



**DAILY BREAD
LECTIONARY DEVOTIONS
CHRISTMAS 1 —YEAR A**

INVOCATION

L: In the name of the Father
and of the Son +
and of the Holy Spirit.

G: Amen

PSALM OF THE DAY: PSALM 2

**A: Great are the works of the Lord.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Great are the works of the Lord.**

L: Why do the nations conspire

G: and the peoples plot in vain?

L: The kings of the earth take their stand and the
rulers gather together against the LORD

G: and against his Anointed One.

L: The One enthroned in heaven laughs;

G: the Lord scoffs at them.

L: Then he rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

**G: "I have installed my King on Zion, my holy
hill."**

L: I will proclaim the decree of the LORD:

**G: He said to me, "You are my Son;
today I have become your Father."**

**A: Great are the works of the Lord.
Alleluia! Alleluia!
Great are the works of the Lord.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

READING & MEDITATION *see next page*

PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

**A: Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

VERSE OF THE DAY

**A: Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.
(Colossians 3:15a)**

BENEDICTION

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

A: Amen

READING AND MEDITATION:

First Sunday after Christmas: God cares for his sons. He cared for his son, the nation of Israel—though they were rebellious. He cared for his Son, Jesus—though Herod raged against him. He even cares for his newly adopted sons—though we do not deserve it. God cared for us by sending his Son to deliver us from the corruption of sin and transform us into sons just like Jesus (Prayer of the Day). That work of Christ gives us peace (Verse of the Day) that only sons can have.

As you study this week, seek to find the connecting theme in all the lessons by using Luther's Four Big Barber Questions to ponder and discuss each individual reading:

1. *What is God saying to me in this lesson?*
2. *For what does this lesson lead me to give thanks?*
3. *What sins does this lesson lead me to confess?*
4. *For what does this lesson lead me to pray?*

THE GOSPEL: MATTHEW 2:13-15, 19-23

At the birth of Christ, the angels announced good news and great joy meant for all people, but not everyone saw it that way: Herod reacted to the birth of Jesus with fear, opposition, and violence. The malice of Herod, however, could not rob the world of the peace God intended to bring through his Son. God cared for his Son and all the sons of God by using Joseph to keep him safe in the land of Egypt. The words of Hosea found their fulfillment at his return from Egypt—Jesus was Israel reduced to one. God cared for his sons by having his Son serve as their substitute. The closing words, “He will be called a Nazarene,” are problematic since they are not found in the Old Testament prophets. Matthew might have intended a play on words between Nazareth and נָצַר, “branch,” fulfilling Isaiah 11:1. Perhaps, though, he meant that Jesus’ new hometown of Nazareth would contribute to the contempt that he would receive as a man (see John 1:45-46), thus fulfilling the word of the prophets that the Messiah would be a suffering servant.

My takeaways:

FIRST LESSON: ISAIAH 63:7-9

Isaiah extols the kindness of the LORD by reminding God’s people of all that he has done for us. The LORD stood by his covenant even though his son, Israel, turned away from him. The LORD showed compassion and mercy to a people who did not

deserve it. What but the kindness of God could look at Israel and us and still say, “Surely they are my people, sons who will not be false to me”? That can only be said because of the work of God’s only true and faithful Son, Jesus. God cared for his sons so much that in the fullness of time, the LORD became our Savior to redeem us. See how much God cares for his sons: when they are distressed, he is distressed; when they are in danger, he lifts them up and carries them. So now the sons of God join Isaiah saying, “I will tell of the kindness of the LORD.”

My takeaways:

SECOND LESSON: GALATIANS 4:4-7

God’s care for his sons meant preparing the world for the coming of Christ. The common language of Greek, the peace of the Roman Empire, the ability to travel, the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world—all these served to help the message of Jesus spread. But even more, the time was right for God to fulfill every prophetic promise to care for his children. He commissioned his own Son to become the God-man who subjected himself to law so that everyone under sin’s curse might be bought back. The Incarnation of God meant that children of wrath could become the sons of God, and Pentecost proves our adoption as sons. The Spirit that cries, “Abba, Father,” also testifies to our freedom from sin and our new status as heirs of God’s kingdom.

My takeaways:

SUPPLEMENTAL FIRST LESSON: HOSEA 11:1-7

God had made a son for himself in the nation of Israel, but they turned away from God again and again. God had cared for his son by healing him and teaching him and feeding him, but Israel failed to recognize his care. The Father kept calling, but the son turned further and further away. To his rebellious son, Israel, God said, “I love you, but I will judge you.” That judgment on Israel certainly came. But God had not stopped caring for his sons. God sent his Son to be the son Israel should have been so that his repentant children might be his sons again.

My takeaways:

What major theme(s) connect(s) all the lessons?