

**“Our Eyes Have Seen”**

*“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).*

When you are a first-time parent, everything about your new baby matters. You buy “What to Expect...” baby books, you find websites that answer questions and give instructions how to handle a newborn. Your first child turns your world upside down and a sense of new parent paranoia drives just about everything you do. The Bible doesn’t speak about the new parent jitters of Joseph and Mary but if they were anything like the rest of us, it goes without saying that they wanted everything to be done just right for their new baby boy. And so it’s no surprise, as Luke tells us, that according to God’s Law, Mary and Joseph took their newborn son Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to offer the sacrifice demanded by the Law for consecrating the firstborn male to the Lord.

Joseph and Mary were doing exactly what they were supposed to do as new parents. Their special knowledge of who Jesus truly was didn’t change a thing. The Law was the Law, and like every Jewish family before them, they took their Son to the temple to be presented to the Lord...and then something extraordinary happened. In verse 25, we are introduced to a new character; a man named Simeon who is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture. There was nothing noteworthy about Simeon. He was not a political ruler or official of the temple. He was not a man of wealth or social standing. Simeon held no worldly power or influence, and yet Luke tells us that Simeon was a “righteous and devout” man of God who was “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” This means that *everyday*, Simeon was watching. He was a man who lived his life on the lookout, waiting and searching for the Messiah. Luke also tells us that Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit and that the Spirit had given him special knowledge that he would not die until he had seen the promised Christ.

Imagine the weight of expectation under which Simeon lived. Each day he would wake up wondering if this would be the day that God would show him the Messiah, and even though Luke doesn’t tell us his age, we get hints from the text that Simeon was an old man, and, with each day that passed, Simeon must have wondered, “Will this be the day? Will my eyes see the Savior today?” There also must have been days when Simeon questioned, and maybe even doubted the promise made by the Spirit: “Is my mind playing tricks on me? Is my age finally catching up to me? What about my sins? How can God reveal the Messiah to a sinner like me?” And there, in the midst of this storm of expectation and uncertainty, of anticipation and disbelief, of hope and despair, the Spirit spoke to Him again. Luke writes that Simeon, “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” (Luke 2:27-28).

In a knowledge that could only have been miraculously revealed, Simeon recognized Jesus as the Christ. His eyes were opened, his forgiveness was assured, and his hope was confirmed. In unimaginable joy, he took this baby boy out of his mother’s arms and there, in the temple courts, Simeon shared the good news that he had waited his whole life to experience and Simeon 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 peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32). These famous words of praise, which the Church knows as the “Nunc Dimittis,” illustrate with poetic and prophetic clarity the good news that the Scriptures were written to proclaim; that “the fullness of time had come,” and that in this baby boy, “God (had) sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5).

And this Gospel message is so important for us to hear because, in our sin, we are blind. In our sin, our eyes are closed and we do not see the salvation that God has prepared. In our sin, we have focused instead on ourselves. We have turned to our own intellect and will as the solutions to life's problems and, in the process, we have pushed God completely out of our sight. In the week to come, many of us will make New Year's resolutions committing ourselves to exercise more or to drink less, to adopt a better diet or to quit smoking. While these may be good and earnest attempts to better our lives, simply changing our behavior can't begin to change our hearts, and that is why we need to hear this Word from God.

You see, without God's action, we are left like Simeon and Anna waiting and wondering while our lives slip away. Without God's action, we are left to fend for ourselves in a world where the strong survive and the weak are trampled. Without God's action, we continue to walk blindly in the way of our sin that can only end in death.

But through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *God acts* and our eyes are opened. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *God acts* and our sins are forgiven. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, *God acts* and our hope is renewed. In the Gospel, God opens our eyes and He breaks through our blindness and He reveals a path that we couldn't have seen before. In the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we see God's love for us; we see the salvation which God prepared in the sight of all people; and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God changes our hearts.

"Field of Dreams" is one of my favorite movies from the 80's. It's the story of a farmer named Ray Kinsella who follows the instructions of a disembodied voice instructing him to plow under his corn crop and turn his valuable farmland into a baseball field. As Ray follows the prompting of the mysterious voice, many of the great players from baseball's past come back to life to play on Ray's field of dreams. In the course of the story, Ray and his family spend hours sitting on the tiny set of bleachers watching games only they can see, and drawing criticism from friends and neighbors for such bizarre behavior. The person who is most upset is by Ray's action is his brother-in-law Mark who thinks that Ray is crazy for wasting profitable farmland for these foolish, imaginary games.

In the climax of the movie, Mark's eyes are finally opened to the reality of the field of dreams as one of the players leaves the magical field to save Ray's daughter who was choking to death after falling off the bleachers. And once his eyes are opened, Mark's reaction to the baseball field completely changes. Where he had once begged Ray to abandon the field and turn it back into farmable land, Mark now turns into the field's biggest promoter emphatically telling his brother-in-law: "We've got to keep this field Ray!"

When we experience God's saving grace in Jesus, our hearts are changed and we can't help but share this good news with others. As we've poured over Christmas letters in the past few weeks, we've seen it again and again; when good things happen, the news gets passed on. Whether it's the announcement of a family engagement or new birth, or the news of a job change or retirement, when we see something good happen we tell others. This is one of the key messages of this text. Simeon's song was his unique response to God's action, and like Simeon, each one of us has a song to sing. Each of us has a response to offer. I can't tell you what your unique song is, but I can tell you that God has placed you exactly where He wants you, and it is there, in your family, in your job, in your friendships that God wants you to sing your song of response.

God has opened our eyes to the Messiah and like Simeon – those who *see* Christ, *share* Christ! My brothers and sisters: Today, our eyes have seen God's salvation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and because He has been revealed to our sinful eyes, we can now look beyond ourselves and, with our unique song, we can respond to the needs of those around us...and with Simeon, we can lift up Jesus as the light for revelation to the world...and they will see their Savior. Depart in peace, for your eyes have seen salvation. Amen.

Pastor Thomas A. Eggold

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*“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).*

In today’s Gospel reading, Luke describes the trip taken by Mary and Joseph to dedicate their newborn son at the temple. Like any new parents, Joseph and Mary wanted everything to be done just right for their new baby boy. They were also a good Jewish family and so, as Luke tells us, on the eighth day Jesus was circumcised and named, just as the angel Gabriel had instructed, and then, also according to God’s Law, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to offer the sacrifice demanded by the Law for consecrating the firstborn male to the Lord.

This was all pretty standard stuff. Joseph and Mary were doing exactly what they were supposed to do. Their special knowledge of who Jesus truly was didn’t change a thing. The Law was the Law, and like every Jewish family before them, they took their Son to the temple to be presented to the Lord, and it was here that something extraordinary happened. Here, in verse 25, we are introduced to a new character; a man named Simeon who is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture. There was nothing noteworthy about Simeon. He was not a political ruler or official of the temple. He was not a man of wealth or social standing. Simeon held no worldly power or influence, and yet Luke tells us that Simeon was a “righteous and devout” man of God who was “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” This means that Simeon was watching. He was a man who lived his life on the lookout, waiting and searching for the Messiah. Luke also tells us that Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit had been given special revelation that he would not die until he had seen the promised Christ.

Imagine the weight of expectation under which Simeon lived. Each day he would wake up wondering if this would be the day that God would show him the Messiah, and even though Luke doesn’t tell us his age, we get hints from the text that Simeon was an old man, and, with each day that passed, Simeon must have wondered, “Will this be the day? Will my eyes see the Savior today?”

There were also probably days when Simeon questioned, and maybe even doubted the promise made by the Spirit. “Is my mind playing tricks on me? Is my age finally catching up to me? What about my sins? How can God reveal the Messiah to a sinner like me?” And there, in the midst of this storm of expectation and doubt, of anticipation and disbelief, of hope and despair, the Spirit spoke again. Luke writes that Simeon, “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” (Luke 2:27-28).

In a knowledge that could only have been miraculously revealed, Simeon recognized the Christ. His eyes were opened, his forgiveness was assured, and his hope was confirmed. In unimaginable joy, he took this baby boy out of his mother’s arms and there, in the temple courts, Simeon shared the good news that he had waited his whole life to experience: “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). These famous words of praise, which the Church knows as the “Nunc Dimittis,” illustrate with poetic and prophetic clarity the good news that the Scriptures were written to proclaim; that in this baby boy, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them” (II Corinthians 5:19).

And this Gospel message is so important for us to hear because, in our sin, we are blind. In our sin, our eyes do not see the salvation that God has prepared. In our sin, we have focused our eyes on ourselves. We have turned to our own intellect and will as the solutions to life's problems and, in the process, we have pushed God completely out of our sights. In the week to come, many of us will make New Year's resolutions committing ourselves to exercise more or to drink less, to adopt a better diet or to quit smoking. While these may be good and earnest attempts to better our lives, simply changing our behavior can't begin to change our hearts, and that is why we need to hear the message of the Gospel.

Without God's action, we are left like Simeon and Anna waiting and wondering while our life slips away. Without God's action, we are left to fend for ourselves in a world where the strong survive and the weak are trampled. Without God's action, we continue to walk blindly in the way of our sin; a way which can only to death.

But through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God acts and our eyes are opened. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God acts and our sins are forgiven. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God acts and our hope is renewed. In the Gospel, God breaks through our blindness; He shatters our self-reliant worldview and He reveals a path that we couldn't have seen before. In the Gospel, we see God's love for us; we see the salvation which God prepared in the sight of all people; and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God changes our hearts.

"If you build it, he will come." This classic line from the film "Field of Dreams" is spoken by a disembodied voice to the main character of the movie, a farmer named Ray Kinsella. After hearing the mysterious voice on several occasions, Ray is inspired to plow under his corn crop and turn his valuable farmland into a baseball field. In the film, as Ray follows the prompting of the magical voice, many of the great players from baseball's past come back to life to play on Ray's field of dreams. In the course of the story, Ray and his family spend hours sitting on the tiny set of bleachers watching games only they can see, and drawing criticism from friends and neighbors for such bizarre behavior. The person who is most upset is by Ray's action is his brother-in-law Mark who thinks that Ray is crazy for wasting profitable farmland for these foolish, imaginary games.

In the climax of the movie, Mark's eyes are finally opened to the reality of the field of dreams as one of the players leaves the magical field to save Ray's daughter who was choking to death after falling off the bleachers. Once his eyes are opened, Mark's reaction to the baseball field completely changes. Where he had once begged Ray to abandon the field and turn it back into farmable land, Mark now turns into the field's biggest promoter.

When people experience something good they can't help but share it with others. As we've poured over Christmas letters in the past few weeks, we've seen it again and again; when good things happen, the news gets passed on. Whether it's the announcement of a family engagement or new birth, or the news of a job change or retirement, when we see something good happen we are compelled to share it with others. This is one of the key messages of today's text. Simeon's Song was his unique response to God's action, and like Simeon, each one of us has a song to sing. Each of us has a response to offer. I can't tell you what your unique song is, but I can tell you God has placed you exactly where He wants you, and it is there, in your family, in your job, in your friendships that God wants you to sing your unique song of praise.

God has opened our eyes to the Messiah, and, like Simeon in the ancient Jerusalem temple, eyes that see Christ, share Christ! My brothers and sisters: Our eyes have seen God's salvation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and because He has been revealed to our sinful eyes, we can now look beyond ourselves and, with our unique song, we can respond to the needs of those around us. We can look beyond ourselves and with Simeon, we can lift up Jesus as the light to the world and we can share our good news. Amen.

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*Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.*

“If you build it, he will come.” This classic line from the film “Field of Dreams” is spoken by a disembodied voice to a farmer named Ray Kinsella. After hearing the mysterious voice on several occasions, Ray is inspired to plow under his corn crop and turn his valuable farmland into a baseball field. In the film, as Ray follows the prompting of the magical voice, many of the immortal greats from baseball’s past come back to life to play on Ray’s field of dreams. In the course of the story, Ray and his family spend hours sitting on the tiny set of bleachers watching games only they can see, and drawing criticism from friends and neighbors for such bizarre behavior. The person who is most upset by Ray’s action is his brother-in-law Mark who thinks that Ray is crazy for wasting profitable farmland for these foolish, imaginary games.

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The excited reaction of the brother-in-law in, “Field of Dreams” is a good illustration of what people do when they experience something good. As we’ve poured over Christmas letters in the past few weeks, we’ve seen it again and again; when good things happen, the news gets passed on. Whether it’s the announcement of a family engagement or new birth, or the news of a job change or retirement, when we see something good happen we are compelled to share it with others. And that’s exactly the case in today’s reading from Luke.

In this reading, Luke describes the trip taken by Mary and Joseph to the temple in Jerusalem. Like any new parents, Joseph and Mary wanted everything to be done just right for their new baby boy. They were also a good Jewish family and so, as Luke tells us, on the eighth day Jesus was circumcised and named, just as the angel Gabriel had instructed, and then, according to God’s Law, Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to offer the sacrifice demanded by the Law for consecrating the firstborn male to the Lord.

This was all pretty standard stuff. Joseph and Mary were doing exactly what they were supposed do. Their special knowledge of who Jesus truly was didn’t a change a thing. The Law was the Law, and like every Jewish family before them, they took their Son to the temple to be presented to the Lord, and it was here that something extraordinary happened. Here, in verse 25, Luke introduces us to a new character; a man named Simeon who is not mentioned anywhere else in Scripture. There was nothing noteworthy about Simeon. He was not a political ruler or official of the temple. He was not a man of wealth or social standing. Simeon held no worldly power or influence, and yet Simeon was very special. Luke tells us that Simeon was a “righteous and devout” man of God who was “waiting for the consolation of Israel.” This means that Simeon was watching. He was a man who lived his life on the lookout, waiting and searching for the Messiah. Luke tells us that Simeon was filled with the Holy Spirit, and through the Spirit had been given special revelation that he would not die until he had seen the promised Christ.

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In a knowledge that could only have been miraculously revealed, Simeon recognized the Christ. His eyes were opened, his forgiveness was assured, and his hope was confirmed. In unimaginable joy, he took this baby boy out of his mother’s arms and there, in the temple courts, Simeon shared the good news that he had waited his whole life to see: “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32). These famous words of praise, which the Church knows as the “Nunc Dimittis,” illustrate with poetic and prophetic clarity the good news that the Scriptures were written to proclaim; that in this baby boy, “God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them” (II Corinthians 5:19).

And this Gospel message is so important for us to hear because, in our sin, we are blind. In our sin, our eyes do not see the salvation that God has prepared. In our sin, we have focused our eyes on ourselves. We have turned to our own intellect and will as the solutions to life’s problems and, in the process we have pushed God completely out of our sights. In the week to come, many of us will make New Year’s resolutions committing ourselves to exercise more or to drink less, to adopt a better diet or to quit smoking. While these may be good and earnest attempts to better our lives, simply changing our behavior can’t begin to change our hearts, and that is why the message of the Gospel is so critical.

Without God’s action in the Gospel, we are left like Simeon and Anna waiting and wondering while our life slips away. Without God’s action in the Gospel, we are left to fend for ourselves in a world where the strong survive and the weak are trampled. Without God’s action in the Gospel we continue to walk blindly in the way of our sin which can only to death.

But through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our eyes are opened. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ our hope is renewed. In the Gospel, God breaks through our blindness; He shatters our self-reliant worldview and He reveals path that we couldn’t have seen before. In the Gospel, we see God’s love for us; we see the salvation which God prepared in the sight of all people; and in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, God changes our hearts.

God has opened our eyes to the Messiah, and like Simeon and Anna in the ancient Jerusalem temple, eyes that see Christ look to share Him. My brothers and sisters: Our eyes have seen God’s salvation in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and because He has been revealed to our sinful eyes, we can now look beyond ourselves and respond to the needs of those around us. We can look beyond ourselves and with Simeon and Anna, we can lift up Jesus as the light to the world and we can share our good news. Amen.

Reverend Thomas A. Eggold  
December 22, 2008

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). Matthew 1:22-23

“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.”

#### AS WE GATHER...

Like so many in ancient Israel, Simeon and Anna spent their lives looking for God’s promise of a Messiah to be kept. When the infant Jesus was brought to the temple the Spirit moved Simeon to exclaim, “My eyes have seen your salvation” and caused Anna to share the good news about Jesus, “to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.” Our eyes have also seen God’s plan for salvation in the person and work of Jesus Christ and, just as Simeon and Anna were moved to bear witness to what had been revealed to them, the Spirit also works in us to create faith and enables us to share with others the salvation we have seen in God’s Word.

a capella

## WORSHIP

### First Sunday after Christmas

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

**<sup>10</sup> I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup> For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.**

**61:10** I DELIGHT...MY SOUL REJOICES – The speaker seems to be the same as in the first verse of the following chapter, that is, the prophet speaking in the name of Zion’s watchman. Compare 62:6 (CB)

The words remind us of the “Song of Mary” when she heard that she would be the mother of the Messiah: “My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46, 47). The words recorded here by the prophet Isaiah are the words of a believer who has received the great blessings of God. Great joy fills the heart of such a believer. (PBC)

*garments of salvation.*† See v. 3; 52:1.

Because the robe of righteousness covers the deepest stain of human sin, it becomes als a garment of salvation. Humans stand before God dressed in this robe. God see the believer clothed with the perfection of His own Son and welcomes the believer into His presence. (PBC)

**ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** – All “our righteousness” are loathsome and abominable, but the garment of Christ’s righteousness and salvation, wherewith He clothes His people, is excellent and glorious in the view of all beholders; it fills the hearts of its possessors with “the peace of God which passes understanding” with “joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” (CB)

Jesus fashioned this robe from the threads of His perfect life. Then He wove it on the loom of the cross and colored it with His own red blood. God freely gives the cloak of His Son’s perfect life to the sinner, and it covers every sin, rebellion, and deviation from God’s standard. This robe of Christ’s righteousness is long and wide enough to cover every twisted human thought, word, and deed. But this robe comes only from God. No human can erase sin. Left to ourselves, we walk about as Lady Macbeth did. She killed the king, and her sins haunted her conscience and heart. Like Shakespeare’s character, we vainly attempt to wipe our own sinful hands clean. If we are honest, we will conclude as she did: “Here’s the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand” (Macbeth 5.152-54) (PBC)

*head like a priest.* Putting on a turban or headband (see note on v. 3).

This is likened to the meticulous care employed by the priest as he equips himself for the performance of his sacred duties. (Leupold)

*bride ... with her jewels.* See 49:18 and note.

The church is described using nuptial imagery as in Eph 5:25-27. The groom and the bride both anticipate joyfully their coming marriage.

**61:11** *sprout ... grow.* Cf. 55:10.

**A GARDEN** – The imagery in this verse echoes the botanical description at the end of verse 3, the Lord will make salvation and righteousness grow throughout the world like a garden, hinting of paradise restored. It is the Lord, both sovereign and gracious, who causes salvation to grow and encompass the nations of the world, foreshadowing the inclusion of gentiles in the church.

*righteousness and praise spring up.* See 45:8 and note.

The last verse of the chapter assured God’s OT readers that this would all come to pass. Just as the soil brings forth green grass and beautiful flowers, so surely will the “Sovereign Lord” make

“righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.” The soil may look barren and lifeless, but after a time the seed sprouts and grows. For the Jews of Isaiah’s day, Jerusalem would be destroyed and God’s people led away captive. But, in God’s good time, they would return. Beyond that return, further into the future, the Messiah would come and proclaim the good news of the gospel. All the words of this chapter, as well as all the other prophecies, would then bloom into fulfillment. (PBC)

### *Zion’s New Name*

**For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.<sup>2</sup> The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.<sup>3</sup> You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.**

**62:1, 6** / The Lord.

**62:1** FOR ZION’S SAKE – Zion and Jerusalem refer to the church of God. It is the invisible church, the assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. (PBC)

*not keep silent ... quiet.* See v. 6; 42:14; 57:11 and note; 64:12; 65:6; see also Ps 28:1.

“I will not stop my intercession with God for Zion.” God will be inquired of by His people for the fulfillment of His glorious promises. It is in answer to their fervent prayers, that He appears for their salvation; and in this work of intercession, Zion’s watchmen are called to take the lead. Compare verse 6 and 7. (CB)

The prophet seems altogether weary of his vocation because of the contempt and derision the world has for the Word. Yet the prophet resolves to carry out his proclamation, knowing the Lord’s Word will not fail (Is. 55:10-11). In like manner, Yahweh, who neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps. 121:3), will continue His saving work for the sake of His people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

*righteousness ... salvation.* See 46:13 and note.

*dawn.* Cf. 58:8.

Isaiah foresaw a time when Israel’s situation would demand divine interference. Such periods, demanding intervention come repeatedly, even down to the very end when the consummation of all things comes to pass. (Leupold)

**62:2** *nations will see ... glory.* See 52:10; see also 40:5; 60:3 and notes.

*your.* Jerusalem’s (see vv. 1, 6).

*new name.* To reflect a new status (see vv. 4, 12; see also 1:26; 60:14; Ge 32:28 and notes).

Like that mentioned in verse 4, denoting her new and glorious character and condition. Compare Rev. 2:17 (CB)

The new situation that shall therefore develop will be so radically different that the old vocabulary will no longer be adequate. A new name must be employed to cover the new situation. That name is not given at this point. It is merely indicated that it will be a matter of divine choice. There are other passages in Scripture in which the new-name concept appears (Is 1:26; Jer. 3:17; 33:16; Ez. 48:35). These various new names do not rule out one another. They merely supplement each other. Each new name expresses some valid aspect of God's dealings with His people. Even the NT deals with this concept (cf. Rev. 2:17; 3:12). (Leupold)

**62:3** *crown of splendor*. In 28:5 the Lord is a "glorious crown" for his people (cf. Zec 9:16).

These figures denote her excellence and dignity. (CB)

Since the Lord holds the church, pictured as this crown, in His hand, the church is His work of art – His creation, which He desires to display to the world. God works as the artist who has done everything to make His church beautiful. He invested time in fulfilling the prophecies made throughout the pages of Scripture. He has invested the holy precious blood of His one and only Son to wash away the sins of His church. He has worked through the gospel to call people and has made them His own. Now He continues to give the church the power to proclaim the sweet message of forgiveness and eternal life. God wants to display the workmanship and effort He has invested in His church. (PBC)

The crown was the most beautiful and glorious ornament available at the time. God's people (now the church) are pictured as the Lord's masterpiece. He holds it up for all to see and admire, an unnerving thought were it not for His love covering a multitude of sins! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

IN THE HAND OF YOUR GOD – Under His safe-keeping. (CB)

The Lord is inspecting it, looking at it from different angles. The work of His hands contributes to His glory. (Leupold)

#### EPISTLE Galatians 4:4-7

**<sup>4</sup> But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, <sup>5</sup> to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. <sup>6</sup> Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.**

**4:4** *time had fully come*. The time "set" (v. 2) by God for his children to become adult sons and heirs.

At God's perfect time, maturity came, brought by the Son of God Himself. Jesus was born as a Jew so He might be subject to all the ceremonial laws as well as the moral law, the Ten Commandments. Having kept them perfectly, and also suffering for us the penalty of sin (death), He "redeemed us – bought us back from the curse and power of the Law, so that we might have full adoption into the family with all the rights of sons. (LL)

Some think of this as when the Jews had finally reached a time in a certain maturity. This is not so because if Judaism was ever at a low spiritual ebb, it was so when the fullness of the time arrived.

We can enumerate some of the providences which helped to open the way for the gospel such as the vast extent of the Roman Empire, the spread of the Greek language, the facility of travel throughout the empire, the extensive diaspora of the Jews, its many proselytes from Gentilism, etc. All of these aided the spread of the gospel. What God saw and regarded as the fullness of the time in the spiritual condition of men, barbarian as well as Greek, is too difficult for us to predicate because His thoughts and judgments are too unsearchable for us. (Lenski)

Romans 5:6, "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly."

2 Peter 3:8,9, "But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup> The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Romans 11:33-36, "<sup>33</sup> Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup> "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" <sup>35</sup> "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" <sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."

*God sent his Son.* See Jn 1:14; 3:16; Ro 1:1–6; 1Jn 4:14.

Then God "commissioned forth His Son." This means that the Son went out on His commission not only "from" God but "out from" God. John says that He was with God (John 1:1) and was God and that He became flesh (John 1:14). (Lenski)

*born of a woman.* Showing that Christ was truly human.

It denotes more than the separation from the womb, it includes the entire human nature of the Son as this was derived from His human mother. (Lenski)

*born under law.* Subject to the Jewish law.

The Son "came to be under law" in general and not only under the pure code of Moses, but by virtue of this code under all that mankind had left of God's law as written in their hearts. (Lenski)

**4:5 TO REDEEM THOSE UNDER THE LAW** – God's purpose in His Son's coming to be under law was "that He should buy free those under law."

Galatians 3:13-14, "<sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." <sup>14</sup> He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

*full rights of sons.* Lit. "adoption [of a son]." See Ro 8:15, where the "Spirit of sonship" is contrasted with the "spirit of slavery" (cf. Eph 1:5). God takes into his family as fully recognized sons and heirs both Jews (those who had been under law) and Gentiles who believe in Christ.

"The sonship" is modified by the context (v. 1-3) and thus signifies the status of sons who have advanced from their minority to their majority, to the status of full-grown son who are no longer

under guardians and stewards. “Adoption” is not the proper word, for it may apply to a babe, a minor son and heir. (Lenski)

Pass from the condition and spirit of servants to the privileges and filial spirit of sons, in a state not of minority and servitude, but of manhood and freedom. The only sure evidence is connected to our faith in Christ and a hearty reliance on Him for salvation. (CB)

**4:6** *Spirit of his Son.* A new “guardian” (v. 2), identified as the “Spirit of God” in Ro 8:9 (see Ro 8:2; Eph 1:13–14).

The Spirit Himself testifies to our close relationship with the Father and cries out in prayer to the Father for our needs. We are now heirs entitled to the heavenly inheritance and the benefits of sons and daughters in the Kingdom. (LL)

*calls out.* The Greek for this phrase is a vivid verb expressing deep emotion, often used of an inarticulate cry. In Mt 27:50 it is used of Jesus’ final cry.

The Spirit is said to utter this cry when He moves us to utter it . The fact that He is in our hearts is the result of our sonship, and His presence makes this cry possible. (Lenski)

God by His Spirit has given you a filial temper, and taught you to use the language not of servants, but of sons. (CB)

*Abba, Father.* Expressive of an especially close relationship to God (see also NIV text note – Aramaic for Father).

The thought of the apostle is that we sons who are now in full possession of all that we have in the Son and in the Spirit of the Son direct our “Abba Father” to God in our fullness of sonship. (Lenski)

Abba is a Chaldee word for Father.

Romans 8:15-16, “<sup>15</sup> For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba*,<sup>h</sup> Father.” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

**4:7** SO YOU – Continuing to address the Galatians directly in the second person, Paul even switches to the singular pronoun to assure each and every Galatian individually of the blessings brought by the Savior sent at God’s good time. (PBC)

NOT A SLAVE BUT A SON – This goes back to verse 1 that shows this person has attained his majority who possesses and enjoys the full benefits of an heir. (Lenski)

As non-Jews, the Gentile Galatians never were under the specific Mosaic Law. But they too had been freed from a tremendous burden of legal requirements – in their case, one imposed by their own former false ideas of how they needed to serve their pagan idols and “non-gods.” (PBC)

GOD HAS MADE – This is due entirely to God. (Lenski)

GOSPEL  
Luke 2:22-40

## *Jesus Presented in the Temple*

<sup>21</sup> On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. <sup>22</sup> When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord <sup>23</sup> (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”), <sup>24</sup> and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.” <sup>25</sup> Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. <sup>26</sup> It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. <sup>27</sup> Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, <sup>28</sup> Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: <sup>29</sup> “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. <sup>30</sup> For my eyes have seen your salvation, <sup>31</sup> which you have prepared in the sight of all people, <sup>32</sup> a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” <sup>33</sup> The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. <sup>34</sup> Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, <sup>35</sup> so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” <sup>36</sup> There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, <sup>37</sup> and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. <sup>38</sup> Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. <sup>39</sup> When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. <sup>40</sup> And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

**2:21** EIGHTH DAY – Jesus begins His mission of fulfillment on the eighth day – the first day of the new week of God’s new creation, which will also be the day of His resurrection. His obedience to the Law involves the shedding of His blood for the first time. Jesus’ circumcision is a one-time event availing for all. The foreskin represents sin and rebellion against God (Col. 2:13). The benefits of Jesus’ circumcision are received in Holy Baptism (Col. 2:10-13; see further on Lk 3:21-22). (CC)

**2:22** *their purification.* Following the birth of a son, the mother had to wait 40 days before going to the temple to offer sacrifice for her purification. If she could not afford a lamb and a pigeon (or dove), then two pigeons (or doves) would be acceptable (Lev 12:2–8; cf. Lev 5:11).

*to Jerusalem.* The distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem was only about six miles.

*present him to the Lord.* The firstborn of both man and animal were to be dedicated to the Lord (see v. 23; Ex 13:12–13). The animals were sacrificed, but the human beings were to serve God throughout their lives. The Levites actually served in the place of all the firstborn males in Israel (see Nu 3:11–13; 8:17–18).

**2:24** A PAIR OF DOVES OR TWO YOUNG PIGEONS – Lev. 12:8 allows this instead of a lamb, since not everyone could afford a lamb. This helps us to understand that Joseph and Mary were of a humble state (Luke 1:48), i.e., too poor to be able to afford a lamb. (CC)

**2:25 CALLED SIMEON** – There was nothing great and wonderful about him; he has no high office, standing or power. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

**WHO WAS RIGHTEOUS** – This speaks of his standing before God, the conscientiousness of his religious obligations and his reproachlessness in the of others. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

**WAS WAITING** – “to wait for” heightens the sense of expectation. (CC)

*the consolation of Israel.* The comfort the Messiah would bring to his people at his coming (see vv. 26, 38; 23:51; 24:21; Isa 40:1–2; Mt 5:4).

A calling alongside (for help). (Young)

When Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as being “another Paraclete” (comforter) He calls Himself the first Paraclete who brought to Israel consolation here mentioned by Simeon. (Lenski)

*the Holy Spirit was upon him.* Not in the way common to all believers after Pentecost. Simeon was given a special insight by the Spirit so that he would recognize the “Christ.”

Aged persons who have long walked uprightly in piety towards God and good will towards men, often have, as they approach the close of life, remarkably clear and exalted views of the Savior – views that which disarm death of its terrors, and prepare them to ascribe “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father,” “glory and dominion for ever and ever.” (CB)

**2:26 BEFORE HE HAD SEEN THE LORD’S CHRIST** – Examples of Messianic hope are listed below:

Mark 15:43, “Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Council, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for Jesus’ body.”

Luke 3:15, “The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Christ.”

John 4:25, “The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

This Lukan motif of closed and open eyes refers not to physical vision but to an eschatological understanding of the work of Jesus. Throughout Luke’s gospel, “the eye” used metaphorically describe the understanding of God’s revelation in Jesus. (CC)

**2:27 TEMPLE COURTS** – This apparently refers to the outer court of the temple, where women were allowed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

The Holy Spirit not only gives Simeon a preview of what he is to experience, but also leads him to the right place at the right time to meet the world’s newborn Messiah. The temple courts included the whole temple compound. Women, for example, were not allowed in certain parts. The presentation of Jesus was part of the established duties for the firstborn. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:28** TOOK HIM IN HIS ARMS – Simeon literally takes Jesus in his arms (without any protest by His parents), but not to cuddle or coddle Him. Simeon breaks forth in a paean of praise. Simeon's adrenalin must have started pumping real well! How poor does the world look to one that has Christ in his arms and salvation in his view! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

SIMEON...PRAISED GOD - First on his own behalf and then on behalf of the whole world. (Lenski)

**2:29–32** See note on 1:46–55. This hymn of Simeon has been called the Nunc Dimittis, from the first words of the Latin Vulgate translation, meaning “[You] now dismiss.”

Psalm 116:15, “Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

Romans 14:8, “If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”

The Nunc Dimittis has been used constantly in the liturgies of Christian churches for 14 centuries. The thought which runs through the hymn is: Simeon represents himself under the image of a sentinel, whom his master has placed in an elevated position and charged to look for the appearance of a star, and then to announce it to the world. (PC)

Are we watching as he watched not asleep in sin but diligent in the Lord's service and rejoicing in His praises. (PC)

There is a vast multitude of men who seek satisfaction in temporal things – in taking pleasure in making money, in wielding power, in gaining honor etc. But they do not find what they seek. (PC)

**2:29** SOVEREIGN LORD – despota is used infrequently with reference to God, denominates Him according to His unlimited power. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

NOW – This emphasizes that salvation is here now in this tiny child Simeon holds in his arms. (CC)

DISMISS YOUR SERVANT – The thought underlying its wording is of a slave who is instructed by his master to keep watch through the long, dark night on a high place to wait for the rising of a special star and then announce it. After wearisome hours of waiting he at last sees the star rising in all its brightness. He announces it and is then discharged from keeping watch any longer. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

**2:30** IN PEACE – This expresses the feeling of his heart, perfect contentment which seeks no more...application is having the actual and complete salvation in Jesus for the rest of our lives. (Lenski)

With his own eyes Simeon saw Jesus, the Messiah, the embodiment of God's salvation who would make it a reality. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:31** YOU HAVE PREPARED – It is a done deed. There is no secret about His coming; it is in “the sight of all people.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

*all people.* As a Gentile himself, Luke was careful to emphasize the truth that salvation was offered for the Gentiles (v. 32) as well as for Jews.

**2:32** LIGHT FOR REVELATION – That is the kind of “light” the Gentiles needed, one that would reveal their dreadful condition and would show them God’s grace in Christ for deliverance from sin and death. (Lenski)

Matthew 5:14-16, <sup>14</sup>“You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup> In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Psalms 119:105, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

The image of light for revelation complements Luke’s metaphor of eyes that see salvation. (CC)

TO THE GENTILES – Gentiles (instead of nations) anticipates the Gentile mission in Acts. (CC)

**2:33** *child’s father.* Luke, aware of the virgin birth of Jesus (1:26–35), is referring to Joseph as Jesus’ legal father.

MARVELED AT WHAT WAS SAID – When Simeon was telling such marvelous things concerning the child, his parents did not despise them, but believed them firmly. For this reason they stood, listened and marveled at his speech – how else could they react to it? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

Luke 2:51, “But His mother treasured all these things in her heart.”

This includes all happenings in chapter 2 plus. The mysteries which were beyond her comprehension, yet she treasured them and sought not to penetrate as to draw the blessedness from them. (Lenski)

The same amazement that struck Zechariah, his friends and neighbors, and the shepherds is now experienced by Mary and Joseph. (CC)

**2:34** *falling and rising of many in Israel.* Christ raises up those who believe in him, but is a stumbling block for those who disbelieve (see 20:17–18; 1Co 1:23; 1Pe 2:6–8).

Christ is, as it were, a Rock placed in a road. Some people despise the Rock and dash against it in a rage. The result is that they are hurt and fall. It is not the fault of the Rock; it has been placed in the road for people to rest on. But if one refuses to make the proper use of it and persists in that refusal, the results are disastrous. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

There is a reason for the poverty of the child. His humble birth is a sign of foreboding. Many Jews will fall and rise as they meet Jesus; He is a stumbling block to everyone, including His own disciples and family, because of the nature of His ministry and the nature of His kingdom. (CC)

*sign ... spoken against.* Christ points to the Father and his love for sinners, and those who oppose him also oppose the Father.

For nearly 3 centuries the name of Jesus of Nazareth and His followers was a name of shame, hateful and despised by the Romans and the Jews in their rabbinical schools. (PC)

You can't be neutral with Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:35** *sword will pierce your own soul too.* The word “too” indicates that Mary, as well as Jesus, would suffer deep anguish—the first reference in this Gospel to Christ's suffering and death.

Generally understood of the anguish which she would be called to endure as a witness of the Savior's suffering and death. (CB)

The childhood in the Nazareth home, and the early manhood were no doubt her happiest days, though, in those days quiet years expectation, fears and dread, curiously interwoven, must have ever torn her heart. The days of the public ministry for Mary must have been sad, and her heart full of anxious forebodings, as she watched the growing jealousies, the hatred, and the unbelief on the part of the leading men of her people. Then the cross. (PC)

HEARTS WILL BE REVEALED – By the treatment of the Savior they will show the character of their hearts. (CB)

Jesus' life, death, and resurrection will force people to contemplate their relationship to Him. (CC)

**2:36** *prophetess.* Other prophetesses were Miriam (Ex 15:20), Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Huldah (2Ki 22:14) and the daughters of Philip (Ac 21:9).

Luke often has stories in pairs, and women figure prominently in the narrative. As in the Easter story, women play a key role in the events surrounding the Nativity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

*Anna.* Same name as OT Hannah (1Sa 1:2), which means “gracious.” Anna praised God for the child Jesus as Hannah had praised God for the child Samuel (1Sa 2:1–10).

She is either 84, or she had remained a widow for 84 years after 7 years of marriage, which probably would make her at least 105. Did she, perhaps, have a room in one of the buildings on the temple grounds? Nothing can be said with certainty, but in any case she was an exceptional saint. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

**2:37** *never left the temple.* Herod's temple was quite large and included rooms for various uses, and Anna may have been allowed to live in one of them. This statement, however, probably means that she spent her waking hours attending and worshiping in the temple.

WORSHIPED NIGHT AND DAY – To worship God in the OT liturgical perspective was to “serve Him with fasting and prayers. The same expression is used in 1:74. (CC)

**2:38** GAVE THANKS AND SPOKE ABOUT – The imperfect tense may well mean that she continued her thanks also after Mary and Joseph had gone. (Lenski)

Anna continues the proclamation of the Good News that shepherds began at the birth of Jesus (2:15-20). (CC)

*Jerusalem.* The holy city of God's chosen people (Isa 40:2; 52:9); here it stands for Israel as a whole.

REDEMPTION OF JERUSALEM – Echoing Simeon, Anna spoke to those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem and said, “It is here in the person of this child.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

**2:39** *they returned to Galilee.* Luke does not mention the coming of the Magi, the danger from Herod, or the flight to and return from Egypt (cf. Mt 2:1–23).

In brief narratives like the present, intervening events are often passed over in silence. We know from Matthew that the wise men from the East found the Savior at Bethlehem; that afterwards He was carried into Egypt; and after a sojourn there of some time, to Nazareth in Galilee, whence Mary had come with Joseph to Bethlehem before His birth. (CB)

**2:40** CHILD GREW AND BECAME STRONG – The lad attained more and more wisdom in the Biblical sense as the right knowledge of God and His salvation coupled with its application to life. In the case of Jesus this included the realization of His own relationship to God. (Lenski)