

What will this child be? Every parent asks that at the birth of a new child. In Luke chapter one we are told that those who heard of John the Baptist's birth, that miraculous gift of a child to an old man and his wife, asked "**What then will this child be?**" (Lk 1:66). We heard from the angel of the Lord on Christmas Eve, "Unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord." We've heard who He is. What, then, will He do?

He fulfills the Law for us. Even as an infant, He is obedient to the Law of His Father in heaven. In Exodus, God said that every firstborn son was to belong to Him, as a reminder of His deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt, and sparing the firstborn by the blood of the Passover lamb. Later, in the book of Numbers, God permitted the tribe of Levi as a "stand-in" of sorts for all the firstborn of all the tribes of Israel. So a mother and father of the tribe of Reuben would bring their firstborn son to the temple and give an offering of five shekels to "redeem," to buy back, their son, in recognition that the Levites were dedicated to the service of God in place of their son.

Jesus is different. He is not redeemed, He is the redeemer. He is the one who buys back not just the firstborn of Israel, but all humanity. He is put under the Law, pledged to be obedient to it, even though it is His own Word. You can't miss that point, it comes up again and again: "**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...)...and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord...the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the Law...they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord.**" St. Paul tells us in today's Epistle: "**when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law.**"

Put under the Law first at eight days old at His circumcision and naming, which the church commemorates tomorrow night, He is brought to the temple not to be bought back, His place taken by another, but to take the place of all humanity. His place is taken by no one else. That is why it matters that God came in human flesh. It was humanity that sinned. It was humanity that turned from God and His Word which gave life. It was humanity that lay in bondage to sin, death, and the devil. It was humanity that needed to satisfy God's holy demands, His pure will, and His perfect justice.

Holy Christmas is the celebration of the fact that God Himself has come as a man to do what man had to do, but what only God can do. He is born under all the same demands as we. Unlike you and I He does not waver. Go down the list of the Ten Commandments and He has kept them perfectly. Where each commandment, each utterance of the Law, kills and condemns us, we see Jesus, even as a child growing up, yes even as a teenager, keep it perfectly. He is faithful to what He was sent to do. There is the consolation of Israel. Old Israel struggled to be faithful to her God. Great as Moses was, he was a sinner. The great judges, Samson and Samuel, sinners too. Mighty kings like David, Solomon, Asa, and Josiah, sinners all. But the One has come who was faithful in every way. Even as the many promises are fulfilled, the Law is satisfied.

Here is your consolation as well. He is your redemption too. He has come not just for the glory of God's ancient people, He is the "**light of revelation to the Gentiles.**" He has stood in your place. There is not a single person He has not come for. He has brought salvation, not only by His perfect obedience to the Law, but also by making satisfaction for all your sins. What will this Child be? He is the Savior. He is the one who fulfills all the Scriptures. He is the one who is put under the Law in perfect obedience. That means He is headed to the cross. Simeon tells Mary that a sword will pierce through her own soul. She will behold her Son and king as He is lifted up as her Savior and yours. Christmas is not the pinnacle of the church year, it is but the beginning. We are headed to Holy Week and Easter because that is where He is going. Who is this child? He is the redeemer and He does His job. With Him is forgiveness and plenteous redemption.

Knowing this, because all this has been done, you can be as confident as Simeon. He sees Jesus and he's ready to go. When you have beheld the Lord's Christ, the Savior of the world, the one who breaks the power of Satan and makes our peace with God, what more do you need? You don't. In the course of our lives the many things which God has given to us are taken away. We move away from our childhood home. We bid farewell to loved ones in this life. We

loose physical or mental abilities. But in all that the Lord Jesus tells us, “You still have Me, and I am enough.” Eventually God takes the very life He gave you. Yet even then, the Lord Jesus tells us, “You still have Me, and I am enough.” Who is this Child? He is the Savior. He is the redeemer. He is enough. Simeon teaches us this in his words, which for as long as anyone in church history can remember, have been sung in the liturgy.

Unique to the Lutheran Church is that these words are sung after the Holy Communion. Aside from the deathbed, there is perhaps no more fitting place to say them. For when you have received the Lord Jesus, with longing or even broken hearts, yearning for the forgiveness of your sins, the cleansing of a guilty conscience, desiring some sign from God that He has not forgotten you, what that is finally satisfied as you take the Lord Jesus in His body and His blood upon your lips, where what He says and promises is sure and certain because it is He who says them, what more do you need?

What will this Child be? You know. He is the Savior. He has done it all for you.