

# "The LORD Comes to His Temple"

Sermon #1

## "The Womb of Mary"

Luke 1:26-33

4 December Anno Domini 2002

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church of Emmett, Idaho  
Pastor Michael L. McCoy

In the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear Baptized,

The promised Advent of the Incarnate Savior is the hope that sustained Old Testament Christians. From shortly after "in the beginning" to the moment when the angel Gabriel told a Jewish maiden, "The Lord is with you!", the children of God awaited the arrival of the Messiah. Adam's Hope. Eve's Seed. Abraham's Offspring. Job's Redeemer. The One like unto Moses. David's Greater Son. Isaiah's Prince of Peace. Jeremiah's Righteousness.

"This is He Whom seers in old time,  
Chanted of with one accord,  
Whom the voices of the prophets,  
Promised in their faithful Word."  
(LW 36, st. 2)

The Prophet Malachi wrote of the Word's Advent when he scribed four centuries before the Incarnation of our Lord: "Behold, I send My messenger to prepare the way before Me, and the Lord Whom you seek will suddenly come to His temple; the messenger of the Covenant in Whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:1-2). That is the theme for our midweek Advent and Christmas sermons this year ... "The LORD Comes to His Temple."

Generally, a temple is a religious place where a deity is located, yet we aren't speaking generally. We speak specifically about the One, True God ... the LORD, Jehovah, Yahweh ... and His Temple. Now certainly, Jehovah needs no temple, no tabernacle, no tent, no shrine, even as the Apostle Paul said to the Athenians, "The God Who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by man, nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all men life and breath and everything" (Acts 17:24-25).

God didn't and doesn't need such creations to dwell in. However, mankind does need the good and gracious God to come to us. As a result, the Presence of the LORD traveled in the Tent of Meeting, journeyed in the Exodus Tabernacle, and dwelt in the Temple that Solomon built. All of this, and much, much more, took place in history in order to preserve a people from whom the Messiah would come. The promised Seed of the woman would be the Savior of the world, the LORD whose Advent into His creation would be part of God's Good News. The Incarnation of the Son of God would require that He come into this world and dwell therein.

Thus, the first temple of the Incarnate LORD God would be the womb of a Jewish virgin. The sermon text for this evening is Luke 1:26-33. Please listen to that Word of the LORD God under the theme ...

... "The LORD Comes to His Temple ... the Womb of Mary"

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the Throne of His father David, and He will reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there will be no end.'"

Thus far the Word of Jehovah our God.

As the centuries gave way to millennia, this fallen world continued to regress in the darkness of continual decay and all creation groaned in the wretched throes of certain death. And what is true for the whole, is also true for each member thereof. Every individual who draws the breath of life is born into a world of hurt, a time of trouble, a life with suffering, and a date with death. While some of this may not be of your own doing, much is due to your own sin and your own sins. Add to this the unalterable Commandments of the LORD God Almighty and His demands of perfection, and well, the darkness of the Day only grows deeper ... for each of us knows that we are utterly and totally lost.

Does God know all of this? Does He know everything about this land and all who dwell therein, including whatsoever resides within your hearts, fulfills your desires, forms your words and brings about your deeds? Yes, and you know that He does. Certainly such a fallen world and surely a sinful soul deserves a visit from the righteous, just and holy God Who hates sin. I mean, just consider the visitation at the time of the Flood, or judgment upon Sodom and Gomorrah. Thus even the promise of Emmanuel ... that is, "God with us," ... does not, in itself, give cause for gladness within us or joy to the world.

But behold, when this world was ready and history prepared, in the fulness of the time, God sent the angel Gabriel "to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be." What does this mean? Was this visitation one of the Law of God that always accuses the old sinful nature that Mary had by virtue of being born in the likeness of Adam and after his image (Genesis 5:3), or one of the Gospel, that is, the Good News of God that comforts the repentant soul that Mary had by virtue of her God-given trust in the LORD God her Savior?

And the angel said to her, 'Fear not, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His Name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the Throne of His father David, and He will reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there will be no end.'"

Thus, the eternal Son of God, begotten of the Father from eternity, is incarnate by the Holy Spirit, and dwells within the womb of Mary. Here is the first temple of the Incarnate Jehovah. This God made flesh

and dwelling among us first resides within the temple of the Jewish virgin's womb.

From the instant of the Incarnation "Mary, the most blessed virgin, did not conceive a mere, ordinary human being, but a human being who is truly the Son of the most high God, as the angel testifies. He demonstrated His divine majesty even in His mother's womb in that he was born of a virgin without violating her virginity. Therefore she is truly the mother of God and yet remained a virgin." (The Formula of Concord: 2, VIII, 23-24). At the instant when Jesus was but a single cell, "He had this majesty immediately at His conception even in His mother's womb" (The Formula of Concord: 2, VIII, 26). This is the Immaculate Conception; that is, the Incarnation of God.

Thus we know Who this is, for "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to Him the Throne of His father David, and He will reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of His Kingdom there will be no end." But why has David's Descendent Who is Son of the Most High come and taken up residence in this first temple, the temple of His mother's womb?

Well, first consider what is happening with this single cell Savior. This unborn child becomes a mass of two cells and then doubles again and again and again and again. Shortly thereafter His sacred head will form. Within 40 days He will develop a heart and His Holy Blood will begin to flow as it pumps. At six weeks He will develop eyes that will see the crowds and look into the souls of each one. At ten weeks He is about an inch long and His arms will sprout and hands will bud in order that they may be extended as He reaches out and holds the world. Within the same period of time, the Incarnate Son of God will have legs and feet. His lips will part in order for Him to but say the Word. His gestation will be the same as ours ... nine months. He will be human just as we are, yet without sin.

Second consider what will happen. One day, those legs of His will carry Jesus up to Jerusalem where He will be force-marched to Golgotha. His back will feel the stripes whereby we are healed. His Head will be capped with a crown of thorns as man mocks His Maker. Those feet and hands of His will be punctured by crude nails as He is offered for the Life of the world and is the sufficient Ransom for all. That mouth of His will speak the Word of forgiveness and full atonement from the cross. His eyes will behold His mother and His lips will speak of love and comfort to this woman whose womb was His first temple. When it is finished; that is, when the sins of the world have been atoned for and when the wrath of God against sin has been vented, He will have been faithful unto death, even death on a cross. Jesus' heart will be stilled, pierced and silent for two nights.

Third, consider what will happen on the third day. The Risen Redeemer will stand upon the earth and speak peace to His disciples. He will extend His nail-pierced hands and breathe His forgiving Spirit upon His undershepherds. He will ascend into heaven and will be enthroned in the eternal habitations, and even as His is Present there, also He is most certainly and truly Present with His Church here as He promised. Thus, in the twelfth month a messenger was sent from God and said, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"

But in order for you to hear the Good News that, in the Name of the Father and of the (+) Son and of the Holy Spirit, you are forgiven of all your sin and all your sins, it was necessary for the Son of God to become flesh and dwell among us. Thus, "the LORD comes to His temple" and for nine months He dwelt in His first temple, which is, the Womb of Mary. Amen.

Thanks be to God. Amen.