

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2020 - FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

ISAIAH 61: 10 – 62: 3 VINDICATION AND SALVATION OF ZION

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God.

¹ For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest.

Cf. Simeon and Anna

²The nations shall see your vindication, and all the kings your glory.

Cf. Simeon – "My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

PSALM 148 PRAISE THE LORD!

Psalms 146-150 all begin and end with Hallelujah – Praise the Lord.

What a great way to begin and end each day – with a Hallelujah – Praise the Lord.

The Psalm calls on various parts of creation to praise the Lord.

If all of creation is praising the Lord, I do not want to be left out.

Cf. Jesus on Palm Sunday – Luke 19: 40 – "I tell you, if these were silent, the rocks would cry out."

I do not want a bunch of stones to have to do what I should be doing.

GALATIANS 4: 4-7 THE TIME (FOR JESUS' BIRTH) HAD FULLY COME

⁴ But when the fullness of time had come – when the time had fully come – at just the right time

Cf. Bethel Series New Testament Lesson 1 –

Universal language – Roman peace – Roman roads and ships – Roman citizenship – Jewish dispersion

⁴ God sent his Son, born of a woman – cf. "Lo, how a rose"

⁴ Born under the law, ⁵ in order to redeem those who were under the law

Cf. Luke 2: 22-23 –

"When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord)

⁵ So that we might receive adoption as children. ⁶ And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

Cf. Romans 8: 15-17 -

"When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ."

LUKE 2:22-40 JESUS IS PRESENTED IN THE TEMPLE

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord”), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.”

Feast of Purification - Presentation

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him.

²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah.

²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple.

²⁸Simeon took (Jesus) in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹“Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

What would it take for you to be able to say, “I am ready to die; my life has been fulfilled”?

What would it take for you to be able to say, “I will die in peace”?

What do you still need to do – what do you need to do now – so that you can die in peace?

³⁴Then Simeon blessed (Mary and Joseph) and said to his mother Mary, “This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

Is God calling you, like He called Simeon and Anna –

To declare the true identity of Jesus

To pass on a word of blessing

To help people prepare for what lies ahead?

³⁶There was also a prophetess, Anna . . . She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four.

³⁷She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.

³⁸At that moment she came and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

Cf. Luke 2: 52 – And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and other people.