

Christ the Light of the World

For about a month now, as in every year, we have been celebrating various aspects of Christ coming into this world to enlighten all who sat in darkness. His coming was announced to shepherds in the fields by angels. Astronomer kings from far away were beckoned to meet Him by a star. Those who had come out to John preaching and baptizing in the River Jordan, even if they didn't see the dove descending upon Christ, nor hear the voice of the Father from the cloud, heard John's testimony about He who is greater than I. Even to the blind old priest Simeon, who had been skeptical about Isaiah's prophecy of the Virgin bearing the Messiah, and the aged widow prophetess Hannah, now behold the light which can lead all who receive it to peace.

Now, it is time for us to prepare for the greatest feast of all. To properly appreciate the New Covenant which our Lord came to proclaim, today, consider His personal example, preaching, committed observance of everything revealed to the prophets and patriarchs. From His birth to His Ascension into heaven Christ observed the spirit of these laws. Eight days after His birth, He was circumcised and given the Name Jesus. Forty days after His birth, He was brought to the temple for the rites of purification and dedication or redemption of Him as the first-born.

In those days, there were many Jews who refused to enter that temple. Such protestors objected that it was served by a corrupt priesthood, collaborating with Rome's agent kings. But as our Lord was carried in the temple as an infant, St. Luke recorded a wonderful encounter with two individuals proving that some of God's people still anticipated the fulfillment of His promises. They immediately were inspired to recognize Jesus as the One to fulfill all the prophecies.

In our time, with even a greater cloud of witnesses, stretching all the way from Apostolic times to the present, there are those who overlook Christ's words, ". . . I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 16 :18 & 19) Obviously, discounting such quotes, they suppose that because some may have mishandled their charge, that the healing Priesthood ordained by Christ is no longer to be taken seriously. Was it not the same Lord and Saviour, telling those He sent out into the world to teach, baptize, bind and

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loose on earth as it is in heaven, change bread and wine into His life saving body and blood, in commemoration of what He did for the life of the world? Did not the same light Who came to enlighten the nations and be glory of His people Israel, give the Holy Spirit that they might forgive sins? (John 20:22 & 23)

Now, as we anticipate the start of the Great Fast, let us turn from whatever darkness persists in our own lives, to fitting preparation for the greatest feast of the year. Let us heed Christ's call for all to "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." If you do not yet have a spiritual father, find one. If you already have one, call him, and make an appointment to rid yourself of whatever might keep you from entering that kingdom, for it may be later than you think.

Abba Thomas,
(Yekatit 8)15th Feb 2009,
The Feast of Christ's Entry into the Temple