

## Second Sunday after Christmas

OLD TESTAMENT – 1 Kings 3:4-16

<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> 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.” <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> “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. <sup>8</sup> Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. <sup>9</sup> 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?” <sup>10</sup> The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. <sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> 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.” <sup>15</sup> 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)

No reason is given why Solomon went to sacrifice at “the great high place” in Gibeon, c 6 mi NW of Jerusalem. (TLSB)

*most important high place.* The reason for Gibeon’s importance was the presence there of the tabernacle and the ancient bronze altar (see 1Ch 21:29; 2Ch 1:2–6). These must have been salvaged after the destruction of Shiloh by the Philistines (see note on 1Sa 7:1). (CSB)

*a thousand.* Denotes a large number rather than an exact count. (TLSB)

**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)

One means of divine revelation (1Sm 28:6, 15), claimed also by false prophets (Jer 23:32; Zec 10:2). (TLSB)

Revelation through dreams was not a common occurrence, but was certainly not unheard of either. If there was any doubt that Solomon was the rightful king according to God, this encounter proved it. Solomon was now assured of God's presence and blessing. (Concordia Pupil Resources – Volume 12, part 3)

*by night.* After his evening religious services. (TLSB)

**3:6 *kindness.*** The Hebrew for this word refers to God's covenant favors (see note on 2Sa 7:15). Solomon is praising the Lord for faithfulness to his promises to David (2Sa 7:8–16). (CSB)

This refers to the great and steadfast loving-kindness that God showed to David through the establishment of a dynasty (2 Sam 7:11-16) and through the forgiveness of sins (2 Sam 12:13). God has proved his faithfulness throughout all time, but especially now in keeping his promise to David was a chief recipient of the grace and mercy of God, in spite of his great sin and many failings. (Concordia Pupil Resources – Volume 12, part 3)

*because.* See note on 2Sa 22:21- (*according to my righteousness.* In vv. 21–25 David refers to the Lord's deliverances as a reward for his own righteousness. While these statements may give the impression of self-righteous boasting and a meritorious basis for divine favor, they should be understood in their context as: (1) David's desire to please the Lord in his service as the Lord's anointed (see note on v. 51); (2) his recognition that the Lord rewards those who faithfully seek to serve him.) (CSB)

SON TO SIT ON HIS THRONE – That the son of David and Bathsheba would sit on the throne – considering their adultery – was further evidence of God's grace and mercy. (Concordia Pupil Resources – Volume 12, part 3)

**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)

Solomon acknowledges both the size and greatness of the people he is to govern and his inexperience and youth. (Concordia Pupil Resources – Volume 12, part 3)

Figure of speech to express lack of experience. Solomon actually had a child of his own at this time (cf 11:42; 14:21). (TLSB)

**DO NOT KNOW HOW TO CARY OUT MY DUTIES** – How to tackle the problems of administering “a great people” whose numbers were bewildering (v. 8; Dt 31:2). Luther says, “It is incurable and damnable rashness and arrogance on my part when I claim to be such a person and such an extraordinary man that I can manage the state, the home, and the church wisely and properly. But if you are judge, a bishop, or a prince, you should not feel ashamed to fall on your knees and say: ‘Lord God, Thou has appointed me...guide and teach me, give me counsel, wisdom, and strength to attend successfully to the office committed to me.’” (TLSB)

**3:8** *great people, too numerous to count.* From the small beginnings of a single family living in Egypt (see Ge 46:26–27; Dt 7:7), the Israelites had increased to an extent approaching that anticipated in the promise given to Abraham (Ge 13:16; 22:17–18) and Jacob (Ge 32:12). See 4:20. (CSB)

Hyperbole. David had conducted censuses, though not without issue (1Ch 21). (TLSB)

**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)

Literally, “a hearing heart.” Hebrew verb “to hear” frequently means “to hearken, to obey” (cf 1 Sam 15:22). To act in obedience to God, Solomon wanted to be able to “discern between good and evil.” Such discrimination required a mind capable of analytic judgments. However, only a heart that listens to the Lord could supply the basis for making correct decisions, the desire to conform to the divine way, and the willpower to act accordingly. (TLSB)

**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)

**ASKED...FOR DISCERNMENT** – Though David was a man after God’s own heart, he lacked judgment, which brought sorrow to his family and kingdom. (TLSB)

Jesus once said, “Seek first His [God’s] kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things [food, drink, clothing] will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33). That is what happened here. (PBC)

**3:12** *never ... anyone like you.* See 4:29–34; 10:1–13. (CSB)

God gave Solomon wisdom the likes of which this world had never see and would never see again. (PBC)

**3:13** *I will give you what you have not asked for.* Cf. Jesus’ promise in Lk 12:31. (CSB)

Israel never grew greater economically or politically than under Solomon. His expanded power naturally diminished the territory and influence of his rivals. (TLSB)

**3:14** *If you walk in my ways ... I will give you a long life.* Echoes Dt 6:2; 17:20; 22:7. Unfortunately Solomon did not remain obedient to the covenant as his father David had (11:6), and he did not live to be much more than 60 years of age (see note on v. 7; cf. 11:42). (CSB)

**3:15** *ark of the Lord’s covenant.* See notes on 6:19; 2Sa 6:2 – (*ark of the covenant of the LORD*). The Ten Commandments are called the “words of the covenant” in Ex 34:28. The stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were inscribed are called the “tablets of the covenant” in Dt 9:9. The ark in which the tablets were kept (see Ex 25:16, 21; 40:20; Dt 10:1–5) is thus sometimes called the “ark of the covenant of the LORD” (see Dt 10:8; 31:9, 25; Jos 3:11). Elsewhere the ark is variously designated as the “ark of the LORD” (Jos 3:13; 4:11), the “ark of the Testimony” (Ex 30:6; 31:7) and the “ark of God” (1Sa 3:3; 4:11, 17, 21; 5:1–2). (CSB)

David had brought it to Jerusalem (2 Sam 6:16-17). (TLSB)

*fellowship offerings.* See note on 1Sa 11:15 – (This type of offering was an important element in the original ceremony of covenant ratification at Sinai (Ex 24:5, 11). It represented the communion or peace between the Lord and his people when the people lived in conformity with their covenant obligations (see Lev 7:11–17; 22:21–23). (CSB)

*held a great celebration.* Rejoicing is the expression of people who have renewed their commitment to the Lord, confessed their sin (see 12:19) and been given a king.). (CSB)

A sacrificial meal in connection with the thank-offerings. To those who seek first of all the kingdom of God and His righteousness all other things are added by virtue of His free grace. (Kretzmann)

**3:1–15** 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. • O Lord God, do not forsake me in my life of service, lest I bring it all to ruin. May Your Word, my constant companion, give me strength and wisdom. In Jesus' name. Amen. (TLSB)

#### EPISTLE – Ephesians 1:3-14

**<sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. <sup>7</sup> In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace <sup>8</sup> that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. <sup>9</sup> And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> 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, <sup>12</sup> in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup> 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, <sup>14</sup> who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.**

**1:3–14** 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). (CSB)

“Blessed be” ESV is a prayer based on the Jewish Berakah “Blessed” patter (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)

*Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Jesus' relation to God the Father is unique (see Jn 20:17 and note). (CSB)

Jesus is true God. As true man, He addressed the Father as “My God” (Mt. 27:46; John 20:17). He taught us to pray this way and prays with us. (TLSB)

*blessed ... blessing.* Jewish people used the word “bless” to express both God's kindness to us and our thanks or praise to him. (CSB)

The happy condition of those who revere the Lord and do his will (see 94:12; 112:1; 119:1–2; 128:1; Pr 29:18; cf. Ps 41:1; 106:3; Pr 14:21; Isa 56:2), who put their trust in him (see 40:4; 84:5, 12; 144:15; 146:5; Pr 16:20; Isa 30:18; Jer 17:7; cf. Ps 2:12; 34:8), and so are blessed by God (see especially 41:1–3; 144:12–14; see also Mt 5:3–12). The Psalter begins by proclaiming the blessedness of the godly and ends by calling all living things to praise God in his earthly and heavenly sanctuaries (Ps 150). (CSB)

The word means more than “happy,” because happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. “Blessed” here refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God. (CSB-Mt) (CSB)

Who has a joy, of which neither crosses nor losses can deprive him; who will be happy as long as he lives; and who has still more happiness in store for him when death is past. The psalmist is not speaking of the good man as happy because he is aiming at happiness, but as being so because he follows the Law of God, and finds joy therein, without seeking for joy for its own sake. (Note from Psalm 1) – A news reporter recently interviewed the winner of a 45-million-dollar lottery. The sheer overwhelming, “blessedness” of this woman’s experience was written all over her face! How much more, considering the eternal riches of God in our relationship with Christ are we to wear the mind, heart, and face of the blessed! (LL)

*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. At stake are God’s eternal eschatological purpose (3:11) and the titanic conflict between God and the powerful spiritual forces arrayed against him—a purpose and a conflict that come to focus in the history of redemption. Here (v. 3) Paul asserts that, through their union with the exalted Christ, Christians have already been made beneficiaries of every spiritual blessing that belongs to and comes from the heavenly realm. In vv. 20–22, he proclaims Christ’s exaltation to that realm and his elevation over all other powers and titles so that he rules over all for the sake of his church. According to 2:6, those who have been “made alive with Christ” share in Christ’s exaltation and enthronement in heaven. Thus (3:11) by the gathering of Gentiles and Jews into one body of Christ (the church), God triumphantly displays his “manifold wisdom” to the “rulers and authorities” in the heavenly realm. As a result, the spiritual struggle of the saints here and now is not so much against “flesh and blood” as against the great spiritual forces that war against God in heaven (6:12). (CSB)

Could also be stated “heavenly matters.” A common phrase in Ephesians which is concerned with the ultimate battle between God’s forces and the devil’s. (TLSB)

This refers to God’s action in Christ over and beyond this earth and time. Christ sits at God’s right hand guiding and ruling for the benefit of his church. (LL)

This designates heaven itself not the visible heaven, but the other-worldly regions, heaven as the habitation of God. The blessings we enjoy are blessings of a higher world. This spiritual heavenly blessing of ours stands in contrast to the material perishable effects of this world. (Stoekhardt)

**SPIRITUAL BLESSING** - God blesses us physically and spiritually. Here Paul likely refers to the blessings given through the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

The blessing is brought by the Holy Spirit. (Third Article and Explanation) The idea of “spiritual” was totally unknown to them. These blessings have their origin in heaven, as the dwelling place of God. The blessings of the higher, of the perfect, of the future world are ours in Christ. (Buls) (Attributes of God - Attributes of Christ - verse 4 - Rev. 21 - Luther’s Evening and Morning Prayers)

Not one good thing is missing. Everything connected with “the heavenly realms” is theirs. Precisely what those blessings are will be indicated later. (Ephesians 6:14-18) (PBC)

*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” (see, e.g., v. 23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30). (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)

Where the context speaks of what God has done, or still does, to us, has given or given us, is intimated that God’s deed, blessing, gift, is mediated through Christ. (Eph. 1:6, 13, 20; 2:7, 13; Col. 1:16) In our case “in Christ” amounts to “for Christ’s sake.” For the spiritual heavenly blessing is mediated to us through Christ inasmuch as He has obtained and merited it for us. Although the original is best reproduced by “through Christ,” one may translate “in Christ” and also with this translation consider Christ the Mediator of the blessing, or paraphrase thus: the blessing we received was established in Christ. Not outside of but in Christ it rested causatively that God blessed us with that spiritual blessing, since His redemptive work is the meritorious cause of this divine blessing. (Stoekhardt)

**1:4 FOR – AS** in Greek – καθώς—Here this conjunction indicates not a comparison (“just as”), but a cause or explanation: “inasmuch as, because.” The rest of the prayer is an elucidation of the manner in which God has blessed us in Christ, which is the reason for us blessing him (1:3a). (CC)

*chose.* Divine election is a constant theme in Paul’s letters (Ro 8:29–33; 9:6–26; 11:5, 7, 28; 16:13; Col 3:12; 1Th 1:4; 2Th 2:13; Tit 1:1). In this chapter it is emphasized

in the following ways: (1) “he chose us” (here); (2) “he predestined us” (v. 5); (3) “we were also chosen” (v. 11); (4) “having been predestined” (v. 11). (CSB)

According to etymology and composition “to choose,” in the original means and can mean nothing else than: to select, single out, to select, choose from several or from a great multitude of similar persons or things. The middle voice found exclusively in the NT, brings along the meaning “for oneself.” “To choose,” in the original middle voice, means: to choose for oneself, so that the chosen object belongs to the choosing subject, stands in relation to him or in some way serves him and his interests. (Stoeckhardt)

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)

Deuteronomy 7:6 “For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.”

Psalms 4:3 “Know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself; the LORD will hear when I call to him.”

1 Corinthians 1:26 “Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.”

James 2:5 “Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?”

1 Peter 2:9-10 “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

*before the creation of the world.* See Jn 17:24. (CSB)

Before we came into being, even before the foundation of the world was laid, God had thought of us in grace, and had his thoughts, in his purpose and council, taken us out of the world, out of loss, condemned mankind, had claimed and secured us for himself, had firmly resolved that we should always be and remain his own and live with him eternally. (Stoeckhardt)

*holy and blameless.* See 5:27 for the same pair of words. Holiness is the result—not the basis—of God’s choosing. It refers both to the holiness imparted to the believer

because of Christ and to the believer's personal sanctification (see note on 1Co 1:2). (CSB)

Not a description of our morality as seen by the world, but our status in God's eyes. As Christ is holy and blameless, the perfect sacrifice for our sins (Heb. 7:26; 9:14), we, too, are made holy and blameless by forgiveness through His blood (Eph. 1:7). (TLSB)

A Christian's life in all its connection with God's will is holy, consecrated. The word translated "blameless" comes from a word describing an animal that is without blemish and therefore fit for sacrifice. To describe Christians as blameless people is to say we are committed to offering our Lord the very best – lives of excellent service and sacrifices that are pleasing to him. (LL)

Our blessings in Christ are not merely for this world. We are already experiencing here a foretaste of the eternal blessings that are in Christ.

Christ reconciled (made thoroughly different), washed and cleaned us in baptism and thus actually presented us as being holy and blameless and also glorious. (Lenski)

It is not that we were holy and blameless to begin with and for that reason God took a liking to us and chose us. No, far from it! But he chose us "to be holy and blameless." (PBC)

**IN HIS SIGHT** – κατενώπιον αὐτοῦ—In the NT and early Christian literature, the preposition κατενώπιον, "before [someone]," is used only of God. It implies the authority of judgment and points to the glorious face of God, before which only those who are holy and without blemish may stand. A holy God consumes anything in his presence that is unholy. The work of the Gospel is to prepare God's people to stand before him in a position of privilege and intimacy. (CC)

*In love.* See NIV text note on vv. 4–5; cf. 3:17; 4:2, 15–16; 5:2. (CSB)

We could never be holy before God unless the loving relations between us were restored. The spirit of love, trust, admiration, directed to God helps our complete sanctification – changes us into the same image. (PC)

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

**1:5 PREDESTINED US** – προορίσας ἡμᾶς—"Since he had predestined us" renders the causal participle. Because this is an aorist participle, it should be understood as an action that preceded the act of choosing (1:4). God's choice (both in eternity and in the act of Baptism) arises from his plan. προορίζω is used in the NT exclusively of God's plan of salvation (Acts 4:28; Rom 8:29–30; 1 Cor 2:7; Eph 1:5, 11). (CC)

## The Doctrine of Predestination

*The primary point is that as God's chosen we can rest assured that our salvation will not be taken away from us.*

Predestination is whatever God has done, is doing and still will do for us during our life on earth to bring us to faith in Christ and to preserve us in this faith unto eternal salvation.

Some things to remember:

1. It is a mystery that we will never understand this side of heaven.
  - Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."
  - Romans 11:33-36, "<sup>33</sup>Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup>Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?"<sup>35</sup>"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" <sup>36</sup>For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen."
2. It is not a matter of chance.
  - Ephesians 1:4, "For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight."
3. It is not motivated by any personal merit and worthiness or better conduct on the part of humans.
  - 2 Timothy 1:9, "who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time."
  - Romans 11:6, "And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace."
4. People are not predestined to hell. That would be contrary to God's will.
  - 1 Timothy 2:4, "who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth,"
  - Ezekiel 18:23, "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? Declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?" Luke 15:10 "In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."
5. No one should think that, because he is in faith today and thereby assured of his election, he may now discard the Gospel, lose faith, live in sin, and still regard himself as one of the elect who will unfailingly be saved. People can through willful and intentional neglect throw away their faith. There is no such thing as "once saved, always saved" [Cain Gen 4:16 – Pharaoh – Judas/Peter – Jews – Romans 1:24]. We must make use of those means by which God assures us of His grace and thereby of our election.

6. The life of the Christian is not in the hands of “fate.” In this short phrase three things are said:
- a. Our destiny is in God’s hands,
  - b. The spirit in which God handles us is loving, and
  - c. Christ is the agent through whom our destiny is managed.

We have no advance or direct information of our election unto eternal life, but we may know of it by its results in our lives, by the faith, in which we now stand. As long as we remain in this faith, we should regard ourselves as the elect of God, and be certain that we are bound for heaven.

(Much of the information shared about predestination comes from: “A Summary of Christian Doctrine” by Edward W. A Koehler)

John 10:27-28: <sup>27</sup> My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.”

In the NT divine predestination is always presented in the context of gratitude for God’s grace, never is the sense of blaming God or questioning God’s choices. (LL)

Luther says, “If you believe, you are called; if you are called, your surely are also predestinated.” (What Luther Says – A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active Christian – Plass – page 456)

2 Timothy 1:9 “who has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time,”

*adopted.* See note on Ro 8:23 {Christians are already God’s children, but this is a reference to the full realization of our inheritance in Christ.} – Ro 8:15 Note {Adoption was common among the Greeks and Romans, who granted the adopted son all the privileges of a natural son, including inheritance rights. Christians are adopted sons by grace; Christ, however, is God’s Son by nature.} (CSB)

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)

The original Greek word for “predestination” means adoption and then the filial relation established through adoption - sonship. (Stoeckhardt)

In the ancient world, when a man adopted a son, that son’s entire identity and future changed. The grateful son, lavished with blessings and an inheritance, knew in a real

way the significance of a father's choice. Being chosen meant everything. Many adopted children today know the power and reassurance of being loved by choice. Christians are adopted children who never stop celebrating the sheer grace of our heavenly Father's choice. There are no accidental adoptions. (LL)

Deuteronomy 14:2 "for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession."

Hosea 11:1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."

John 1:12 "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God"

Romans 8:15 "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship.<sup>9</sup> And by him we cry, "Abba,"<sup>h</sup> Father."

2 Corinthians 6:18 "I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty."

Galatians 4:5-6 "to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."

IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS PLEASURE AND WILL – Thus the apostle finally points to the motive of predestination to adoption or of eternal election. The essential concept is the free self-determination of God. The entire expression should indicate that this act of God originated alone in God, not in something outside of God. In His election and predestination God took into consideration nothing outside of Himself, nothing that is in man, in no way considered man's conduct or the cessation of wanton opposition on his part. (Stoeckhardt)

**1:6** *to the praise*. See vv. 12, 14. Election is for God's glory. (CSB)

It is to show that Divine grace is not a limp shallow attribute, but one of glorious riches, deserving infinite praise. The idea of the richness, fullness, abundance, of God's grace is prominent throughout the epistle. God desires to draw attention, not only to this attribute, but to the boundlessness of it – thus draw the love and confidence of his creatures to himself and inspire them with the desire to imitate him. (PC)

This refrain closes each section of the prayer, confessing that the blessings are due to God's grace, not our own merit. (TLSB) Explanation of Lord's Prayer: Fifth Petition: We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor

have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us.

**FREELY GIVEN US** – Knaritoo To highly favor or honor someone and to do so without having them merited it.

Through the grace of God in Jesus, whose entire work is an expression of the love of God toward us, we become both the objects and the recipients of His love. (Buls)

**ONE HE LOVES** - ESV -Beloved - This describes Jesus at His Baptism (Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22) and transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7). Through our Baptism into Christ, we, too, are beloved of God (Eph. 5:1; Col. 3:12). (TLSB)

**1:7 redemption.** See v. 14; 4:30; Ro 3:24; Tit 2:14. The Ephesians were familiar with the Greco-Roman practice of redemption: Slaves were freed by the payment of a ransom. Similarly, the ransom necessary to free sinners from the bondage of sin and the resulting curse imposed by the law (see Gal 3:13) was the death of Christ (called here “his blood”). (CSB)

Payment made to free a slave or captive - a common picture for salvation in the NT, evoking the exodus (Ex. 15:13; Luke 1:68). (TLSB)

Redemption implies that someone is a slave or captive and needs to be ransomed. (PBC)

*through his blood.* Cf. 2:13; 1Pe 1:18–19. (CSB)

OT sacrifices are also evoked (Lev. 17:11; Hebrew 9:14-15; 1 Peter 1:18-19). (TLDB)

St. Bernard of Clairvaux: “Where there is reconciliation there is remission of sins. And what is that but justification? Whether, therefore, we call it reconciliation or remission of sins, or justification, or again, redemption, or liberation from the chains of the devil... we have been justified freely by His (Christ’s) blood” (SLSB, pp. 287-88). (TLSB)

**FORGIVENESS OF SINS** – Sin is not only cancelled out in terms of guilt, but is actually removed from our lives.

Forgiveness implies that someone has acted improperly toward another and in so doing has incurred guilt that needs to be covered over or taken away. (PBC)

Luther: “Where there is forgiveness of sins there is life and salvation.

Psalm 103:12 “as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RICHES – ploutos An abundance of wealth to be given.

With these words Paul again expressly points to the motive of redemption and forgiveness. This His grace God has further demonstrated to us in a rich measure well explained in the coming verses. (Stoeckhardt)

Ephesians 2:7 “in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

1 Timothy 1:14 “The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

**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)

In a million years we would not have devised such a plan. Rather, God devised it. (TLSB)

God is the prodigal – that is, extravagant – father of Luke 15, waiting for us to come and eager to shower us with an abundance of undeserved love. (LL)

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Psalms 36:8 “They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.”

John 10:10 “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”

Ephesians 3:20 “Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,”

Philippians 4:19 “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.”

2 Peter 1:11 “and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

WITH ALL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING – With God’s grace comes wisdom and understanding. The wisdom, of which Paul writes, is to know and understand the mysteries of God so that they make sense of life. Wisdom is applied Scriptural truth. Wise people know God’s truth (knowledge) and have a firm grasp of it so that they articulate it (understanding), but they can also apply God’s truth to their own life experiences. The wisdom God gives to Christians may appear foolish by worldly standards (1 Cor. 1:20-25), but in the end it is the wisdom that matters most for a blessed life. (LL)

Many ancient religions and philosophies, such as Gnosticism, promised special knowledge (4:14; Col. 2:16-223), but Paul taught that true wisdom is found in Christ (cf. Matt. 13:54; 1 Cor. 1:24, 30; Col. 2:3). (TLSB)

Wisdom and the similar expressions: discretion, prudence, understanding, do not always in Biblical usage designate only the intellectual faculty and endowment, but often the mind, the disposition, refer at the same time to the tendency of man’s of the Christian will. They appear in both the OT and NT as religious moral concepts and are also used in the practical sense, in the sense of practical wisdom, discretion, prudence, which is intent upon the right, which knows how to attain which is right, corresponding to the goal, corresponding to the will of God. So also in our letter. (Stoekhardt)

Make us ready and perfect for a holy, blameless conduct in love. All these gifts, everything that we are and possess in spiritual matters we owe entirely to the free grace of God. (Kretzmann)

Romans 11:33-36, “Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! <sup>34</sup> “Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?” <sup>35</sup> “Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?” <sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.”

Proverbs 4:7: “Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.”

**1:9** *mystery*. See notes on Ro 11:25 {The so-called mystery religions of Paul’s day used the Greek word (*mysterion*) in the sense of something that was to be revealed only to the initiated. Paul himself, however, used it to refer to something formerly hidden or

obscure but now revealed by God for all to know and understand (see 16:25; 1Co 2:7; 4:1; 13:2; 14:2; 15:51; Eph 1:9; 3:3–4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Col 1:26–27; 2:2; 4:3; 2Th 2:7; 1Ti 3:9, 16).); Col 1:6 {*All over the world*. Hyperbole, to dramatize the rapid spread of the gospel into every quarter of the Roman empire within three decades of Pentecost (see v. 23; Ro 1:8; 10:18; 16:19). In refutation of the charge of the false teachers, Paul insists that the Christian faith is not merely local or regional but worldwide.} (CSB)

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)

Not only would we not have thought up a plan like this, but we would never have grasped or understood it if He had not made it known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He proposed in Christ. The mystery of God’s Will, will be treated more fully late in this letter (3:2-13). Suffice it at this stage to say that the mystery of God’s will is almost synonymous with God’s plan of salvation, that is, His will to save sinners. God’s plan is not mysterious in the sense that it mystifies people or is incomprehensible to them. It is a mystery only in the sense that people cannot come to understand it by themselves. God has to explain it to them and lead them to know it and accept it. And that He does of course, in the gospel that proclaims His grace in Christ. (PBC)

Note from Acts 10:2 “(Cornelius) a devout man who feared God.” - Although he was pious and generous, he did not yet know Jesus as his Savior from sin. He would have known there was a coming Messiah. Ancient inscriptions have shown that Gentile patrons gave gifts to synagogues. “Cornelius living among the Jews, had heard long before about the coming Messiah, through whom he was righteous before God. In such faith, his prayers and alms were acceptable to God” (SA III VIII 8). (TLSB)

The word “mystery” encompasses all of God’s purposes in Christ – knowledge not known except through the revelation of the inspired Scriptures, centered in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel. The ultimate result of God’s revelation in Word and Christ is the salvation and inclusion of both Jews and Gentiles in the NT church, and the bringing of all things in heaven and earth together in eternity, when in the new heaven and new earth all God’s people shall live with Christ forever (2 Peter 3:13) (LL)

GOOD PLEASURE – The is a word of “purpose is eudokia – “good pleasure – and stresses both the absolute sovereignty and benevolence of God. The Greek word is always use in the sense of a gracious decree from God.

**1:10 TO BE PUT INTO EFFECT** – The word “plan” is *oikonomia* – the word for “steward” or “stewardship” Here the meaning is the execution of a project previously determined.

**TIMES WILL HAVE REACHED THEIR FULFILLMENT** – This phrase makes the plan of historical – the plan is worked out in this world. History is significant because it is the sphere of the saving activity of God. The word here for “time” (literally, “the times”) is the standard Greek for a moment of intense significance

The messianic age began with Christ’s incarnation, death, and resurrection (Gal. 4:4; Luke 2:6; John 12:23). (TLSB)

A time of salvation (Greek *kairos*). We might best translate this phrase, “When the time was exactly right. To be filled completely, to bring to a head.

Romans 5:6, “You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.”

2 Corinthians 6:2, “For he says, ‘In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ (Is. 49:8) I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”

*to bring ... under one head.* Paul uses a significant term here that not only has the idea of leadership but also was often used of adding up a column of figures. A contemporary way of putting it might be to say that in a world of confusion, where things do not “add up” or make sense, we look forward to the time when everything will be brought into meaningful relationship under the headship of Christ. (CSB)

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)

God’s purpose is to have everything add up to and make sense in Christ. (LL)

All things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. Brought into one unit, actually become one. The children according to election he wanted to lead, one after the other, to Christ, join them together in Christ, make them all one in Christ, unite them in one whole. So here for the first time in our letter we meet the idea of the one holy Christian Church. (Stoeckhardt)

**1:11 *In him.*** Christ is the center of God’s plan. Whether the universe or the individual Christian is in view, it is only in relationship to Christ that there is a meaningful future destiny. Paul goes on to speak, not of the world as a whole, but of those who respond to God’s call. (CSB)

WERE CHOSEN - ESV has “obtained” which literally means “appointed,” “allotted.” (TLSB)

AN INHERITANCE (ESV) - The Israelite tribes received the Promised Land as their allotment from God, Christians receive God’s kingdom, eternal life, and heaven (Mt. 25:34; Col. 1:12; 1 Peter 1:4). As we are God’s children, this can be called an inheritance (1:14, 18). (TLSB)

PREDESTINED - “In Him we are seek the eternal election of the Father, who has determined in His eternal divine counsel that He would save no one except those who know His Son Christ and truly believe in Him. Other thoughts are to be entirely banished...We know (assuredly that out of pure grace, without any merit of our own, we have been elected in Christ to eternal life” (FC Ep XI 13). (TLSB)

ACCORDING TO THE PLAN – God’s inheritance is not a fortuitous benefit, but the result of God’s deliberate and eternal foreordination; it rest therefore on an immoveable foundation. (PC)

In speaking of how God’s eternal plan centers on Christ, Paul returns once more to the subject of election and predestination. He states, “In him 9Christ) we were also chosen, having been predestinated according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that, we who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory. (PBC)

PURPOSE OF HIS WILL – Man resolves to do many things but does not by far accomplish everything he has determined to do. Whatever God has determined he also carries through and accomplishes in spite of all obstacles. (Stoeckhardt)

**1:12** *we, who were the first to hope in Christ.* Probably a reference to those Jews who, like Paul, had become believers before many Gentiles had. (CSB)

Paul writes as a Jewish Christian, one who received the Messiah. He insists that the Gentiles, who receive Christ through his preaching (v. 13) are united with the Jews in Christ by their common Baptism. (TLSB)

This does not simply describe the believers out of Israel but points at the same time to this that God, who does all things after the counsel of His will, has actually carried out His eternal decree of election in the elect out of Israel. (Stoeckhardt)

Whoever hopes and trusts in Christ from his heart, he is through Christ a child of God and a vessel to the praise and glory of God; in him God’s power and grace have glorified themselves. We may render vv. 11, 12 thus: in whom we also have been chosen, since we were predestinated according to the purpose of Him who does all things according to the counsel of His will, that we should be to the praise of His glory - we, we who have also before hoped and trusted in Christ. (Stoeckhardt)

God's faithfulness to the Jewish nation was only part of His plan, though. Paul hints at that when he says, "We...were the first to hope in Christ," implying there are others. We Jews may have been the first to believe in Christ, Paul says - but he quickly adds, "You (Ephesian readers, Gentiles by birth) also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." The Jews are part of God's plan, but in Christ the Gentiles are also in the picture. Note the implications of that for God's plan and purpose of bringing "all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ." (PBC)

FOR THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY - We should redound (To have an effect or consequence - To return) to the praise, to the honor of God's glory. God wanted to glorify Himself in us through His grace and mercy, then also through His power and might. This present statement concerning our eternal election and predestination is not simply a repetition of what was said at the beginning of this section, but by means of the words "even in Him: in whom also we have been elected," etc., stands in close connection with the purpose of God's will just mentioned: to gather together all things in Christ. God wanted to gather together all who are children in heaven and on earth in Christ, in the Christ in whom it is established that we are chosen, or through whom we are chosen and predestined unto adoption, unto the praise of God's glory. We owe it to Christ, the Redeemer of the human race, that God has chosen us in grace unto His own, who are by nature poor sinners. Christ should also then be the focal point, in whom all the elect children of earth along with the elect angels are found together. (Stoeckhardt)

**1:13** *And you also.* Probably refers to the majority of the Ephesians, who were Gentiles. (CSB)

WHEN YOU HEARD THE WORD OF TRUTH – Heard and received the truth as it is in Jesus, the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Jesus, just as freely as did the believing Jews, and to the same blessed effects. (PC)

The sinner hears the Gospel concerning Christ and accepts this Word in faith. He who does that thereby also accepts Christ, of whom the Gospel speaks. (Stoeckhardt)

THE GOSPEL OF YOUR SALVATION – τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς σωτηρίας ὑμῶν—The genitive has two aspects: "the Gospel message whose *content* is the salvation accomplished for you" and "the Gospel message that *brings* you salvation." (CC)

*marked ... with a seal.* In those days a seal denoted ownership. – Such faith is sealed and resealed through Word and Sacraments. A stamp on our hand can wear off and so can the seal if we neglect his Word and Sacrament. (CSB)

Baptized. A seal marked ownership. The word was used for a wax seal on a scroll (John 3:33; Rev. 5:1-5; Jer. 32:10); also for a brand on any animal or a tattoo on a slave or soldier. In the OT, God sealed Cain to protect him (Gen. 4:15), and circumcision

sealed the Israelites as God's people (Gen. 17:11; Rom. 4:11; Col. 2:11-12). God seal marks all those in heaven (Rev. 7:2-4; 9:4). A seal leaves its image, through Baptism, the promised Spirit (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33) makes us His dwelling (2 Cor. 1:21-22). "Baptism and the Lord's Supper - appointed as outward signs - work as seal" (LC III 98). (TLSB)

The impression of it is partly within believers and partly without. Within it is the felt result of the working of the Holy Spirit – the feeling of satisfaction and delight in the work and person of Christ, of love confidence, and joy flowing out toward God and the desire and endeavor in all things to be conformed to His will. Without, it is the fruit of the Spirit, the new man, created in righteousness and holiness after the image of Christ. (PC)

The Holy Spirit protects us unto salvation, which is promised us in the Gospel of Christ, to which we have been elected from the beginning. Preservation is a work of the Holy Spirit. (Stoeckhardt)

The Ephesians bear a seal: having the Holy Spirit in their hearts. In ancient times a seal was a sign of ownership. For a Christian to bear the seal of the Holy Spirit is an indicator that he or she belongs to God. That is a present blessing. (PBC)

**1:14** *deposit*. See note on Ro 8:23 {*firstfruits of the Spirit*}. The Christian's possession of the Holy Spirit is not only evidence of his present salvation (vv. 14, 16) but is also a pledge of his future inheritance—and not only a pledge but also the down payment on that inheritance (see 2Co 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14).} (CSB)

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)

The Holy Spirit is the down payment, the earnest money, of our heavenly inheritance. The Holy Spirit brought us to faith and, as Martin Luther put it in his explanation to the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed, The Holy Spirit "keeps us in the one true faith." In other words, we are secure. Our place in heaven is guaranteed. A deposit has been made. Our reservation is confirmed in the ongoing presence and power of the Spirit in our lives. (LL)

We have future blessing. A deposit, down payment, is the first installment of a transaction and guarantees the rest of the obligation will also be met. (PBC)

2 Timothy 1:12, "That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day."

TO THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY – This is a vivid purpose statement for the life of the Christian. We are people of praise. That means our lives celebrate Christ. Our

attitudes and our actions are meant to lift people to see Christ with us and within us.  
(LL)

**1:3–14** Paul directs the Ephesians away from themselves, teaching them to trust in God’s promises in Christ. Pride tempts us to trust in our commitment to God; doubt makes us worry that we are not committed enough. Jesus blesses us spiritually by leading us to repent of sinful pride by the Law and calming our worried hearts through the Gospel. • Father, forgive my self-centeredness, and teach me to rely on Your loving plan for me; through Jesus Christ. Amen.  
(TLSB)

#### GOSPEL – Luke 2:40-52

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

**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. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Since the ministry of Jesus culminates as High Priest and the offering, completing the purpose of the temple, Luke has selected an event from Jesus’ youth that characterizes this direction of his life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**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. (Lenski)

On this verse compare 1:80 and 2:52. This verse evidently describes Jesus' progress from infancy until the age twelve. He is called "child," a true human being. Note that both verbs are imperfect tense for obvious reasons. He grew as did any other child. Note the passive verbs denoting God as agent in both the mental and spiritual "filling." "Grace" does not denote saving grace, but the favor and approval of God. This verse is a remarkable commentary on the humanity of Jesus. (Buls)

Lenski: It is impossible for us to penetrate the mystery of this development in Jesus -- body and soul untouched by sin, unchecked and unretarded by any result of sin, his mind and soul absorbing the wisdom of God's Word as a bud drinks in the sunshine and expands. (Buls)

Geldenhuys: For the first time a human infant was realizing the ideal of humanity. (Buls)

The sinless Jesus grew and developed as do all other children. He did not need baptism as an infant. His baptism later, was a vicarious baptism, for us. He was not "contradicted" as a child, verse 34. That came only when He began to testify later, John 5:16-18. Though sinless, Jesus must have been a very normal child. (Buls)

**FILLED WITH WISDOM** – Likely alludes to Is. 11:2, where the Messiah is characterized as one endowed by the Spirit with Wisdom. (TLSB)

**2:39–40** Jesus matures as a normal child and also has the blessings of God's wisdom and favor. Today, pray for the children in your family or neighborhood, that they would grow in the knowledge of their Savior and receive His favor. He who has blessed and kept you in faith will likewise hear and bless them too. • I thank You, Holy Child, that You fulfilled the Law for me. Fill me with the wisdom only You can give. Amen. (TLSB)

**2:41-42** Whereas many passages describe regulations about the Passover (Ex 23:14–17; cf. 34:22–23; Deut 16:16; see also 1 Sam 1:7; 2:1, 19), only here do we observe the One who willingly continues (vv 22–40) to submit himself to the Law. Luke does not relate whether this Passover was Jesus' first time at the temple since childhood. However, this pilgrimage was according to the custom of the family; they fulfilled what the Law required (Ex 12:15; Lev 23:8; Deut 16:3). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**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)

An annual pilgrimage to the Passover was required of all Israelites (Dt 16:6). Extended families and neighbors often traveled together, singing and picnicking along the way. (TLSB)

All male Jews were expected to travel to Jerusalem for the Passover (Ex 23:14–17; Deut 16:16). The celebration involved the liturgical slaying of the lamb at the temple and then a family meal of that lamb after sundown on the fifteenth day of Nisan (Mar/Ap). (CC)

The Passover in Jerusalem was exciting. There was a festive atmosphere and family reunions, pageantry, and ancient biblical liturgical traditions. A child would ponder the historical and theological components of this journey. The Passover meal began with child's question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" The discussion of God's saving acts would often extend late into the night. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

The combination of the passion language of necessity (δεῖ) and the temporal context of the Passover is also significant. Only two Passovers are mentioned in Luke: here at the beginning of Jesus' life in the infancy narrative and at the end of his life in the passion narrative (Luke 22). Only Luke describes the day of the Last Supper as "the day of Unleavened Bread, on which it was necessary [ἔδει] that the Passover lamb be sacrificed" (22:7). Once again, the evangelist uses a simple frame of time, the Passover, and event, the passion, to help the hearer see how the infancy narrative anticipates Jesus' final days of passion and resurrection. (CC)

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

Twelve years have passed since the previous episode. Remarkably, vv 41–52 is the only NT account of Jesus' later childhood. (TLSB)

At the age 12 boys were instructed and prepared for becoming adult members of the covenant community, which happened at age 13. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

**2:43-44** While the feast lasted seven days, some pilgrims left after two days. With *kai teleiōsantōn tas hēmeras* (v 43), Luke shows that this family was pious and devout (William Arndt, *Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to St. Luke*, Concordia Heritage Series [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956], 100). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

Without delay and detail, Luke recounts the feast, but he notably slows the pace of the narrative when the search for Jesus begins. In a larger caravan, it would seem children were not always with parents but with extended family or townsfolk (Arndt, 100–101). This contrast should be recognized, however: Jesus was not found with the expected

family and acquaintances, but he is with his Father (cf. Lk 8:19–21). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**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)

WENT UP TO – ἀναβαινόντων—One always goes up to Jerusalem, not only because of its height, but because this is Zion, the holy mountain where God will come for redemption (cf. 18:10, 31; 19:28). (CC)

**2:44** LOOKING FOR HIM – καὶ ἀνεζήτησαν αὐτόν—Similar expressions are repeated with ἀναζητέω in 2:44–45 and ζητέω in 2:48–49, providing the language for a subtheme in the narrative: seeking and finding Jesus. Jesus knows his destiny and (as a sign) he remains (momentarily) where he should be. As Luke will later imply (2:50), Mary and Joseph do not fully understand where Jesus must be and what he must do. They are continually seeking to discover the mission of their child. (CC)

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

The traveling to and fro from the great festivals in Jerusalem was done by those living at a distance in companies or caravans. Neighbors, friends, and relatives formed groups whose members could furnish assistance to one another in cases of illness or attacks by highwaymen. Naturally it was not necessary for them to travel in anything resembling military formation. Some of the group would walk more leisurely than others. In this instance the parents of Jesus, probably with a few special friends, traveled alone, knowing that at the meeting place agreed on as resting place for the night they would find their companions. (CC pp. 129-130)

Again observe the tempo of the account; Luke compels us to watch with judgment as Jesus guides this incident to its climax. The three days perhaps foreshadow Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection (Arthur A. Just Jr., *Luke 1:1–9:50*, Concordia Commentary [St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1996], 130). In Luke 2 and 24, Jesus remains hidden to human eyes until he has chosen the place and the time to reveal himself. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

This event is not a one-to-one session; Jesus participates (*akouonta autōn kai eperōtōnta autous*) in the instruction of a public nature (*en tōi hierōi*), possibly under a portico (cf. Jn 10:23; 18:20). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

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)

In order to stimulate more profound thinking, the rabbis often responded to people's questions by posing their own questions. Already as a child, Jesus was able to engage the best religious minds in this way. (TLSB)

*the teachers.* The rabbis, experts in Judaism. (CSB)

**2:47** WAS AMAZED – ἐξίσταντο—The amazement of the all who heard him is consistent with the wonder that has accompanied the events of his infancy and John's (1:21, 63; 2:18, 33). But here, the very words of Jesus cause amazement among the teachers and others in the temple. Luke will use ἐξίστημι in Lk 8:56; 24:22; Acts 2:7, 12; 8:9, 11, 13; 9:21; 10:45; 12:16. (CC)

Jesus is depicted as Rabbi par excellence, even from His youth. (TLSB)

Jesus' insightful responses demonstrate that he was filled with wisdom (2:40). The presence of the Holy Spirit remains hidden though understood in the phrase *epi tēi sunesei* (see Is 11:2 LXX). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, 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)

Jesus' words manifest his awareness of his person and work. He confirms what Gabriel declared (1:32, 35). Whereas Mary spoke of *ho patēr sou* (Joseph), Jesus opens the door for his ministry with *en tois tou patros mou*. Whether that phrase is rendered "in my Father's house" or "about my Father's matters," what Jesus does is his Father's work, and that occurs in the temple. Jesus is always conscious of the Father (Jn 6:37–40, 57; 8:18, 28–29, 38–39, 49); he is one with the Father (Jn 10:30; 17:23). His first recorded words are about his Father, and his last words from the cross are about his Father, and everything in between is his Father's matter. Jesus speaks of the divine necessity (*dei* [v 49]) eighteen times in Luke (for example, to preach [4:43]; suffer [9:22]; go on his way [13:33]; stay at home of Zacchaeus [19:5]; be delivered up, crucified, and rise again [24:7]; suffer these things and enter into glory [22:37]). As Jesus set his face toward Jerusalem, he taught his disciples that being about the matters of the Father is also the attitude required of all who would follow him (9:59–62; 14:26). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**2:48** THEY WERE ASTONISHED – ἐξεπλάγησαν—Immediately following the amazement of those in the temple, Luke uses an even stronger word for the astonishment of Jesus' parents, who are struck that Jesus is in the temple with such an

audience surrounding him and listening to his answers and his wisdom (cf. 4:32; 9:43; Acts 13:12). (CC)

YOUR FATHER AND I HAVE BEEN ANXIOUSLY SEARCHING – ὁ πατήρ σου κάγω ... ἐζητούμην σε—The anxious searching that aptly summarizes the activity of Mary and Joseph in 2:43–45 is now given voice by Mary in her question of Jesus. Mary says, “your father and I,” which will stand in sharp contrast to Jesus’ reply about his need to be about the things of *his Father*. (CC)

**2:49** WHY WERE YOU SEARCHING – τί ὅτι ἐζητεῖτέ με—These are Jesus’ first recorded words in the gospel. His response picks up Mary’s word for seeking. By using this expression, he implies that even his parents do not understand why he must be where he is, anticipating his next statement. All human participants in Jesus’ life will be seeking him and seeking to understand him. However, only after his resurrection will their eyes be opened (by God) so that they may perceive his identity, purpose, and accomplishment (e.g., 24:31, 35). (CC)

I HAD TO BE – δεῖ—This theologically significant word is part of Luke’s passion vocabulary, denoting the necessity of God’s plan of salvation to be accomplished in Jerusalem. “It is necessary” emphasizes this destiny. *I must* lays down the law of devotion to His Father by which he was to walk even to the Cross.’” (CC)

Simeon has already predicted that Jesus is destined for the fall and resurrection of many in Israel, but little did the hearer expect and Mary and Joseph to be the first who stumble over the cross (see 20:17–18). “What Mary and Joseph did not understand was this: that in those first fateful words, ‘I must be in my Father’s home’, Jesus was darkly alluding to his future passion and Resurrection in the Holy City.” But the hearer is now alerted to look for how others will respond to the words of Jesus and for similar misunderstandings of his passion, particularly in the passion predictions (9:44–45; 18:31–34). This will set the stage for the great revelation at Emmaus. There, in the midst of profound confusion, Jesus interprets the OT Christologically for the Emmaus disciples and then their eyes are opened in the breaking of the bread; they see him *for the first time in the gospel as the crucified and risen Christ*. CC

*in my Father’s house*. Jesus pointed to his personal duty to his Father in heaven. He contrasted his “my Father” with Mary’s “Your father” (v. 48). At 12 years of age he was aware of his unique relationship to God. But he was also obedient to his earthly parents (v. 51). (CSB)

**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)

As in v 47, though Jesus comprehended the nature of his call, others did not. His own family failed to understand his calling, as did his disciples (Mt 16:22; Mk 9:10; Lk 8:19–

21; 9:45). His work was hidden under the form of a servant. His calling remains a matter of faith for all who hear. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

**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)

Jesus responded as an obedient child to His mother’s scolding (v 48). He obeyed the divine Law and submitted to His earthly parents. (TLSB)

Jesus did not grasp for what had belonged to him but made himself servant, a child of the parents (Phil 2:6–7). This mind-set characterizes the people of God (Eph 5:21).

*dietērei* parallels *sunetērei* (2:19). Mary, mulling over these events and words constantly, does not know how to arrange these matters of her Son’s life into a comprehensible whole. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

He willingly submitted to the authority of his parents since he was born under the laws to redeem those under the law, so that we might share in his sonship (Gal. 4:4-5) (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 1)

MOTHER TREASURED – διετήρει πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτῆς—Again, Luke uses τὰ ῥήματα to denote the words and actions of Jesus that Mary treasures in her heart. This is the second time Mary has done this (see 2:19). This strongly suggests that she is a source for the historical information in the infancy narrative in Luke. (CC)

**2:52** Luke appears to have borrowed the words of 1Sa 2:26. (CSB)

*And Jesus grew.* Although Jesus was God, there is no indication that he had all knowledge and wisdom from birth. He seems to have matured like any other boy. (CSB)

Chemnitz: “This advance pertained to the one [human] nature [of Christ]” (*LTh* 1:105). (TLSB)

*chariti* returns us to 1:80 and 2:40 (1 Sam 2:26; Prov 3:4). Spiritual maturity is in mind (Eph 3:16; 4:13). Jesus is ready for his ministry. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 19, Part 1)

BEFORE GOD AND MEN – παρὰ θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων—The Emmaus disciples will use a similar expression of Jesus’ deeds and words during his ministry (24:19; ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ). Throughout his boyhood and adult ministry, there was no doubt that Jesus was wise and full of understanding. The problem is his destiny in Jerusalem. (CC)

**2:41–52** Luke’s account of Jesus’ birth and childhood repeatedly sets the ordinary beside the miraculous (e.g., a youth from the hinterland stuns the Jerusalem rabbis with His wisdom). Given

the mysterious and often apparently ordinary ways God chooses to reveal Himself and His salvation—in the flesh of His Son, in words, in water, in bread and wine—we easily underestimate their power. Thankfully, the very common aspects of God’s gifts mean that they are never far from us. • Lord Jesus, open my eyes to Your life-giving presence. Through Your Word, Sacraments, and Spirit, bless my life, so that things that seem mundane become a foretaste of blessedness in Your eternal presence. Amen. (TLSB)