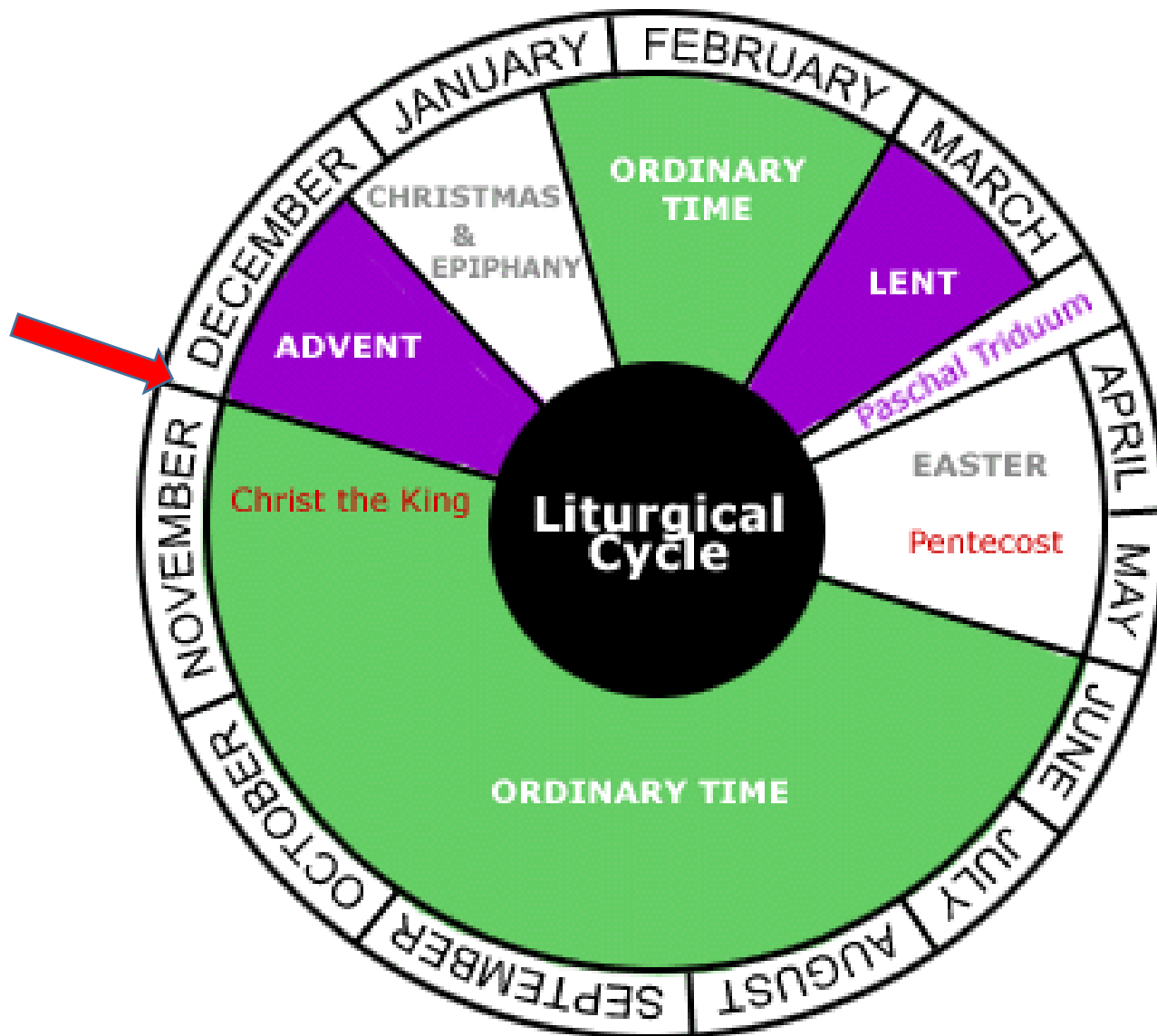


# Bible Study 2022-2023 #

10

11/29/22



# The Christmas Season

- **Advent** – November 27-December 23
- **Christmas Eve**
  - Saturday - December 24
- **Christmas**
  - Sunday - December 25- January 8
    - January 9 –The Baptism of Jesus on the Monday after the Feast of the Epiphany (January 8)

# Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:46-56** “*And Mary said, My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...and returned to her home*”
  - Mary’s Magnificat (**Luke 1:46-55**) <sup>1</sup> recited in **evening prayer** as a part of the *Liturgy of the Hours* of the Church
  - We can also find all sorts of information from the Prophet *Zephaniah* (whom we discussed in our last class) in Mary’s Magnificat (**Luke 1:46-55**)
  - Luke is also expecting us to know the story of *Hannah* (**1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 1 & 2**) \*
  - He is showing us this parallelism between Mary and *Hannah* (her name means Grace)
    - *Hannah* was brought by the hand of God from barrenness to fertility
    - Mary, a daughter of Zion, gives birth to a son
    - Later, we will hear that Mary (like *Hannah*) planned to leave her son in the temple

# Luke 1 (Cont)

- Once *Samuel* was born, *Hannah* cried out with her beautiful song (**1 Samuel 2:1-10**) <sup>2</sup>
- Upon the birth of Jesus, and her arrival at the house of *Elizabeth*, we hear *Mary's Magnificat*, which contains much of *Hanna's Magnificat*
- Luke is linking these two stories to remind us of *Zephaniah*, who shows us God coming to dwell among His people
- *Hannah's* hymn talks about the coming Messiah, and prophecies about the eventual coming of the Christ

**1Sam 2:1-10**

[1] Hannah also prayed and said,  
"My heart exults in the LORD;  
my strength is exalted in the LORD.  
My mouth derides my enemies,  
because I rejoice in thy salvation.  
[2] "There is none holy like the LORD,  
there is none besides thee;  
there is no rock like our God.  
[3] Talk no more so very proudly,  
let not arrogance come from your mouth;  
for the LORD is a God of knowledge,  
and by him actions are weighed.  
[4] The bows of the mighty are broken,  
but the feeble gird on strength.  
[5] Those who were full have hired themselves out  
for bread,  
but those who were hungry have ceased to  
hunger.  
The barren has borne seven,  
but she who has many children is forlorn.  
[6] The LORD kills and brings to life;  
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.  
[7] The LORD makes poor and makes rich;  
he brings low, he also exalts.  
[8] He raises up the poor from the dust;  
he lifts the needy from the ash heap,  
to make them sit with princes  
and inherit a seat of honor.  
For the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S,  
and on them he has set the world.  
[9] "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones;  
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness;  
for not by might shall a man prevail.  
[10] The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken  
to pieces;  
against them he will thunder in heaven.  
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth;  
he will give strength to his king,  
and exalt the power of his anointed."

**Luke 1:46-55**

[46] And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,  
[47] and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
[48] for he has regarded the low estate of his  
handmaiden.  
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me  
blessed;  
[49] for he who is mighty has done great things for  
me,  
and holy is his name.  
[50] And his mercy is on those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
[51] He has shown strength with his arm,  
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of  
their hearts,  
[52] he has put down the mighty from their  
thrones,  
and exalted those of low degree;  
[53] he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and the rich he has sent empty away.  
[54] He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
[55] as he spoke to our fathers,  
to Abraham and to his posterity for ever."

# Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:57-66** *“Now the time came for Elizabeth to be delivered,...For the hand of the Lord was with him”*
  - Here, we have *Hannah*, the first woman of grace prophesying the coming of the Christ, and dedicating him to the temple, and now the last woman of grace, dedicates her son to the temple after giving birth to the final Christ
  - Luke tells us the Mary will remain for three months in Judea, just as the Ark did before going to Jerusalem
  - Then, we hear about the birth of John, and the hymn of *Zechariah* who was filled with the Holy Spirit
  - The Messiah was the anointed one, the one who had the spirit of God
  - Thus, wherever Jesus was, you had the Holy Spirit (another major theme for Luke)

# Luke 1 (Cont)

- **Luke 1:67-80** *“And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit,...and he was in the wilderness to the day of his manifestation to Israel”*
  - *Zachariah* means “Yahweh remembers”
  - Luke wants us to pay attention to the meaning of these names
  - The son of *Zachariah* will be called the prophet of God, of the most high, to prepare the way for the new *Elijah* who is to come
  - He was preparing for Jesus, who is the Lord, coming to dwell among His people



# Luke 1 (Cont)

- This passage in **Luke 1:67-79)**<sup>3</sup> is read as a part of **morning prayer**, every day in the Liturgy of the Hours of the church
- Father concluded this section by pointing out that *John the Baptist* might have been a *Nazarite* from his birth, as he drank no wine or strong drink, and lived in the wilderness

# Luke 2

- **Luke 2:1** *“In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled”*
  - The word “world,” as with the Gospel of Matthew, means the “Roman Empire;” the civilized world
  - Once again, Father pointed out that reading a word in English may conjure up a different concept than what was intended by the author (We are keen to understand the context of the Greek text)

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- **Luke 2:2** *“This was the first enrollment when Quirinius was governor of Syria”*
  - During the “Rationalist Period,” some commentators said that Luke made all this up since *Quirinius* was not the governor of Syria
  - Father pointed out that Luke used these references to demonstrate his interest in history and facts
  - Recent archaeological research had discovered that *Quirinus* was in charge of Syria during this period, but not as governor in the sense of that word today
  - He did exercise an administrative role over all that region at that time

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- **Luke 2:3-7** *“And all went for them to be enrolled, each to his own city....because there was no place for them in the inn”*
  - Joseph was of the house and lineage of David
  - At that time the lineage was from the father to the son with the line of succession going to the first-born no matter who his mother was
  - We saw this in Matthew’s genealogy which contained even foreign mothers in the line of kings
  - Some scholars attempt to project practices of modern Judaism back to the time of Christ, but if we know the historical setting of Judaism there were two very distinct Jewish religions – pre-70 AD and post-70 AD

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- As we mentioned before, *Nazareth* was a Davidic city (Father recommended the books by *Bargil Pixner* concerning this historical period for this type of information)
- By the time of the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century, there was no way that all the descendants of David could live in the small city of *Bethlehem*
- Thus, Joseph (and many of his relatives) had to return to *Bethlehem* which was the origin of the house of David
- Most likely, Joseph had uncles and cousins living there

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- Father discussed the meaning of “swaddling clothes” and “**first-born**”
- A great deal of confusion (caused by modern American Protestants) has arisen (This is similar to what we discussed in **Matthew 1:25**, “until she gave birth” which led to their idea that Mary and Joseph had other children, after the birth of Jesus)
- Father requested that we place a note here to **Luke 2:23** concerning first-born
- Again, many Protestant scholars believe that if there is a first-born this would mean that there would be a second-born

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- At that time, first-born was the title for the son who opened the womb (even if there had already been many daughters)
- Inheritance was passed on to the eldest son
- If there was no first-born son, the family name and inheritance ended to include the plot of land and the house, which could be taken by a neighbor
- This was why the death of the first-born in Egypt was so significant
- The birth of a first-born son was seen as a sign that God blessed that family (hence the curse of bareness)

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- Thus, the law required a sacrifice of a yearling lamb (a full-sized animal), in thanksgiving for the birth of the first born son (**Exodus 13:11-16**)<sup>4</sup>
  - Lambs were very expensive at that time
  - Today, a full-sized lamb will cost about \$200
  - A butchered lamb \$500 OR \$600
  - Imagine paying \$200 for forty sacrifices (Passover and other required sacrifices)
  - Therefore, the poor were permitted to offer two (inexpensive) pigeons or doves in place of the lamb (**Leviticus 5:7**)<sup>5</sup>



# Luke 2 (Cont)

- This passage continues, by discussing Mary wrapping Jesus in swaddling clothes
- The newborns (then and now) were wrapped up immediately after birth to keep them warm (we will see this again in **Luke 2:12** (Father discussed this process at the birth of each of his seven children)
- Although, this was a well-known practice it was very important to Luke
  - In **Wisdom 7:4,6** Solomon said *“I was nursed with care in swaddling clothes. For no king has had a different beginning of existence; there is for all mankind and one entrance into life, and a common departure”*

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- We see Solomon, the son of David, talking about himself being born not like a king, but like an ordinary person
- Father suggested that there are some parallels with Jesus the King not being born in the palace but in a stable (cave) of a small town, wrapped in swaddling clothes
- Everywhere you look in Judea then and today, you find caves
- Stables were often built over caves (not red-painted wooden barns of Europe or western US)
- *St. Helena*, the mother of *Constantine*, built the Church of the Nativity over one such cave in *Bethlehem* (containing the best preserved mosaics we have in Christianity)

# Luke 2 (Cont)

- By describing Jesus being wrapped in swaddling clothes, Luke is making us think of the end of the story (his being buried, wrapped in a burial cloth)
- In Matthew, we saw Jesus as a king receiving gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh (giving us a hint at what will happen in the end)
- Father suggested that Luke might be trying to show us that He was a baby, and a king, a son of David, but he is going to be wrapped in swaddling clothes and later, buried in them again via his burial cloth