

Xmas 1 2018

Luke 2: The Lord our Holiness

**“Holy Spirit, Light Divine, shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away; turn the darkness into day!”**

Luke 2:22–40 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 is 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 young 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’s 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 peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

And his father and his mother marveled 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 a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.”

And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

In the Name of our Holiness with God, the Name of Jesus:

The Law, the Law of Moses, the Law of the Lord—five times in these few verses. Now, instead of THIS Paul explaining Christ’s presentation at the temple, SAINT Paul will do just fine. Paul wrote to the Galatians:

¹⁵ We ourselves are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners; ¹⁶ yet we know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, so we also have believed in Christ Jesus, in order to be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ¹

¹⁰ For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹ Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”— ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. ²

I mean that the heir, as long as he is a child, is no different from a slave, though he is the owner of everything, ² but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by his father. ³ In the same way we also, when we were children, were enslaved to the elementary principles of the world. ⁴ But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵ to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. ⁶ And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God. ³

The law of man, the decree of Caesar Augustus brought the law-abiding Mary, Joseph and Promise in the womb to Bethlehem. The Law of the Lord brought the law-abiding Baby Jesus and His parents to the temple for presentation.

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ga 2:15–16). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ga 3:10–14). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

³ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Ga 4:1–7). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

And Simeon taught the Church to sing! To sing of a slave set free: ‘Master—now you are freeing your slave!’ He was looking for the consolation of Israel; the day when the burden of the Law would be removed, the heir would come out from under the tyranny of conscience, and from then on the each man, woman, child would have what the army of the Lord sang about that night: whether we live here in THIS, or rise up to live there with HIM, God and all are at peace.

The Law does not bring peace with God—and forget about man! No sound, healthy frame of body, mind, spirit, feelings?—springs to life from ANY type of RESPONSE on OUR PART to what the God of Abraham does. Not becoming more religious, more church-y; not amputating foul, gangrenous members wracked with sin: hand, foot, eye; not even starting to give two cents about the welfare of the next poor slob.

Life-Peace, God-Peace, Gospel-Peace ends up HERE:

²⁷ “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. ²⁹ To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. ³⁰ Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. ³¹ And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

³² “If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. ³⁴ And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. ³⁵ But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. ³⁶ Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

³⁷ “Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; ³⁸ give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken

together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you.”⁴

My dear ones: this is not LAW—not of Moses nor of the Lord. This is the life-giving teaching of the Prince of Peace, born under the Law, to purchase back from the God we cannot approach those for whom the Law is a burden that will not let our conscience BE!

Howzabout this:

² And he said to them, “When you pray, say:

“Father, hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come.

³ Give us each day our daily bread,

⁴ and forgive us our sins,

for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

And lead us not into temptation.”⁵

No Law, no Law of Moses, no Law of the Lord taught OLD Israel to ‘school’ Heaven, to place the Unapproachable One into the role of Father, Whom we approach and address and put in His Place with all boldness and confidence as dear CHILDREN, heirs and co-heirs of ALL God can figure out to be today and forever!

HOW does it work, my dear holy ones?

HOW...dare...we...POINT the God we offend daily and much to OUR already done and did and over PARDON of those who offend OUR majesty—and then ORDER HIM to pardon US in the same manner?

The Song tells us how that works, dearly beloved. The New Song! The Song to which Simeon added HIS stanza: the slave is now dismissed from bondage and I will finally LIVE; I go in peace; I go with God.

WE are the Gentiles for whom this light is given, my dear ones. Saint Paul was the bearer of the Good News to the nations like us.

⁴ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 6:27–38). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

⁵ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 11:2–4). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

WEEEeeee....are NOT the chosen nation of God in this world. That role will always be played by the children of Abraham in the flesh. And there is a holy thing going on there that we do well to simply wonder at and adore and keep our mouths silent.

But we ARE the chosen, holy nation of God, according to the FAITH of Abraham! The child of Promise shall bless all nations! NOT the child of the slave woman!

I think that's why the Small Catechism of Doctor Martin Luther puts as the first Chief Part the Ten Commandments of Moses. Though Luther taught clearly that, in their OUTWARD, THIS-WORLDLY form, these commands have NOTHING to do with us Gentiles. Yet, they are a good summary to teach a nation like ours—which does not know its left hand from its right!—that our heart belongs to the Creator, NOT to Creation; that what pours out from us toward our neighbor ought to be soothing comfort, and not screeching hatred.

But no amount of scolding of the Law will bring the glory of God in the highest and peace to people on earth—not in the good ol' USA, nor anywhere else. Our Baptism into Christ brings peace: the pledge that HEAVEN finds no spot or blemish on us, though the law of men may hound us, or the Law of the Lord terrify.

Christ's Body and His Blood are for us to eat and to drink—the Body and Blood of the One Who looked at His crucifixion party, and the first prayer out of His mouth that day was to His Father: 'HERE we have our first squad to add to the hosts of heaven! Father: pardon these men! Say they do not know what they are doing! They're just Gentiles, after all. Shine THAT light to them!'

My old friend, Louis Kutruff, said at 2 am Wednesday morning, 'I think I'm dying.' Then he told those close to him, 'Please don't call an ambulance.' Ninety-eight years was enough to look forward to his dismissal.

Louis asked me years ago, 'Pastor! That thing that fellow on the cross said to Jesus—Remember me in your kingdom!—are those words available for the rest of us to pray?' Like Simeon, Louis

was in this world, under the Law, yet redeemed from under the Law, looking for heaven's consolation and redemption and peace; looking for a gift.

'Are those words for us to pray also, my friend? I am counting on it!' If you remember that gentleman, you know what I mean when I say to you the peace of heaven shone in his face then. If you have not yet met him, it will be my pleasure to introduce you, soon.

Until then, dear saints: live in this Law-world; live! Not Law, but the Gospel of the Law removed from us as a burden, by the baby who made Simeon sing, and Anna thank God for the redemption of His holy city.

What will be OUR stanza, to add to this growing New Song?

"Let me see my Savior's face; let me all HIS beauties trace!
Show those glorious truths to me which are only known to Thee!"

In the Name of Jesus.