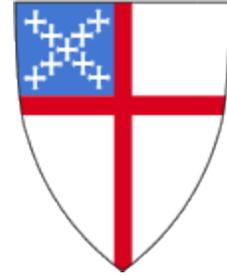


The Lessons Appointed for Use on
the Feast of

The Presentation of Our Lord

February 2
RCL



- [Malachi 3:1-4](#)
- [Hebrews 2:14-18](#)
- [Luke 2:22-40](#)
- [Psalm 84](#)

Preface of the Epiphany

The Collect

Almighty and everliving God, we humbly pray that, as your
only-begotten **Son was** this day **presented** in the temple, **so we may be presented to**
you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Old Testament

Malachi 3:1-4

Thus says the Lord, See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight-- indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts.

But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

The Psalm

Psalm 84

Quam dilecta!

- 1 How dear to me is your dwelling, O LORD of hosts! *My soul has a desire and longing for the courts of the LORD; my heart and my flesh rejoice in the living God.
- 2 The sparrow has found her a house and the swallow a nest where she may lay her young; *by the side of your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God.
- 3 Happy are they who dwell in your house! *they will always be praising you.
- 4 Happy are the people whose strength is in you! *whose hearts are set on the pilgrims' way.
- 5 Those who go through the desolate valley will find it a place of springs, *for the early rains have covered it with pools of water.
- 6 They will climb from height to height, *and the God of gods will reveal himself in Zion.
- 7 LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; *hearken, O God of Jacob.
- 8 Behold our defender, O God; *and look upon the face of your Anointed.
- 9 For one day in your courts is better than a thousand in my own room, *and to stand at the threshold of the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- 10 For the LORD God is both sun and shield; *he will give grace and glory;
- 11 No good thing will the LORD withhold *from those who walk with integrity.
- 12 O LORD of hosts, *happy are they who put their trust in you!

The New Testament

Hebrews 2:14-18

Since God's children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.

Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

The Gospel

Luke 2:22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, **the parents of Jesus brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord** (as it is written in the law of the Lord, very firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated 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; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and **the Holy Spirit rested on him**. It had been revealed to him **by the Holy Spirit** that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. **Guided by the Spirit**, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
for my eyes have seen **your salvation**, (Messiah)
which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light **for revelation** to the Gentiles (2nd coming of Christ)
and for glory to your people Israel."

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. **Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed-- and a sword will pierce your own soul too."**

There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. **At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.**

When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. **The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.**

St. Luke's Episcopal Church
The Presentation of Jesus Christ at the Temple
February 5, 2017
Luke 2:22-40
The Reverend John P. Carr

The Presentation of Jesus the Christ in the Temple

Almighty and everliving God, we humbly pray that, as your Son was presented, so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord...

That is a part of our Collect for the **Feast of the Presentation** and it raises a startling point. Just **as** Jesus was presented by His parents, we will be presented to God by Jesus one day. Have you ever thought of that? How will you prepare?

Since the day that Jesus was born in Bethlehem He was preparing for His presentation at the Temple was anticipated.

From the angels to the shepherds to the Wise Men, Mary had readied herself for the naming of Jesus and now for His presentation at the Temple.

To fulfill the Law, Jesus is to be presented at the Temple 40 days after His birth.

- The first born male child to be presented to the Lord and dedicated to the Lord. This child to serve the Lord throughout his life. However, the Levites actually served in the place of all firstborn males in Israel.
- A sacrifice is to be made by the parents. Mary and Joseph offer their sacrifice of the two doves which indicates that they are poor

people who cannot afford to offer a lamb but this is a suitable sacrifice under the Law.

The trip to the Temple with the family of Jesus was all pretty routine until Simeon and Anna arrive.

- **Simeon**

- Simeon is described as a man who was righteous and devout to establish that He is acceptable to God.
- He quotes Isaiah 40:3-5 to establish Jesus' work in the restoration of Israel, and a work to include the Gentiles, so there is hope for the entire world.
- All this takes place in the Temple in God's presence to confirm his words.
- Simeon recognizes Jesus as the Messiah because the Holy Spirit had informed him.*the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple.....*
- Simeon predicts three things
 - In Jesus, salvation has come.
 - Jesus is a light to the Gentiles and a glory to the people of Israel.
 - That a sword will pierce Mary's heart

Simeon was there to announce that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus is a light to those who understand and accept him, and a stumbling block to those who don't. There is a foreboding in the message of Simeon of salvation and conflict in this suggesting that Israel will be divided by Jesus.

- **Anna is and echo of Hannah and Jesus of Samuel**

- Anna prayed for the coming of the Messiah just as her OT namesake *Hannah* prayed for the coming of Samuel. (1 Sam 1:10)
- Samuel and Jesus, “*He continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men.*” (1 Sam 2:26)
- Just as Hannah and Elkanah “*returned home to Ramah*” (1 Sam 2:11), so Mary and Joseph “*returned to Nazareth.*”

In this passage from Luke two main points are established.

- Jesus is the Messiah and deliverer of salvation
- His salvation is universal, for Israel and the Gentiles

Jesus has been presented to the Lord in His Temple marked by circumcision and named Jesus as the angels instructed Mary and Joseph. Simeon confirms that Jesus is the agent of salvation by his proclamation and Anna the prophetess confirms Jesus.

This passage was preserved not because it is a pleasant story about Mary, Joseph and Jesus taking a trip to the Temple from Bethlehem but because this event is another marking and naming of Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, the Savior of not only Israel but the rest of the world. The story was preserved to establish a foundation for the story of the life, purpose and ministry of Jesus.

The stories of the early life of Jesus were recorded to establish who He is and why He has come at that point in history. Jesus is proclaimed the Messiah in at four instances.

Mary and the angel

- *You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. (Lk. 1:31) The one to be born to you will be called the Son of God. (Lk. 1:35)*

The shepherds

- *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Lk. 2:11)*

The Wise Men

- *Where is the one who is born king of the Jews? (Mt. 2:2)*
- *He asked them where the Christ was to be born. In Bethlehem, in Judea...(Mt. 2:4)*

Simeon and Anna

- *It has been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (Lk. 2:26)*

All of these are establishing Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets; that the long awaited king, the Messiah, the Savior of the world had arrived.

This case is being made for us today!

The writers wanted us to know about Jesus, about who He was and is. It was so urgently important that they went to great lengths to spread the Word and the Way of Jesus in the world. They spread the word of His saving grace. They wanted us to know what they knew and risked their lives in the process of spreading the Word that Jesus Christ came to save the world.

Paul makes the point in Hebrews 2:14-18. He says that,
“Since God's children share flesh and blood, Jesus himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one

who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.

Jesus came to save us from fear and death.

Paul continues, *“Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.*

Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.”

When we are tested and life seems either too much to bear or the temptation is too strong to resist, remember Jesus. He saw what was coming in the Garden and yet he showed us the way, he overcame weakness and temptation through prayer and concluded,

“not my will but thy will be done.”

Later, when He went to the cross, He overcame suffering.

He experienced the worst that the world had to offer and yet remained faithful. He was pure in spirit until the end.

The King, the Savior had come and shown us the way. Not only the way to live while on earth but the Way to prepare us for eternity. The whole plan is not for us to *be happy* here on earth but for us to live eternally with God.

We are in basic training now. We are being tested in life as Jesus knew we would be tested. That is why He went all the way to the cross for us and did not quit, because God loves us and wants us.

He submitted himself to great suffering to show us the way. He showed us that we would not be destroyed by suffering but we would be resurrected *by suffering*. We would pass through the fire that would test and form us.

We are being prepared for the time when we will meet Jesus in the second coming or whenever that meeting occurs.

The important thing is to be ready for that meeting.

One of the best ways to prepare for this meeting is experiencing suffering faithfully just as Jesus did on the cross.

Jesus invited us to take up our cross and follow Him. He is inviting us to leave our “self” behind and be made anew. In a sense when we can leave our selves behind then we can experience a resurrection. The way we leave our selves behind is to fall in love with Jesus. Let it all go. Release control and find your new self in the embrace of Jesus. In this embrace find a new life, a resurrection into who God has called you to be.

We must begin today. We must prepare to be ready for our meeting with Jesus. We have to ask ourselves today, “*Am I ready to be presented by Jesus to God?*”

Amen