

The Sunday within the Octave of the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord

St. Luke 2:33-40

December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC

Simpsonville, SC

St. Michael and All Angels Ev. Lutheran Mission, UAC

Augusta, GA

Pastor Jerald P. Dulas

## A Sign Which Is Spoken Against

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

“And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.’”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Almighty and Everlasting God, mercifully direct our ways, that we may walk in Thy Law, and be made to abound in good works: through Thy beloved Son, + Jesus Christ our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, one true God, world without end. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, Our Lord is presented in the Temple. Isaiah calls it the House of Prayer for all people. But the Temple segregates. It divides men from women, Jews from Gentiles, and priests from laity. Nor is the Temple in which He is presented the Temple of the Old Testament, the one built by Solomon according to Divine command. That was desecrated and destroyed. This Temple was built by wicked Herod. And yet, still, despite the desecration of a Roman eagle and other sacrilege, The Lord God sanctified it. He made it His place. The blood of animals was spilled. The aroma was pleasing to the Lord God. He chose to dwell there on behalf of His people. But it was no more permanent, with its brick and mortar, its beams of cedar from Lebanon, than the roving canvas Tabernacle of Moses.

Do not forget that the Temple in which our Lord was presented and laid in Simeon’s arms; where as a Boy He taught the teachers; where He preached and healed and baffled His vain enemies; where He was a sign spoken against; and from which He drove out the money-changers would not last. It was destroyed. It no longer exists. It has been gone now for over 1,985 years. A religion, as empty and false as modern Judaism, calls it “a sacred place.” Zealots use it as an excuse to kill and maim on behalf of their wicked, evil god Allah. And even if a temple like Herod’s should be rebuilt, the Lord God will not dwell there again. For He has raised up for Himself a new Temple which man did not build, but that men did tear down. He rebuilt that Temple on the third day and now all the sacrifices for the atonement of mankind are fulfilled in Him.

So, it is that we do not need either the Temples of Solomon, or Zerubbabel, or of Herod. We have the greater Temple. We have a Temple that is older than those others, older even than Moses’ Tabernacle, older than the sacrifice that clothed Adam and Eve as they were expelled from the garden; and more lasting too. Those other places were only shadows of Him Who has now come. Those temples are fulfilled in Him Who died, but Who lives again. The good they did; they did on account of

faith in Him accepting the sacrifices offered to Him. His once and for all time sacrifice now atones for the sins of the whole world. He is the One to Whom we now go to receive forgiveness, which He bestows through His means of grace and the work of the Holy Ghost. He is now the place of the Lord God's gracious presence among His people. He is present with us through the means of grace: through preaching, Holy Baptism, the Absolution, the Lord's Supper, and whenever two or three are gathered together in His Name.

He is Immanuel—God with us—the Lord God as one of us and for us. He is the Atonement and appeasement of the Lord God's wrath, the Passover Lamb that takes away not just the sins of those whose doors are marked, but the sins of the whole world whenever they believe on His Name. It is His Blood that is sprinkled upon us in Holy Baptism, which is distributed to us from the Cup, which gives us faith, that makes us clean, makes us His own. He is the House of Prayer for all people, interceding for His spiritual brothers and sisters, and teaching them to pray. He is greater than those types that went before Him. He does not segregate. In Him there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, young or old. And in Him there are no laymen. All believers are priests according to the order of Melchizedek, His own order. We can now receive forgiveness directly from Him. All who confess His Name in faith are members of the royal family, too. They offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and moved by their request He spares the world of His greater wrath. He is not bound to time or space, or to a piece of real estate in Jerusalem. He dwells in the hearts of men, making them the temple of His Holy Ghost where His own loving Father is addressed by grace as our Father.

That being said, my dear friends, do not let us think that we can just willy-nilly take the Lord Christ with us in whatever way we see fit. We belong to Him. We do not control Him. We cannot just put Him in our pocket and take Him out when it is convenient. He is present when and where He chooses to be. In times of old He chose to be in the Temple, on the mercy seat, between the Law and man that He might shield us from the threat of death. Now, in the everlasting Day of the Resurrection, He has promised to be present in the Word of Absolution, in the Word that is heard and preached, and in the Sacrament of the Altar, and all of the means of grace for us. In those places, according to His promise, He is present for us through the working of the Holy Ghost. That is where we need to be; where He tells us He is going to be found. We belong to Him, so be where He has called us to be and where He can be found.

The Shepherds when they heard the Good News from the angels did not abide in their fields. The Magi from the East did not think on Him from afar when they saw His star. But both groups, Jewish Shepherds and Gentile Magi alike, both went to where He was, in Bethlehem, to worship Him. So also, Simeon was spirited to the Temple in Jerusalem, the Prophetess Anna was daily in the Temple, as well. They came to the place where the Lord God had promised to be and where the Lord God was coming anew as a Baby forty-days old, that the New Temple might replace the old. Simeon and Anna saw and blessed that day and were glad. They looked upon their Lord God in the flesh of the Christ, and sang His praise.

The Lord God has called us to be where He is, where He has said He would be. That does not mean that where He promises to be is always going to be gushing with an emotional high or a brain thawing revelation of His grace. Indeed, He does give those times, and we give thanks for when they come and are glad in them. But ours is the life of faith and that means believing in the Word and His promises; believing in the truth, when the truth is not supported by what we see, or feel. Even when we feel cold and dead inside, when our brain has gone solid, and our soul seems lost in a foggy, make-believe world, and the only emotion is a lackadaisical melancholy, even then we live by faith, we trust the Lord God's Word; that the promises therein are true for us. In such a case, faith boldly says, "So what of it? What of my lack of emotions, or lack of physical signs and wonders? The Word is true. I will believe in that! No matter what, I know that the Lord God is good, that the Lord God is true, that the Lord God is here for me as He has said that He would be. I will believe in that." Such is grace through

faith in the Lord + Jesus, the Christ.

My dear friends, time is not without an end, and neither is our sorrow nor our pain. Christ lives. Christ is coming back. For now, while we wait, He is here for us in the places He has promised to be. It is that perfect torn-down and built-again on the third day Temple which is put into us this day by way of bread and wine that we ourselves would become what He is—the place of His gracious presence, His own beloved in whom He is well-pleased, the abode of His Holy Ghost, the Temple not built with hands, but by His Word. He is presented here for us, and He is present here today, for us so that in us He might perform all things necessary for our salvation. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ + Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*