

Purification of Mary and Presentation of Our Lord

OLD TESTAMENT - 1 Samuel 1:21-38

Samuel Given to the LORD

21 The man Elkanah and all his house went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice and to pay his vow. **22** But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, “As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, so that he may appear in the presence of the LORD and dwell there forever.” **23** Elkanah her husband said to her, “Do what seems best to you; wait until you have weaned him; only, may the LORD establish his word.” So the woman remained and nursed her son until she weaned him. **24** And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and she brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. And the child was young. **25** Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. **26** And she said, “Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. **27** For this child I prayed, and the LORD has granted me my petition that I made to him. **28** Therefore I have lent him to the LORD. As long as he lives, he is lent to the LORD.” And he worshiped the LORD there.

1:21 *his vow.* Making vows to God was a common feature of OT piety, usually involving thank offerings and praise (see Lev 7:16; Ps 50:14; 56:12; 66:13–15; 116:17–18; Isa 19:21). Elkanah no doubt annually made vows to the Lord as he prayed for God’s blessing on his crops and flocks, and fulfilled those vows at the Feast of Tabernacles. (CSB)

1:22 *weaned.* It was customary in the East to nurse children for three years or longer since there was no way to keep milk sweet. (CSB)

Samuel would have been about age 3. Breast-feeding typically lasted much longer than it does today. Because it sometimes inhibits ovulation, breast-feeding can help prevent pregnancy. A feast celebrating the weaning might also be observed (Gn 21:8). (TLSB)

1:23 *his word.* No previous word from God is mentioned, unless this refers to the pronouncement of Eli in v. 17. The Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) and Syriac version resolve this problem by reading “your word.” (CSB)

Prayerfully, Elkanah expresses his own hope that God’s blessing of more children will come with the fulfillment of Hannah’s vow (v. 11). Hannah will not fail to bring Samuel into God’s presence and will prepare the boy for service to God. Husbands had responsibility for their wives. (TLSB)

1:24 The exact nature of this offering is not clear. It may have been a custom at Shiloh only or a offering specific to Hannah’s vow (cf. Lev. 27; Num. 30). (TLSB)

1:26 *As surely as you live.* A customary way of emphasizing the truthfulness of one’s words. (CSB)

1:28 *lent.* Literally, “make him one asked of the Lord,” playing off the verbs for asking that are repeatedly used. Samuel belongs to the Lord forever (v. 22). (TLSB)

worshiped – Literally, “he bowed down” (some versions have “they”). It probably means that Samuel worshiped the Lord at Shiloh from that time, though an act of consecration may be meant; the meaning is ambiguous. (TLSB)

1:21–28 Hannah brings the young Samuel to the presence of the Lord at Shiloh, and she offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving and consecration. In fulfillment of her vow, Hannah gives Samuel to the Lord for the length of his life. Everything that we have is a gift from the Lord. This means that we have no right to keep anything back from service to God, no matter how dear it is to us. God’s claim on our life is absolute (Lk 14:25–33). Always true to His Word, He will stand by His promises to us, even when we have no earthly reason for hope. • Thank You, Lord, for all Your gifts to us. Let our joy be complete as we offer ourselves and our children to You and to each other in love. Amen. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – Hebrews 2:14-18

4 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

2:14-15 A quite complete summary of the incarnation: its nature (“partook” of “flesh and blood”), its destination (“death”), its accomplishment (“destroy” the devil and “deliver” the enslaved “children”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

2:14 *children share in flesh and blood.* Children and their parents share genetic unity. (TLSB)

partook of the same. Jesus became, and still is, a real human being and truly our Brother. Through the incarnation, Jesus shares our human nature (yet without sin). Christians and their Lord also share the unique fellowship of the Lord’s flesh and blood through the Lord’s Supper (1Co 10:16–17). “He did not receive a foreign nature, but our own flesh in the unity of His person. In this way He has become our true Brother... Christ redeemed human nature as His work, sanctifies it, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work” (FC Ep I 5–6). (TLSB)

through death ... destroy. Jesus’ death absorbed God’s judgment against sin. On the cross, Jesus bore all sin and the condemnation of death. (TLSB)

the one who holds the power of death. Satan wields the power of death only insofar as he induces people to sin and to come under sin’s penalty, which is death (see Eze 18:4; Ro 5:12; 6:23). (CSB)

Death has a claim on those who sin (Rm 6:23). (TLSB)

the devil. He uses God’s Law to bring accusations against those who have sinned. Luther: “The devil’s work is to crush us under his feet and, because of our sin, to dispatch us from life into death.... [Christ’s] works are truly divine works such as: to justify, to restore to life, to save” (AE 13:135). (TLSB)

katargeo – To render entirely useless. The devil continues to remind us of our many sins and tries to enslave us. But, Jesus reminds us that his death takes care of all of our sins and we are not guilty and don’t have be burdened with that guilt.

2:15 *lifelong slavery.* All who sin fear death as a consequence of sin and are bound in this fear unless God speaks His word of mercy in Christ (cf Rm 7:14–25). (TLSB)

2:16 *offspring of Abraham.* Christ assumed not angelic nature but human nature, characterized by the descendants of Abraham. (CSB)

Those who also have faith in the Savior. Cf Gal 3:6–9, 26–29. (TLSB)

2:17 *in every respect.* Jesus was, and is, a real human being who has shared in every aspect of human life, including the temptation to sin. (TLSB)

a merciful and faithful high priest. Christ could represent mankind before God only if he became one with them. (CSB)

Jesus brings our needs to the Father because He knows the reality of human weakness. (TLSB)

the service of God. Jesus' sacrifice is given to God the Father and is not compelled by Satan or any other power. Jesus went to the cross willingly, thwarting Satan's purposes (1Co 2:8; 1Jn 3:8). (TLSB)

make propitiation. In order for Christ to turn aside the wrath of God against guilty sinners, he had to become one with them and die as a substitute for them. (CSB)

propitiation. Jesus removes the stain of sin, bringing human beings into a right relationship with the Father (TLSB)

hilastayreon – This means to have an atoning victim (Jesus) and also mercy seat like in the lid of the Ark or propitiation. The OT priests sprinkled blood of animals on the altar as a symbol of a sacrifice for sin. Jesus used his own blood and did it only once and for all.

2:18 *he himself has suffering when tempted.* Jesus' prayers are those of one who has suffered and been tempted as a real human being. We are assured that His prayers are effective and heartfelt (cf 5:7; Rm 8:34). (TLSB)

2:5–18 Jesus, as true man, willingly humbled Himself to taste death. As resurrected Lord, and as our firstborn Brother (v 11), He serves as our High Priest to intercede for us before the Father. Without a Savior, we would live in slavery to the fear of death. But Jesus has taken the consequence of our sin and removes our fear. Knowing our weaknesses, He will always help us when we are tempted. • Lord Jesus, You know my weakness. Help me always to turn away from sin and to put all my trust in You. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Luke 2:22-32

Jesus Presented in the Temple

22 And 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 **23** (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) **24** and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” **25** 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. **26** 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. **27** 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, **28** he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, **29** “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; **30** for my eyes have seen your salvation **31** that you have prepared in the

presence of all peoples, 32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.”

2:22-40 Theophilus (Lk 1:3), already knowing something of the content of the Gospel, is catechized about the Lord of all humankind, of Jerusalem and of the nations. The carefully recorded birth announcements for John and Jesus, the recounting of their births, and also the praises of heaven and earth sung at their births, instruct Theophilus how to understand Jesus growing as God in the flesh. Jesus, after he has been born man, will grow as man grows, and at the temple Theophilus watches the Son of God begin to fulfill his sacrificial ministry with his whole life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

2:22-24 Lev 12:1–4 demanded nothing for the husband or the child. With the plural (*tou katharismou autōn* [v 22]), Mary’s purification and the offering for the Child are gathered under one heading; Jesus entered the temple with Mary (Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996], 115). Mary’s impurity stresses the reality of the incarnation. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

In Exodus 13, the firstborn were presented (*parastēsai* [v 22]) as the special servants of the Lord. For Jesus no purchase price (Num 3:12–13, 44–51; 18:16) is noted—for he is holy (1:35; cf. Ex 13:2, 12, 15); he was not presented to be redeemed. Rather, since the presence of the child at the temple was not required for the act of redemption, Jesus is presented in service to the Lord. This is his active obedience; he has no guilt, but is presented as the One who will freely take the guilt of the world upon himself (Is 53:4–6; Jn 1:29). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

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). (CSB)

to Jerusalem. The distance from Bethlehem to Jerusalem was only about six miles. (CSB)

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). (CSB)

2:24 *offer a sacrifice* – τοῦ δοῦναι θυσίαν—“To offer sacrifice” retains the language of sacrifice. (CC)

1. *a pair of turtledoves 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)

Most modest of the different sacrifices that could be offered; suggests that Jesus’ parents were poor (Lv 12:8). (TLSB)

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2:25-32 Forty days after Jesus' birth in Bethlehem His parents took Him to the Temple in Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, verses 22-24. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Simeon came to the Temple just at the time when Mary and Joseph were there with the baby Jesus. He took the baby in his arms, praised God and spoke what we call *The Nunc Dimittis*. In keeping with God's promise, Simeon saw God's salvation with his own eyes. He declared Jesus as the Light of all the nations and the Person Who was Israel's greatest glory. This brings us to verse 33. (Buls)

2:25-28 After John's birth, his destiny was revealed. Now behold (*kai idou* [v 25]) what Simeon will declare about Jesus. Like Zechariah (Lk 1:6), Simeon is described as *dikaios* (v 25), and as a devout man he has been waiting for the consolation of Israel (*paraklēsīn*; LXX Is 49:13; 57:18; 61:2; cf. Gen 5:29). With the Spirit upon him, Simeon has been endowed with the ability to recognize the Child as the Christ (*ton christon* [v 26] foreshadows *keitai* [v 34]). The continued emphasis on the Holy Spirit reminds us that these events in the temple are not historical coincidences, but are under the direction of the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

2:25-27 Simeon's watchfulness, discernment of the Messiah's presence, and consequent prophetic utterance were all the result of the Spirit's action. (TLSB)

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

was righteous and devout – 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)

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)

waiting – “to wait for” heightens the sense of expectation. (CC)

προσδεχόμενος—“To wait for” heightens the sense of expectation. This word is also part of Luke's frame between Simeon and Anna, where she and others are waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem (2:38; cf. 23:51). (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). (CSB)

This recalls the comfort Isaiah foretold. Synonymous with the Lord's salvation and forgiveness. (TLSB)

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.” (CSB)

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)

2:26 *revealed to him by the Holy Spirit* – Simeon wasn't carried away by a pious wish; it was revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. The manner of this revelation is not revealed. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

would not see death – The Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he beheld the fulfillment of God's promise to send the Messiah. (TLSB)

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 2:38 – Anna

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

Specific setting is likely the temple’s Court of Women, because both Mary and Anna (vv 36-38) were present. (TLSB)

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 up 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)

2:29-33 *nun* (v 29) highlights the presence of salvation. Having taken Jesus in his arms, Simeon confesses what he, the servant, has presently received from the Lord, his Master. Whether emphasizing departing this life (v 26) or release from sin (v 30), *to hrēma sou* (v 29) defines Simeon’s status before the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

In full view of the peoples, God has come to save them. *kata prosōpon pantōn tōn laōn* (v 31) refers to all participants, Jews and Gentiles. Jesus, *phōs eis apokalupsin ethnōn* (v 32), will lead the nations out of their darkness (Is 42:6; 49:6; 60:3). “Nations” further anticipates the Baptism of Jesus (whose genealogy encompasses all humankind, Luke 3), the preaching of repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations (Lk 24:47), and the mission in Acts. Meanwhile, Jesus is also *doxan laou sou Israēl* (v 32), the head of the people (Col 1:18), the pinnacle of the temple (Eph 2:20), the paramount gift of the Lord to Israel (Jn 4:22; Rom 9:5). The glory is dwelling with his people (Ex 40:34–38; 1 Sam 4:21–22). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

2:29–32 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 *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)

letting your servant depart in peace – 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)

Like Mary (1:48), Simeon identifies himself as God's servant while bursting forth in praise – a thematic link between the two songs. Simeon's song also continues to be sung as part of the Church's liturgy (LSB, pp 238-240). (TLSB)

2:30 *your salvation* – Realized in the baby Jesus. (TLSB)

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 peoples. 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. (CSB)

2:32 *light* – 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)

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

Matthew 5:14-16, ¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵Neither 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. ¹⁶In 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."

for revelation – εἰς ἀποκάλυψιν—The verb ἀποκαλύπτω is repeated in 2:35, forming a frame to Simeon’s words and tying the two parts together. Revelation is one of the themes, if not the theme of Simeon’s hymn. (CC)

to the Gentiles – Gentiles (instead of nations) anticipates the Gentile mission in Acts. (CC)

for glory to your people Israel – δόξαν λαοῦ σου Ἰσραήλ—The angels announced glory to God, and now Simeon announces that the salvation and light in this child are for the glory of Israel. This strengthens the interpretation that the heavenly glory in 2:14 is also reflected on earth. Since δόξα is in the accusative, it goes with the preposition εἰς so that salvation/light (φῶς stands in apposition to τὸ σωτήριον) is for revelation to the Gentiles and is for glory to Israel. (CC)

The glory of Israel is her salvation. Because this salvation is for all people, it will come to shine upon every nation through the preaching of the Gospel. (TLSB)