

Storyteller:

Today's scripture reading tells Luke's account of the Holy Family's visit to the temple, presenting baby Jesus as required by the Jewish Biblical Law.

Luke writes: When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses,

Mary and Joseph brought Jesus up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

(As it is written in God's law, every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to God),

And they offered a sacrifice,

according to what is stated in God's law,

"a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons."

Now 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.

It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit

that he would not see death

before he had seen God's Messiah.

Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple.

And when the parents brought in the child Jesus,

to do for him what was customary under the law,

Simeon took the babe in his arms, and praised God, saying,

Simeon:

Eternal One, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared

in the presence of all peoples,

a light for revelation to the Gentiles

and for glory to your people Israel.

Storyteller:

And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him.

Then Simeon blessed them

and said to his mother Mary,

Simeon:

This child is destined
for the falling and the rising of many in Israel,
and to be a sign that will be opposed,
so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed.
And a sword will pierce your own soul, too.

Storyteller:

There was also a prophet, Anna,
the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.
She was of a great age, having lived with her husband
for seven years after her marriage,
then as a widow to the age of eighty-four.
She never left the temple, but worshipped there
with fasting and prayer night and day.
At 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.

When they had finished everything required by God's law,
Mary and Joseph returned to Galilee,

to their own town of Nazareth.

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.
And the favour of God was upon the child.

Here ends the reading.

May God bless our hearing with understanding.