

Let's look at the Bible readings for Jan. 2 (2nd Sunday of Christmas), to prepare for on-line, drive-in, and in-person worship (10 am) with Abounding Joy Lutheran Church.

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:4-15 King Solomon's request is granted

⁴King Solomon went to Gibeon to sacrifice there, for that was the great high place. Solomon used to offer a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I shall give you." ⁶And Solomon said, "You have shown **great and steadfast love** to **your servant** David my father, because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you. And you have kept for him this **great and steadfast love** and have given him a son to sit on his throne this day. ⁷And now, O Lord my God, you have made **your servant** king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child. I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸And **your servant** is in the midst of your people whom you have chosen, a great people, too many to be numbered or counted for multitude. ⁹Give **your servant** therefore an understanding mind to govern your people, that I may discern between good and evil,

for who is able to govern this your great people?" ¹⁰It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹And God said to him, "Because you have asked this, and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹²behold, I now do according to your word. Behold, I give you a wise and discerning mind, so that none like you has been before you and none like you shall arise after you. ¹³I give you also what you have not asked, both riches and honor, so that no other king shall compare with you, all your days. ¹⁴And if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and my commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days." ¹⁵And Solomon awoke, and behold, it was a dream. Then he came to Jerusalem and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO I KINGS, CHAPTER 3

1. On your favorite search engine, look up the meaning of "high place" from vs. 4.
2. What two people are referred to as "your servant" in vss. 6-9?
3. What do you think this phrase means, (vs. 7) "I do not know how to go out or come in"?
4. The Lord tells Solomon he will grant his wish. For what does he ask? Why ask for this?
5. What would you ask for?
6. What promises were given to David and his son Solomon in vss. 6 and 14?
7. Does God guarantee that if we keep his Word, we'll live a long life?
8. How is upright living related to a good and long life?

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14 Abundant blessings for all believers

³**Blessed** be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed** us in Christ with every spiritual **blessing** in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he **chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he **predestined** us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the

purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his **glorious grace**, with which he has **blessed** us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose,

which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹In him we have obtained an **INHERITANCE**, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹²so that

we who were the first to hope in Christ might be **to the praise of his glory**. ¹³In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is the guarantee of our **INHERITANCE** until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory**.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO EPHESIANS, CHAPTER 1

1. Is God a “blesser” or a “blessee” according to vs. 3?
2. How does vs. 8 relate to the story above (I Kings) about Solomon?
3. How has God blessed us in Jesus? That is, what has God done for us through our Lord?
List at least 10 gifts/blessings that are mentioned in this reading.
4. What does the phrase, **“to the praise of his glory/grace”** mean?
5. What truth is taught here by Paul by means of the words “chose” and “predestined”?
6. For what are we chosen and predestined in Christ?
7. What is the inheritance that is promised to us (vss.11 and 14)?
8. What is communicated by the use of the words “will,” “purpose,” and “plan”?
9. What from this text shows up in the baptismal service (LBW, p. 124)?

Gospel: Luke 2:40-52 Jesus grows in wisdom, stature, and favor

⁴⁰The child Jesus grew and became strong, **filled with wisdom**. And **the favor of God** was upon him. ⁴¹Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.

⁴³And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴but supposing him to be in the group they went a day’s journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him.

⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, **listening**

to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷And all who heard him were **amazed** at **his understanding and his answers**. ⁴⁸And when his parents saw him, they were **astonished**. And his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.” ⁴⁹And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” ⁵⁰And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased **in wisdom** and in stature and in **favor with God** and man.

SOME QUESTIONS TO PONDER RELATED TO LUKE, CHAPTER 2

1. Compare Luke 2:40 and 52, with I Samuel 2:21 and 26. What are the similarities?
2. Compare vs. 51 with Luke 2:19. What does this mean?
3. Given what Mary and Joseph had been told by God and an angel (before Jesus was conceived) about the identity of Jesus, why do you think they didn’t understand who he was at age twelve?
4. What was Jesus doing in vs. 46? Why is asking questions important?
5. What does this story tell us about who Jesus is?