. *What does Leviticus 12 say about a woman after the birth of a male child?*

3. *How might Mary and Joseph have spent their 33 days waiting for Mary to be considered "pure" by the Law of Moses?*

4. *How did God see the firstborn male, according to Exodus 13:13b-16?*

5. *What do Mary and Joseph's choices at this point tell you about their faith and relationship with God? (What might have happened had they not done any of these things?)*
