

# Joy at Long Last!

Thomas Robinson, *Good News of God with Us 3*, December 15, 2019

## Luke 2:22-38

<sup>22</sup> When (Mary & Joseph) completed the days before their **purification** according to the law of Moses [Lev 12:2-7], they brought Jesus into Jerusalem **to present him to the Lord** [1Sam 1:28] – <sup>23</sup> as it's written in a law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be called holy to the Lord” [Exod 13:12-15] – <sup>24</sup> and to present a sacrifice specified in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons” [Lev 12:8].

<sup>25</sup> Look, there was a person in Jerusalem named **Simeon**, and this man was **righteous** and **devoted** as he **awaited God's promise to comfort Israel** [Isa 40:1-2], and the **Holy Spirit** was upon him. <sup>26</sup> And it had been **revealed** to him by that **Holy Spirit** that he would not see death before he saw the **Lord's Anointed King (Christos)** [Isa 61:1].

<sup>27</sup> **Led by the Spirit** he came into the temple. And when the parents brought in the infant Jesus, to perform for him the customs of the Law, <sup>28</sup> he himself **took the baby in his arms and praised God** and said,

<sup>29</sup> “**Master, now you are releasing your servant** [Psa 116:15-16]  
in peace, according to your word, [Isa 57:2]

<sup>30</sup> **for my eyes have seen your salvation** [Isa 52:8,10]

<sup>31</sup> **that you prepared in the presence of all peoples,** [Isa 40:5]

<sup>32</sup> **a light for revelation for the Gentiles,** [Isa 42:6; 49:6]  
**and a glory for your people Israel.”** [Isa 46:13]

<sup>33</sup> And his father and mother were in amazement at what was being said about him. <sup>34</sup> And **Simeon** blessed them and said to **Mary** his mother,

“Behold, this child is set here for a **falling and rising** for many in Israel [Isa 8:14; 28:16], and for a **sign that is rejected** [Isa 7:11-14], <sup>35</sup> and a **sword will pierce through your own soul also** [Zech 12:10; 13:7], so that **thoughts from many hearts may be revealed**” [Jer 4:14; 17:10].

<sup>36</sup> There was also a **prophet, Anna**, daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of **Asher** [Deut 33:24-25]. She was **advanced in age**, since she lived with her husband seven years after their marriage, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow till she was eighty-four. She didn't withdraw from **the temple**, as she served God with **fasting and prayer** night and day.

<sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to **give thanks to God** and to talk about the child to **all who were waiting for Jerusalem's redemption from slavery** [Isa 51:10-12; 52:2-3; Lk 1:68].

## Isaiah 11:1-6

<sup>1</sup> There shall come forth a **shoot from the stump of Jesse**, | and a **branch** from his roots shall bear fruit. | <sup>2</sup> And the **Spirit of Yahweh** shall rest upon him, | the **Spirit of wisdom and understanding**, | the **Spirit of counsel and might**, | the **Spirit of knowledge** and the **fear of Yahweh**. | <sup>3</sup> And his delight shall be in the fear of Yahweh. |

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, | or decide disputes by what his ears hear, | <sup>4</sup> but with **righteousness** he shall judge the **poor**, | and decide with **equity** for the **meek** of the earth; | and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, | and with the breath/Spirit of his lips he shall destroy the wicked. | <sup>5</sup> **Righteousness** shall be the belt of his waist, | and **faithfulness** the belt of his loins. |

<sup>6</sup> The **wolf** shall dwell with the **lamb**, | and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, | and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; | and **a little child** shall lead them.

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Luke 1:67-70 <sup>67</sup> And (John's) father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, <sup>68</sup> "Blessed be the LORD God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people <sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for in the house of his servant David <sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old..."

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## People Waiting for Joy through Long ... Experience

Luke takes us into the life of faithful Jews near the end of Herod's violent reign. Zechariah/Elizabeth; Mary/Joseph; Simeon and Anna. Two young, four elderly. The old ones lived through the old days and know they weren't better. They carry the long expectation. Isaiah, before the exile, foresaw Israel's royal hope cut off. But a branch would grow from the stump. He would bear God's Spirit; God's heart for justice; God's renewal. What joy! Things started happening: Gabriel, Zechariah, Mary, Elizabeth, John's birth. Mary & Joseph bring an astonishing child (angels-shepherds) to the Temple for faithful obedience, 6 bc. The Temple was brand new, 14 yrs old, rebuilt by King Herod an Edomite. It's high priest was Herod's father-in-law, Simeon son of Boethus, an aristocratic Sadducee from Alexandria. Another Simeon meets Jesus, an elderly prophet, full of scripture and hope. He is the other faithful Israel, like Zechariah. He received a promise. What did he expect? A baby whose parents could only afford pigeons? But he sees! Salvation. Light. Glory. Prophetic hope!

## Anna – What These Eyes Have Seen!

Luke emphasizes the prophet Anna's age. Born 90 bc. Married, widowed, about 70 bc. 64 yrs as a widow, becoming a prophet. Simeon & Anna anticipate prophecy in Acts 2 – for all. She's from one of the lost tribes. Evidently soon after becoming a widow, she focuses her life on the Jerusalem's old Temple. Now in the midst of Herod's gold, she fasts & prays. Think of this woman, what she has seen, what she represents. When Anna was born, it was 500 yrs since Israel lost it's last Davidic king and Solomon's Temple was destroyed. About 430 since 2<sup>nd</sup> temple built, under Persian empire. 370 since Ezra brought Torah. 240 since Alexander conquered Persia. 80 yrs since Antiochus 4 outlawed the Torah, Maccabean revold began. Hasmonean kings (High priests not from Aaron, Kings not from David. Pharisees rise. John Hyrcanus conquered Edom, Herod's grandfather. Anna was born in a time of civil war between Alexander Jannaeus & the Pharisees. 50,000 killed, 800 Pharisees crucified. Anna married as Salome Alexandra became queen. 7 yrs later a widow, 20 yrs old, 70 bc. Begins life around the Temple. 7 more yrs, dynastic conflict leads to intervention by Pompey the Roman general in 63 bc. Violent siege, slaughter of priests at altar. Pompey enters Holy of Holies. Hundreds enslaved. Judea becomes a Roman outpost against Parthia. In 50 bc, Anna 40, Rabbi Hillel came from Babylon. Roman civil wars renew dynastic conflict and the rise of Herod. In 40 bc. Parthians plunder Jeru. Herod escapes to Rome, returns with army. Another siege. Anna 53. Herod builds Theater and Amphitheater in Jerusalem. 20 bc, Anna was 70, Herod rebuilt the Temple, while his family descended into ever more violent conflict. She was 83 when her friend Zechariah had a vision of Gabriel in the temple, became a prophet. Now Anna is 84. Can any hope or joy be left? She has watched it all. Now a baby comes. Here is the hope of the prophets! The End of Jerusalem's long enslavement. How will it happen?