



Jesus Reveals His Authority

31st January 2021
Fourth Sunday of Epiphany:

Or:
Jesus is Presented in the Temple:
A God-revealing light (Candlemas)

WE WELCOME GOD'S PRESENCE

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out. (John 1.5)

*O Lord, open our lips:
and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.*

*The night has passed, and the day lies open before us;
let us pray with one heart and mind.*

Faithful One, Your Word is life:
come with saving power
to free our praise,
inspire our prayer
and shape our lives
for the kingdom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN 1

At the Name of Jesus

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7w-tDjlpgk>

At the Name of Jesus, Amber Trent

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu6yqBmuVT4>

COLLECT

God our creator,
who in the beginning
commanded the light to shine out of darkness:
we pray:
that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ
may dispel the darkness of ignorance and
unbelief;

shine into the hearts of all your people;
and reveal the knowledge of your glory
in the face of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

(or)
God of heaven,
you send the gospel to the ends of the earth
and your messengers to every nation:
send your Holy Spirit to transform us
by the good news of everlasting life
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

(or)
Lord Jesus Christ,
light of the nations and glory of Israel:
make your home among us,
and present us pure and holy
to your heavenly Father,
your God, and our God.

CONFSSION

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

*Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

*May the God of love
bring us back to himself,
forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Amen.



THE WORD OF GOD

St Paul says; The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. (1 Corinthians 4.20)

**Through our lives and by our prayers
may your kingdom come.**

Psalm 24.7-end

7 Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.
8 Who is the King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty;
the Lord, invincible in battle.
9 Open up, ancient gates!
Open up, ancient doors,
and let the King of glory enter.
10 Who is the King of glory?
The Lord of Heaven's Armies—
he is the King of glory.

Read by David Suchet:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABoNMdvvYFo>

Anglican chant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbGC8cKKVpY>

(Gettys)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsOZ3UsUbNA>

Malachi 3 (GNT)

3 The Lord Almighty answers, “I will send my messenger to prepare the way for me. Then the Lord you are looking for will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger you long to see will come and proclaim my covenant.”

2 But who will be able to endure the day when he comes? Who will be able to survive when he appears? He will be like strong soap, like a fire that refines metal. 3 He will come to judge like one who refines and purifies silver. As a metalworker refines silver and gold, so the Lord's messenger will purify the priests, so that they will bring to the Lord the right kind of offerings. 4 Then the offerings which the people of Judah and Jerusalem bring to the Lord will be pleasing to him, as they used to be in the past. 5 The Lord Almighty says, “I will appear among you to judge, and I will testify at once against those who practice magic, against adulterers, against those who give false testimony, those who cheat employees out of their wages, and those who take advantage of widows, orphans, and foreigners—against all who do not respect me.

HYMN 2

Jesus Shall Reign

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNjdpdiK24I>

Refiner's Fire

[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=BLyQAx8DpBI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BLyQAx8DpBI)

Gospel for the Presentation:

Luke 2.22-40 Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

22 The time came for Joseph and Mary to perform the ceremony of purification, as the Law of Moses commanded. So they took the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, 23 as it is written in the law of the Lord: "Every first-born male is to be dedicated to the Lord."

24 They also went to offer a sacrifice of a pair of doves or two young pigeons, as required by the law of the Lord.

25 At that time there was a man named Simeon living in Jerusalem. He was a good, God-fearing man and was waiting for Israel to be saved. The Holy Spirit was with him 26 and had assured him that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's promised Messiah.

27 Led by the Spirit, Simeon went into the Temple. When the parents brought the child Jesus into the Temple to do for him what the Law required, 28 Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God:

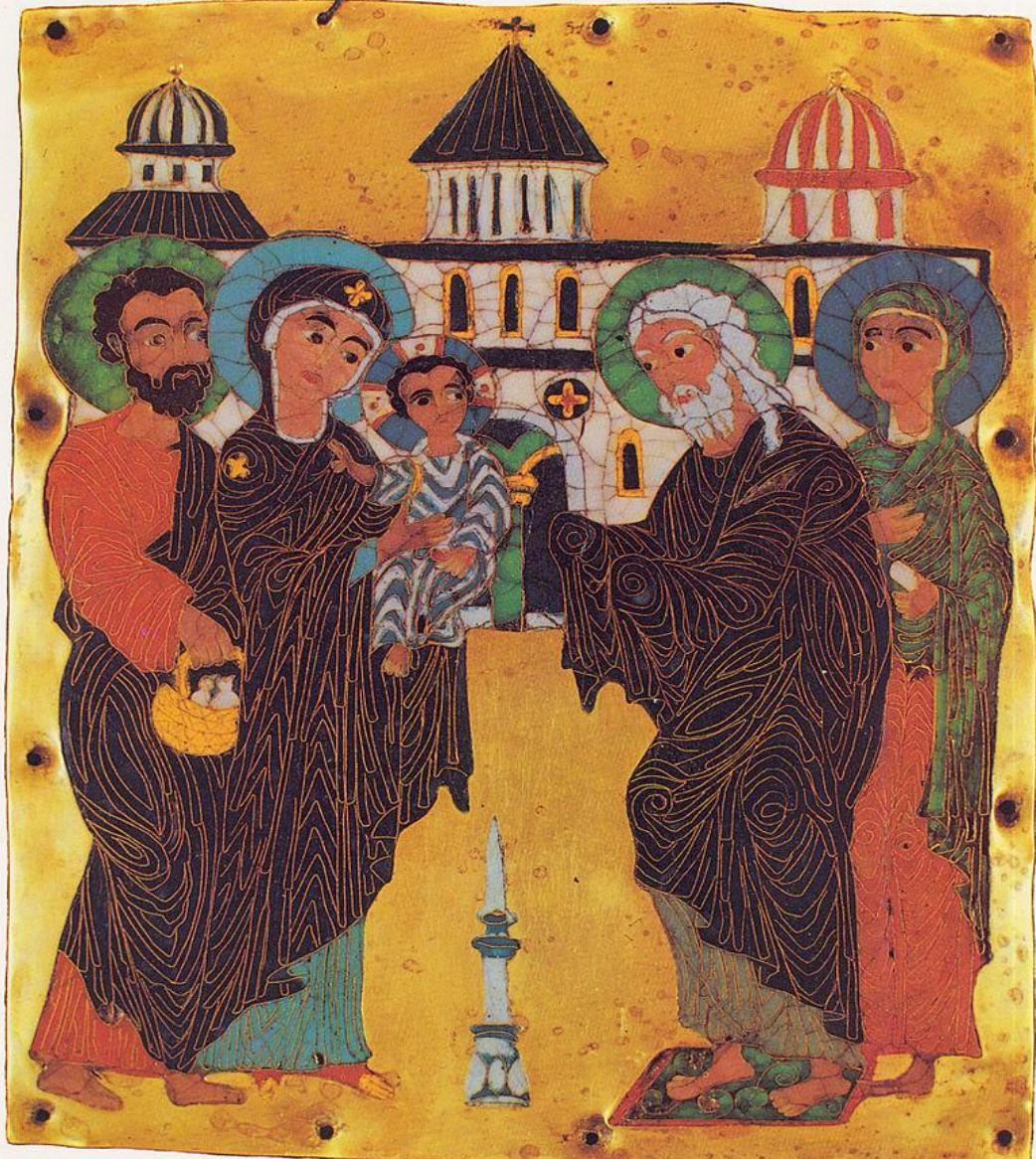
29 "Now, Lord, you have kept your promise,
and you may let your

30 With my own eyes I have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:

32 A light to reveal your will to the Gentiles
and bring glory to your people Israel."

33 The child's father and mother were amazed at the things Simeon said about him. 34 Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother, "This child is chosen by God for the destruction and the salvation of many in Israel. He will be a sign from God which many people will speak against 35 and so reveal their secret thoughts. And sorrow, like a sharp sword, will break your own heart."

36-37 There was a very old prophet, a widow named Anna, daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She



12th Century enamel from Georgia

had been married for only seven years and was now eighty-four years old. [a] She never left the Temple; day and night she worshiped God, fasting and praying. 38 That very same hour she arrived and gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for God to set Jerusalem free.

The Return to Nazareth

39 When Joseph and Mary had finished doing all that was required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to their hometown of Nazareth in Galilee. 40 The child grew and became strong; he was full of wisdom, and God's blessings were upon him.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK #1

Two revelations to consider on one day in this season of the epiphanies, the revelations!



From the Menologion of Basil II (ca. AD1000)

Some of our churches mark The Presentation of Jesus (Candlemas) today, where God's light in the darkness is revealed. (Incidentally, this event is part of where we get our service of Thanksgiving for a Child, the 'gateway' service into the fellowship of the church). Other churches mark Epiphany 4, which reveals the authority of Jesus over spiritual darkness. Both festivals celebrate the coming of the Light of God, in Jesus, into a dark world.

In the centuries before 1802, after which electricity began to light our homes and church buildings, candles and oil lamps were the source of light in the darkness. They remain a symbol of the presence of the Light of Jesus in many churches today.

It is easy, however, for us humans to mistake the symbol for the reality. I remember being savaged in my last charge after an 8.00 BCP Holy Communion for not having had candles on the Communion Table. The attack was so visceral it brought tears to my eyes, to my own astonishment. The person knew nothing of the story behind this mortal sin (server not turning up, my daughter in hospital etc.) You'd have thought God had been forcibly ejected from the service, which of course, he wasn't.

This innocent devotion to symbol rather than reality is what made the reformers reject candles (and much other symbology) as they sought to return Christians to the true source of spiritual light, God-in-Jesus. (Of

course, they still had to light their buildings with candles and oil lamps!)

The old man Simeon saw, in the baby Jesus, this God-revealing light now come into the world, after all the waiting. If the candle reminds us of Him, great! These days, maybe an LED lamp would be a better symbol: much more powerful. Perhaps we should rename the festival LEDmas?!

It's not the candle that's important, it's the Christ.

Watch the talk on this link.

Gospel for Epiphany 4

Mark 1.21-28 A Man with an Evil Spirit

21 Jesus and his disciples came to the town of Capernaum, and on the next Sabbath Jesus went to the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people who heard him were amazed at the way he taught, for he wasn't like the teachers of the Law; instead, he taught with authority.

23 Just then a man with an evil spirit came into the synagogue and screamed, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Are you here to destroy us? I know who you are—you are God's holy messenger!"

25 Jesus ordered the spirit,

"Be quiet, and come out of the man!"

26 The evil spirit shook the man hard, gave a loud scream, and came out of him. 27 The people were all



so amazed that they started saying to one another, "What is this? Is it some kind of new teaching? This man has authority to give orders to the evil spirits, and they obey him!"

28 And so the news about Jesus spread quickly everywhere in the province of Galilee.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK #2

30 years after Jesus was presented right at the start of his mission on earth, Jesus is confronted by a man described as being 'with an unclean spirit (en pneumati akathartou)' (Mk 1.23).

Now, there's much debate in the church about what this means. Some will only allow that this man is

psychologically disturbed and that it was his human spirit that was unclean, i.e. he was mentally ill, his dopamine was dysregulated, or some such. It was naive first century understanding that interpreted the encounter as with an evil spirit that assaulted the man, whereas if they'd known like we sophisticates do, they'd have known it was mental illness. This may well be a reliable diagnosis, only beginning to be understood in our day, for people who exhibit disturbed behaviour.

There maybe more in this account than a disturbed mind. People in the biblical world recognised mental



illness not associated with demons (e.g. from 1000 years before Jesus, 2 Samuel 21.13-14).

Unclean spirits, or demonions (it's nearly always the diminutive noun daimonion conveying how powerless these are against Christ) are seen in scripture as defined, not infinite, spirit-beings, as fallen angels (2Pet 2.4).

Numbers of the gospel accounts of Jesus casting out demonions are about physical, not psychiatric illness. (Mtt 9.32f; 12.22f; 17.15f etc.)

How did the man know that Jesus was the 'Holy One of God.' He'd hardly done anything to reveal his divine nature at this early point. This recognition of Jesus as divine occurs in a number of his encounters with people described as having unclean spirits (e.g. Mk 1.34; 5.7; Lk 4.41).

Was Jesus addressing the man, or his unclean human spirit, or the mental illness, or a fallen angel? (Mk 1.25).

Why did Jesus command the unclean spirit to come out of the man, and to leave him alone?

Did Jesus, son of God, creator of the universe, master storyteller and behavioural influencer, not know psychology and neural chemistry?

How come the man was healed instantly, when it may take years of therapy today?

The opposite extreme to dismissing the existence of unclean spirit-beings, or demonions, is finding them everywhere, and blaming them for every wrong. This is to give them too much power, and too high a

number. If they are fallen angels, their number is finite and limited, and they are defeated.

In his Preface to Screwtape Letters, CS Lewis wrote: "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."

Jesus healed the man with a command, banishing the darkness with His light, and he recruited followers to do the same...

Watch the talk on this link.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith in God.

We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

HYMN 3

Son of God Eternal Saviour

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXDjkXe_btA

I Will Fear No More (The Afters)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wMmmbJlWhtk&feature=youtu.be>

Prayers- [Follow this link for intercessory Prayers.](#)

The Collect for Peace

O God, who art the author of peace and lover of concord, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom; defend us thy humble servants in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The following form of prayer may be used:
We pray for strength to follow Jesus.
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.

**Jesus said: Unless you change
and become humble like little children,
you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.**
Saviour, we hear your call.
Help us to follow.

We pray for the coming of God's kingdom.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.
You sent your Son to bring good news to the poor, sight to the blind, freedom to captives, and salvation to your people;
anoint us with your Spirit;
rouse us to work in his name,
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

Send us to bring help to the poor and freedom to the oppressed.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.
Send us to tell the world the good news of your healing love.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

Send us to those who mourn, to bring joy and gladness instead of grief.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.
Send us to proclaim that the time is here for you to save your people.
Father, by your Spirit bring in your kingdom.

In faith we pray:
That you will strengthen us in your service, and fill our hearts with longing for your kingdom
(Isaiah 61.1-3 & Luke 4.18-19)

The Lord's Prayer (Berj Topalian)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.

<https://www.gnu-tube.com/music/out-of-nowhere-2/track/the-lords-prayer/>

HYMN 4

And Can it Be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQeIGbKqiw8>

God of All My Days (Casting Crowns)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYkZE8AogDE>

THE BLESSING

**Christ the Son of God perfect in us
the image of his glory
and gladden our hearts
with the good news of his kingdom;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always. Amen.**

Extras

If you have 10 minutes to spend being awed by God's creation, try one of these:

Creation Calls, Brian Doerkson

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28sq5H5hao>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-kVMcvMWcg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTsBBxTgdvg>

And Can it Be (Phatfish & Lou Felliham)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oc3y07FWEAE>

Refiner's Fire (Jeremy Passion & the Catinas)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RqpOJMYJvhU>

The Story of the song...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VjBZBiYhOcl>

O My Soul (Casting Crowns)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWvzmbbgGLU>

Demon Possession and Mental Illness, Prof Chris Cook, retired Consultant Psychiatrist

<https://www.cmf.org.uk/resources/publications/content/?context=article&id=619>