

Notes for Next Sunday

Second Sunday after Christmas

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (1 Kings 3:4-15). In return for Solomon's selfless request for wisdom, God blesses him, not only with wisdom, but also with riches and honor. May we, like Solomon, recognize that we do not deserve the wonderful opportunities God gives us. Because of our human limitations, we are unable to perfectly fulfill the challenges we face. Yet, in Christ, we have forgiveness; we are a new creation and can do all things through Him who gives us strength and wisdom.

Epistle (Ephesians 1:3-14). All one sentence in Greek, this section is often called a "doxology" because it recites what God has done and is an expression of worship to honor him. Paul speaks first of the blessings we have through the Father (v. 3), then of those that come through the Son (vv. 4–13a) and finally of those through the Holy Spirit (1:13b–14).

Gospel (Luke 2:40-52). Luke continues last week's emphasis on the presence of God and the temple. Jesus, born of woman, grew as man grows. But with the completion of everything according to the Law, Luke answers the question posed of John the Baptizer: What will this one be? How will this one increase and abound in wisdom? Luke provides this event as his response, to anticipate how Jesus will be about the Father's matters in his ministry. Or to view it from our Lord's eyes: "You brought me to the temple and I was dedicated to the service of the Lord. Did you not think that I would be in my Father's house?" This record demonstrates that Jesus always had set his face set toward Jerusalem, his Father's matters at the temple.

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

OLD TESTAMENT – 1 Kings 3:4-15

⁴ The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." ⁶ Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. ⁷ "Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" ¹⁰ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ¹³ Moreover, I will

give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴ And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.” ¹⁵ Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

3:4 *Gibeon*. The Gibeonites tricked Joshua and Israel into a peace treaty at the time of the conquest of Canaan (see Jos 9:3–27). The city was subsequently given to the tribe of Benjamin and set apart for the Levites (Jos 18:25; 21:17). David avenged Saul’s violation of the Gibeonite treaty by the execution of seven of Saul’s descendants (see 2Sa 21:1–9). (CSB)

3:5 *dream*. Revelation through dreams is found elsewhere in the OT (see Ge 28:12; 31:11; 46:2; Nu 12:6; Jdg 7:13; Da 2:4; 7:1), as well as in the NT (see, e.g., Mt 1:20; 2:12, 22). (CSB)

3:7 *I am only a little child*. The birth of Solomon is generally placed in approximately the middle of David’s 40-year reign, meaning that Solomon was about 20 years old at the beginning of his own reign (see 2:11–12) and lacked experience in assuming the responsibilities of his office (cf. Jer 1:6). (CSB)

3:9 A DISCERNING HEART – This is “hearing or listening heart.” This is much more than a request for the proverbial wisdom “to listen twice as much as we speak because we have two ears and only one mouth.” This is godly listening, to listen first to God and his Word and then to act. This request is for spiritual discernment. Solomon acknowledges that true wisdom and understanding come from God alone. If he is to faithfully govern the people of God, he must always look to God for guidance and strength. Then and only then will he be a wise and faithful king. (Concordia Pupil Resources – Volume 12, part 3)

3:10 THE LORD WAS PLEASED – He granted not only the request for a discerning heart, but also granted honor and riches. God’s reaction to the prayer of Solomon is a foreshadowing of the words of Jesus in Mt. 6:33. (Concordia Pupil Resources – Volume 12, part 3)

3:11 *long life ... wealth ... death of your enemies*. Typical desires of ancient Near Eastern monarchs. (CSB)

EPISTLE – Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in

accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. ¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

1:3 “Blessed be” ESV is a prayer based on the Jewish Berakah “Blessed” pater (Dt. 2:20-23). In Hebrew, the same word is used for our blessing (praising) God and His blessing us (giving us good gifts). Paul naturally begins this way, since he has spent three years worshiping with the Ephesians as their pastor. This Trinitarian prayer invokes the blessings of the Father (vv 3-6), Son (vv 7-12), and Holy Spirit (vv 13-14). (TLSB)

1:3 *heavenly realms*. Occurs five times in Ephesians, emphasizing Paul's perception that in the exaltation of Christ (his resurrection and enthronement at God's right hand) and in the Christian's union with the exalted Christ ultimate issues are involved—issues that pertain to the divine realm and that in the final analysis are worked out in and from that realm.

1:3 *in Christ*. This phrase (or one like it) occurs 12 times in vv. 3–12. It refers to the spiritual union of Christ with believers, which Paul often symbolizes by the metaphor “body of Christ” (CSB)

This is the key theme of Ephesians. (TLSB) This can mean “by or through Christ,” as the agent of our salvation. Christ is also the One in whom we find God's gifts. We are baptized “into Christ” (Gal. 3:26-27) and experience what He has (Eph. 2:4-6). (TLSB p. 1903)

1:4 *chose*. As Israel was once God's chosen people (Dt. 4:37; 14:2), the Christian Church is now chosen (Rom. 9; 1 Peter 2:9-10). “God's Word leads us to Christ, who is the Book of Life, in whom all are written and elected who are to be saved in eternity” (FC Ep XI 7). (TLSB)

1:5 *adopted*. In the Greco-Roman world, only sons could inherit (Gal. 4:7). Some men ignored their natural children and declared an adopted son as heir. To be adopted by God is to be reborn into His family, made heirs of His kingdom (John 1:12-13; Rom. 8:16-17; 1 John 3:1-2). This happens, when we are all made “sons” (children, heirs) of God through His Son, Jesus (John 3:5; Gal. 3:26-29). (TLSB)

1:8 LAVISHED ON US – perisseuo To excel beyond any imagination. To be superabundant in giving.

“In accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us,” He did the unthinkable: God Himself paid the price. He sent His Son to be our substitute, to suffer and die in our place. Through His blood we have been rescued from the captivity of sin and freed from its guilt. (PBC)

1:9 *mystery*. An astonishing revelation – the Gospel is for the Gentiles as well as the Jew (3:6). “Mystery religions” in the ancient world promised to reveal mysterious truths as adherents progressed to higher levels. For Paul, the emphasis is not on things kept hidden, but that things once hidden in God’s plan are now revealed to all (3:9). Paul defines the mystery primarily as Jesus Himself (5:32; Col. 1:27; 2:2-3), whom God revealed as the Messiah to the apostles and prophets (3:3-5), and whom they revealed to the world in their preaching (3:8-9; 6:19; Col. 1:25-27). (TLSB)

1:10 *to bring ... under one head*. Literally, “put under one head,” i.e., Christ (cf. v. 22; 4:15; 5:23). Because Jesus is both God and man, humankind and God are reconciled in Him (2:16; 2 Cor. 5:18-20). Because all who are baptized are “in Christ,” they are also reconciled to one another, whether Jew or Gentile, male or female, slave or free (2:14; Ga. 3:26-29). (TLSB)

1:14 *deposit*. Deposit or down payment; a substantial part of a purchase price paid in advance. The Holy Spirit dwells in us as the firstfruits of God’s gifts; the final “payment” is the resurrection and eternal life (Rom. 8:23)

GOSPEL – Luke 2:40-52

⁴⁰ **And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.** ⁴¹ **Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover.** ⁴² **When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.** ⁴³ **After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.** ⁴⁴ **Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.** ⁴⁵ **When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.** ⁴⁶ **After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.** ⁴⁷ **Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.** ⁴⁸ **When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”** ⁴⁹ **“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”** ⁵⁰ **But they did not understand what he was saying to them.** ⁵¹ **Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.** ⁵² **And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

2:40 CHILD GREW AND BECAME STRONG – The lad attained more and more wisdom in the Biblical sense as the right knowledge of God and His salvation coupled with its application to life. In the case of Jesus this included the realization of His own relationship to God. (Lanski)

2:41 *Feast of the Passover.* Annual attendance at three feasts by all adult males (normally accompanied by their families) was commanded in the law: Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. Distance prevented many from attending all three, but most Jews tried to be at Passover. (CSB)

2:42 *twelve years old.* At age 12 boys began preparing to take their places in the religious community the following year. (CSB)

2:43 AFTER THE FEAST WAS OVER – The two feasts of Passover and Unleavened Bread lasted a total of 7 days (Ex. 12:15; Lev. 23:8; Deut 16:3). According to Jewish tradition, pilgrims were only required to stay 2 days, but Joseph and Mary fulfilled the entire period. During this time, Jesus may have established a routine of being out of sight of his parents, which could have included his spending time in the temple with the rabbis. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

2:46 *three days.* One day traveling away from Jerusalem, a second traveling back and a third looking for him. (CSB)

LISTENING...ASKING QUESTIONS – The type of rabbinic teaching was for both teachers and pupils to ask probing questions, and to use the answers as springboards for religious instruction. It is still a wonderful thing to listen to learned people talk intelligently about issues that matter. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

2:48-49 Mary again is about to confront the sword. In view of Jesus' actions, she must contend with the announcement from Gabriel, the words of the shepherds, and the words of Simeon. Though they had brought him to the temple at Mary's purification and now for this feast, Mary and Joseph cannot yet perceive that this Jesus will save his people from their sins or what that will entail. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

2:50 THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND – Jesus' very first words are misunderstood, a theme for his life. Since the necessity to be about the things of his Father has passion overtones, this misunderstanding fits well into the patterns of misunderstanding that accompanies the passion predictions (9:22; 9:44-45; 18:31-34). (CC pp. 131-132)

2:51 WAS OBEDIENT TO THEM – ἦν ὑποτασσόμενος αὐτοῖς—Jesus' obedience to his parents is part of his active obedience. The periphrastic construction implies continual obedience. He let himself be placed in the proper divine ordering of the family. (CC)

