

*The Case for Christmas*  
**Advent Worship Series – Christmas Day**  
*My Eyes have Seen Your Salvation*

**WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES**

Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin.

**Announcements & Offering**

**Call to Worship**

<b>SB#108 – Hark! The herald angels sing</b>	TB-270 – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	HTD4-T5 (3 vs.)
<b>Additional Optional Songs</b>		
<b>SB#100 – Angels, from the realms of glory</b>	TB-398 – Come and Worship (Regent Sq.)	HTD4-T12 (4 vs.)
<b>SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180</b>	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
<b>SB#113 – Joy to the world!</b>	TB-87 – Joy to the World!	HTD4-T9 (3 vs.)
<b>SB#114 – Light of the world HC#146 – Here I am to Worship</b>	TB-653 – Here I am to Worship HC-146	HCD13-T16
<b>SB#103 – Christians awake, salute the happy morn</b>	TB-476 – same	HTD10-T1 (3 vs.)
<b>SB#116 – O come, all ye faithful HC#140 – O Come, All Ye Faithful</b>	TB-496 – Adeste Fideles HC-140	HTD3 –T1 (3 vs.) HCD12-T20
<b>SB#126 – The first noel the angel did say</b>	TB-857 – The First Noel	HTD6-T18 (3 vs.)

<b>SB#113 – Joy to the world!</b>	TB-87 – Joy to the World!	HTD4-T9 (3 vs.)
<b>Additional Optional Songs</b>		

<b>SB#100 – Angels, from the realms of glory</b>	TB-398 – Come and Worship (Regent Sq.)	HTD4-T12 (4 vs.)
<b>SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180</b>	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
<b>SB#114 – Light of the world HC#146 – Here I am to Worship</b>	TB-653 – Here I am to Worship HC-146	HCD13-T16
<b>SB#126 – The first noel the angel did say</b>	TB-857 – The First Noel	HTD6-T18 (3 vs.)
<b>SB#133 – Wonderful counselor HC#10 – The Light Has Come</b>	TB-859 – The Light Has Come HC-10	HCD1-T10

## *The Evidence*

### Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus Christ

#### Candle Lighting:

**Leader:** Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. (Revelation 1:3)

**Reader 1:** **Prophecy** - “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.” (Genesis 22:18)

**Reader 2:** **Fulfillment** - The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham. (Matthew 1:1)

**Leader:** **Therefore...Jesus is the Son of God**

**Reader 1:** **Prophecy** - But God said to Abraham... “In Isaac your seed shall be called.” (Genesis 21:12)

**Reader 2:** **Fulfillment** - Jesus...the son of Isaac. (Luke 3:23, 34)

**Leader:** **Therefore...Jesus is the Son of God**

**Reader 1:** **Prophecy** - “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.” (Numbers 24:17)

**Reader 2:** **Fulfillment** - Jesus...the son of Jacob. (Matthew 1:2)

**Leader:** **Therefore...Jesus is the Son of God**

**Reader 1:** **Prophecy** - “The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh comes; and to him shall be the obedience of the people.” (Genesis 49:10)

**Reader 2:** **Fulfillment** - Jesus...the son of Judah. (Matthew 1:2)

**Leader:** **Therefore...Jesus is the Son of God**

**Reader 1:** **Prophecy** - There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse; and a branch shall grow out of his roots. (Isaiah 11:1)

**Reader 2:** **Fulfillment** - Jesus...the son of Jesse. (Matthew 1:6)

**Leader:** **Therefore...Jesus is the Son of God**

**Reader 1:** **Prophecy** - “Behold, the days are coming,” says the Lord, “that I will raise to David a branch of righteousness; a king shall reign and prosper, and execute judgment and righteousness in the land.” (Jeremiah 23:5)

**Reader 2:** **Fulfillment** - Jesus...the son of David... He shall be called Lord.

**Leader:** **Therefore...Jesus is the Son of God. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophets.** (Matthew 1:22)

*[Light the third candle]*

<b>SB#118 – O little town of Bethlehem</b>	TB-136 – same	HTD3-T5 (3 vs.) Bethlehem
<b>Additional Optional Songs</b>		
<b>HC#10 – The Light has Come</b>	HC-10	HCD1-T10
<b>HC#72 – Emmanuel</b>	HC-72	HCD6-T12
<b>HC#82 – Jesus, Name Above All Names</b>	HC-82	HCD7-T12
<b>HC#123 – Shine on Us</b>	HC-123	HCD11-T13
<b>HC#127 – How Deep the Father’s Love for us</b>	HC-127	HCD11-T17
<b>HC#146 – Here I am to Worship</b>	HC-146	HCD13-T16
<b>HC#187 – Jesus, Messiah</b>	HC-187	HCD17-T17
<b>HC#219 – King of Kings, Majesty</b>	HC-219	HCD20-T19
<b>HC#220 – Incarnate</b>	HC-220	HCD20-T20

**Prayer:**

*[Piano continues to play chorus]*

Thank you God, that the genealogy of your son is a lineage of grace, testimony to the reach of your love throughout the generations.

Thank you for reaching across generations for us. And for ever so patiently grafting us into that tree. Thank you for the firmness of your hand and the tenderness of your touch. We have needed both at one time or another, and doubtless we will need both again. Continue to lift and to prune. To water and to weed. And to do whatever it takes to bring us to a place where we have something to offer others.

O Lord...who watched so faithfully over those families who waited for the Savior to come, watch over my family who waits for him to come again. Amen.

*(Moments With the Savior, page 20-21)*

### **Reading:**

The Jews regarded their own nation as the chosen people, but they saw quite clearly that by human means their nation could never attain to the supreme world greatness which they believed their destiny involved. By far the greater number of them believed that because the Jews were the chosen people, they were bound some day to become masters of the world and lords of all the nations. To bring in that day some believed that some great, celestial champion would descend upon the earth; some believed that there would arise another king of David's line and that all the old glories would revive; some believed that God himself would break directly into history by supernatural means.

But in contrast to all that, there were a few people who were known as *the Quiet in the Land*. They had no dreams of violence and of power and of armies with banners; they believed in a life of constant prayer and quiet watchfulness until God should come. All their lives they waited quietly and patiently upon God. Simeon was like that; in prayer, in worship, in humble and faithful expectation he was waiting for the day when God would comfort his people. God had promised him through the Holy Spirit that his life would not end before he had seen God's own anointed king. In the baby Jesus he recognized that king and was glad. *(The New Daily Study Bible, page 31-32)*

### **Responsive Scripture:**

**Leader:** 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.

**All:** 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 (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"), 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."

**Leader:** 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. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he

would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts.

**All:** When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

**Leader:** "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

**All:** The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother:

**Leader:** "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

**All:** 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, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying.

**Leader:** 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.

**All:** When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. (Luke 2:21-40)

<b>Drama: That's My Boy</b>		
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<b>SB#124 – Silent night! Holy night!</b>	TB-842 – Stille Nacht	HTD4-T15 (3 vs.)
<b>Additional Optional Songs</b>		
<b>HC#169 – Hallelujah</b>	HC-169	HCD15-T19
<b>HC#187 – Jesus, Messiah</b>	HC-187	HCD17-T17
<b>HC#220 – Incarnate</b>	HC-220	HCD20-T20
<b>SB#153 – Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown</b>	TB-94 – Margaret	HTD10 –T6 (4 vs.)
<b>SB#158 – Who is he in yonder stall</b>	TB-287 – Who is he?	HTD10-T19 (6 vs.)

## *How then shall we live?*

### **Reading:**

**Leader:** Blessed is the one who reads the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near. (Revelation 1:3)

**Reader 1:** Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. (Revelation 22:12)

**Reader 2:** Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. (James 5:7)

**Leader:** **Therefore...keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.** (Matthew 24:42)

**Reader 1:** Be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. (James 5:8)

**Reader 2:** Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him. (Revelation 1:7)

**Reader 1:** Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be?

**Reader 2:** You ought to live holy and godly lives. (2 Peter 3:11)

**Leader:** **Therefore...keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.** (Matthew 24:42)

**Reader 1:** For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? (1Thessalonians 2:19)

**Reader 2:** Indeed, you are our glory and joy. (1Thessalonians 2:20)

**Leader:** **Therefore...keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.** (Matthew 24:42)

### **Sermon – In the Fullness of Time**

<b>SB#116 – O come, all ye faithful</b> <b>HC#140 – O Come, All Ye Faithful</b>	TB-496 – Adeste Fideles HC-140	HTD3 –T1 (3 vs.) HCD12-T20
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<b>Additional Optional Songs</b>		
<b>SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180</b>	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
<b>SB#108 – Hark! The herald angels sing</b>	TB-270 – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	HTD4-T5 (3 vs.)
<b>SB#115 – If I were a star then I would shine, shine, shine</b>	TB-773- Noel	No CD
<b>SB#126 – The first noel the angel did say</b>	TB-857 – The First Noel	HTD6-T18 (3 vs.)
<b>HC#61 – Crown Him King of Kings</b>	HC-61	HCD5-T11
<b>HC#141 – All Hail the Power</b>	HC-141	HCD13 –T11
<b>CF#17 – Angels we have heard on high</b>	CF-17	No CD

### **Benediction:**

Across the centuries, throughout all recorded history, you have called out to us in your gracious love. You have offered yourself to us, and pleaded with us to come to you. You have invited us to come when we are thirsty; come when we are wounded; come when we are lost in sin; come when we are poor, alone and without hope. And we have come, Lord, in faith, in humility and in gratitude. Now we join our voices and invite you to come to us. Return to us, Lord Jesus, and make your dwelling place among us. We pray that you will come soon and come quickly, for above all else we long to see your face. Amen.

*(Praise & Worship Bible, page 1684)*

<b>Vocal Benediction – HC#140 – O Come, All Ye Faithful SB#85 – O come, all ye faithful</b>	HC-140 TB-552 – Adeste Fideles	HCD12-T20 HTD3-T1 (3 vs.)
<b>Additional Optional Songs</b>		
<b>HC#61 – Crown Him King of Kings</b>	HC-61	HCD5-T11
<b>HC#128 – My Tribute</b>	HC-128	HCD11-T18
<b>HC#141 – All Hail the Power</b>	HC-141	HCD13-T11
<b>HC#149 – In Christ Alone</b>	HC-149	HCD13-T19
<b>HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus</b>	HC-151	HCD14-T11
<b>SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180</b>	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
<b>HC#260 – Go, Tell it on the Mountain</b>	HC-260	HCD24-T20

<b>Week #5</b>	
<b>DRAMA</b>	
<b>That's My Boy</b>	
<b>By Martyn Scott Thomas</b>	
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<b>Scripture:</b>	Luke 2:21-35
<b>Synopsis:</b>	A proud mother reflects on her son.
<b>Characters:</b>	<b>Mary</b> – mother of Jesus
<b>Props/Costumes:</b>	Biblical or modern dress.
<b>Setting:</b>	Bare stage.
<b>Running Time:</b>	2:30 minutes.

**Mary:** As a mother, it's easy to see the best in your children. And it's easy to sing their praises over any accomplishment, no matter how routine. Whether it's a first tooth, a first step or a first word, we only see the brightest future – my child is going to have the cutest smile, be the fastest runner and have the most beautiful singing voice. It's my job as mother to dream the biggest dreams for my children and help them to see it in themselves.

But it's an even higher honor when others see the potential in your child. A mother's pride swells when someone else sees in your child what you knew was always there.

Looking back, I remember when that happened with my first born. It was when we presented him at the temple for his purification. We were very nervous as new parents to be taking him anywhere, but we knew that it was required by the Law. So, we took him to the temple.

We were even more nervous when the old man approached us, but something about him quickly put us at ease. It was almost as if we knew him. He could have even been part of our family.

As he took the child from my arms, I willingly handed him over to this stranger. Then he spoke these words,

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.”

At first, we were too stunned to say anything. How could this aged

man see such promise in a simple little baby? But, then I knew. I had heard these same things from the angel before he was born. Joseph knew, too. It was confirmed. All that we had thought to be true was indeed true. God, himself, had sent his Son to be our son and to be Savior of all mankind.

But the old man, Simeon, wasn't finished. He went on to tell us, "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

These words stung me. How could he say something so cruel to the parents of a newborn? But we knew this also must be of God and took his words to heart.

Before we could move on, another came over to us. Anna, a prophetess, gave thanks to God and spoke about our child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Israel.

And so before he was even a few weeks old, my son made his mother proud. Not a bragging kind of proud, but an awe-filled pride in the greatness I held in my arms. He was the Son of God, but he was also my child and I couldn't have been more proud.

*[Blackout]*

*The Case for Christmas*  
*My Eyes have Seen Your Salvation*  
**Advent Worship Series – Christmas Day**

**In the Fullness of Time**

**Scripture:** Luke 2:21-40  
**Theme:** All in God's time.

**Introduction:**

The day has arrived. The event has come. There are no more sleeps needed. The long anticipated celebrating is upon us. How exciting to see the expectations met! I hope you have gotten today some of the things you have imagined under the tree, but more than that, I trust that you will have a day of joy and rejoicing with loved ones.

The scripture reading today has told us about two people in particular who have been waiting for the arrival of the Messiah, the birth of the King. Each of them has been serving God in anticipation of his coming. They have served according to their own capacity and with their own giftedness.

Remember as we wait for the coming King we should keep busy doing the things he has called us to do. In the fullness of time the promises will be fulfilled.

The Scriptures record that Simeon was a man in Jerusalem who was righteous and devout. Can you imagine such a wonderful thing being written beside your name for eternity? How incredible that he was seen as righteous and devout in an age when the religious leadership had become corrupt in many ways. Just because others may be lowering their standards does not mean we, as individuals, have to succumb to the same behaviors. While we are part of a community, we are personally responsible for our own behavior at the same time. There are so many paradoxes in the Christian walk. We are reborn into a community of faith in which we are to bear the burdens of others and at the same time keep our lives individually pure before God.

The other person who had been particularly waiting for the coming of the Messiah is Anna, a prophetess and the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. Anna had been serving in the temple since she had been left a widow for many years. She declared and recognized that this child would be for the redemption of Israel. What a wonderful dramatization of this for us this morning—an insight, perhaps, into the heart of Mary.

**The Leading of the Spirit of God**

As we look at Simeon it is clear that the Spirit of God can guide his people to be in the right place at the right time. I am not sure that there are coincidences with God. Perhaps much of what happens in our lives are 'Holy Spirit moments', if we are aware of them.

We are not actually told what Simeon was doing in Jerusalem, but the text is clear in

declaring that the Holy Spirit led him to the temple courts.

*Luke 2:27—*

*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.*

The Spirit of God nudges us in a variety of ways:

**The words of others in the community** – sometimes gifts are confirmed and choices of occupation or calling are revealed as fellow believers express what they see in us.

How many young people have been encouraged to Salvation Army officership because someone has told them that they seem gifted in pastoral or preaching skills? We should not say such things lightly, but as the Spirit lays things on our hearts we should express what we believe.

### **Intuitive Sensing**

Sometimes the Spirit of God moves us by simply placing a concern in our mind or laying a person on our heart. It is not uncommon to feel that you should make a phone call or send a note to someone. Have you ever just felt led to pray for a friend?

God leads us in very simple ways when we are in tune with his voice. This only comes by practice.

Simeon followed the leading of the Spirit and was in the right place at the right time to see, as he says, “the consolation of Israel.”

### **Blessed by the timing of God**

Simeon had felt that God had made a personal promise to him, as Luke indicates in verse 26,

*It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.*

Not too early and never too late, the Lord completes what he intends. Simeon is so blessed by this experience he breaks into praise:

*Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel.*

Let me share with you an email story circulated not long ago about a mission field request. This beautiful story was written by a doctor who worked in South Africa:

One night I had worked hard to help a mother in the labor ward; but in spite of all we could do, she died leaving us with a tiny premature baby and a

crying two-year-old daughter. We would have difficulty keeping the baby alive, as we had no incubator (we had no electricity to run an incubator). We also had no special feeding facilities.

Although we lived on the equator, nights were often chilly with treacherous drafts. One student midwife went for the box we had for such babies and the cotton wool that the baby would be wrapped in. Another went to stoke up the fire and fill a hot water bottle. She came back shortly in distress to tell me that in filling the bottle, it had burst (rubber perishes easily in tropical climates). "And it is our last hot water bottle!" she exclaimed.

As in the West, it is no good crying over spilled milk; so in Central Africa it might be considered no good crying over burst water bottles. "All right," I said, "put the baby as near the fire as you safely can, and sleep between the baby and the door to keep it free from drafts. Your job is to keep the baby warm."

The following noon, as I did most days, I went to have prayers with any of the orphanage children who chose to gather with me. I gave the youngsters various suggestions of things to pray about and told them about the tiny baby. I explained our problem about keeping the baby warm enough, mentioning the hot water bottle, and that the baby could so easily die if it got chills. I also told them of the two-year-old sister, crying because her mother had died.

During prayer time, one ten-year old girl, Ruth, prayed with the usual blunt conciseness of our African children. "Please, God," she prayed, "send us a hot water bottle today. It'll be no good tomorrow, God, as the baby will be dead, so please send it this afternoon." While I gasped inwardly at the audacity of the prayer, she added, "And while you are about it, would you please send a dolly for the little girl so she'll know you really love her?"

As often with children's prayers, I was put on the spot. Could I honestly say, "Amen"? I just did not believe that God could do this. Oh, yes, I know that he can do everything—the Bible says so. But there are limits, aren't there? The only way God could answer this particular prayer would be by sending me a parcel from the homeland. I had been in Africa for almost four years at that time, and I had never, ever, received a parcel from home. Anyway, if anyone did send me a parcel, who would put in a hot water bottle? I lived on the equator!

Halfway through the afternoon, while I was teaching in the nurses' training school, a message was sent that there was a car at my front door. By the time I reached home, the car had gone, but there, on the verandah, was a large twenty-two pound parcel. I felt tears pricking my eyes. I could not open the parcel alone, so I sent for the orphanage children. Together we pulled off the string, carefully undoing each knot. We folded the paper, taking care not to tear it unduly. Excitement was mounting. Some thirty or forty pairs of eyes were focused on the large cardboard box.

From the top, I lifted out brightly-colored knitted jerseys. Eyes sparkled as I gave them out. Then there were the knitted bandages for the leprosy patients, and the children looked a little bored. Then came a box of mixed raisins and sultanas—that would make a batch of buns for the weekend. Then, as I put my hand in again, I felt the.....could it really be? I grasped it and pulled it out—yes, a brand new, rubber hot water bottle. I cried. I had not asked God to send it; I had

not truly believed that He could. Ruth was in the front row of the children. She rushed forward, crying out, "If God has sent the bottle, he must have sent the dolly, too!"

Rummaging down to the bottom of the box, she pulled out the small, beautifully dressed doll. Her eyes shone! She had never doubted! Looking up at me, she asked: "Can I go over with you and give this dolly to that little girl, so she'll know that Jesus really loves her?" Of course, I replied!

That parcel had been on the way for five whole months. Packed up by my former Sunday school class, whose leader had heard and obeyed God's prompting to send a hot water bottle, even to the equator. And one of the girls had put in a dolly for an African child—five months before—in answer to the believing prayer of a ten-year-old to bring it "that afternoon."

*"Before they call, I will answer" (Isaiah 65:24)*

God's timing is perfect....

### **No Age or Gender Limits in God's Timing**

How many times are we guilty of thinking that everything should be left to the younger people? The ministry is often thought of for the young. The younger people will lead us into new ways of worship and ministries.

Here is a wonderful example of God blessing and using a woman who is 84 years of age. Anna had only been married for seven years before she became a widow, and she is now advanced in age. God has a particular blessing for her and a word for her to give as to the redemption of Israel. The text tells us that she has spent all of her days since becoming a widow in the service of the temple. She has worshipped and given herself to fasting and prayer. Her labors were not unnoticed by God.

*Luke 2:38—*

*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.*

Anna saw what had been long awaited. Her prayers and worship were acknowledged in her having seen the promise fulfilled.

Christ had come as a babe in the fullness of time for the redemption of the world and these two people in particular knew who he was.

### **Encouragement in the Message**

Mary and Joseph had a particularly difficult responsibility. Theirs was the task of raising the son of God. They took him to their home and trained him in the faith in the little village of Nazareth. There, Jesus grew. Luke 2:52 says,

*And Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and men.*

Simeon blessed Mary and Joseph that day in the temple and gave a word to them, and in particular to Mary,

*Luke 2:34b-35—*

*“This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”*

Words to which Mary would need to cling as Jesus grew and moved into ministry. Simeon in his message seems to indicate how difficult it will be on Mary. It will be like a sword thrust into her.

### **On the Cross in the Fullness of Time**

Christ on the cross said, “It is finished.” The work that began in the mind and heart of God in response to the sin of humanity was set in motion in a particular way, here in Bethlehem, at the incarnation of God. God with us in human flesh.

The plan of God was further developed on the cross and in the resurrection, but the culmination of it all will be in the fullness of time when Jesus comes again.

### **His Return will be in the Fullness of Time**

But there is still a final day of victory for which we wait.

### **Conclusion**

As we worship at the manger we recognize that the cross makes the final victory real. In the fullness of time all of the pieces will come together.

“Christian faith and theology are oriented to the coming glory of God and the fulfillment of the promise of God contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ.” (Migliore, 232)

We long for God to come and set the world right! Yet, as the prophet Amos warned, the expectation of a coming judgment at the "Day of the Lord" may not be the day of light that we might want, because the penetrating light of God's judgment on sin will shine just as brightly on God's people.

As we worship at the manger today, let us look to Jesus who loved us enough to come in the form of man to be treated so cruelly in our place.

*Hebrews 12:2—*

*Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

Until he comes again, let's be in the place where we will be ready, with our lives fully in tune with him by the power of the Spirit of God in us.

We worship him today as the babe in the manger, but await him as our Coming King!