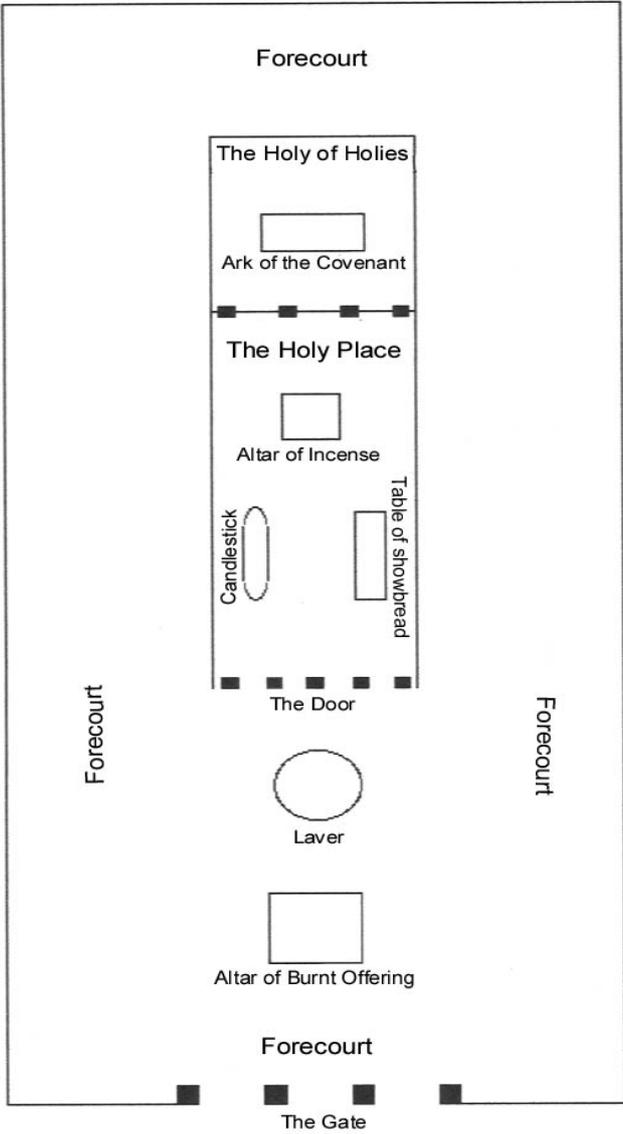


Luke (Chapter 2)

The Book of the NEW MAN in Christ

"Verse by verse" the deeper meaning of this Bible-book, explained in the light of the Israeli Tabernacle.

Plan of the Israeli Tabernacle



> The Endtime-messenger <

Part I

The court-life of the believer

Chapter 2

The birth of the NEW LIFE



The previous chapter ended with the circumcision of John the Baptist, the symbol of a willing entering (on our side) of the Blood-covenant with Christ: a willing surrender unto God, that all of the process of God's work on the cross, unto the annihilation of our old life, might be done unto us. After the promises without repentance of God's Word the NEW LIFE of God, which will then be poured into us, will follow such faith and attitude of life. In this light it is understandable, that in this new chapter the NEW LIFE of God is depicted in the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. God's profound wisdom lies herein: John the Baptist had to be born earlier, and only thereafter God's Christ: first heartfelt repentance and surrender must be born in us before NEW LIFE of God can be produced in us; because, as we saw, this NEW LIFE could only develop within us on the pure and holy foundation of Jesus Christ.

The birth of Jesus Christ.

2 verse 1-3: *"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria). And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city."*

Here is a brief report of the first census in the Roman empire. This census had taken quite a lot of doing: everyone had to be registered in the town or place of origin of the family. This most probably had to do with civil rights. In any case, this registration was done in connection with taxes, that were to be charged. Thereafter such censuses were to take place once every 14 years in the Roman empire.

2 verse 4-5: *"And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David); To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child."*

Obedying the command of the emperor of Rome, because Israel in those days was under the dominion of the Roman Empire, Joseph, too, went with Mary to whom he was to be married, to Bethlehem, the city of the origin of the entire house of David, unto which Joseph as well as Mary belonged. Mary then was in an advanced state of pregnancy of the Child Jesus: it was about the time that she should deliver. One understands how difficult that must have been. This gives us a striking idea, how a Christian who is truly full of Jesus, often has to suffer painfully the things of this world. Here Mary already stood in the adumbration (the most central, darkest part of the shadow)(or foreshadow) of the cross, which

> The Endtime-messenger <

would also crucify her own life, her "I"/self, completely. Quietly, and without grumbling, with a patient heart, Mary must have gone this for her difficult way beside Joseph.

2 verse 6-7: *"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger (i.e. a feeding trough for animals!); because there was no room for them in the inn."*

He, Who is the NEW LIFE, the Resurrection Life, Himself, was born in a manger, in a stable for animals. He **must** be born there. God had determined that. That stable was the place predetermined by God. In that dirty stable for animals, where also was dung, He must be born; because the human heart into which He must be born in the Spirit, is also dirty, like a stable for animals, because of all the sins of the people. This explains why He had to be born there, exactly there. He was laid in a manger, because He was to be food, the Bread of Life, for us. When we eat Him in the spirit; i.e. when we open our heart unto Him, and allow Him (access) into our heart and life, then we will receive NEW LIFE. I repeat: Jesus Christ can only really become the Bread of Life for us, when we, in answer to the call of the preacher unto repentance (in those days John the Baptist), repent sincerely. If we thus have communion with Him, as our Prince of Life, by accepting His Word and by having all His promises in our life fulfilled by Him, then we **know**, by our faith, that the ETERNAL LIFE, the Kingdom of God, enters into our heart and life.

The witnesses to His birth.

Now we shall have a close look at the witnesses at His birth. Projected unto the inner life of our heart, the birth of the NEW LIFE knows similar witnesses. God's Word is unfailing and wonderful. As He came among witnesses in those days, so it is with the coming of the NEW LIFE into our heart.

God's Word mentions three kinds of witnesses around His birth. Shortly after His birth: the shepherds. Forty days after His birth: two old, faithful souls: Simon and Anna. The third group of witnesses are the three wise men, who came to witness to the birth of the "born King of the Jews" about two years after His birth. Alleluia! And so it is in the deep center of our own being. Let us learn to see this, as we study the relating Scripture parts in the light of the birth of the NEW MAN in us. For you already know that the Gospel after Luke is the Gospel which announces the NEW MAN in God, who as a matter of course is a priest of God; all this because this Gospel mentions Jesus Christ as God's NEW MAN and High Priest. By Him alone we could be a NEW CREATION, and priests of the most high God.

The first group of witnesses: the shepherds.

2 verse 8-14: *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord (suddenly) came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men (or better translated: in the people that please God)."*

Well then, who perceive first of all God's joyous message of redemption and renewal? It is our ears. They first hear the Gospel, which is brought to us by His angels; they are: the servants of God. At the birth of Jesus they were the creatures of heaven, but at the projection unto our inner being they are the earthly angels of God: the proclaims of the gospel, and servants of God. Scripture also calls an earthly servant of God an angel of the Lord (Revelation 2 and 3).

Thus it is **our body** which first hears the joyful message of God. And how do we react to this heard or read joyful message? If we react positively, like the shepherds did in those days, then things are well with us.

2 verse 15-20: *"And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."*

The angels' message was received with faith and passion. They immediately went to investigate whether this was true, and they went to Bethlehem (this means: House of Bread), in order to hear and see everything concerning that wonderful Savior and Messiah they were told about. Would we also have acted in such a way when we heard the good news? Did we then immediately go to the place of gathering, the house where the Bread of Life is handed out? Did we also with faith and passion look for Him until we would have found Him? So then, **our body** is the first witness of the NEW LIFE, that God wants to give us, and has given us. If not only our body heard this message, but if also our **inner being** shared it, then only will be fulfilled in us this wondrous new thing. Then our **spirit** will be a witness of the NEW LIFE, and will share this new thing.

> The Endtime-messenger <

The second group of witnesses: Simon and Anna.

2 verse 21-24: *"And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb (of Mary, His mother). And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons."*

According to the Law God had given Israel, a woman was impure for seven days after the birth of a son, and at the birth of a daughter 2 x 7 days (see Leviticus 12). On the eighth day after his birth a son was also considered pure, and the circumcision was allowed to take place, whereby he was taken up into the community of Israel. At this religious ceremony he was also given his name. This way the child shared the blood-covenant God had made with Abraham (see Genesis 17:9-14), and which He confirmed in Moses by means of the circumcision. The number eight being the number of the resurrection into the NEW LIFE. So our spirit, too, must share in this NEW LIFE by living in relationship with and in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It further is written here: "When the days of her purification were accomplished...". When are these accomplished for a young mother? Leviticus 12 teaches that an Israeli mother must remain "three and thirty days in the blood of her purification", only then was she allowed to go to the temple to bring the burnt and sin offering required by the Law. That is, at the birth of a boy, only after 7 + 33 days = 40 days. At the birth of a girl that was 14 + 66 days = 80 days. Now forty is the number of fullness of trial.

Is not there in this number symbolism a wonderful picture which must be found again in our inner life? 8 is the number of resurrection, of NEW LIFE; but 40 is the number of fullness of trial that we have chosen Jesus above all things or people here on earth. Do we really? Does our spirit choose Him at all the trials of every day life? This way of life of our spirit must, in this life, grow out of an early beginning unto fullness, from eight days to forty days, from rebirth unto mature holiness; that we, purified by God of all the old and sinful in us, choose this NEW LIFE above **all** else! That we choose Jesus Christ above **all things** and **all people**! Only then can we truly and worthily take our places in the spiritual temple of almighty God.

Such a life devoted to God is depicted here by two people: a man and a woman: Simeon and Anna.

2 verse 25-35: *"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came (led) by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marveled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (Yes, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

You here see Simeon act first. He was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God. So also our spirit, from the deepest part of our heart, must want to be obedient under the guidance of God's Spirit; we must **be willing** to be led by the Holy Spirit. We must be willing to leave what He wants us to leave; must be willing to do what He wants us to do. We must be willing to be what He wants us to be. So we must proceed step by step under the guidance of the Spirit of God. Now this is guidance by the Holy Spirit, Who will lead us from resurrection to fullness, from rebirth to mature holiness. We must be willing to walk this road of God **obediently**. We must be willing to go obediently to the world of the Child Jesus; from the Child Jesus through Calvary's cross to union with the throne of God, in Christ. Are we thus willing to bring our sin and burnt offerings unto God complete obedience unto Him? Are we willing to completely follow Him wherever He goes or stands? O beloved, this kind of offer requires a whole life of purification and sanctification in the patience of God's Holy Spirit on the basis of our faith in the shed blood; in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for us. Then we shall arrive at a life that will follow and obey Him in all His gentlest and tenderest gestures, to the honor of His unsurpassed Name, and to the richest spiritual fruit-bearing in Him. However, we often are so unwilling, and our flesh fights against the wise and loving decisions of our God. O, if only we would learn to obey Him; to never again grieve Him; to beg Him for the strength to do the things which are so beneficial to our eternal spirit...

But not only has Simeon been pictured here as a type of the human spirit, but, as we read on, also Anna, a daughter of Phanuel.

2 verse 36-39: *"And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity (from the day she married as a virgin); And she was a widow of about fourscore and four (i.e. eighty-four) years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned unto Galilee, to their own city Nazareth."*

> The Endtime-messenger <

God's Spirit did not just want to show a man as a type of the human spirit, but also a woman. In other words: He equally loves the spirit of a man and that of a woman. Both come as witnesses to the birth of the NEW LIFE, of His existence here on earth. Let us accept this in gratitude. When therefore our spirit has accepted Him as our Prince of Life, then only remains for our soul to die, to make room for the heavenly soul, the soul of Christ. Each day's revelation now must become the **fulfillment** of this Word. Only then our soul, too, will form the third witness of our share in this NEW LIFE in Christ.

The third group of witnesses: the three wise men.

This third group is not mentioned in the Gospel of Luke. Matthew does report it in his Gospel (see Matthew 2).

About two years after the birth of Jesus, three wise men came "from the East". We will investigate who they were and where exactly they came from. God's Word is not very clear about this. There have been explanations about this, but we will, in this study, leave this an open question. Our interest lies in the image, projected upon our inner being, and what it tells us. They reacted to the birth of the "born King of the Jews", as **our soul** is to react to everything concerning Jesus, and all of the Word of God.

Man has a physical life. And we have a spiritual life, but also a soul life. All three kinds must bear witness to the birth of the Christ within us. These three wise men form the third group of witnesses; together they form the testimony our soul has to give in all its revelation forms.

Were Simeon and Anna, types of our spirit, led by the Holy Ghost when God's anointing came over them, so were these three wise men led by a star. Israeli symbolism (the teaching of symbols, namely a sign or subject depicting something spiritual) know only the six-pointed star as the holy star of God which refers to the Messiah and His coming. As we know, this star consists of two equilateral triangles: one pointing upwards, the other downwards. Together they form the well known "Star of David", the sign of each religious Israelite.

The upwards pointing triangle with its three corners or three sides portrays God in His threefold revelation. The downward pointing triangle depicts man who, after the image of God, also consists of three elements, namely: spirit, soul, and body. Linked together these triangles form a six-pointed star, the image of the God-Man, the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ, also called "the Bright Morning-star"; but also (the image) of each child of God, in whom God's Spirit has made His dwelling to lead this child of God to complete surrender to, and acceptance of, the Lordship (and thus the dominion) of Jesus Christ; and Who wants to cleanse the changed (i.e. heavenly) soul of man in this way, and to adorn it with (all) gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

The soul of God's Word often is depicted as a raiment that must be washed, day by day, in the blood of the Lamb, in the power of the Holy Spirit, until it is immaculately white as a wedding gown! Our deeds, our words, our silence, our wishes and our acts, God regards them as a raiment. Our purification and sanctification in Christ so form the raiment of our righteousness in Him. "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." (Revelation 19:8) Therefore each day our soul radiates what our spirit wants and desires; as our spirit leads, so our soul reveals itself in our daily actions and words, in our wishes, thoughts and desires. The spirit within us is the responsible leader, which one day must answer to God, and which has an **eternal** destiny.

The three wise men were led by a star to the "born King of the Jews", where they brought their offerings; so our soul, by the indwelling Spirit and the Word, must be formed into a complete likeness of God's purity and holiness; of God's righteousness, which is given us in Christ by His excellent grace. These three are called "wise" by the Word of God, because they came to the "born King" and subjected themselves to Him, as was evident in their offerings of gold, incense and myrrh. "Gold" is the god of this world, which to the worldly man is worth everything. But the first wise man laid this at His feet as an offering, that he might receive from the King of the Kingdom of heaven the Gold of a NEW LIFE in the Holy Spirit, which is tried by fire. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich..." (Revelation 3:18). The second wise man lay "incense" at His feet, as a sign that he wished to worship only Him. Let us be careful not to worship man or thing, neither our "I", which is worshipped by men who are proud and full of desire for honor and/or fame! The third wise man laid "myrrh" at the feet of the Child Jesus. "Myrrh" was used by the Israelite as an ingredient of the Balm ointment, wherewith the dead were anointed. This "myrrh offering" was an expression of his express will to **die** in Him to the old life, the life of the flesh; to be buried in Him that the gold of the NEW LIFE in and with Christ also be victorious in him. O that we all, who say we love Him, express this in our prayers, in our confession, in our acts and walk, in our thoughts and desires, in our speech and silence!

Our prayer is that the image of the Lord Jesus Christ will be found in our soul life – by our offering of gold, incense and myrrh – and that this image, by our faithfulness in bringing these offerings, will grow into maturity! How beautiful God's Word is in Its symbols. They are as a many-faceted brilliant (diamond) held in the light of the sun. These pictures reveal all the depths of our inner life. Unfortunately, they are hidden for many. But God's Spirit will reveal them to those who sincerely long for God's righteousness. God wants to tell them of His love for you and for me; yes, for all men. And He wants us all to give the same testimony – after body, soul and spirit – of His birth, of His growth, and of His maturity in our being. May God grant that this testimony after body, soul and spirit will be found in you and in me unto our salvation in Him, unto the honor and glory of His still unparalleled Name.

> The Endtime-messenger <

Christ wants to grow in us and work through us towards the strength that works in us with power.

2 verse 40-52: *"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they (his parents) saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."*

We have studied the first part of this chapter in the light of the birth of Jesus in our heart and life; of the testimony our body, our spirit and our soul give of this birth in our being; therefore it goes without saying that we continue to study this remaining part in the same light; namely in the light of a growing of Christ within us.

We read a report of an event in the life of the twelve-year-old Jesus. Let us first look at the symbolic (meaning) of the number 12. In various places in the Word of God the number 12 is built up of 3 x 4. The number 3 points to the triune God. The number 4 to the world and the four quarters. The number 12 thus tells us of the work of this triune God in the whole world. Therefore 12 is the specific number of the Church of Christ, particularly the work of the Holy Spirit in this world after Jesus had given Himself in His atoning sacrifice. There also were twelve tribes of Israel which again form the Old-Testament type of this Church. There were twelve foundation-apostles, who laid the foundations of the Church of Christ and built it up.

Therefore it is understandable that the twelfth year of Jesus would not pass into oblivion like all those other "quiet" years of His youth. In His twelfth year He was found in the temple by Mary and Joseph, because He must be "in the things of His Father". God's Spirit, if He is working in us, wants us to be the same: namely producing spiritual gifts and fruit. One was astonished at His wisdom and answers. It could also be that one asks oneself: where did that preacher or evangelist get it from? One will especially wonder about this, when such a person never visited a Bible school or theological college. For the only source that preacher or evangelist has is Christ. He should have no other source if His Word is still to be "prophetic". The Holy Spirit was also active in the twelve-year-old Jesus in the temple, in His capacity as Teacher of the Church. So, a Spirit-filled preacher, who is uneducated in the things of God's Word, by the light (and thus insight) of God's Spirit, could explain clearly and wonderfully God's Word. Then the gift of God's Spirit is active in such a life to the full knowledge of the Son of God, that one be not tossed to and fro and carried about with every influence of cunning deceit of human errors, but grow into a complete man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4: 13-14).

Let us therefore seek this wondrous activity of the Spirit within us. Let us especially seek to be baptized with His Spirit and let us then be filled, and remain, with that Spirit, and long for it that that Spirit will grow in us to all its fullness. Not to use this anointing, but to have ourselves be used by God's Spirit as an instrument in His wonderful Hand according to His will. Strive after it that the anointing of God will have a free hand in your life that His anointing work in and through you. Then He will show the world that His saving Hand is almighty, for that anointing of God, working on in the Word, is not to be stopped by any power. As Revelation 6 verse 2 says, He is conquering and to conquer!

Mary and Joseph found Him this way after a three-day search. So, we, too, will find Jesus in our life if we toil and seek Him for three days. Symbolically these three days mean our sharing in His death and resurrection. If we truly seek Jesus in this way, through His death and resurrection, we shall find Him; He, Who can work everything in our life, and Who can form our life into a fruitful branch of His. He could only do this if we surrender completely to the divine standards He has established in His Word; if we willingly subject ourselves to His divine chastisement – in the strength we will receive from Him – lay off all things of the flesh and of the world.

The end of Chapter 2 (from Part 1)

By E. van den Worm

2nd revised edition, January 2000

P.S.:

For Chapter 1 see our Blog at 10 November 2009.