**WORSHIP**

**First Sunday after Christmas**

OLD TESTAMENT

Isaiah 61:10-62:3

**﻿10﻿ I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ﻿11﻿ For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.**

**61:10-11** In vv 10–11, the speaker is no longer the Servant, but Zion, and by anticipation, the New Testament church. The mood is one of joy because the Lord has adorned his people in garments of salvation and righteousness. The garment of Christ’s righteousness is placed on us in baptism (Gal 3:27). The church is described using nuptial imagery as in Eph 5:25–27. The groom and bride both anticipate joyfully their coming marriage. The imagery in v 11 then echoes the botanical description at the end of v 3: the Lord will make salvation and righteousness grow throughout the world like a garden, hinting of paradise restored. It is the Lord, both sovereign and gracious, who causes salvation to grow and encompass the nations of the world, foreshadowing the inclusion of gentiles in the church. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

**61:10** שׂ֧וֹשׂ אָשִׂ֣ישׂ בַּֽיהוָ֗ה—The Qal infinitive absolute שׂ֧וֹשׂ (translated adverbially, “exuberantly”) with the imperfect אָשִׂ֣ישׂ (“I will rejoice”) intensifies the prophet’s expression of joy. For שׂוּשׂ, see the third textual note on 61:3. While אָשִׂ֣ישׂ is the regular form of the Qal imperfect (not cohortative in form), the context implies that its mood is cohortative, i.e., a strong volitional declaration of the speaker’s intention to rejoice. See Joüon, § 114 b (1) and the next textual note. (CC)

תָּגֵ֤ל נַפְשִׁי֙ בֵּֽאלֹהַ֔י—The form of גִּיל, “to exult,” is jussive (תָּגֵ֤ל), rather than imperfect (תָּגִיל). This volitive form (and mood; see Joüon, § 114 g (1)) confirms the volitional (cohortative) mood of אָשִׂ֣ישׂ in the preceding clause and likewise is a powerful expression of the will (Joüon, § 114 h), thus “*indeed* exult.” תָּגֵ֤ל is third feminine singular since its subject is נַפְשִׁי֙, the suffixed feminine singular noun נֶפֶשׁ, “soul.” Compare St. Paul’s terminology for the “inner man” who delights in God’s Law (Rom 7:22), is being renewed daily (2 Cor 4:16), and is strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph 3:16), and his terminology for the “new man” created “in the righteousness and the holiness of the truth” (Eph 4:24). (CC)

כִּ֤י הִלְבִּישַׁ֙נִי֙ בִּגְדֵי־יֶ֔שַׁע מְעִ֥יל צְדָקָ֖ה יְעָטָ֑נִי—The “garments of skin” Yahweh provided for Adam and Eve (Gen 3:21) were a down payment of glorious attire to come. In the next clauses Isaiah will describe this garb in bridal terms (see the next textual note). Hebrew poetry often alternates between plural and singular forms, as here with בִּגְדֵי־יֶ֔שַׁע, “*garments* of salvation,” and then מְעִ֥יל צְדָקָ֖ה, “a *robe* of righteousness.” Isaiah and by extension all believers are clothed in this vesture; cf. the Christian’s “breastplate of righteousness” in Eph 6:14 and “crown of righteousness” in 2 Tim 4:8. The terms בֶּגֶד, “garment,” and מְעִיל, “robe,” also appear together in Is 59:17 to describe the Divine Warrior; and for the Davidic Messiah, “righteousness will be the belt of his waist” (וְהָ֥יָה צֶ֖דֶק אֵז֣וֹר מָתְנָ֑יו, 11:5). The nouns יֶשַׁע or יְשׁוּעָה, “salvation,” and צֶדֶק or צְדָקָה, “righteousness,” are also parallel in 45:8; 51:5, 6, 8; 56:1; 59:17; 62:1. In 52:1 Yahweh commands, לִבְשִׁ֥י עֻזֵּ֖ךְ צִיּ֑וֹן לִבְשִׁ֣י ׀ בִּגְדֵ֣י תִפְאַרְתֵּ֗ךְ, “put on/clothe yourself with your strength, O Zion; put on garments of your beauty.” Similar expressions are in Ps 132:9, 16. (CC)

Here, instead of Isaiah/the faithful remnant clothing himself/themselves (Qal of לָבֵשׁ, as in 49:18; 51:9; 52:1) with a garment provided by Yahweh, the entire action is performed by Yahweh alone. He is the subject of both verbs. This depicts divine monergism in salvation: Yahweh does it all! Both verbs take a double accusative construction: the first accusative is denoted by the first common singular pronominal suffix on each of the verbs (-נִי, “me,” the person clothed), and the second accusative is the two-word phrase that refers to the garment (בִּגְדֵי־יֶ֔שַׁע and then מְעִ֥יל צְדָקָ֖ה). The first verb, הִלְבִּישַׁ֙נִי֙, “he clothed me, caused me to be clothed,” is the (causative) Hiphil of לָבֵשׁ. The second verb form, יְעָטָ֑נִי, is the Qal perfect third masculine singular of יָעַט, to “cover” (BDB, *DCH*), a hapax legomenon, with a first common singular suffix. Some suggest emending it to a Hiphil imperfect third masculine singular of the related verb עָטָה, “wrap with, cover with” (*DCH*, עטה I, Hiphil), but emendation is unnecessary. (CC)

כֶּֽחָתָן֙ יְכַהֵ֣ן פְּאֵ֔ר וְכַכַּלָּ֖ה תַּעְדֶּ֥ה כֵלֶֽיהָ׃—Is 61:10b–11 is connected through four similes, each beginning with the preposition כְּ: “like a bridegroom” and “like a bride” (61:10b) and “as the earth” and “as a garden” (61:11; see also 58:11). The subjects here, the “bridegroom” (חָתָן) and “bride” (כַּלָּה), likewise rejoice in 62:5. This same marital joy is expressed in Jer 33:11. The noun פְּאֵר, “headdress,” appears also in 61:3; see the second textual note there. The פְּאֵר was worn by Israelite priests (Ex 39:28; Ezek 44:18). This and other priestly connections explain the use of the denominative Piel verb (derived from the noun כֹּהֵן, “priest”) יְכַהֵ֣ן, “dress like a priest.” Note the gift of the title כֹּהֲנֵ֤י יְהוָה֙, “priests of Yahweh,” in 61:6. The investing of the bridegroom with a priestly headdress may be compared to the crowning of the bridegroom on his wedding day in Song 3:11. The parallel verb תַּעְדֶּ֥ה is the third feminine singular Qal imperfect of עָדָה, “adorn/ornament oneself” (see BDB, עָדָה II), although the form itself could be Hiphil (not used in the OT).22 This verb appears in the context of Bridegroom Yahweh adorning his bride Jerusalem in Ezek 16:11, 13. Cf. the cognate noun עֲדִי denoting a bride’s “ornaments” in Is 49:18; Jer 2:32; Ezek 16:11. Here in Is 61:10 כֵלֶֽיהָ, the suffixed plural of the multivalent noun כְּלִי, denotes “her ornaments” or “her jewels.” כְּלִי denotes precious betrothal gifts in Gen 24:53 (cf. Ex 3:22; 11:2). (CC)

Isaiah makes this confession for himself as well as for the remnant community. The first person singular discourse creates an inclusio around chapter 61. In 61:1–3 the Anointed Servant speaks in the first person as he proclaims the gifts he brings, while here Isaiah celebrates those Gospel gifts. Luther rightly comments: “This is a song which the prophet sings as representative of the church.” And just like to Peter, “flesh and blood” did not reveal this to Isaiah (Mt 16:17). It was not human insight or imagination. It was rather Yahweh’s self-disclosure through his Anointed Servant (Is 61:1–3), who let the prophet see the beauty of salvation. (CC)

Envision a woman dressed for a funeral who receives word that a mistake has been made. She is told, “Instead of a funeral there will be a wedding with the love of your life!” What does she do? In breathtaking speed she washes the ashes from her face, dons her wedding garments, and crowns her head with a garland of flowers. It is time to celebrate! In like manner, Zion’s wailing has been turned into celebration; her sackcloth is gone, and she is girded with joy (cf. Ps 30:12 [ET 30:11]). Zion’s beauty comes from Yahweh. And it is everlasting! (CC)

In the OT the process of marriage often begins with the payment of a bride price or gift (e.g., Gen 24:51–53; 34:12; 1 Sam 18:25; cf. Song 1:10–11). Yahweh paid for his bride through the suffering and death of his faithful Servant (Is 52:13–53:12), so the baptized have been bought, “not with gold or silver, but with His [Christ’s] holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death.” God does not pursue his bride because she is lovely; he seeks the one who is unlovely to bestow upon her a perfect righteousness (Hos 2:21 [ET 2:19]; Eph 5:25–28). (CC)

The Anointed Servant gives gifts so that the faithful become “oaks of righteousness” (Is 61:3). Now, speaking for Zion, Isaiah responds with praise to Yahweh for having cloaked his people with righteousness. Justification is not an improvement, an alteration, a change of heart, or a cleaning up of the old Adam. It is an imputed righteous standing, received by faith, for Christ’s sake (Is 53:11; 54:17; Rom 3:24–30; Gal 3:8–14). These garments of salvation and righteousness are similar to the Divine Warrior’s clothes (Is 59:17). We therefore not only receive a righteous standing, but incorporated into Christ, we also become partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4). Our cups overflow with celebrative elation (Ps 23:5)! (CC)

These garments of salvation are the same clothes John calls white robes washed in the blood of the Lamb (Rev 7:14). Paul maintains that the baptized bride of Christ stands before him “without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Eph 5:27; cf. Gal 3:27; Col 3:9–10). The salvation story is truly one of rags (see Is 64:5 [ET 64:6]) to riches because Christ went from riches to rags (cf. Jn 19:23–24; 2 Cor 8:9). (CC)

I DELIGHT…MY SOUL REJOICES – The speaker seems to be the same as in the first verse of the following chapter, that is, the prophet speaking in the name of Zion’s watchman. Compare 62:6 (Concordia Bible)

The words remind us of the “Song of Mary” when she heard that she would be the mother of the Messiah: “My soul praises the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46, 47). The words recorded here by the prophet Isaiah are the words of a believer who has received the great blessings of God. Great joy fills the heart of such a believer. (PBC)

HE HAS CLOTHED ME – The speaker is no longer the Servant, but Zion, and by anticipation, the NT church. The mood is one of joy because the Lord has adorned his people in garments of salvation and righteousness. The garment of Christ’s righteousness is placed on us in baptism Gal 3:27). Many families have a white baptism dress that is worn by each member of the family when they are baptized.

*garments of salvation.*† See v. 3; 52:1. (CSB)

Those whom the Lord wraps in this robe not only experience deliverance from unrighteousness but also power to live out His righteousness. (TLSB)

Because the robe of righteousness covers the deepest stain of human sin, it becomes also a garment of salvation. Humans stand before God dressed in this robe. God see the believer clothed with the perfection of His own Son and welcomes the beliver into His presence. (PBC)

ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS – All “our righteousness” are loathsome and abominable, but the garment of Christ’s righteousness and salvation, wherewith He clothes His people, is excellent and glorious in the view of all beholders; it fills the hearts of its possessors with “the peace of God which passes understanding” with “joy unspeakable, and full of glory.” (Concordia Bible)

Jesus fashioned this robe from the threads of His perfect life. Then He wove it on the loom of the cross and colored it with His own red blood. God freely gives the cloak of His Son’s perfect life to the sinner, and it covers every sin, rebellion, and deviation from God’s standard. This robe of Christ’s righteousness is long and wide enough to cover every twisted human though, word, and deed. But this robe comes only from God. No human can erase sin. Left to ourselves, we walk about as Lady Macbeth did. She killed the king, and her sins haunted her conscience and heart. Like Shakespeare’s character, we vainly attempt to wipe our own sinful hands clean. If we are honest, we will conclude as she did: “Here’s the smell of the blood still; all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand” (Macbeth 5.152-54) (PBC)

*head like a priest.* Putting on a turban or headband (see note on v. 3). (CSB)

Cf v 3; 3:20 (only other times mentioned in Is). (TLSB)

This is likened to the meticulous care employed by the priest as he equips himself for the performance of his sacred duties. (Leupold)

*bride … with her jewels.* See 49:18 and note. (CSB)

The church is described using nuptial imagery as in Eph 5:25-27. The groom and the bride both anticipate joyfully their coming marriage.

**61:11** Both 55:10–11 and 61:11 employ nature comparisons to make stunning theological claims. God has designed nature to be fruitful and productive by means of rainfall and soil; how much more fruitful and productive, then, will God be as he accomplishes salvation by the power of his Word (55:10–11) to yield “righteousness” and “praise” (61:11). These texts organize their claims by means of the conjunctions כַּאֲשֶׁר and כְּ and the adverb כֵּן. In 55:10–11 the sequence is כַּאֲשֶׁ֣ר, “just as,” and then כֵּ֣ן, “thus.” In 61:11 it is כְּ twice, on כָאָ֙רֶץ֙, “as the earth,” and כְגַנָּ֖ה, “as a garden,” and then כֵּ֣ן, “thus.” (CC)

כִּ֤י כָאָ֙רֶץ֙ תּוֹצִ֣יא צִמְחָ֔הּ—The feminine noun אֶרֶץ, “earth,” is the subject of תּוֹצִ֣יא, the feminine (causative) Hiphil imperfect of יָצָא, whose direct object is the noun צֶמַח, a collective singular, “sprouts,” whose feminine suffix (צִמְחָ֔הּ) refers back to אֶרֶץ, “earth.” Literally, the earth “causes its sprouts to go out,” i.e., to emerge out from the ground, but the verb is rendered as “brings forth.” For similar agricultural instances of the Hiphil of יָצָא, see Gen 1:12, 24; Hag 1:11; Ps 104:14 (BDB, יָצָא, Hiphil, 4 j). (CC)

וּכְגַנָּ֖ה זֵרוּעֶ֣יהָ תַצְמִ֑יחַ—Parallel to the preceding clause, the feminine גַּנָּה, “garden,” is the subject of תַצְמִ֑יחַ, the feminine (causative) Hiphil imperfect of צָמַח, “cause to sprout.” The direct object is the suffixed plural of the noun זֵרוּעַ, “what is sown.” This passive noun formation is related to זֶרַע, “seed, offspring,” and likely alludes to the prominent theme of the Servant’s “offspring”; see the first textual note on 61:9 and the fourth textual note on 53:10. (CC)

Isaiah employs the root צמח three times in this verse, once as a noun in the preceding clause (צִמְחָ֔הּ, “its sprouts”) and twice as a Hiphil verb (תַצְמִ֑יחַ here and יַצְמִ֤יחַ in the next clause). See the third textual note on 42:9. The verb appears in 58:8 when Yahweh promises that healing will quickly sprout. In 4:2 Yahweh’s צֶ֣מַח, “Sprout, Branch,” is messianic, as it is also in Jer 23:5; 33:15; Zech 3:8; 6:12. Additional botanical motifs in Is 61:11 include כְגַנָּ֖ה, “as a garden,” and זֵרוּעֶ֣יהָ, “what has been sown in it.” (CC)

“Garden” (גַּנָּה here; גַּן in 51:3; 58:11) retrospectively alludes to Eden (Genesis 2; see Is 51:3) and prospectively to paradise restored (Is 58:11; Lk 23:43; Rev 2:7; 22:1–2, 14, 19). During the present era, the apostates pollute the “garden” by their idolatrous practices (e.g., Is 65:3; 66:17), but God intends it to be the place where bride and groom meet (גַּן or גַּנָּה in Song 4:12–5:1; 6:2, 11; 8:13) to celebrate the love that is “the flame of Yah” (Song 8:6). Thus the garden motif in Is 61:11 relates to the bridal motif in 61:10; 62:5. Eden was the site of the first wedding (Gen 2:24), and the eschatological “wedding” of the divine Bridegroom and his beautifully adorned bride, the church (Rev 19:7–8; 21:2), is celebrated in the greater Eden (Rev 22:1–2). (CC)

כֵּ֣ן ׀ אֲדֹנָ֣י יְהוִ֗ה יַצְמִ֤יחַ צְדָקָה֙ וּתְהִלָּ֔ה נֶ֖גֶד כָּל־הַגּוֹיִֽם׃—The adverb כֵּ֣ן, “thus, so,” introduces the soteriological point of the preceding creation comparisons. Instead of the “garden,” now it is אֲדֹנָ֣י יְהוִ֗ה, “the Lord Yahweh” (see the first textual note on 61:1), who “will cause to sprout up” (יַצְמִ֤יחַ, Hiphil of צָמַח, as in the preceding textual note). Moreover, the object here is not vegetation; the compound direct object is צְדָקָה֙ וּתְהִלָּ֔ה, “righteousness and praise,” and in that order, because justification by grace alone is the basis for rendering praise to God (e.g., Ex 15:2; Deut 10:21; Ps 7:18 [ET 7:17]; Is 25:1; 45:25; 60:18; Phil 1:11). Zion’s inhabitants will be צַדִּיקִ֔ים, “righteous” (60:21), and אֵילֵ֣י הַצֶּ֔דֶק, “oaks of righteousness” (61:3). “Righteousness” (צְדָקָה) is parallel with יֵשַׁע, “salvation” (61:10). Because “Salvation” (יְשׁוּעָה) is the name of the new Zion’s walls, “Praise” (תְּהִלָּה) is the name of her gates (60:18). Jerusalem will become the cause of “praise [תְּהִלָּ֖ה] in the earth [בָּאָֽרֶץ]” (62:7). (CC)

Characteristically, praise begins with Isaiah and the remnant he speaks for (Is 61:10) and then expands to include all the nations (Is 61:11). The same development appears in Psalm 22. David announces, “I will recount your name to my brothers” (Ps 22:23 [ET 22:22]). This is followed by “you who fear Yahweh, praise him” (Ps 22:24 [ET 22:23]). Finally David sings, “All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to Yahweh” (Ps 22:28 [ET 22:27]). (CC)

Isaiah frequently employs creation to make a point. Just as he likens the efficacy of God’s Word to rain and snow that bring forth food (Is 55:10–11), so in Is 61:11 he links the gift of righteousness with the earth’s ability to bring forth plant life. In both cases, the prophet is reflecting upon Gen 1:11–12; 2:9; 8:22. “In this way God’s activity in nature is the image and the guarantee of his activity in history.” (CC)

This confirms the pledge in Is 60:21 when Isaiah says that the remnant will possess the land forever and become a branch of Yahweh’s planting. This branch, though the smallest and least, will grow into a mighty nation (Is 60:22; cf. Mk 4:30–32). God’s people will be called “oaks of righteousness” and “a planting of Yahweh” (Is 61:3; cf. Jn 15:1–9). The gift of righteousness extends to coming generations (Is 61:9; cf. Mt 19:14; Acts 2:39; 2 Tim 3:15), and Yahweh is the foundation for this transformation (Is 61:8). It is his initiative and covenant faithfulness that makes new life happen. In the place of devastation the land will be restored and renewed, as will the persecuted remnant. (CC)

The righteousness that the Israelites were unable to attain for themselves (e.g., 48:1; 64:5 [ET 64:6]) will now spring up, blossom, and grow! “If nature is reliable, how much more so is the Creator of nature!” Yahweh asserts similar promises connecting righteousness to the Creator’s faithfulness in, e.g., Is 45:8; Psalms 72 and 85. Paul makes the message clearer. Quoting from Hab 2:4 the apostle writes: “For [the] righteousness of God is being revealed in it from faith[fulness] into faith, just as it stands written: ‘But the righteous person will live from faith’ ” (Rom 1:17). In subsequent chapters Paul makes the revelation of a righteous standing before the Father crystal clear (e.g., Rom 3:22–24; 4:25; 5:1). The climactic revelation of righteousness comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus: “The one not knowing sin, he made sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor 5:21). “Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress.” (CC)

The vision of a renewed garden appears in, e.g., Is 51:3; 58:11; Jer 31:12. The way into the eternal garden paradise (Rev 2:7; 22:1–2) is opened by Jesus. “Now in the place where he was crucified was a garden, and in the garden, a new tomb in which no one yet had been placed” (Jn 19:41). Wright adds:

The Spirit who brooded over the waters of creation at the beginning broods now over God’s world, ready to bring it bursting to springtime life. Mary goes to the tomb while it’s still dark and in the morning light meets Jesus in the garden. She thinks he is the gardener, as in one important sense he indeed is. This is the new creation. This is the new Genesis. (CC)

*sprout … grow.* Cf. 55:10. (CSB)

A GARDEN – The imagery in this verse echoes the botanical description at the end of verse 3, the Lord will make salvation and righteousness grow throughout the world like a garden, hinting of paradise restored. It is the Lord, both sovereign and gracious, who causes salvation to grow and encompass the nations of the world, foreshadowing the inclusion of gentiles in the church.

*righteousness and praise spring up.* See 45:8 and note. (CSB)

Joy is guaranteed just as the earth is guaranteed to cause seeds sown in it to sprout. If nature is reliable, how much more so is God? (TLSB)

The last verse of the chapter assured God’s OT readers that this would all come to pass. Just as the soil brings forth green grass and beautiful flowers, so surely will the “Sovereign Lord” make “righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.” The soil may look barren and lifeless, but after a time the seed sprouts and grows. For the Jews of Isaiah’s day, Jerusalem would be destroyed and God’s people led away captive. But, in God’s good time, they would return. Beyond that return, further into the future, the Messiah would come and proclaim the good news of the gospel. All the words of this chapter, as well as all the other prophecies, would then bloom into fulfillment. (PBC)

**Ch 61** The Servant/Messiah will come, bringing good news and everlasting joy to the redeemed of Israel. As brokenhearted souls, we must confess the sinful cause of our poverty and brokenness. Our dire straits are due to our sinful condition—a condition from which we cannot free ourselves. Jesus brings liberty for all held captive by sin and death. By His death and resurrection, He has delivered us from the shame of our sin, clothed us in His own righteousness, and made us to be His holy priests. • Lord God, teach us not to rely on the tattered fabric of our own works and accomplishments. Lead us to be comforted each day in Your robe of righteousness. Amen. (TLSB)

*Zion’s New Name*

**For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her righteousness shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. ﻿2﻿ The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. ﻿3﻿ You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God.**

**62 –** Proof of God’s willingness to send His enlightening Word into the souls of people again and again. The way to glory is again presented as leading through Israel’s release from the Babylonian exile to a salvation “proclaimed to the end of the earth” (v 11). The envisioned scene is a panoramic view of a new Jerusalem. Its walls circle the entire earth (Rm 10:12; Gal 3:28–29). (TLSB)

**62:1, 6** *I.* The Lord. (CSB)

**62:1** אֶחֱשֶׁ֔ה—The combination לְמַ֤עַן (עַן + מַ + לְ) here (and in the next clause) serves as a preposition, “for the sake of” (BDB, לְמַ֤עַן, 1 a, listed under the substantive מַעַן under the root ענה I). For צִיּוֹן֙, “Zion,” see the third textual note on 40:9. The Qal of חָשָׁה, “be silent, keep silence” (*DCH*, Qal), may convey the idea of silence (e.g., Ps 39:3 [39:2]; Neh 8:11), inactivity (Judg 18:9; 1 Ki 22:3), or delay (2 Ki 7:9). Yahweh’s “I will not be silent” means that he issues a worldwide public proclamation (62:11) and takes vigorous action starting now. In Isaiah 56–66, חָשָׁה is also in 57:11; 62:6; 64:11 (ET 64:12); 65:6. The negation with לֹא of a Qal imperfect of חָשָׁה recurs in 62:6 (לֹ֣א יֶחֱשׁ֑וּ). Again in 65:6 Yahweh declares לֹ֤א אֶחֱשֶׂה֙ in a context where he speeds his vengeance. (CC)

וּלְמַ֥עַן יְרוּשָׁלַ֖םִ לֹ֣א אֶשְׁק֑וֹט—“Jerusalem” (יְרוּשָׁלַםִ) appears for the first time here (62:1, 6, 7) in Isaiah 56–66. See the first textual note on 40:2. Later the prophet announces that in the future Jerusalem will be full of joy (65:18; 66:10). The negative לֹ֣א with the Qal imperfect אֶשְׁק֑וֹט (spelled plene, -וֹ-) is parallel to לֹ֣א אֶחֱשֶׁ֔ה in the preceding clause. שָׁקַט, “to **maintain a quiet attitude**” (*HALOT*, Qal, 3 a), is negated in the declaration that the tossing sea is not able to be quiet (57:20). Yahweh alone can hush the raging ocean (Jonah 1:15; Job 38:8–11; Mk 4:39); no one can silence him. He implements the salvation described and anticipated in chapters 60–62 (whose delay Isaiah laments in 63:7–64:11 [ET 63:7–64:12]). (CC)

עַד־יֵצֵ֤א כַ֙נֹּגַהְ֙ צִדְקָ֔הּ—How long will Yahweh speak and act on behalf of his people? The answer hinges on the preposition עַד, “until.” Until when? Until his righteousness, imputed to his remnant people, is evident for all to see, that is, until the second advent of the Messiah, Jesus our Lord (Rev 15:4; 19:8, 11). The twofold use of עַד in 62:7 functions in the same way. God’s resolve is permanent. He will not quit until his people’s circumstances are inverted and everything is made new. Acting on his behalf in 62:6 are שֹֽׁמְרִ֔ים, “watchmen,” who continually invoke Yahweh (הַמַּזְכִּרִים֙ אֶת־יְהוָ֔ה) and give him no rest until he acts (62:7). (CC)

The suffixed masculine noun צֶדֶק, “righteousness” (צִדְקָ֔הּ), is the subject of יֵצֵ֤א, the masculine imperfect of יָצָא, “go out/forth.” This verb can denote the emergence of the sun (e.g., Judg 5:31; Ps 19:6 [ET 19:5]). Instead of the sun itself, however, the simile with כַ֙נֹּגַהּ֙ here uses the preposition כְּ, “like,” and the noun נֹגַהּ, “brightness” (see the second textual note on 60:3). Here כַ֙נֹּגַהּ֙ has the generic definite article (indicated by the *patach* under the *kaph* [כַ-], literally, “like *the* brightness”), which is common in comparisons (Joüon, § 137 i). See also כְּלַפִּ֥יד in the next textual note. (CC)

“Her righteousness” (צִדְקָ֔הּ) in this clause is parallel to “her salvation” in the next clause (see וִישׁוּעָתָ֖הּ in the next textual note). The Suffering Servant is the “righteous” one (53:11; 57:1) who “justifies” or “declares righteous” (53:11) all who believe in him. He is the Divine Warrior who achieves “righteousness” through his victory (59:16–17; 63:1). Therefore all of his people are “righteous” (60:21) and “oaks of righteousness” (61:3); others can see their imputed “righteousness” (56:1; 58:8; 61:10–11; 62:1–2). For the interrelated Hebrew vocabulary of “righteous(ness)” and “salvation,” see the second and third textual notes on 56:1.

וִישׁוּעָתָ֖הּ כְּלַפִּ֥יד יִבְעָֽר׃—The preposition and the verb from the preceding clause, עַד־יֵצֵ֤א (“until … goes forth”), are implied here. The suffixed feminine noun וִישׁוּעָתָ֖הּ, “(and) her salvation,” is the subject of the implied verb “goes forth.” Parallel to כַ֙נֹּגַהּ֙ in the preceding clause is כְּלַפִּ֥יד, “like the/a torch,” with a generic definite article as is common in comparisons (Joüon, § 137 i). The noun לַפִּיד is new to Isaiah’s multifaceted light language in chapters 56–66 (for previous terminology, see, e.g., 58:9–10; 59:9; 60:1–3, 19–20). The translation above takes יִבְעָֽר as a relative clause, with the masculine noun לַפִּיד as the implied subject of the masculine (Qal imperfect) of בָּעַר, “burn”: “like a torch *that* burns.” (NASB and NKJV are similar.) Another alternative would be to consider the suffixed feminine noun וִישׁוּעָתָ֖הּ, “(and) her salvation,” as the subject of the masculine verb יִבְעָֽר, which would be possible (Joüon, § 150 k) and would result in the translation “(until) her salvation burns like a torch.” (CC)

The first two words of the chapter set the tone for everything that follows. Yahweh emphatically places “for the sake of Zion” (לְמַ֤עַן צִיּוֹן֙) first to accent his primary concern. Even though Yahweh may be silent for a time (57:11; 64:11 [ET 64:12]; contrast 65:6), he remains true to his Word. He has promised Zion’s inhabitants an eternal covenant (59:21; 61:8) and has pledged that the city will be radiant with light (cf. 60:1–3) and burn like a torch (62:1). He has even appointed “watchmen,” prophetic ministers who continually invoke Yahweh (62:6) and remind him of his promises (62:7). They are ordained to make Yahweh “be heard to the end of the earth” (62:11) by preaching (“say to Daughter Zion,” 62:11). They will speak of Yahweh’s excellences forever (cf. Ps 89:2 [ET 89:1]). (CC)

Prophets often intercede for Israel (e.g., Jer 7:16; 14:11; 15:1; Ezek 13:5; 22:30; Amos 7:1–6). God’s spokesmen are to keep knocking until he answers (cf. Mt 7:7 || Lk 11:9) and persevere until he responds (cf. Lk 18:1–8). (CC)

As pastors, the unwillingness to ever give up on Zion is our primary concern as well. In an age of hyper-individualism and an ungodly devotion to self, Isaiah calls us to labor and live “for the sake of Zion.” Paul puts it this way: “I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (2 Tim 2:10). The hymnwriter says:

I love Your Church, O God,

Your saints in ev’ry land,

Dear as the apple of Your eye

And graven on Your hand.…

Sure as Your truth shall last,

To Zion shall be giv’n

The brightest glories earth can yield

And brighter bliss of heav’n. (CC)

FOR ZION’S SAKE – Zion and Jerusalem refer to the church of God. It is the invisible church, the assembly of believers in Jesus Christ. (PBC)

In short, because of the ungodly I would keep silent, just as our people care nothing if no word would be preached. Yet among them there are certain remnants, and for their sakes, for those good people, I will speak, even though a number of reasons should dictate silence. So Jeremiah said (Jer. 4:19), “I will keep silent. But there is a burning fire in my bones.” He could not keep silent because his conscience was driving him. Thus although the prophet might not willingly do it, yet *for Zion’s sake and for Jerusalem’s sake*, that is, for the elect’s sake, (Luther)

*not keep silent … quiet.* See v. 6; 42:14; 57:11 and note; 64:12; 65:6; see also Ps 28:1. (CSB)

“I will not stop my intercession with God for Zion.” God will be inquired of by His people for the fulfillment of His glorious promises. It is in answer to their fervent prayers, that He appears for their salvation; and in this work of intercession, Zion’s watchmen are called to take the lead. Compare verse 6 and 7. (CB)

Isaiah has taken a lot of heat for his prophecy. He is probably weary by now. But he knows that Gods word does not fail and therefore goes on prophesying.

Isaiah 55:10-11 “ As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but it will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

The prophet seems altogether weary of his vocation because of the contempt and derision the world has for the Word. Yet the prophet resolves to carry out his proclamation, knowing the Lord’s Word will not fail (Is. 55:10-11). In like manner, Yahweh, who neither slumbers nor sleeps (Ps. 121:3), will continue His saving work for the sake of His people. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

*righteousness … salvation.* See 46:13 and note. (CSB)

The Hebrew word for vindication is צְדָקָה, that is, “I will preach until Christ Himself and His Gospel come.” He is the Christ and our salvation. צְדָקָה means the personal and private righteousness which we also practice toward others, and it is also God’s redemption and righteousness. It is as if He were saying: “The righteousness by which the world will be enlightened will arise, and for its sake I will preach to those who look forward to the promises.” Thus to the end of the world we preach to those who await the coming of Christ, but we preach not at all to the others, the ungodly. *Righteousness* is our redemption and the forgiveness of sins. *Salvation* is victory itself. Since the righteous are always troubled by death and sin, it is fitting that the Deliverer be with them. (Luther)

*dawn.* Cf. 58:8. (CSB)

Isaiah foresaw a time when Israel’s situation would demand divine interference. Such periods, demanding intervention come repeatedly, even down to the very end when the consummation of all things comes to pass. (Leupold)

LIKE A BLAZING TORCH – The prophet describes the rise of the Gospel as torches and rays of the sun, although (he says) there is no light in my. time. The light lies in the ashes, but it will be kindled. How he would have loved to see it! (Luther)

In the darkness of Satan’s dungeon, the eyes of his captives do not see “the glory of the Lord” (60:1–2; cf 2Co 3:14–16). His Word gives light and the vision of faith, enabling the blind prisoners to see the door to liberty unbarred. (TLSB)

**62:2** וְרָא֤וּ גוֹיִם֙ צִדְקֵ֔ךְ וְכָל־מְלָכִ֖ים כְּבוֹדֵ֑ךְ—The preceding verse refers to Zion with third feminine singular forms. Now she is addressed in the second feminine singular with three pronominal suffixes, each -ךְ, “you”: צִדְקֵ֔ךְ, “your righteousness”; כְּבוֹדֵ֑ךְ, “your glory”; לָךְ֙, “to you.” Such a change in person is not unusual (GKC, § 144 p). The parallel plural nouns that are the subjects in these two clauses, “nations” (גוֹיִם֙) and “kings” (מְלָכִ֖ים), are parallel also in, e.g., Is 52:15; 60:3, 11, 16; Pss 72:11; 102:16 (ET 102:15). The word “nations” (גּוֹיִם) appears nine times in chapters 60–62; this is its last occurrence in the section. The verb that begins the first clause, וְרָא֤וּ, “and they will see,” is implied in the second clause. (CC)

“Righteousness” (צֶדֶק) and “glory” (כָּבוֹד) form a word pair also in 58:8. “Glory” (כָּבוֹד) in this context signifies the divine honor and splendor often ascribed to Yahweh (e.g., Is 42:8, 12; 48:11; Pss 29:1, 2; 145:11) and which he shares with the redeemed (e.g., Is 4:5; 11:10; 43:7; 60:1, 2). Isaiah also envisions foreign nations beholding Yahweh’s glory in, e.g., 40:5; 58:8; 59:19; 60:2; see further the first textual note on 40:5. (CC)

וְקֹ֤רָא לָךְ֙ שֵׁ֣ם חָדָ֔שׁ—Words related to proclamation are frequent in Isaiah 62. They include קָרָא, “call” (62:2, 4, 12); אָמַר, “speak” (62:4 [twice], 11); and the Hiphil of שָׁמַע, “make heard” (62:11). Antonyms include חָשָׁה, “be silent” (62:1, 6), and שָׁקַט, “be quiet” (62:1). As such, this chapter resembles 40:1–11 with its emphasis on speaking. (CC)

The verb קֹרָא, “be called,” appears also in 58:12; 61:3; for a discussion of its form (Qal passive perfect), see the third textual note on 58:12. The suffixed preposition לָךְ֙, “to you” (feminine singular), indicates the person (Zion) to whom the name is given. The theme of (re) naming using the idiom of קָרָא with לְ appears in 58:12; 60:14; 61:3; 62:2, 4, 12; 65:15 (cf. 61:6). Here the verb’s subject is the adjectival phrase שֵׁ֣ם חָדָ֔שׁ, “a new name.” In Genesis 1 when Yahweh “calls” or names something (קָרָא, Gen 1:5, 8, 10), this is an act of creative power and an exercise of ownership. Being called a new name implies conferral of a new status (e.g., Gen 17:5, 15–16; 32:28–29 [ET 32:27–28]). As noted above new names are a frequent motif in Isaiah 56–66, as well as in Hos 2:1 (ET 1:10); 2:25 (ET 2:23); cf. Rev 3:12. See the second textual note and the commentary on 56:5; the third textual note on 58:12; and the third textual note on 60:14. Other examples include Pharaoh Neco changing Eliakim’s name to Jehoiakim (2 Ki 23:34) and Nebuchadnezzar replacing Mattaniah’s name with Zedekiah (2 Ki 24:17); in both cases, the name change signifies that the Judean kings are no longer autonomous but are rather beholden to new political authorities. During the exile, Daniel’s name was changed to Belteshazzar, Hananiah’s to Shadrach, Mishael’s to Meshach, and Azariah’s to Abednego (Dan 1:7). (CC)

אֲשֶׁ֛ר פִּ֥י יְהוָ֖ה יִקֳּבֶֽנּוּ׃—The syntax of this relative clause, with a redundant resumptive suffix on the verb, is, literally, “which the mouth of Yahweh will designate it.” In Isaiah the construct phrase פִּי יהוה, “the mouth of Yahweh,” is most often connected to Gospel promises (40:5; 58:14). The verb יִקֳּבֶֽנּוּ is the Qal imperfect of נָקַב, “designate” a name (*DCH*, נקב I, Qal, 2), with a third masculine singular suffix referring back to the masculine noun שֵׁם, “name.” This is the only OT instance where the Qal of נָקַב refers to the designation of a name in a positive sense; twice in Lev 24:16 (also Lev 24:11) it refers to the designation or invocation of Yahweh’s שֵׁם, “name,” in vain, and so there it is usually rendered as “blaspheme” (cf. the neutral idiom with the Niphal of נָקַב and the plural of שֵׁם in, e.g., Num 1:17; Ezra 8:20; 1 Chr 16:41). Elsewhere in the OT the Qal of נָקַב means “pierce, bore” (BDB, 1, citing, e.g., 2 Ki 12:10 [ET 12:9]; Is 36:6). (CC)

This verse closely resembles 60:2 (cf. also 2:2; 4:5). The attractive qualities given to exalted Zion foreshadow these words of Jesus: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all to myself” (Jn 12:32). Commenting on Is 62:2, Jerome writes: “**Kings will see the glory** through which he was glorified on the cross, and all their kingdoms will be subject to his authority.” (CC)

“And a new name will be called to you” (62:2). Yahweh also mentions the topic of Zion’s new names in 60:14, 18, but in 62:2 it is heightened. David Andersen sheds light on renaming in the OT. Cities are given a new name after being conquered (e.g., Num 32:41–42; Judg 18:29; 2 Sam 5:6–7) or when they are rebuilt (Num 32:37–38). People are sometimes renamed to signify that they are under a new authority (e.g., Gen 41:45; Dan 1:7) or to confirm covenant promises (e.g., Gen 17:5, 15; 32:28–29 [ET 32:27–28]). In marriage a woman takes on her husband’s name (e.g., Is 4:1). (CC)

Zion’s new names are stated in 62:4: “My Delight Is in Her” (*Ḥephzibah*) and “Married” (*Beʿulah*). God’s people will also be called “holy people” and “Yahweh’s redeemed ones,” as well as “Sought After” and “A City Not Abandoned” (62:12). This renaming signifies a new relationship between Yahweh, his people, and his land. Jesus promises a new name to those in the church in Pergamum who overcome (Rev 2:17; cf. Rev 3:12). In the liturgy for Holy Baptism, the pastor asks how the baptizand is to be named, and the response is considered the person’s “Christian name.” Commenting on God’s gift of a new name in Is 62:2, Luther writes: “The Christian is proud of this name even in the most severe persecutions. He is properly called Christian because he simply depends on Christ without all merits, his own righteousness, and without all works.” (CC)

*nations will see … glory.* See 52:10; see also 40:5; 60:3 and notes. (CSB)

*your.* Jerusalem’s (see vv. 1, 6). (CSB)

RIGHTEOUSNESS – צֶדֶק, “righteousness,” that is, this righteousness and glory shall appear so that all nations may see it. We have taken צֶדֶק to mean political righteousness, the government of pastors, preachers, and rulers, in whose office the outward government consists. Regulations will best be established in a kingdom. In this way all the kings may see the church justified and equipped with the finest regulations. (Luther)

Zion becomes “the city of righteousness” (1:26) only by “the mouth of the Lord.” (TLSB)

*new name.* To reflect a new status (see vv. 4, 12; see also 1:26; 60:14; Ge 32:28 and notes). (CSB)

A mark of God’s blessings throughout Scripture (65:15; Gn 17:3–8; 32:28) that demonstrates a change in status or character. (TLSB)

When things were not working the way God had laid them out he would make new covenants. He would also rename some people like Abraham, Sarah and Jacob. He will do that on the last day with a new heaven and earth. This meant that they would have a new status.

Like that mentioned in verse 4, denoting her new and glorious character and condition. Compare Rev. 2:17 (CB)

The new situation that shall therefore develop will be so radically different that the old vocabulary will no longer be adequate. A new name must be employed to cover the new situation. That name is not given at this point. It is merely indicated that it will be a matter of divine choice. There are other passages in Scripture in which the new-name concept appears (Is 1:26; Jer. 3:17; 33:16; Ez. 48:35). These various new names do not rule out one another. They merely supplement each other. Each new name expresses some valid aspect of God’s dealings with His people. Even the NT deals with this concept (cf. Rev. 2:17; 3:12). (Leupold)

These are pure promises. “From now on you shall have a different name.” Which is that name? Before this they were called Zion, Jerusalem, the people of Israel, the seed of Abraham, whose are the covenant, the fathers, and the promise. These were their physical names which have been done away in the New Testament. You are not a Christian because you have Moses, the Law, the promises, and Christ in a physical sense. But this is our name: He who has come to faith in Christ on the basis of the Word. This is the new name, derived from Christ and the Son of God, and it is not carnal but spiritual. The Christian is proud of this name even in the most severe persecutions. He is properly called Christian because he simply depends on Christ without all merits, his own righteousness, and without all works. It is not because of these that he is called Christian. But here his heart and his boasting rest in Christ’s righteousness, salvation, and redemption. (Luther)

**62:3** יְהוָ֑ה—The construct phrase עֲטֶרֶת תִּפְאֶרֶת, “crown of beauty,” also appears in Jer 13:18; Ezek 16:12; 23:42; Prov 4:9; 16:31. It signifies royalty in Jer 13:18. In a metaphorical marriage context, Yahweh adorns his “wife” Jerusalem with it in Ezek 16:12 (cf. Ezek 23:42), while in Prov 4:9 Lady Wisdom bestows it on any man who learns divine instruction. Prov 12:4 states: “A good wife is the crown of her husband” (עֲטֶ֣רֶת בַּעְלָ֑הּ). Zion’s beautiful crown, then, means she is no longer an abandoned wife but is reunited with her husband, Yahweh, and lives under his protection and love. This clause, therefore, relates to the imagery of Yahweh’s “marriage” to his people in, e.g., Is 49:18; 54:6; 60:15; 61:10; 62:3–5. (CC)

וּצְנִ֥יף מְלוּכָ֖ה בְּכַף־אֱלֹהָֽיִךְ׃—The construct phrase (following the Qere) צְנִ֥יף מְלוּכָ֖ה, “turban of royalty,” is parallel to עֲטֶ֥רֶת תִּפְאֶ֖רֶת (see the preceding textual note). The noun צָנִיף can refer to the high priest’s “turban” (Zech 3:5 [twice]), as does its cognate מִצְנֶפֶת (e.g., Ex 28:4, 37, 39; Lev 16:4). צָנִיף can also represent justice (Job 29:14) or be worn by wealthy women of Zion (Is 3:23). The Kethib צנוף is the reading of 1QIsaa. Depending on how it is to be vocalized, the Kethib could be a synonymous noun or perhaps a Qal passive participle (צָנוּף) or Qal infinitive absolute צָנוֹף) of צָנַף, “to wrap, wind (a turban).” The basic meaning of the clause probably would remain unchanged. The LXX (διάδημα) and Vulgate (*diadema*) both translate with a noun for “diadem.” (CC)

In the ancient Near East gods are frequently depicted with crowns on their heads. For example, Marduk has “mighty horns, a lordly crown befitting a god, full of splendor, of lapis lazuli and gold.”11 Another text addressed to Marduk says: “Borsippa [a city south of Babylon] is your crown.” (CC)

It is not strange, then, for Zion to be Yahweh’s crown. What is odd, though, is that both lines of 62:3 depict the crown and diadem as being in Yahweh’s *hand* rather than on his head. Perhaps this recalls the earlier promise that Zion is engraved upon Yahweh’s hand (49:16). Koole writes: “The best exegesis is probably that God holds this diadem in his hand so that it can be beheld.” Moreover, in light of the wedding garland in 61:10 and the explicit reference to marriage in 62:5, the crown and diadem may convey the double idea that Zion is both a queen city as well as Yahweh’s metaphorical wife. Paul uses the metaphor that the Christian congregations he founded are his “joy” (χαρά) and “crown” (στέφανος), which he will proudly wear at Christ’s return (Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19). Other passages refer to the “crown” of “righteousness,” “life,” or “glory” that God, on the Last Day, will award Christians who persevere (2 Tim 4:8; James 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10; cf. Rev 3:11). (CC)

Because Ephraim was a drunk who could not leave the bottle behind, the Northern Kingdom’s majestic wreath (עֲטֶרֶת גֵּאוּת, 28:1, 3) faded like a flower, was stepped on and smashed. Add to this the rocky relationship and broken family systems witnessed in 57:3–13a and we wonder, “Is God finished with this household? Will this family forever disappear?” (CC)

No! Isaiah maintains that the day is coming when Yahweh, the God of armies, will be the beautiful crown (עֲטֶ֣רֶת צְבִ֔י) for “the remnant of his people” (28:5), which would include believers gathered from what was Ephraim (cf. “Israel’s dispersed ones,” 56:8). And because he is beautiful, his bride will be beautiful as well. Zion’s day arrives in 62:3, where she is called a beautiful crown and a royal diadem in Yahweh’s hand. But why does he hold the crown instead of placing it on his beloved’s head? Yahweh has the crown in his hand so that he can gaze upon its beauty from several angles. His people are valuable in his hands and precious in his eyes (43:4). In fact, he declares, “Upon the palms of [my] hands I inscribed you” (49:16). This Bridegroom has overwhelming delight in his bride (62:5), so much so that no one will be able to snatch her out of his strong hand (Jn 10:29). (CC)

*crown of splendor.* In 28:5 the Lord is a “glorious crown” for his people (cf. Zec 9:16). (CSB)

Royal scepters may have been topped with a crown. *royal diadem*. A crown. (TLSB)

These figures denote her excellence and dignity. (CB)

Since the Lord holds the church, pictured as this crown, in His hand, the church is His work of art – His creation, which He desires to display to the world. God works as the artist who has done everything to make His church beautiful. He invested time in fulfilling the prophecies made throughout the pages of Scripture. He has invested the holy precious blood of His one and only Son to wash away the sins of His church. He has worked through the gospel to call people and has made them His own. Now He continues to give the church the power to proclaim the sweet message of forgiveness and eternal life. God wants to display the workmanship and effort He has invested in His church. (PBC)

This is a Hebraism. *Crown of beauty*, the diadem of kings, taken from the crown of Aaron. A diadem is a beautiful red hat with a crown in its lowest part. Summary: “You will have a glorious kingdom.” (Luther)

The crown was the most beautiful and glorious ornament available at the time. God’s people (now the church) are pictured as the Lord’s masterpiece. He holds it up for all to see and admire, an unnerving thought were it not for His love covering a multitude of sins! (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 11, Part 1)

IN THE HAND OF YOUR GOD – Under His safe-keeping. (CB)

The Lord is inspecting it, looking at it from different angles. The work of His hands contributes to His glory. (Leupold)

This is the greatest fact, that this kingdom is altogether in Christ’s hand. It is He who rules over us. Yet according to outward appearance it looks no different from filth and mud in the devil’s hand. According to faith, however, the crown is not in the hand of Caesar but *in the hand of the Lord*. (Luther)

EPISTLE

Galatians 4:4-7

**﻿4﻿ But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, ﻿5﻿ to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. ﻿6﻿ Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *“Abba*,Father.” ﻿7﻿ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.**

**4:4–5** *But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that he might redeem those under the Law and in order that we might receive the adoption as sons.* The roughly chiastic structure of the verses serves to contrast God’s Son/sons with those under the Law in need of redemption:

A God sent forth his Son

B Born under the Law

B′ To redeem those under the Law

A′ That we might receive the adoption as sons (CC)

Paul does not develop the phrase “born of a woman” (γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός) elsewhere in the letter, and “the fullness of time” (τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου) is unique in the Pauline corpus. Some scholars have therefore contended that these two phrases, the chiastic pattern of the verse, and the first person usage (“we”) are evidence that Paul is adapting a Jewish-Christian “sending” formula. These scholars hypothesize that Paul draws on the “sending” formula also in Rom 8:3–4: God sent his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to resolve the requirement of the Law. Like Gal 4:4–5; Rom 8:3–4 speaks of God’s sending, of Christ’s sharing human existence, and of the plight under the Law. The two passages, however, differ considerably in wording. The hypothesis that pre-Pauline material stands behind either Gal 4:4–5 or Rom 8:3–4 is questionable. The phrases “the fullness of time” and “born of a woman” need not reflect pre-Pauline Jewish Christianity. Paul admonishes the Galatians at the beginning of the letter to recognize that they are in the midst of a new age inaugurated by Christ’s saving work (1:4), thus “the fullness of time.” “Born of a woman” is a common expression in Greek literature for sharing in humanity. Paul is stressing at this point Jesus’ identification with the human condition. (CC)

In developing their hypotheses of a Jewish-Christian “sending” formula, some commentators have speculated that the first Christians were connecting Jesus with the figure of Wisdom. Perhaps standing behind Gal 4:4 is Wis Sol 9:10: “Send her forth from the holy heavens, and from the throne of your glory send her” (NRSV). Perhaps standing behind Gal 4:6 is Wis Sol 9:17: “Who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?” (NRSV).58 Another scholar abandoned any reference to pre-Pauline Jewish-Christian traditions and attributed the language of “sending” to Paul himself as he identified the Son seen on the Damascus road with the figure of Wisdom. These suggestions are unlikely as well. Wisdom of Solomon 9 does not identify Wisdom with the “Son of God,” and the sending of Wisdom is a response to Solomon’s need for guidance and not to the plight of the people as a whole. The sending of Wisdom may parallel the sending of the Son *or* the Spirit but hardly the twofold sending of both the Son *and* the Spirit in Gal 4:4–6. Still another scholar linked a potential “sending” formula not with Wisdom but rather with the Gospel traditions. In Mk 12:1–12, especially Mk 12:6–7, the father “sent” his son to check on the vineyard tenants even as God “sent” his own Son in Gal 4:4. As these varied hypotheses demonstrate, the notion that Paul is citing traditional material in 4:4–5 is unlikely and incapable of proof. Whether traditional or not, these verses express Paul’s own thinking. (CC)

The debate over pre-Pauline traditions behind 4:4–5 raises yet another question: the referent of the first person pronouns and verbs. Is Paul distinguishing “we” Jewish Christians by his first person pronouns and verbs in 4:3, 5 from “you” gentile Christians in 4:6? Paul never actually *says* that the “we” group in 4:3, 5 consists of Jewish Christians, and 4:5–6 is even more problematic for the proposal. In 4:5b “*we*” receive adoption as sons, and yet 4:6a concludes on the basis of that very adoption of the “we” group: “Now because *you* are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into *our* hearts.” *The “you” and “we” groups must be the same, or Paul’s line of reasoning would collapse.* One ardent advocate of the distinction between “we” Jewish Christians and “you” gentile Galatians has therefore resorted to the desperate measure of emending the Greek text of 4:6 from “our hearts” to “your hearts” in order to match “you are sons” in 4:6. This proposed textual emendation is based on meager external evidence. The first person “our hearts” is the more difficult reading and therefore more likely the original reading, since scribes would have wanted to eliminate the possibly jarring contrast between the first person and second person pronouns and verbs (“we” in 4:5; “you” and then “our” in 4:6). Certainly God did not send his Son in 4:5 in order that “we” *Jews* might receive the “adoption as sons.” That is a privilege that Paul grants Israel *before* Christ’s coming (see Rom 9:4)! The logic of Gal 4:6–7 makes little or no sense if the pronouns and verbs are referring to differing groups: “And because you [gentiles] are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into *our* hearts [as Jewish Christians] … so that you [gentiles] are no longer a slave but a son.” Jewish Christians do not depend for their reception of the Spirit on the gentiles’ adoption as sons. Paul is describing in 4:4–7 the situation of believers in general, regardless of whether they are Jewish or gentile. The Son’s work of redemption in 4:4–5a leads to the reception of sonship in 4:5b, which, in turn, leads to the reception of the Spirit by the same group (4:6): Since *you* are sons, God sent forth the Spirit into *our* hearts. (CC)

Paul begins 4:4 with “but when the fullness of time came” (ὅτε δὲ ἦλθεν τὸ πλήρωμα τοῦ χρόνου). The apostle does not say anything here about conditions in the Roman Empire. He does not say anything about a common government, a single language of commerce, a network of roads, or protected sea lanes. Paul’s categories here, as elsewhere in the letter, remain apocalyptic. Galatians opens with reference to “the present evil age” (1:4) and closes with the dawning of a “new creation” (6:15). The Scriptures frequently refer to God’s appointed purpose being brought to fruition at the appointed time (Dan 8:19 [cf. Dan 11:35]; 1QpHab VII.2; Mk 1:15; 13:32; Lk 21:24; Acts 1:7; 3:21; Eph 1:10). The rival teachers have completely missed *what time it is*! Substantives in Greek that end in -μα, as does πλήρωμα, “fullness,” tend to stress completed action. God has a plan for this world, and that plan is now coming to completion with the sending of the Son! The coming of the Son with his powerful Spirit has inaugurated a new age in the history of humanity with the full benefits of sonship. Paul, along with *all* Christ’s own (!), lives at a climactic moment. Two thousand years of intervening history do not change the comforting fact that believers enjoy God’s historic, completed work. (CC)

The reference to God’s “Son” in 4:4 comes amidst a cluster of terms centered on family and inheritance. Thanks to the rivals’ influence, the Galatians are coveting a sonship that would relate them to Abraham, the father of God’s historic people (3:6). Paul speaks of something even better. He grants that they have indeed become sons of Abraham, even if not in the manner that they had supposed. They are sons of Abraham not through Moses’ Law but rather through Christ, the sole, legitimate Seed of Abraham and the rightful recipient of the Abrahamic promises (3:16–18, 29). Christ is not only the sole, proper heir of the Abrahamic promises, but he is also the sole, proper “Son” of God (1:16). Since believers are “in Christ” (3:28) and God has sent Christ’s Spirit “into” them (4:6), they become *fellow* heirs. The Galatians are striving for Abrahamic sonship when they have already become sons of God with an incredible new identity (3:26)! (CC)

In the fullness of time, “God sent forth his Son, *born of a woman*” (ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός). Perhaps the sending of the Son is no different than God’s “sending” of human prophets and implies nothing with respect to Christ’s preexistence (Judg 6:8; Jer 7:25; Ezek 2:3; Hag 1:12; Paul in Acts 22:21). Indeed, Paul narrates his own call/sending with the language of the prophets (Gal 1:15–16; cf. Is 49:1, 5; Jer 1:5). The phrase “born of a woman” is a common way of expressing human existence in the OT, Second Temple Judaism, and even early Christianity (Job 14:1; 15:14; 25:4; Mt 11:11 || Lk 7:28; 1QS XI.21; Sirach 10:18; Josephus, *Ant.* 7.1.4 § 21; 16.11.5 § 382). Paul is probably not, then, referring in 4:4 to a virgin birth. The Son simply became thoroughly, fully human. The late-first-and second-century Docetists who denied Christ’s humanity would have done well to reconsider 4:4–5. (CC)

The question still remains whether Paul is implying the birth of a preexistent, divine being. In support of this conclusion, first, if “born of a woman” were only emphasizing Jesus’ humanity, then the phrase would have been unnecessary in the Galatian context since none of the parties would have disputed Jesus’ humanity. Paul does not elaborate on Jesus’ genuine humanity elsewhere in the letter. The phrase would be extraneous were it not signaling Jesus’ preexistence. Second, even as God sent forth the Spirit in 4:6, God sent forth the Son in 4:4. Even as the Spirit is preexistent, so also the Son is preexistent. Third, although Paul was sent by God in a manner comparable with the sending of the prophets (Gal 1:15–16; cf. Jn 17:18), he is not God’s Son. Unlike the prophets or apostles, the Son comes for a purpose that is cosmic in scope: he delivers people from “the present evil age” (1:4). Jesus’ mission to “the present evil age” suggests that he stands *beyond* this age and has invaded it from without in order to rescue and redeem humanity. Fourth, the order of Paul’s verbs in 4:4 (“sent … born … born”) has the Son’s sending *before* his birth, thereby implying his preexistence. Fifth and finally, Paul elsewhere in his letters expresses a very high view of Christ as God (Rom 9:5; 1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:6 [cf. Phil 2:5–11: a preexistent person!]; Col 2:9). The apostle also describes Christ in the language of preexistent Wisdom in 1 Cor 1:24, 30; 8:6b; 10:4; cf. Col 1:15–17. Precisely because the Son is a powerful, preexistent, otherworldly figure, he can deliver those who are under the potent, enslaving Law. (CC)

In Gal 4:4–5 God sent forth his Son under the Law “in order that he might redeem those under the Law.” Apart from 3:13 and 4:5, the verb “redeem” (ἐξαγοράζω) is used elsewhere in the Pauline corpus only in Eph 5:16 and Col 4:5 in the difficult phrase “redeeming the time.” The only use of “redeem” in a sense similar to Gal 4:5 is in Diodorus Siculus 15.7: Some philosophers reportedly came together and redeemed Plato (ἐξηγόρασαν τοῦτον) to freedom after his sale on the slave market. Paul treats existence “under the Law” (Gal 4:5) as a form of slavery comparable to being “under the elements of the world” (4:3). The metaphor of slavery in this context probably suggested to Paul the verb “to redeem.” A Jew such as the historian Josephus could write: “[God] made the Law the standard and rule, that we might live under it as under a father and master” (*Ag. Ap.* 2.17 § 174; Thackeray, LCL).82 Paul does not view such subjection so favorably. Earlier in 3:10–12 Paul explains that God’s Law demands obedience, and human beings fail to obey God’s Law in the perfect manner that befits the God who gave it. The Law inevitably brings a curse upon its adherents. In 3:13 Paul turns to God’s solution for humanity’s plight under the Law in Christ’s redemption. The apostle rejects as burdensome, oppressive, and impossible the futile attempt to avoid the curse through a proper obedience. One must die to the Law in Christ (2:19). Christ had to be “under the Law” (4:4) in order to redeem those “under the Law” (4:5). Luther’s advice with respect to justification still stands: “Law, I shall not listen to you, because you have an evil voice. Besides, the time has now fully come. Therefore I am free. I shall no longer endure your domination” (AE 26:365). God in Christ has delivered humanity from the Law’s burdensome, Egypt-like “yoke of slavery” (5:1; cf. Lev 26:13; Is 10:24–27). The mark of maturity for a Jewish teacher, Mosaic Law observance (e.g., Rom 2:20), has become ironically a mark of immaturity! (CC)

In Gal 4:4–5 Paul says that God has sent forth his Son not only to redeem those under the Law but also “in order that we might receive the adoption as sons.” In 3:26 Paul climactically declares the Galatians to be “sons of God in Christ,” and in 4:6 he again emphatically proclaims them God’s adopted “sons.” In the Greco-Roman world, adoption could grant even a slave the full rights and privileges of a natural son (thus 4:7). Although the Jews did not generally practice adoption in Paul’s day (υἱοθεσία, Gal 4:5; cf. also Rom 9:4), the apostle is drawing on a widely recognized custom as a way of explaining the benefits of Christ’s saving work. (CC)

Paul associates “adoption as sons” (υἱοθεσία) with the “Spirit.” In Rom 8:15, for instance, he refers to “the *Spirit* of adoption (as sons).” The parallels between Gal 4:5–7 and Rom 8:15–17 are striking:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Galatians 4:5–7** | **Romans 8:15–17** |
| 5… in order that he might redeem (from slavery) those under the Law | 15You received not the spirit of slavery … |
| and in order that we might receive the adoption as sons. | but you received the Spirit of adoption as sons, |
| 6God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who cries, “Abba, Father,” | by whom we cry, “Abba, Father.” |
| because you are sons. | 16The Spirit himself bears witness … that we are children of God, |
| 7… and since a son, also an heir through God. | 17and if children, then heirs of God. |

Paul likewise connects “adoption as sons” (Gal 4:5) with the Spirit in Galatians as the logic of 4:6–7 spells out. (CC)

**4:4** γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός (“born of a woman”)—In common speech there appears to have been some confusion between the verbs γενόμενον (from γίνομαι, “to become”) and γεννώμενον (from γεννάω, “to beget”). On γίνομαι as the quasi-passive of γεννάω, see 1 Esdras 4:15–16; Tobit 8:6; Wis Sol 7:3; Sirach 44:9; Jn 8:58. (CC)

*time had fully come.* The time “set” (v. 2) by God for his children to become adult sons and heirs. (CSB)

Pictures a container steadily being filled with the passage of time until full. Corresponds to “date set by his father” in V. 2. Thus at a specific and appropriate time in human history, God acted to fulfill His eternal purpose. (TLSB)

"But when the time had fully come" simply means "the full time." "When God wills it." Leave it at that. (Buls)

At God’s perfect time, maturity came, brought by the Son of God Himself. Jesus was born as a Jew so He might be subject to all the ceremonial laws as well as the moral law, the Ten Commandments. Having kept them perfectly, and also suffering for us the penalty of sin (death), He “redeemed us – bought us back from the curse and power of the Law, so that we might have full adoption into the family with all the rights of sons. (LL)

Some think of this as when the Jews had finally reached a time in a certain maturity. This is not so because if Judaism was ever at a low spiritual ebb, it was so when the fullness of the time arrived. We can enumerate some of the providences which helped to open the way for the gospel such as the vast extent of the Roman Empire, the spread of the Greek language, the facility of travel throughout the empire, the extensive diaspora of the Jews, its many proselytes from Gentilism, etc. All of these aided the spread of the gospel. What God saw and regarded as the fullness of the time in the spiritual condition of men, barbarian as well as Greek, is to difficult for us to predicate because His thoughts and judgments are too unsearchable for us. (Lenski)

Romans 5:6, “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

2 Peter 3:8,9, “But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ﻿9﻿ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

Romans 11:33-36, “﻿33﻿ Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! ﻿34﻿ “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?”﻿﻿35﻿ “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?”﻿﻿36﻿ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”

*God sent his Son.* See Jn 1:14; 3:16; Ro 1:1–6; 1Jn 4:14. (CSB)

Then God “commissioned forth His Son.” This means that the Son went out on His commission not only “from” God but “out from” God. John says that He was with God (John 1:1) and was God and that He became flesh (John 1:14). (Lenski)

"Sent" means "to send out with a commission." (Buls)

"His Son" denotes the divinity of Jesus. He pre-existence is implied. (Buls)

*born of a woman.* Showing that Christ was truly human. (CSB)

The preexistent Son of God (1 Co 8:6; Php 2:6-11; Col 1:15-16) became fully human. Paul nowhere mentioned Mary by name; Jesus was the focus of his theology and devotion. (TLSB)

Does "born of a woman" denote the virgin birth? Luther and others say it does. (Buls)

It denotes more than the separation from the womb, it includes the entire human nature of the Son as this was derived from His human mother. (Lenski)

*born under law.* Subject to the Jewish law. (CSB)

Jesus was born a Jew and under obligation to keep the Law of Moses (see FC SD III 58). Consistent with Paul’s imagery, Jesus entered our prison (3:23). (TLSB)

"Born under the Law" shows the humanity of Jesus. These words lead us right into the vicarious atonement. (Buls)

Luther: The Law did everything to Jesus that it did to us. It accused us and terrified us. It subjected us to sin, death, and the wrath of God; and it condemned us with its judgment . . . . It accused Him of blasphemy and sedition; it found Him guilty in the sight of God of all the sins of the entire world; finally it so saddened and frightened Him that He sweat blood, Luke 22:44; and eventually it sentenced Him to death, even death on a cross, Philippians 2:8. (Buls)

Space does not allow further beautiful quotes from Luther. It is time well spent for the reader to peruse his  *Commentary on Galatians.* (Buls)

The Son “came to be under law” in general and not only under the pure code of Moses, but by virtue of this code under all that mankind had left of God’s law as written in their hearts. (Lenski)

**4:5** υἱοθεσίαν (“adoption as sons”)—Although daughters were sometimes adopted in the Greco-Roman world—and this may be reflected in Paul’s movement from (masculine) “sons” to (neuter, inclusive) “children” in Rom 8:14, 16—daughters could not carry on a family line in first-century patriarchal society, and their adoptions are narrated with different terminology. Males were the only ones described by the ancients as enjoying “adoption as sons.” Paul also prefers “sons” (υἱοί, e.g., Gal 3:26; 4:6) over “children” (τέκνα, in Galatians only in 4:19–31) because the adoption of baptized believers as sons is dependent upon and inextricably tied to Jesus as God’s “Son” (υἱός, 4:4; also, e.g., 1:16; 2:20), the proper heir. (CC)

Here are two purpose phrases. Compare this with Galatians 3:14 where we also have two purpose phrases. In fact there is a close relationship between 3:10-14 and 4:1-7. Read the two side by side and note how the vicarious, universal atonement is so prominent in both passages. (Buls)

Compare the two clauses in 3:14 and 4:5. (Buls)

1. In each case the *first clause* denotes what we call "objective justification."
2. And in each case the  *second clause*  denotes what we call "subjective justification." (Buls)

REDEEM THOSE UNDER LAW – It is extremely important, therefore, to keep in view and always to consider this statement, so delightful and full of comfort, as well as others like it which define Christ properly and accurately; for then throughout our life, in every danger, in the confession of our faith in the presence of tyrants, and in the hour of death, we can declare with a sure and steady confidence: “Law, you have no jurisdiction over me; therefore you are accusing and condemning me in vain. For I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom the Father sent into the world to redeem us miserable sinners who are oppressed by the tyranny of the Law. He poured out His life and spent it lavishly for me. When I feel your terrors and threats, O Law, I immerse my conscience in the wounds, the blood, the death, the resurrection, and the victory of Christ. Beyond Him I do not want to see or hear anything at all.” (Luther)

The first pair of clauses: Why did Christ redeem us from the curse of the Law? "In order that Abraham's blessing (the Gospel) in Christ Jesus might come to the nations (3:14)." Why did God send His Son into the world? "In order that he might redeem those under the Law (the cursed, all men) 4:5." This is clearly objective justification. (Buls)

The Jews. (TLSB)

WE – Both Jewish and Gentile believers (cf 3:14). (TLSB)

Galatians 3:13-14, “﻿13﻿ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.”﻿14﻿ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”

*full rights of sons.* Lit. “adoption [of a son].” See Ro 8:15, where the “Spirit of sonship” is contrasted with the “spirit of slavery” (cf. Eph 1:5). God takes into his family as fully recognized sons and heirs both Jews (those who had been under law) and Gentiles who believe in Christ. (CSB)

Now the second pair of clauses: In 3:14 it reads "In order that we might receive the promised Holy Spirit (the Gospel) by faith." In 4:5 we read: "In order that we might receive the adoption of sons." These purpose clauses are what we call subjective justification.(Buls)

In 3:10-14 Paul was discussing the awful danger of salvation by works. In 4:1-7 Paul is speaking about passing from the bondage under the Law to the freedom under the Gospel. (Buls)

Now, just one quote from Luther.

Luther: Now since Christ has conquered the Law in His own Person, it necessarily follows that He is God by nature. For except for God no one, neither a man nor an angel, is above the Law. But Christ is above the Law, because He has conquered and strangled it. Therefore He is the Son of God, and God by nature. If you grasp Christ as He is described by Paul here, you will neither go wrong nor be put to shame. Then you will be in a position to judge about all the various styles of life and about the religion and worship of the whole world. But if this true picture of Christ is removed or even obscured, there follows a sure confusion of everything; for the unspiritual person cannot judge about the Law of God . . . . Then what is the purpose of the Law if it does not justify? The final cause of the obedience of the Law by the righteous is not righteousness in the sight of God, which is received by faith alone, but the peace of the world, gratitude toward God, and a good example by which others are invited to believe the Gospel. (Buls)

“The sonship” is modified by the context (v. 1-3) and thus signifies the status of sons who have advanced from their minority to their majority, to the status of full-grown son who are no longer under guardians and stewards. “Adoption” is not the proper word, for it may apply to a babe, a minor son and heir. (Lenski)

Pass from the condition and spirit of servants to the privileges and filial spirit of sons, in a state not of minority and servitude, but of manhood and freedom. The only sure evidence is connected to our faith in Christ and a hearty reliance on Him for salvation. (CB)

**4:6–7** *Now because you are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, who cries, “Abba, Father.” Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and since [you are] a son, [you are] also an heir through God.* The causal construal of the ὅτι, “*because* [ὅτι] you are sons,” is the simplest and most natural approach to the syntax as Paul turns to the blessings of sonship, namely, the reception of the Spirit. Some commentators have advocated an alternative translation that reverses the logic: “*That* [ὅτι] you are sons is proved by [understanding ἐξαπέστειλεν to be an ellipsis for ἐμαρτύρησεν ἐξαποστείλας] God’s sending the Spirit of his Son.” Or: “It is clear [understanding δῆλον] that [ὅτι] you are sons, because [understanding another ὅτι] God sent forth …” In Rom 8:14–15 Paul grounds the status of sonship in the prior presence of the Spirit. In other words, God creates sons by sending his Spirit. Likewise in Gal 4:29, the Spirit gives birth to the children of God. The causal translation of ὅτι as “because” in 4:6, as advocated here, would seem to ground the experience of the Spirit in the prior sonship. That would appear to contradict the order in Rom 8:14–15, if not also Gal 4:29. Certainly Paul appeals to the Galatians’ prior reception of the Spirit in 3:1–5. Paul expresses the relationship between the Spirit and sonship *both* ways: in 4:6 the Spirit is granted to sons, and in 4:29 and in Rom 8:14–15 the Spirit creates sons. Precisely because the Spirit and sonship are experienced as coterminous, Paul may word the relationship differently depending on the context. The most natural understanding of the syntax in Gal 4:6 with the causal ὅτι (“because”) is preferable. The Galatians, as do all “in Christ,” enjoy the inheritance of sons: God’s powerful Spirit in their lives. (CC)

In 4:4 “God sent forth his Son” (ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ), and in 4:6 “God sent forth the Spirit of his Son” (ἐξαπέστειλεν ὁ θεὸς τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ). God’s sending of the Son and the Spirit is reminiscent of the sending of divine Wisdom in the Jewish Apocrypha (Wis Sol 9:10, 17). If the Wisdom parallels are any indication, Paul gives the distinct impression that the Son and the Spirit should be understood as divine. Furthermore, even as the Son is a personal being, so also must be the Spirit. Both are experienced simultaneously within the same, saving work of God. Gordon Fee has called 4:4–6 with its juxtaposition of God, the Son, and the Spirit “one of the great ‘Trinitarian’ passages in the New Testament.” (CC)

The sending of the Son and the Spirit together entails profoundly practical implications. Whereas the rivals are stressing the Law of Moses as the source of the Christian life, Paul is stressing the genuine change that “the Spirit of his Son” (4:6) brings. The Spirit has been poured “into our hearts” (4:6)! This is not some charismatic “second experience.” The experience of the Spirit is part and parcel of being a son, an heir, in Christ. The Spirit renders God and his Son a personal reality. The Christian enjoys a new, changed identity. Christ lives in the believer (2:20). The baptized believer is clothed in Christ (3:27). Those who enjoy the Spirit’s presence no longer stand at a distance from God but are privileged to address God as Father. The Spirit within the believer cries, “Abba, Father” (4:6) as did Jesus himself. The Spirit refashions those who are sons in Christ into the *likeness* of Christ (cf. Rom 8:29)! (CC)

“Abba” (ἀββά) is a Greek transliteration of אַבָּא, the Aramaic vocative for address of a “father,” even as the Greek ὁ πατήρ is likewise a vocative of address of the “Father.” The Aramaic word may initially seem out of place in a letter in Greek to a gentile audience.98 Aramaic was the language of the Jews in the vicinity of their homeland, while Greek was the language of Paul’s gentile audiences. Paul’s doubled address of the Father in both Aramaic (ἀββά for אַבָּא) and Greek (ὁ πατήρ) is likely another way of expressing that Jews and gentiles in Christ now share the same rights as sons in the same family (thus also Rom 8:15). They are “no longer” slaves (cf. Gal 3:25). (CC)

The divinely enabled address of God as “Father” will be of comfort to those who have suffered under sinful earthly fathers. In his faithfulness to his promises and in his selfless love for his children, the heavenly Father is the model for all fathers. Those who have suffered enjoy a *new* family in Christ! The heavenly Father brought forth children for the purpose of a joyous personal relationship. The pain of broken homes, uncaring parents, and failed relationships all point to the need for a caring parent and, ultimately, for a sound relationship with the heavenly Father. The loving Father will heal the wounds, whatever they may be. (CC)

A venerable scholarly tradition has noted the fact that the Jews generally do not call God “Father” and has concluded that “Abba” must have been Jesus’ own unique, preferred form of address of God (thus Mk 14:36). That scholarly tradition has of late been scrutinized.101 First, the term “Abba” cannot be attributed with certainty to Jesus and may have originated in the Syrian Christian communities. Second, “Father” or “my Father” was occasionally used as an address and epithet for God in ancient Judaism (4Q372 Frag. 1.16; *T. Job* 33.3, 9; 40.2–3; 47.11; cf. *T. Job* 50.3; not as an address in *T. Job*).103 Third, the address of God as “Father” did not necessarily originate with Jesus. Even granting these reservations, God is rather frequently called “Father” (πατήρ) throughout the Gospels (forty-five times in Matthew, five times in Mark, seventeen times in Luke, and a hundred eighteen times in John). The frequent use of Father-language in the Gospels is striking when compared with the paucity of the appellation in Judaism. “If the title does not go back to Jesus, why should the writers of the gospels make such use of it?” “Father” as the preferred form of address for God conveys Jesus’ sense of a unique sonship. Mk 14:36’s lone attestation of Jesus’ calling God “Abba” should not be downplayed and should be considered alongside the multiply attested address of God as “Father.” Furthermore: “That he should invite his disciples to use his word after him was almost certainly an expression of grace on his part.”107 Believers who have received “adoption as sons” (υἱοθεσία, Gal 4:5) participate in the rights of sonship to such an extent that they may address God in the very words of his own Son (αββα ὁ πατήρ, “Abba, Father,” 4:6). (CC)

In many Christian circles, “Abba” is understood as an intimate form of address that is the equivalent of “Daddy.” This popular understanding is unfortunately mistaken. Jesus addresses God as “Abba” in prayer during a rather serious moment in the Garden of Gethsemane in Mk 14:36. Mark interprets Jesus’ Aramaic utterance with the ordinary Greek word for “Father” (ὁ πατήρ) and not “Daddy” (πάπας or πάππας). Paul, like Mark, juxtaposes the Greek equivalent “Father” (ὁ πατήρ) to interpret the Aramaic word. Grammatically, the Aramaic -*a* ending signified not intimacy but rather definiteness. By Jesus’ day, “Abba” had replaced older Hebrew and Aramaic forms as a solemn, responsible address of a father, whether on the lips of an adult or a child. The word may indeed be used with a sense of endearment, but the context would convey that sense and not the word itself. The head of a household was an authority figure who had the right to put a family member to death. Paul’s point in Gal 4:6 is not to express intimacy, but rather status. The presence of the Spirit of God’s Son who cries “Abba” demonstrates that those in Christ are likewise the sons of God. Paul’s comments may have been a response to the rivals’ claims about the identity of the true sons of Abraham. In Rom 8:15–17, on the other hand, in a context not dictated by a conflict situation, Paul describes those rescued from slavery and fear who by means of God’s own Spirit cry out, “Abba, Father.” The address of God as Father is close to the apostle’s heart. Again, Christians enjoy a special relationship with their adoptive Father. Those who call God “Father” in the Lord’s Prayer do so by virtue of a powerful, enabling presence in their lives! (CC)

Paul writes “into our hearts” (Gal 4:6). That the corporate community together cries out, “Father,” attests to the Spirit’s creation of a new family. The centrality of this new family in Paul’s letter is signaled already in 1:4 when Paul called God “*our* Father” twice (1:3–4). Christians are members of *a new household.* The apostle develops the mutual burden-bearing of that close-knit community in 6:1–10. The Galatians are threatening to abandon their Father *and* their family! (CC)

The modern world is obsessed with identity crises. People are constantly seeking to discover their inner selves for self-fulfillment and self-actualization, or they may find their self-worth in their work or achievements. This preoccupation with identity and with the self is an exercise in vanity. God graciously and freely grants the Spirit, who directs the Christian away from a preoccupation with self toward the praise of God as “Abba, Father.” A Christ-centered, God-honoring focus is at the heart of Paul’s letter to the Galatians. Such a focus inevitably leads to the service of other people, especially those of the household of faith (6:10). (CC)

Paul summarizes 4:1–6 with 4:7: “therefore [ὥστε] …” Paul’s usage of a second person verb emphasizes to the Galatians that they share in the privileges of a son. The trouble is that the Galatians are on the verge of losing all that they have gained in Christ. Slavery to the Law and sonship in Christ are mutually exclusive—precisely the opposite of what the rivals are claiming. Nothing more is required of the Galatians beyond what they were when Paul left them (thus 4:12–20). Paul appends “through God” at the end of 4:7 to remind the Galatians that God has already acted on their behalf. He sent forth his Son and his Spirit, and the Galatians now enjoy a privileged position as his heirs. The very notion that the masters of all (4:1) would want to return to slavery reeks of absurdity, an absurdity to which Paul turns in 4:8–11. (CC)

**4:6** δέ ἐστε (“now … you are”)—The connective δέ signals a mild contrast with 4:5: the “adoption as sons” (4:5) is “now” a present reality for “you” Galatians.

τὸ πνεῦμα τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ (“the Spirit of his Son”)—This is the more difficult and thus the more likely reading since “the Spirit of his Son” is an unusual phrase nowhere else employed in the NT (thus likely drawing scribal attention); cf. Rom 8:9 (“the Spirit of Christ”); Phil 1:19 (“the Spirit of Jesus Christ”); 2 Cor 3:17 (“the Spirit of the Lord”). The omission of τοῦ υἱοῦ, “the Son” (leaving just τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ, “his Spirit”) in 𝔓46, Marcion, and Augustine is likely secondary and associates the Spirit only with the Father.

εἰς τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν (“into our hearts”)—This prepositional phrase is well supported 𝔓46 א A B C D\* G) and also the more difficult reading. The switch to ὑμῶν (“your”) in some manuscripts and translations was likely motivated by a desire to assimilate the pronoun to the verb ἐστε (“you are”) at the beginning of the verse. (CC)

BECAUSE YOU ARE SONS – Through faith (3:26), the Holy Spirit is received (3:2, 14). (TLSB)

Note that in verse 5a Paul spoke of mankind in the third person, in 5b in the first person plural. In verse 6 he speaks of Christians in the second person plural. In verse 7 he speaks of Christians in the second person singular. (Buls)

"Because" in verse 6 is variously translated "because" or "to prove that you are sons" or "inasmuch as." The word denotes both cause and evidence.  God sends His Spirit into our hearts because Jesus took our place under the Law. God sends His Spirit into our hearts as evidence of the fact that we are redeemed. Read Galatians 3:1-5. (Buls)

*Spirit of his Son.* A new “guardian” (v. 2), identified as the “Spirit of God” in Ro 8:9 (see Ro 8:2; Eph 1:13–14). (CSB)

The “Spirit of His Son” prompts the prayer of God’s Son (“Our Father” and so bears witness to the sonship of those who so pray (Mk. 14:36; Rom.8:15). (TLSB)

Note carefully the Trinity in this verse. The Bible always speaks of the Trinity as a saving God, in many, many places. Look at Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:13. (Buls)

Note that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son. This is one of the proof passages for the filioque principle, which means "and from the Son." Look at the Nicene Creed. The Father and the Son send the Holy Spirit into the heart of the repentant sinner to assure that sinner of forgiveness of sins. When that happens that sinner prays: "Abba, Father!" (Buls)

Redemption from condemnation of Law, reception of sonship, and the gift of the Spirit, are a unit. Never separate them. They stand or fall together.

The Spirit Himself testifies to our close relationship with the Father and cries out in prayer to the Father for our needs. We are now heirs entitled to the heavenly inheritance and the benefits of sons and daughters in the Kingdom. (LL)

*calls out.* The Greek for this phrase is a vivid verb expressing deep emotion, often used of an inarticulate cry. In Mt 27:50 it is used of Jesus’ final cry. (CSB)

The Spirit is said to utter this cry when He moves us to utter it. The fact that He is in our hearts is the result of our sonship, and His presence makes this cry possible. (Lenski)

God by His Spirit has given you a filial temper, and taught you to use the language not of servants, but of sons. (CB)

*Abba, Father.* Expressive of an especially close relationship to God (see also NIV text note). (CSB)

Aram for “papa,” an address of special intimacy not typically found in Judaism. (TLSB)

Paul's first Scriptural argument about justification by faith is by experience, of course, not apart from the means of grace. Faith is never a religious, charismatic, subjective experience apart from the Word of God and the atonement. (Buls)

But God does give the Christian experiential evidence. What is the evidence? The Holy Spirit praying in the heart of the believer. And the greatest prayers are like those of Jesus: "Abba, Father." True prayer proves that there is saving faith. Saving faith proves that the individual is a son of God, a free man, and an heir of God and of Christ. (Buls)

Abba is an ancient Palestinian Aramaic baby talk meaning, “Dear Daddy.” The rabbinic teachers of Israel used to say that when a child was weaned it began to say “Abba” and “Imma,” words which exactly correspond to “Daddy” and “Mommy.” Thus abba derives from an intimate family relationship. It is a young child’s word, though there is evidence that it continued to be used by adult sons and daughter, as “Daddy” and “Papa’ are used today. The only use of this Aramaic word in the Greek NT is in Mark 14:36 when Jesus prayed to God in Gethsemane as “Abba Father.” The presence of an Aramaic word in the NT Greek text is in itself rather unique. (The God Who Hears – W. Bingham Hunter)

Exhaustive research by biblical scholars has demonstrated that in all the huge literature of ancient Judaism there is not one instance of God being addressed in prayer with the word abba. The word abba was too personal, too familiar and intimate to be appropriate. The Lord was high and lifted up, the incomparable One. He was to be approached with reverence and awe. To call him “Daddy” was unthinkable blasphemy. Yet Jesus prayed like this all the time. (The God Who Hears – W. Bingham Hunter)

That Jesus gave Christians the right to address God as abba is usually argued from the wording of the Lord’s Prayer (Luke 11:1-2). We need to be reminded periodically that the privilege of speaking with God so intimately was not given to even the greatest OT saints. (The God Who Hears – W. Bingham Hunter)

Abba represents the essentials of the new relationship with God which Jesus offered men and women who believe on His name. From the Father’s side abba implies many things: (1) His mercy, compassion an love for the child; (2) His personal interest in the child and consistent concern for its good; (3) His willingness to provide for the needs of and given protection to the child; and (4) the use of His mature knowledge, judgment and wisdom in guiding and caring for the child. (The God Who Hears – W. Bingham Hunter)

The thought of the apostle is that we sons who are now in full possession of all that we have in the Son and in the Spirit of the Son direct our “Abba Father” to God in our fullness of sonship. (Lenski)

Romans 8:15-16, “15﻿ For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.﻿And by him we cry, *“Abba,*Father.” ﻿16﻿ The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”

In every temptation and weakness, therefore, just cling to Christ and sigh! He gives you the Holy Spirit, who cries: “Abba! Father!” Then the Father says: “I do not hear anything in the whole world except this single sigh, which is such a loud cry in My ears that it fills heaven and earth and drowns out all the cries of everything else.” (Luther)

**4:7** εἶ (singular “you are”)—The change from the plural verb ἐστε, “you are,” in 4:6 to this singular verb (and singular nouns) in 4:7 is an instance of *orati variata* in accord with Greek idiom. Paul switches back to the plural “you” in 4:8–11.

εἰ δὲ υἱός, καὶ κληρονόμος (“since [you are] a son, [you are] also an heir”)—The δέ (literally, “and”; left untranslated) is continuative. Although all conditional sentences that express a real state of affairs are first class conditionals, not all first class conditionals express reality. This first class conditional sentence does.

διὰ θεοῦ (“through God”)—This reading is strongly supported by 𝔓46 א\* A B C\*, but אc Cc D K P Textus Receptus have θεοῦ διὰ Χριστοῦ (“of God through Christ”). The variants διὰ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (“through God in Christ Jesus”), μὲν θεοῦ συγκληρονόμος δὲ Χριστοῦ (“fellow heir of God and of Christ”), θεοῦ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (“of God through Jesus Christ”), διὰ θεόν (“because of/on account of God”), and θεοῦ (“of God”) are all more weakly supported. These scribal variations are, no doubt, a reaction to the unusual notion of God as a mediating figure (“through”), a role normally ascribed to Christ (with God as the source or origin). διὰ θεόν (“because of/on account of God”) in G and 1881 (a fourteenth-century miniscule) appears to be a scribal error with respect to the last letter (ν in place of υ). This reading also removes the perceived difficulty of God as a mediating figure. διὰ θεοῦ (“through God”) occurs only here in the NT, but διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ θεοῦ (“through Jesus Christ and God”) in 1:1 is a close parallel. See also the phrase “through the will of God” (διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ), which is unique to the Pauline corpus (Rom 15:32; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; 8:5; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1). (CC)

SO YOU – Continuing to address the Galatians directly in the second person, Paul even switches to the singular pronoun to assure each and every Galatian individually of the blessings brought by the Savior sent at God’s good time. (PBC)

Singular personal. By God’s grace, each person can regard himself or herself as an heir to all spiritual blessings. (TLSB)

Now comes the grand conclusion in the form of two fact conditions. (Buls)

"Therefore" in view of everything that's been said since Galatians 3:6 where Paul began by discussing the faith of Abraham and thus introduced the Scriptural arguments about justification by faith. Note that "you" is second person singular. "No longer a slave but a son" which means "you are no longer under the bondage and condemnation of the Law but you are free from sin, death, and the devil because Christ, your Substitute, suffered in your stead." (Buls)

But more than that. A second conditional sentence which also goes back at least to 3:29: "If you are Christ's then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise." The last part of 4:7 is saying that the free person, the believer (see John 8:36) is an heir of everlasting life through the God who redeemed him. (Buls)

Luther: The Holy Spirit was sent first in a manifest and visible form, Acts 2:3. This was the first sending forth of the Holy Spirit; it was necessary in the primitive church, which had to be established with visible signs on account of the unbelievers, as Paul testifies. 1 Corinthians 14:22: 'Tongues are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers.' But later on, when the church had been gathered and confirmed by these signs, it was not necessary for this visible sending forth of the Holy Spirit to continue. The second sending is that by which the Holy Spirit, through the Word, is sent into the hearts of believers, as is said here: 'God has sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts.' This happens with a visible form, namely, when through the spoken Word we receive fire and light, by which we are made new and different, and by which a new judgment, new sensations, and new drives arise in us . . . . Let everyone accustom himself, therefore, to believe for a certainty that he is in a state of grace and that his person with its works is pleasing to God . . . . Therefore we should strive daily to move more and more from uncertainty; and we should make an effort to wipe out completely that wicked idea which has consumed the entire world, namely that a person does not know whether they are in a state of grace. For if we are in doubt about our being in a state of grace and about our being pleasing to God for the sake of Christ, we are denying that Christ has redeemed us and completely denying all His benefits . . . The Holy Spirit's cry in us vastly exceeds, and breaks through, the powerful and horrible cries of the Law, sin, death, and the devil. It penetrates the clouds and heaven, and it reaches all the way to the ears of God . . . . In deep terrors and conflicts of conscience we do indeed take hold of Christ and believe that He is our Savior. . . . And this is our foundation: The Gospel commands us to look, not at our own good deeds or perfection but at God Himself as His promises, and at Christ Himself, the Mediator. By contrast the pope commands us to look, not at God as He promises, not at Christ our High Priest, but at our own works and merits . . . . And this is the reason why our theology is certain: it snatches us away from our selves and places us outside ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive. . . . For in the matter of justification I must be ignorant of the divine Law and not permit it to rule in any way over my conscience . . . . Therefore we come to these eternal goods -- the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the glory of the resurrection, and eternal life -- not actively but passively. Nothing whatever interferes here; faith alone takes hold of the offered promise. (Buls)

NO LONGER A SLAVE BUT A SON – This goes back to verse 1 that shows this person has attained his majority who possesses and enjoys the full benefits of an heir. (Lenski)

As non-Jews, the Gentile Galatians never were under the specific Mosaic Law. But they too had been freed from a tremendous burden of legal requirements – in their case, one imposed by their own former false ideas of how they needed to serve their pagan idols and “non-gods.” (PBC)

SINCE …ARE A SON… ALSO AN HEIR – Whoever is a son must be an heir as well. For merely by being born he deserves to be an heir. No work and no merit brings him the inheritance, but only his birth. Thus he obtains the inheritance in a purely passive, not in an active way; that is, just his being born, not his producing or working or worrying, makes him an heir. He does not do anything toward his being born but merely lets it happen. Therefore we come to these eternal goods—the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, the glory of the resurrection, and eternal life—not actively but passively. Nothing whatever interferes here; faith alone takes hold of the offered promise. (Luther)

GOD HAS MADE – This is due entirely to God. (Lenski)

**4:1–7** The Holy Spirit assures us that we are God’s children, redeemed by Jesus Christ and made full heirs of the promise to Abraham. The Spirit never derides God’s Son or spiritual matters (1Co 12:3). Christ earned for us the right to call God “our Father,” a prayer taught only by the Spirit. • Dear Father, in confidence and boldness I bring my needs before You. Hear me for the sake of Jesus alone. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL

Luke 2:22-40

*Jesus Presented in the Temple*

**﻿21﻿ On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise him, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he had been conceived. ﻿22﻿ When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ﻿23﻿ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord”﻿), ﻿24﻿ and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”﻿25﻿ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ﻿26﻿ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. ﻿27﻿ Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ﻿28﻿ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: ﻿29﻿ “Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. ﻿30﻿ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ﻿31﻿ which you have prepared in the sight of all people, ﻿32﻿ a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.” ﻿33﻿ The child’s father and mother marveled at what was said about him. ﻿34﻿ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ﻿35﻿ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” ﻿36﻿ There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ﻿37﻿ and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ﻿38﻿ Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. ﻿39﻿ When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. ﻿40﻿ And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.**

**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 – του̂ δου̂ναι θυσίαν—“To offer sacrifice” retains the language of sacrifice. (CC)

A PAIR OF DOVES 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)

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

**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 (*paraklēsin*; 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** CALLED SIMEON – There was nothing great and wonderful about him; he has no high office, standing or power. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

WHO WAS RIGHTEOUS – 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 it 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)

WAS 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 DIE – 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** TEMPLE COURTS – 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 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)

SIMEON…PRAISED GOD – First on his own behalf and then on behalf of the whole world. (Lenski)

**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** See note on 1:46–55. 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** SOVEREIGN 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)

DISMISS YOUR SERVANT – 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 people.* 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)

φω̂ς—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. ﻿15﻿ Neither 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. ﻿16﻿ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

Psalm 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 ISREAL – δόξαν λαου̂ 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 (φω̂ς 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)

**2:33** *child’s father.* Luke, aware of the virgin birth of Jesus (1:26–35), is referring to Joseph as Jesus’ legal father. (CSB)

MARVELED AT WHAT WAS SAID – When Simeon was telling such marvelous things concerning the child, his parents did not despise them, but believed them firmly. For this reason they stood, listened and marveled at his speech – how else could they react to it? (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

Note that AV and NKJV have the Koine reading "Joseph and his mother" whereas the others have "His father and mother." Joseph, Jesus' legal father, was regarded by people as His father.(Buls)

"Marvelled" is variously translated "marveling, amazed, wondering, surprised." They were astounded at what Simeon said concerning the baby.(Buls)

Bengel: They began to understand more and more how glorious the things were which had been spoken concerning Jesus, before He was born. And they were now hearing similar things from Simeon and others, whom they did not suppose as yet to be aware of the fact.(Buls)

Lenski: Simeon's words went beyond Matthew 1:21 and Luke 1:32.33 and 2:10, which referred only to Israel; Simeon included all the Gentile nations in the salvation that this child was bringing.(Buls)

Arndt: That Mary had conceived the Child through the action of the Holy Spirit they knew, and Gabriel's message and other information about Him they had pondered; but here additional matters, betokening that He would have a divine mission, are mentioned, and at that by a person who was a total stranger to them and who evidently spoke through divine revelation. (Buls)

Luke 2:51, “But His mother treasured all these things in her heart.”

This includes all happenings in chapter 2 plus. The mysteries which were beyond her comprehension, yet she treasured them and sought not to penetrate as to draw the blessedness from them. (Lenski)

The same amazement that struck Zechariah, his friends and neighbors, and the shepherds is now experienced by Mary and Joseph. (CC)

**2:34-35** This Jesus—mark well, Joseph and Mary and all who would hear him and would follow him—is appointed by the Lord (*idou houtos keitai* [v 34]; cf. Phil 1:16; 1 Thess 3:3). The sufferings and opposition that Jesus will encounter are not incidental to the office of Messiah. Having followed the brightness of the star to the manger, to the infant Jesus, will we follow this Jesus to the darkness of his cross, and therefore to the darkness of our baptismal cross, trusting only in the Father? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Jesus will scandalize many (*eis ptōsin* [v 34]), yet many will see the new Israel in him (*kai anastasin* [v 34]); some will reject, and others will believe (Jn 1:10–12; cf. Is 8:14; 28:16; Mk 12:10; Lk 20:17; Acts 4:11; Rom 9:32–33; 1 Pet 2:6–8). Judas despairs, but Peter repents; one robber blasphemes, but the other confesses. Men oppose this sign (*eis sēmeion antilegomenon* [v 34]), because they do not think Jesus is a real sign from God. This sign brings about a sharp division; he brings a sword (Mt 10:34; Jn 1:11; 6:66). This sign forces us to confront every self-satisfying preconception and every religious posturing. And the sword wielded in his preaching pierces our neatly wrapped and packaged lives, reaching into the very marrow of our thought and will. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Though maternal anguish cannot be discounted, Mary must confront the sword of Jesus’ preaching (*sou [de] autēs tēn psuchēn* [v 35]); she also belongs to the family that hears the word of God (Lk 8:19–21). Note how the NIV has rearranged the sentence structure (v 35). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

*hopōs an apokaluphthōsin ek pollōn kardiōn dialogismoi* (v 35), dependent on *keitai*, states the purpose of Jesus’ coming. Christ is the sign that requires people take certain action; through their stance toward Jesus, their inmost thoughts are expressed. In Luke, this begins in Nazareth (4:22–29; 5:21–22; 6:8; 9:46–47; 24:38). On the Last Day, the Father will not ask us if we enjoyed ourselves during Christmas, but whether we have done his will, believed in the incarnate Lord crucified and risen. Has our flesh revealed the birth and death and resurrection of the flesh of Christ? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:34** THIS CHILD – "Then" denotes something exceptional or remarkable. "This child" refers to Jesus, whom Simeon is holding in his arms (verse 28). "Is destined" means "is appointed, ordained (by God)." Cf. Philippians 1:16 and 1 Thessalonians 3:3. In keeping with the context, these Notes suggest that Simeon is speaking of two groups of people, not one. (Buls)

*falling and rising of many in Israel.* Christ raises up those who believe in him, but is a stumbling block for those who disbelieve (see 20:17–18; 1Co 1:23; 1Pe 2:6–8). (CSB)

Based on their reaction to Jesus, people will either stand or fall (cf 1 Peter 2:6, 8). (TLSB)

Christ is, as it were, a Rock placed in a road. Some people despise the Rock and dash against it in a rage. The result is that they are hurt and fall. It is not the fault of the Rock; it has been placed in the road for people to rest on. But if one refuses to make the proper use of it and persists in that refusal, the results are disastrous. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

There is a reason for the poverty of the child. His humble birth is a sign of foreboding. Many Jews will fall and rise as they meet Jesus; He is a stumbling block to everyone, including His own disciples and family, because of the nature of His ministry and the nature of His kingdom. (CC)

Plummer: Notice Isaiah 8:14 where the same double destiny is expressed.(Buls)

The word "many" refers to both nouns, describing both the many who will fall and the many who will rise. He is speaking especially about Israel, the Covenant people. No one can be neutral to Jesus. The theologians distinguish the *voluntas Dei antecedens* and the  *voluntas Dei consequens.* The first denotes God's saving will for all. The second denotes God's judgmental will toward those who reject Christ. Christ is destined to be the cause of the fall of those who reject Him, but they are to blame. Christ is destined to be the cause of the rise of those who repent and believe in Him. (Buls)

Bengel: It is to be observed that these things were not foretold in the prediction of the angel but were added by a holy man. (Buls)

Lenski: When men reject that grace in unbelief they fall, and it is God's will that they perish (Mark 16;16; Isaiah 8:14; Matthew 21:42.44; Romans 9:33). On the other hand, when God's grace in Christ wins men and makes them rise up from sin and death in a spiritual resurrection (Ephesians 2:5.6), this is again the effect of his consequent will but at the same time the execution of his *voluntas antecedens*. (Buls)

Plummer: Some welcome the Light; others love the darkness rather than the Light, because their works are evil (John 3:19) and are by their own conduct condemned. Judas despairs, Peter repents; one robber blasphemes, the other confesses (2 Corinthians 2:6). (Buls)

Geldenhuys: For the first time in the Gospel history the coming struggle and suffering are referred to. (Buls)

Arndt: The message of Christ and His work would arouse much opposition in Israel, and instead of being universally acclaimed as the Savior, Jesus would meet with much rejection. What is startling is that it is stated this has been ordained by God. (Buls)

*sign … spoken against.* Christ points to the Father and his love for sinners, and those who oppose him also oppose the Father. (CSB)

Jesus’ rejection is foretold early in Luke. Before the infancy narrative ends, the cross begins to loom. (TLSB)

Secondly, Jesus is ordained by God for a sign which will be contradicted. (Buls)

Geldenhuys: This indicates a phenomenon which cannot escape notice, of which cognizance must be taken, and through which something else is made known. (Buls)

It refers to Jesus' entire person, Word and work. The Jews contradicted Jesus in words and deeds. Read Hebrews 12:3. Sinners spoke against and contradicted Him. It began at John 5:16-18. They persecuted and wanted to kill Jesus because He did not keep the Sabbath and made Himself equal to God. John chapters 5, 6,7 ,8, 9 and 10, plus Jesus' trial, condemnation and crucifixion make this thought clear. "He came to His own but His own received Him not." They spoke against Him. They contradicted Him. (Buls)

For nearly 3 centuries the name of Jesus of Nazareth and His followers was a name of shame, hateful and despised by the Romans and the Jews in their rabbinical schools. (PC)

You can’t be neutral with Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 13, Part 1)

**2:35** THOUGHTS AND HEARTS WILL BE REVEALED – διαλογισμοί—Jesus will cause the “thoughts” of many to be revealed. This is fulfilled as Jesus’ divine omniscience enables him to discern the “thoughts” of others in 5:21–22; 6:8; 9:46–47; 24:38 and in parables in 12:17; 20:14. Whenever this noun for “thoughts” or the verb διαλογίζομαι, “to think, debate,” refers to Jesus’ opponents, they are always contemplating evil thoughts that stem from unbelief. See the noun also in 5:22; 6:8 and the verb in 12:17; 20:14. The noun also refers to “doubts” of the apostles in 9:46–47; 24:38. However, the verb denotes sincere questioning or wondering by believers in 1:29 (Mary) and 3:15 (the people). (CC)

Note that the Nestle/Aland Greek text make the first part of this verse a parenthesis, as do AV, RSV, JB, NASB, NKJV. And TEV, NIV, and AAT place it last for the sake of clarity. Some commentators agree with this, some do not. We take it as a parenthesis. (Buls)

Bengel: When Jesus is presented for the first time in the temple, adversities are awaiting Him. When He was in the temple the last time He Himself spoke words not unlike those of Simeon. The sword may have pierced through her soul on the occasion mentioned at the end of verse 48, Mark 3:31, John 19:25. Her faith attained its height by proving victorious through the height of temptation. Something bitter is now announced even to her, who was blessed among women. All have to bear the part assigned to them in chastisement. (Buls)

Arndt: It adds a slight touch of contingency 'in every given case' whenever human hearts are confronted with Christ. (Buls)

A person's attitude to Jesus' person, Word and work, brings out the thoughts of that person's heart. (Buls)

Bengel: Both faith and unbelief are in the heart and are put forth by the mouth. Romans 10:8.9.21; 15:5.6; Acts 13:46; 2 Corinthians 4:13; 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:12.13.(Buls)

Geldenhuys: The appearance of Christ will cause a clear division between those who really serve Him and those who are hostile to Him. (Buls)

This verse is not saying that some hearts are better, by nature, than are others. Judas was lost. Peter repented. One malefactor was lost. The other was saved. In both instances, the former rejected the Christ and the latter, only by grace and mercy, repented. Read John 3:20.21 where we have the same thought in different words. Christ is was ordained by God to bring out this great distinction among men. This truth stands side by side, in Scripture, with the great truth of the universal atonement and God's serious desire that all men be saved, that they come to the knowledge of the Truth. (Buls)

*sword will pierce your own soul too.* The word “too” indicates that Mary, as well as Jesus, would suffer deep anguish—the first reference in this Gospel to Christ’s suffering and death. (CSB)

Mary will someday experience sorrow because of her Son’s suffering and death (cf John 19:25-27). (TLSB)

You" means "also" implying that a sword would pierce Jesus' soul too. "Pierce your soul" is emphatic, and is, of course, metaphorical, denoting extreme pain. Note John 19:25 in the Nestle/Aland margin. Mary's pain reached its height when she stood under the cross. (Buls)

Mary *the woman,* as a part of Israel *and* as the mother of Jesus, will feel the pain of Jesus’ words and his crucifixion. She herself will be pierced by Jesus’ teaching, especially when he speaks about blood relationships giving way to the new family of the church. All believers (including Mary) will belong to this family, consisting of “those who hear the Word of God and do it” (8:19–21). And the mother of Jesus will be pierced at the cross as she watches her son die the humiliating death of crucifixion. Like every other participant in Jesus’ life, Mary, Israelite and mother, will experience sharp pain because of Jesus’ teaching and death. (CC)

**2:36-38** To confirm the words of Simeon, a second witness, Anna, is introduced (Deut 19:15). She, as did the women who saw the resurrected Jesus and as the shepherds who heard the good news, spread the message of hope. She spoke of his death as the redemption/ransom (Lk 21:28). Her presence confirms that Jesus is the hope for all Israel, for she, of the tribe of Asher, represents the ten tribes. Her constant presence in the temple, her piety (cf. Acts 14:23; 27:9; 2 Cor 6:5), and her waiting (cf. Is 4:2–6; Zeph 3:14–20) stand as an example for believers today. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Furthermore, with the presence of Simeon and Anna and their confession of God’s redemption for all nations in Christ, divisions once in place (e.g., Gal 3:28) begin to fall. Before us is Jesus, who fulfills the purpose of the temple and who is the reconciliation between God and man. He is the Passover; he is the place of atonement; he is the High Priest. Those who belong to him as priests offer their living sacrifices. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:36** *prophetess.* Other prophetesses were Miriam (Ex 15:20), Deborah (Jdg 4:4), Huldah (2Ki 22:14) and the daughters of Philip (Ac 21:9). (CSB)

Note how similar the beginning of verses 25, 33, 36: Simeon, the parents, Anna. The first information, other than that from Gabriel, which the parents received, was from two elderly, pious, believing Jews. Likely they were not well-known. Mid all the empty ritual at the temple, these two shine. An example for us: though we are insignificant and often must live mid much mere ritual, God sustains us. (Buls)

Anna (Old Testament Hannah) was a prophetess. God caused her to speak His Word. Evidently she was known for this. She has been compared with Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and the daughters of Philip. She made God's will known to people. Her father's name is noted, not that of her husband. Obviously this is done to denote her descent. (Buls)

Before the Destruction of Jerusalem (and all records) Jews could trace their lineage. Asher was one of the ten tribes of the north which were lost. But God preserved one of their descendants as His child. "This one advanced in many days" obviously means she was quite elderly. This verse plainly means that her husband died after seven years of marriage. By the way, this verse can be used in the interest of the ordination of women as little as verses 25-32 can be used in the interest of the ordination of men. (Buls)

The Holy Spirit was upon and guided both Simeon and Anna. These passages do not speak about or pertain to the holy ministry. God used these two elderly people for a specific purpose: to give further information about and to glorify this baby. (Buls)

Luke often has stories in pairs, and women figure prominently in the narrative. As in the Easter story, women play a key role in the events surrounding the Nativity. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

*Anna.* Same name as OT Hannah (1Sa 1:2), which means “gracious.” Anna praised God for the child Jesus as Hannah had praised God for the child Samuel (1Sa 2:1–10). (CSB)

She is either 84, or she had remained a widow for 84 years after 7 years of marriage, which probably would make her at least 105. Did she, perhaps, have a room in one of the buildings on the temple grounds? Nothing can be said with certainty, but in any case she was an exceptional saint. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

**2:37** WIDOW – A variety of widows exhibited exemplary devotion (1 Kings 17:8-24; Luke 21:1-4; cf 1 Tim. 5:3-10). Anna was an outstanding example of such a pious widow. (TLSB)

AV NKJV and JB read the Koine text: "She was a widow of about eighty-four years." All the other translations read "until." That causes a problem. It can mean either: "and as widow till she was eighty-four" RSV NIV AAT NEB NASB, or: "she had been a widow for eighty-four years" LB TEV. The former would mean that she was eighty-four, the latter that she was about 105 years old. In other words, the Koine reading makes the genitive a predicate genitive of description, whereas the Nestle reading gives it a temporal meaning (until). Frankly the Koine reading makes much more sense. The text very likely is saying that as a widow (the time between the death of her husband and this occasion) she devoted herself entirely to a sanctified life of fasting, supplication and testimony about Jesus. (Buls)

Verse 37 does not say that she lived in the Temple. (It the verse be pressed literally it would have to mean that she never left the Temple). In what sense did she not depart from the Temple? In serving day and night by fastings and supplications. A remarkably dedicated widow. (Buls)

*never left the temple.* Herod’s temple was quite large and included rooms for various uses, and Anna may have been allowed to live in one of them. This statement, however, probably means that she spent her waking hours attending and worshiping in the temple. (CSB)

WORSHIPED NIGHT AND DAY – To worship God in the OT liturgical perspective was to “serve Him with fasting and prayers. The same expression is used in 1:74. (CC)

**2:38** COMING UP TO THEM – "At that very moment" a dative of time meaning: "at that very time,"  when the parents and the baby were in the Temple. "Coming up to them" means "appeared."  By the way, this might indicate that she came into the Temple at that very time, but it can't be proved. (Buls)

"She gave thanks" is "she was acknowledging in return,"  in return for blessings received. She was a grateful penitent sinner. Both verbs in this verse are imperfect tense, denoting continued action. It has been suggested that she did this speaking *after* the parents left, but the text does not say this. The text does not specify whether she did this before, during or after the parents came. But that she spoke of Jesus is clear. (Buls)

For the rest of this verse compare verse 25. It reads: "To all of those who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem." Its intended sense is that many people were awaiting the coming of the Messiah. Our text makes Jerusalem, as representative of all Israel, objective genitive. The context must be speaking of spiritual deliverance. NEB "the liberation of Jerusalem" sounds like political deliverance. So does AAT "were looking for Jerusalem to be set free." The context clearly calls for the spiritual deliverance gained by the Messiah, not political deliverance from Rome. (Buls)

GAVE THANKS AND SPOKE ABOUT – The imperfect tense may well mean that she continued her thanks also after Mary and Joseph had gone. (Lenski)

Anna continues the proclamation of the Good News that shepherds began at the birth of Jesus (2:15-20). (CC)

*Jerusalem.* The holy city of God’s chosen people (Isa 40:2; 52:9); here it stands for Israel as a whole. (CSB)

REDEMPTION OF JERUSALEM – Echoing Simeon, Anna spoke to those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem and said, “It is here in the person of this child.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 4, Part 1)

λύτρωσιν—“Redemption” (as opposed to “deliverance”) parallels 1:68 and emphasizes Luke’s concern with atonement language. λύτρωσις/λυτρόοω are part of Luke’s larger Gospel frame, occurring in the final chapter of the gospel as the Emmaus disciples tell Jesus that they had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel (24:21). (CC)

**2:22–38** As confirmed by prophecy, Jesus is appointed as the Savior. Today, pray that the Lord would grant you the enduring faith of Simeon and Anna, to see the Lord’s salvation and give Him thanks face-to-face in eternity. • Pray the Nunc Dimittis (vv 29–32; *LSB*, p 165). (TLSB)

**2:39-40** With *etelesan* (v 39), we are drawn ahead to Jesus’ completion of everything according to the Father’s will (Lk 24:44–49). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Truly human in every way is Jesus (cf. 1:80; 2:52; Heb 2:10–18; 4:15; 5:9). His wisdom, the ability and desire to use knowledge in relationship to the Father, anticipates the next narrative. His wisdom also set him as superior to John, for from childhood Jesus possessed both wisdom and grace. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Though the language differs, *charis theou ēn ep’ auto* (v 40) evokes the Father’s declaration at Jesus’ Baptism and transfiguration. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:39** *they returned to Galilee.* Luke does not mention the coming of the Magi, the danger from Herod, or the flight to and return from Egypt (cf. Mt 2:1–23). (CSB)

"Had done everything" obviously refers to the ceremonial requirements noted in verses 21-24. "Returned" whence they had come, 2:4. Arndt is of the opinion that they returned immediately to Nazareth to move their belongings to Bethlehem to live there permanently. Most other commentators believe that Luke is abbreviating the account because the flight to Egypt intervened as according to Matthew. The latter is likely the true view. Whether or not Luke was aware of the flight into Egypt is beside the point. The accounts in Matthew and Luke do not contradict each other. (Buls)

Plummer: Luke appears to know nothing of the visit of the Magi. It would have suited his theme of the universality of the Gospel so well, that he would hardly have omitted it, if he had known it. In that case he was not familiar with our first Gospel, Matthew. From Matthew 2:11 we infer that the Holy Family, after the Purification, returned to Bethlehem and there occupied a house. (Buls)

In brief narratives like the present, intervening events are often passed over in silence. We know from Matthew that the wise men from the East found the Savior at Bethlehem; that afterwards He was carried into Egypt; and after a sojourn there of some time, to Nazareth in Galilee, whence Mary had come with Joseph to Bethlehem before His birth. (CB)

**2:40-52** Luke continues last week’s emphasis on the presence of God and the temple. Jesus, born of woman, grew as man grows. But with the completion of everything according to the Law, Luke answers the question posed of John the Baptizer: What will this one be? How will this one increase and abound in wisdom? Luke provides this event as his response, to anticipate how Jesus will be about the Father’s matters in his ministry. Or to view it from our Lord’s eyes: “You brought me to the temple and I was dedicated to the service of the Lord. Did you not think that I would be in my Father’s house?” This record demonstrates that Jesus always had set his face set toward Jerusalem, his Father’s matters at the temple. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Since the ministry of Jesus culminates as High Priest and the offering, completing the purpose of the temple, Luke has selected an event from Jesus’ youth that characterizes this direction of his life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:40** CHILD GREW AND BECAME STRONG – The lad attained more and more wisdom in the Biblical sense as the right knowledge of God and His salvation coupled with its application to life. In the case of Jesus this included the realization of His own relationship to God. (Lenski)

On this verse compare 1:80 and 2:52. This verse evidently describes Jesus' progress from infancy until the age twelve. He is called "child," a true human being. Note that both verbs are imperfect tense for obvious reasons. He grew as did any other child. Note the passive verbs denoting God as agent in both the mental and spiritual "filling." "Grace" does not denote saving grace, but the favor and approval of God. This verse is a remarkable commentary on the humanity of Jesus. (Buls)

Lenski: It is impossible for us to penetrate the mystery of this development in Jesus -- body and soul untouched by sin, unchecked and unretarded by any result of sin, his mind and soul absorbing the wisdom of God's Word as a bud drinks in the sunshine and expands. (Buls)

Geldenhuys: For the first time a human infant was realizing the ideal of humanity. (Buls)

The sinless Jesus grew and developed as do all other children. He did not need baptism as an infant. His baptism later, was a vicarious baptism, for us. He was not "contradicted" as a child, verse 34. That came only when He began to testify later, John 5:16-18. Though sinless, Jesus must have been a very normal child. (Buls)

FILLED WITH WISDOM – Likely alludes to Is. 11:2, where the Messiah is characterized as one endowed by the Spirit with Wisdom. (TLSB)

**2:39–40** Jesus matures as a normal child and also has the blessings of God’s wisdom and favor. Today, pray for the children in your family or neighborhood, that they would grow in the knowledge of their Savior and receive His favor. He who has blessed and kept you in faith will likewise hear and bless them too. • I thank You, Holy Child, that You fulfilled the Law for me. Fill me with the wisdom only You can give. Amen. (TLSB)