

THE LORD'S SERMONS

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Sunday after Christmas

The Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple

St. Luke II, 33-40: "And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yes, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

(December 25, 1871)

This chapter begins with My birth, speaks of My circumcision and then deals with the three days I spent at the temple in Jerusalem, when I was twelve years old. The arrival of the three wise men from the east, the slaying of the children, and other things - as, for instance, the flight into Egypt and return after the death of Herod - are not mentioned here, and so I shall skip most of it since you know it anyway from the Gospel of James the story of My childhood [see Jakob Lorber "The Childhood of Jesus"] as well as from My disciples' records.

So let us stop at the above mentioned text: "And Joseph and Mary marvelled..."

What did they marvel about? They marvelled at Simeon's prophetic words and at Anna's statements, both of whom had recognized in the child that had been taken to Jerusalem for circumcision, the Saviour, not only of the Jews, but of all mankind, who had come to liberate the spirit from the constraint of matter.

*Jesus Christ had come to
liberate the spirit from the
bondage of matter.*

It is understandable that Joseph and Mary did not comprehend what those two prophesied, for - looking at all the mysterious happenings, beginning with Mary's conception up to the birth and presentation in the temple, - it is obvious that neither Mary nor Joseph knew what to think of all this.

Although the Jews were used to receiving direct messages from Me through prophets, they did not pay much attention to them while the prophets were still alive, and their prophecies gained importance only when they began to come true.

Jesus Christ instructed His people via prophets, thus He is God.

They were waiting for a Messiah, but their hopes were based on worldly considerations; they were waiting for a Messiah who, most likely born in a palace, would one day as a great hero deliver them from the hated yoke of the Romans. That the son of a carpenter - as what My foster father was known to them - was to become their Saviour was quite beyond their expectations and comprehension.

Therefore, Joseph and Mary marvelled at the words of Simeon and Anna. Mary had had the most miraculous experiences within a short space of time, quite inconceivable to her. She had given birth to a son without having known a man. She had become a mother without having experienced motherhood in its fullness; for normally a child is the link that joins the lives of a man and a woman, uniting them to a whole, to a family.

Mary was a mother and did experience the joy of seeing her offspring before her, but it was more a feeling of pity for the little babe than a mother's bliss at pressing to her bosom the bond of her husband's love. Thus she did not and could not understand what took place at the conception, at the birth and later on. She acted only in accordance with higher guidance and was passive rather than active, following as a woman and mother only her emotions that bound her to her infant.

Of course, this vague feeling, the doubts and suspicions, which she believed only she alone was carrying in her heart, grew when she heard others express similar and even greater things as she was taking the child into the temple. Through having the circumcision and sacrifices performed in accordance with the law, I was to be received as a child into the Jewish religion and brought up in it.

Simeon's words were most mysterious to Mary, since he recognized the child as that of which she had no idea as yet. But his last words were even more puzzling: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against, (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed!"

She could imagine that something extraordinary could become of her son since the conception, the birth and so on were accompanied by such extraordinary phenomena. But to have carried a God under her heart and the expected Messiah, the spiritual redeemer -not only of her people, but of all mankind- that was something beyond her understanding. Still at My death on the cross she wept over Me as her son, - a man, not a God. Only

...but to have carried a God under her heart...

through the resurrection was she convinced - as were My disciples - of that which I had told them repeatedly.

The sword that was to pierce her heart was the mother's grief; for if she had known and recognized who I actually was, she should have rejoiced at My demise and not mourned.

I had often predicted to her and My disciples what was ahead of Me and how I would overcome death and hell. However, how could they imagine - particularly in those times of the prophets and miracle-working Essenes - that I, a man of flesh and bones like them, who eats and drinks, could be God, the Lord of Hosts Who, after He had grown from a human child, was to end on the cross - at that time a symbol of shame and degradation.

Therefore, Joseph and Mary marvelled. They did not comprehend who He was who had come to bring about the fall and rising again of the Jews. The "fall" was the destruction of the Jewish kingdom fifty years after My demise; and the "rising again" the transition of many Jews to Christianity as well as the change of the sign of the cross from a symbol of shame to one of supreme glorification. Do you believe that at the time of My Second Coming there will be better comprehension among men? Not in the least! Then, too, there will be many admirers who will regard Me as nothing more than a man inspired by God. At My Second Coming I will, of course, not come as a child, but as a mature man, and there, too, will be many doubters to whom I shall have to prove My Deity through miracles as the power of the Word would not convince them.

...Jesus Christ is the Lord of Hosts. This is why Jesus tells us in the New Revelation His full name: Jesus Jehovah Zebaoth

The story of My childhood will repeat itself in its main points and events, but only in a spiritual sense, for then the spiritual understanding will be far more developed, so that the believers will be in the majority, the non-believers and doubters in a minority.

Behold, My children, as I once submitted Myself to the Jewish custom of circumcision, you should submit yourselves to a spiritual baptism, the baptism with the spirit of My love. Eliminate from your hearts what does not belong there, and begin to understand Me and My world better every day, so that your hearts may not be pierced by a sword because by attributing too much importance to the things of the world you mourn what is not worth mourning.

Make sure that you see things as they really are and that you daily fulfil your duty on this earth while you have to live here, so that when the grave hour of departure has come you have no regrets and need not mourn anything.

May you recognize Me, as Mary did when I returned to the Father, and understand that He whom you know as Christ is by far greater and more loving than you have imagined, but that also My demands on you are more severe than you thought.

Jesus as human being was God's wisdom separated from God's love.

There are many today who believe in Me and love Me as did Mary during My life on earth. However, this is not enough. Mary recognized only at the cross and on My resurrection that He whom she had borne was not a man but the Son of God, that is, Wisdom that had been separated from Love, Who returned to His heavens after three days in the grave and afterwards appeared to His disciples and the mother of His human body not physically but spiritualised.

See to it that Christ may rise also within you - as He is and was - so that you need not have to marvel if you find Him different from what you expected.

This for a warning, and may you act accordingly!

Amen.

Note: Editor's comments in square brackets.

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