

“The Christ-Child in the Temple”



5 PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK **Psalm 93:5, 2, 1, 3-4**

Your testimonies are | very sure;*
 holiness adorns Your house, O Lord, for- | ever.
 Your throne is established | from of old;*
 You are from ever- | lasting.
 The Lord reigns, He is clothed with | majesty;*
 The Lord is | clothed with strength.
 Surely the world is es- | tablished,*
 so that it can- | not be moved.
 The floods have lifted | up their voice;*
 the floods lift | up their waves.
 The Lord on high is mightier than the noise of many | waters,*
 than the mighty waves | of the sea.

6 SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK **Revelation 21:3**
 “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.”

7 READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

8 PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK
 O heavenly Father, as You gladden our hearts again to celebrate the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, mercifully bestow on us the joy to receive Him as our Redeemer and so welcome Him when He comes again to be our judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

9 PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

10 SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK **To Shepherds as They Watched by Night**
 TLH 103
 Martin Luther



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. To shepherds as they watched by night
Appeared a host of angels bright;
Behold the tender Babe, they said,
In yonder lowly manger laid. | 4. What harm can sin and death then do?
The true God now abides with you.
Let hell and Satan rage and chafe,
Christ is your Brother--ye are safe. |
| 2. At Bethlehem, in David's town,
As Micah did of old make known;
'Tis Jesus Christ, your Lord and King,
Who doth to all salvation bring. | 6. Ye shall and must at last prevail;
God's own ye are, ye cannot fail.
To God forever sing your praise
With joy and patience all your days. |

1 BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:
 In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

2 SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED
 I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
 Maker of heaven and earth.
 And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our
 Lord, who was conceived by the Holy
 Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered
 under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died
 and was buried. He descended into hell.
 The third day He rose again from the
 dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at
 the right hand of God, the Father
 Almighty. From thence He will come to
 judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy
 Christian church, the communion of
 saints, the forgiveness of sins, the
 resurrection of the body, and the life
 everlasting. Amen.

3 PRAY THE LORD'S PRAYER
 Our Father, who art in
 heaven,
 hallowed be Thy name,
 Thy kingdom come,
 Thy will be done on earth as it
 is in heaven.
 Give us this day our daily
 bread;
 and forgive us our trespasses
 as we forgive those who
 trespass against us;
 and lead us not into
 temptation,
 but deliver us from evil.
 For Thine is the kingdom and
 the power and the glory
 forever and ever. Amen.

4 PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning. I thank You, my
 heavenly Father, through Jesus
 Christ, Your dear Son, that You
 have kept me this night from all
 harm and danger; and I pray that
 You would keep me this day also
 from sin and every evil, that all my
 doings and life may please You.
 For into Your hands I commend
 myself, my body and soul, and all
 things. Let Your holy angel be with
 me, that the evil foe may have no
 power over me. Amen.

Evening. I thank you, my
 heavenly Father, through Jesus
 Christ, Your dear Son, that You
 have graciously kept me this day;
 and I pray that You would forgive
 me all my sins where I have done
 wrong, and graciously keep me this
 night. For into Your hands, I
 commend myself, my body and
 soul, and all things. Let Your holy
 angel be with me, that the evil foe
 may have no power over me. Amen.

THEME OF THE WEEK: **The Christ-Child in the Temple**

As we bask in the glow of Christmas and the incarnation of our God, we turn our hearts to the manger of His Word. Therein we see our Savior and, with Him, profound mysteries – marvelous, terrifying, and joyful things. If we are careful how we read, careful how we hear (as our Lord Himself instructs) our hearts will be filled with that holy fear which is the beginning of wisdom. Let us meditate, then, upon various aspects of what it means for the Incarnate One to be the “Christ-Child” and for Him to be found “in the temple.” The climax of the Holy Scriptures and the climax of this age are perfectly summarized in the verse of the week: “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man.” (Revelation 21:3)

SUN

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 23:34-39 “God’s Temple is Holy – You are that Temple”**

God said to the serpent, “I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring.” While we rightly see Jesus as the woman’s offspring, what of the serpent’s offspring? A reference to the antichrist? Indeed, and more. Properly, the offspring of the woman is Christ and all who are His (Rev. 12:17; Rom. 16:20); the offspring of the serpent is the antichrist and all who are his (Matt. 3:7; 12:34). From Abel to Zechariah to our Lord to Stephen and so on, the offspring of the serpent have done their worst to the offspring of the woman, but Christ has now crushed their father’s head under His heel.

Come, Lord Jesus, and enter in. For we are Your temple. All who would destroy us shall be destroyed. (1 Cor. 3:16-17) Amen.

MON

SCRIPTURE: **John 21:19-24 “The Mother of the Christ-Child and Our Own”**

Of the twelve disciples, only John stood at the foot of the cross. When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold, your son.” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold, your mother.” Thus, the mother of Jesus becomes the mother of the disciple, and Jesus becomes the brother of the disciple. In 1522, Luther preached that we who are disciples now have Mary as our mother, Christ as our brother, and God as our Father. In 1529 (the same year the Small Catechism was published), Luther preached that “Mary is the mother of Jesus and the mother of all of us.” *Blessed Father, who are we, that we should be welcomed into Your eternal family? Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: **Matthew 2:13-18 “A Child to Save the Children”**

“A voice was heard in America, weeping and loud lamentation, Liberty weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.” We live in the midst of an unspeakable holocaust. If some six-million Jews were killed in Nazi Germany, some sixty-million infants have been aborted in the United States. There is nothing that the serpent despises more than woman and her offspring (Gen. 3:15). From Pharaoh (Ex. 2:1-10) to Herod (Matt. 2:13-18) to America to the ends of the earth, we see the serpent’s rage. Yet, in the Woman and her Offspring we see his defeat. His head is crushed; his tail lashes out. The dead shall rise. The innocents shall be truly innocent. *Merciful Father, we weep for our children even as we wait for Your Child. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: **Isaiah 11:1-5 “A Child King”**

A stump is a tree that has been cut off. The “stump of Jesse” (King David’s father) is all that remained of a once-proud line of kings. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down. Centuries would pass before a Shoot of new life would spring forth from that stump, a Branch that would bring forth good fruit, a King who would be anointed not only with oil, but with the sevenfold Spirit. INRI. Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews, Who would transform a dead stump and dead tree into a tree of life – not only for the Jews but for the world. With righteousness He will judge for the poor. With the breath of His lips He shall kill the wicked. The Child born to Mary is the King of heaven and earth, of angels and man. *Blessed Jesus, reign in us, we pray. Amen.*

THU

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 2:22-32 “Our Eyes Have Seen Your Salvation”**

Attention-seekers like to claim that “Jesus was not religious,” that “Jesus came to destroy religion,” and the like. Yet, here we see pious Joseph, Mary, and Jesus in the temple, along with Simeon (whom the Holy Spirit describes as “righteous and devout”), all doing according to the custom of the Law – even as Jesus would continue to do His entire life. There is “worthless” religion and religion that is “pure and undefiled” (James 1:26-27). When Simeon holds Jesus, he prays, “my eyes have seen Your salvation.” When we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, there’s no mystery why the Liturgy places the words of Simeon in our mouths. It is the same Jesus. *Gracious Jesus, Your religion is ours, Your body our temple, Your blood cleanses us from all sin. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: **Hebrews 2:9-16 “Let Us Make Man in Our Image”**

“Jesus increased...in favor with God” (Lk. 2:52); “He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death” (Phil. 2:8); “Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered” (Heb. 5:8); “...so that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest” (Heb. 2:17); “For it was fitting that He...should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering” (Heb. 2:10). Increased, becoming, learned, might become, should [be made] perfect. It is not until Jesus stands before Pilate, beaten, crowned with thorns, that He is finally called “the Man” (Jn. 19:5). St. Paul tells us that we are likewise being brought to “mature manhood,” to “the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). *Dear Father, make us Man in Your Image. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: **Psalms 111 “The Dwelling Place of God is with Man”**

“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Without fear of the Lord there can be no wisdom, ergo the darkness and foolishness all around us. How does one come to fear the Lord? The answer is quite simple. Study His works (2). Remember His works (4). See the power of His works (6). Praise. Marvel at what He has made. Marvel at history. Marvel at His Word. Marvel that He is mindful of man. Marvel that He would become as we, that we might become as He. Marvel that the God of billions of galaxies is the God of the manger and cross, the altar and font. Marvel that He has made Himself known to you and made you one with Him, such that He is our temple (Jn. 2:19) and we are His (1 Cor. 3:16) – forever. *Unite my heart to fear your name, O Lord. Amen.*

Around the Word Devotions are produced by Around the Word Journal. Visit www.whatdoesthismean.org to sign up for these free devotions. These devotions are free for individual and family use. Questions? Please email office@hopeaurora.org. Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Thank you to sanctus.org and lutheran-hymnal.com for the Collects and Hymns. This week’s author is **Pastor Jeremy Rhode** has been Pastor of Faith Lutheran Church of Capistrano Beach for 15 years. He is a graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana and of the University of Colorado, Boulder. He is married to Julianna, a Physician’s Assistant. They have been blessed with two children. Pastor Rhode’s sermons and bible studies can be found at www.faithcapo.com