

About the First Sunday after Christmas

Theme: Redemption of the Firstborn

– *highlighting the Scriptures for the week* –

Because of Israel's redemption by God from slavery in Egypt, every firstborn Israelite male (both livestock and human) belonged to the LORD (Exodus). A human male could be redeemed (bought back) with an appropriate sacrifice. Such redemption occurred also in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke). Our own redemption was accomplished by His sacrificial blood on the cross and has far-reaching implications for living the Christian life (Colossians). All of this causes the faithful to praise the LORD for His wondrous deeds and to give honor to His name (Psalm 111).

WEEKLY BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Use the schedule below in your personal devotion. The first three readings are the lessons read today; the last three will be read next Sunday. The Wednesday reading is the psalmody for the week. Each day you may want to pray that Psalm or the prayer printed in our service folder today, followed by the suggested reading and your personal requests and thanksgivings to our Heavenly Father.

- Sunday** Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15 Why did every firstborn male belong to the LORD? Why were firstborn male donkeys redeemed (bought back)? Why were firstborn male humans redeemed (bought back)? What was the importance of communicating the reasons for this practice to one's children?
- Monday** Colossians 3:12-17 What connection is there between holy living and being God's chosen people? What connection is there between holy living and Christ's bloody sacrifice on the cross? How do the faithful "teach and admonish one another"? In whose name do Christians act and behave? Why?
- Tuesday** Luke 2:22-40 Why did Joseph and Mary take Jesus to Jerusalem? What had been promised to Simeon? How was the promise fulfilled? In what way(s) was Jesus a cause for "the falling and rising of many in Israel"? What is so significant about the background and activities of the prophetess Anna? What are we told about Jesus as He grew up in Nazareth?
- Wednesday** Psalm 111 is the first of the so-called 'Hallel Psalms'? Why? (See v. 1.) The last of the 'Hallel Psalms' is Psalm 118, sung by our Lord's disciples at the conclusion of the Passover meal on the night He was betrayed. What's the connection with the theme of the other lessons this week? Make a list of the reasons cited in Psalm 11 for praising the LORD.
- Thursday** 1 Kings 3:4-15 Why did Solomon go to Gibeon? How will this change in the future? For what did Solomon ask? Why? What was God's response? What does this mean for us today?
- Friday** Ephesians 1:3-14 What is the eternal strategy God the Father planned before the world began? Why? To whose credit? How do all three persons of the Holy Trinity work together to bring us greater knowledge of Himself? How are these unseen realities seen? What therefore is the secret to greater spiritual maturity?
- Saturday** Luke 2:40-52 Why do you think this is the only recorded story in the gospels of Jesus' boyhood? What was the Holy Family doing? Why? In what was Jesus interested? Why? What does this mean for us today?

Exodus 13:1-3a, 11-15 (p. 55)

Redemption of the Firstborn

Colossians 3:12-17 (p. 985)

Holy Living

Luke 2:22-40 (p. 857)

The Christ Is Redeemed