

Adult Catechism Class for December 7, 2015

The Relationship between Holy Scripture and the Church Liturgical Calendar

Part 1: Scripture Readings

1 Chronicles 16:23-29: Sing to the LORD, all the earth; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples. For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy in his dwelling place. Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name. Bring an offering and come before him; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

Psalms 100: 1-5: Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

2 Kings 17: 38-39: Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. Rather, worship the LORD your God; it is he who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies."

Part 2: What are the origins of the Church Calendar?

The Byzantine calendar, also called "Creation Era of Constantinople" or "Era of the World" was the calendar used by the Eastern Orthodox Church from c. 691 to 1728 in the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It was also the official calendar of the Byzantine Empire from 988 to 1453, and of Kievan Rus' and Russia from c. 988 to 1700. The calendar is based on the Julian calendar, except that the year started on 1 September and the year number used an Anno Mundi epoch derived from the Septuagint version of the Bible. It placed the date of creation at 5509 years before the Incarnation, and was characterized by a certain tendency which had already been a tradition among Jews and early Christians to number the years from the foundation of the world. (Latin: Annus Mundi or Ab Origine Mundi— "AM"). Its year one, the supposed date of creation, was September 1, 5509 BC to August 31, 5508 BC. The era was ultimately calculated as starting on September 1, and Jesus was thought to have been born in the year 5509 Annus Mundi (AM) – the year since the creation of the world. Thus historical time was calculated from the creation, and not from Christ's birth, as in the west. The Eastern Church avoided the use of the Anno Domini system of Dionysius Exiguus, since the date of Christ's birth was debated in Constantinople as late as the 14th century. Otherwise the Creation Era was identical to the Julian Calendar except that: the names of the months were transcribed from Latin into Greek, the first day of the year was September 1, so that both the Ecclesiastical and Civil calendar years ran from 1 September to 31 August, which to the present day is the Church year, and, the date of creation, its year one, was September 1, 5509 BC to August 31, 5508 BC. The Byzantine World Era was gradually replaced in the Orthodox Church by the Christian Era, which was

utilized initially by Patriarch Theophanes I Karykes in 1597, afterwards by Patriarch Cyril Lucaris in 1626, and then formally established by the Church in 1728. Meanwhile, as Russia received Orthodox Christianity from Byzantium, she inherited the Orthodox Calendar based on the Byzantine Era (translated into Slavonic). After the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, the era continued to be used by Russia, which witnessed millennialist movements in Moscow in AD 1492 (7000 AM) due to the end of the church calendar. It was only in AD 1700 that the Byzantine World Era in Russia was changed to the Julian Calendar by Peter the Great. It still forms the basis of traditional Orthodox calendars up to today. September AD 2000 began the year 7509 AM.

Part 3: Liturgical Hours and Days in the Eastern Tradition:

In the Byzantine period the day was divided into two 12-hour cycles fixed by the rising and setting of the sun. "Following Roman custom, the Byzantines began their day with the first hour of day (hemera) coming at dawn. The third hour marked midmorning, the sixth hour noon, and the ninth hour midafternoon. Evening (hespera) began at the 11th hour, and with sunset came the first hour of night (apodeipnon). The interval between sunset and sunrise (nyx) was similarly divided into 12 hours as well as the traditional "watches" (vigiliae) of Roman times." The seven-day week was known throughout the ancient world. The Roman Calendar had assigned one of the planetary deities to each day of the week. The Byzantines naturally avoided using these Latin names with their pagan echoes. They began their week with the "Lord's Day" (Kyriake), followed by an orderly succession of numbered days: Deutera ("2nd"), Trite ("3rd"), Tetarte ("4th"), and Pempte ("5th"), a day of "preparation" (Paraskeve), and finally Sabatton. "Each day was devoted to remembering one or more martyrs or saints, whose observed feast days gradually eclipsed traditional festivals. Kyriake was seen as both the first and eighth day of the week, in the same way that Christ was the alpha and omega of the cosmos, existing both before and after time. The second day of the week recognized angels, "the secondary luminaries as the first reflections of the primal outpouring of light", just as the sun and the moon had been observed during the Roman week. John the Baptist, the forerunner (Prodromos) of Christ, was honored on the third day. Both the second and third days were viewed as occasions for penitence. The fourth and sixth days were dedicated to the Cross with holy songs sung in remembrance of the Crucifixion. The Virgin Mary was honored on the fifth day of the week, while the seventh day was set aside for the martyrs of the church.

Part 4: Eastern Liturgical Calendar:

The Eastern Christian Liturgical Calendar describes and dictates the rhythm of the life of the Church. Associated with each date are passages of Holy Scripture, Saints and events for commemoration, and many times special rules for fasting or feasting that correspond to the day of the week or time of year in relationship to the major feast days. There are two types of feasts in the Eastern Church calendar: fixed and movable. Fixed feasts occur on the same calendar day every year, while movable feasts change each year. The moveable feasts are generally relative to Pascha (Easter), and so the cycle of moveable feasts is referred to as the Paschal cycle. All dates having to do with Pascha (Easter) - the beginning of Great Lent,

Ascension, Pentecost, etc. - are "moveable" feasts. The Orthodox liturgical year begins on September 1.

Pascha is, by far, the most important day in the ecclesiastical year, and all other days, in one way or another, are dependent upon it. Pascha falls on different calendar dates from year to year, calculated according to a strict set of rules. In principle, Easter falls on the Sunday following the full moon that follows the northern spring equinox (the paschal full moon). However, the vernal equinox and the full moon are not determined by astronomical observation. The vernal equinox is fixed to fall on 21 March (previously it varied in different areas and in some areas Easter was allowed to fall before the equinox). The full moon is an ecclesiastical full moon determined by reference to a lunar calendar, which again varied in different areas. While Easter now falls at the earliest on the 15th of the lunar month and at the latest on the 21st, in some areas it used to fall at the earliest on the fourteenth (the day of the paschal full moon) and at the latest on the twentieth, or between the sixteenth and the 22nd. The last limit arises from the fact that the crucifixion was considered to have happened on the fourteenth (the eve of the Passover) and the resurrection therefore on the sixteenth. The "computus" is the procedure of determining the first Sunday after the first ecclesiastical full moon falling on or after 21 March, and the difficulty arose from doing this over the span of centuries without accurate means of measuring the precise tropical year. In 1583, the Catholic Church began using 21 March under the Gregorian calendar to calculate the date of Easter, while the Eastern Churches have continued to use 21 March under the Julian calendar. The Catholic and Protestant denominations thus use an ecclesiastical full moon that occurs four, five or 34 days earlier than the eastern one.

While the Fixed Cycle begins on September 1, the new Paschal Cycle begins on "Zaccheus Sunday" (the beginning of the preparatory season before Great Lent), eleven Sundays before Pascha, and continues until the Zaccheus Sunday of the following year. The Epistle and Gospel readings at the Divine Liturgy throughout the year are determined by the date of Pascha.

There are Twelve Great Feasts throughout the church year—not counting Pascha, which is above and beyond all other feast days. These are feasts which celebrate major historical events in the lives of Jesus Christ or the Theotokos (Virgin Mary). Of these, three are on the Paschal Cycle: Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Pascha), Ascension (forty days after Pascha), Pentecost (fifty days after Pascha). The other Great Feasts are on the Fixed Cycle: The Nativity of the Theotokos (8 September), The Elevation of the Holy Cross (14 September), The Presentation of the Theotokos (21 November), The Nativity of the Lord (25 December), The Theophany (Epiphany) of the Lord (6 January), The Presentation of the Lord (2 February), The Annunciation (25 March), The Transfiguration (6 August), The Dormition (Falling Asleep) of the Theotokos (15 August). In addition, the feast day of the patron saint of a parish church or monastery is counted as a Great Feast, and is celebrated with great solemnity.

In addition to Great Lent, there are three other lesser lenten seasons in the church year: Nativity Fast (40 days in preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord), Apostles' Fast (variable time from the second Monday after Pentecost until the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul), Dormition Fast (2 weeks from 1 August to 14 August in preparation for the Feast of the

Dormition of the Theotokos). The season from the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee (three weeks before the Great Lent) through Holy Saturday is called Triodion, while the season from Pascha through Pentecost is called the Pentecostarion.

Part 5: How is the Lectionary Determined in Our Church?

A lectionary is a book containing Scripture readings (pericopes) that are appointed to be read in Church services according to the cycles of the liturgical year. The lectionary goes back at least to the fourth century, and some of the oldest Greek manuscripts of the New Testament that have survived are Byzantine lectionaries. In the Eastern Church, the lectionary is traditionally found in three books: the Gospel, the Epistle, and the Prophetologion (a text that contains the Old Testament Lectionary readings appointed at Vespers and at other services during the Church year). Of these three texts, only the Prophetologion has not been published in a single text in English. Old Testament readings are typically taken from the Menaion (refers to the annual fixed cycle of services in the Orthodox Church. Commemorations in the Menaion are tied to the day of the calendar year), or other texts that contain these readings.

The liturgical texts for celebrations on the Menaion are contained in twelve volumes called menaia. Each menaion will contain the services for an entire month. The liturgical year for Eastern Christians begins in September, so the Menaion for September is the first volume of the set. The menaion contains the largest collection of liturgical texts that are used in the Eastern Church, and is a very important component of the liturgical books owned by a parish. Outside of the Sundays of Great Lent, Holy Week, Bright Week, and the Sundays of the Pentecostarion, texts from the menaion are used in every one of the Divine Services, with the exception of the Midnight Office.

The readings for the Divine Liturgy are normally found in a Gospel Book (Evangélion) and an Epistle Book (Apostól). In the Byzantine practice, the readings are in the form of pericopes (selections from scripture containing only the portion actually chanted during the service), and are arranged according to the order in which they occur in the church year, beginning with the Sunday of Pascha (Easter), and continuing throughout the entire year, concluding with Holy Week. Then follows a section of readings for the commemorations of Saints and readings for special occasions (Baptism, Funeral, etc.). In the Slavic practice, the biblical books are reproduced in their entirety and arranged in the canonical order in which they appear in the Bible.

The annual cycle of the Gospels is composed of four series:

1. The Gospel of St. John—read from Pascha until Pentecost Sunday. There are, however, several exceptions to this sequential reading: On three days, the Gospel lessons are taken from other Gospels: On Bright Tuesday, from Luke, On the Sunday of the Myrrhbearers, from Mark, On Ascension Day, from Luke. The Gospel lessons on the Sundays during this period (except the Sunday of the Myrrhbearers) are all taken from John, but they do not follow any particular sequence. On certain other days during the fifty-day period, the strict sequential reading from

John is broken. The Gospel of John is also read on the Sunday of Orthodoxy (first Sunday of Great Lent) as well as Friday of Cheese fare week. During Great Lent, the Gospel of John is read on All Souls Saturdays during Lent, the Commemoration of St. Mary of Egypt (Fifth Sunday of Great Lent), on Lazarus Saturday (the day before Palm Sunday), and on Palm Sunday. Part of the Gospel of John is also read on Holy Wednesday, Holy Thursday, and Good Friday. The Gospel of John is also read during the Sunday before the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, on the day of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (September 14), the Saturday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, at funerals and 40 day services for the deceased, and on the feast days of St. John the Apostle and Theologian (September 26), St. Thomas (October 6), the Sunday of the Fathers of Nicea, St. Demetrius (October 26), St. Josaphat (November 12), St. John Chrysostom (November 13), St. Philip (November 14), St. Andrew (November 30), St. John the Baptist (January 7), Veneration of the Chains of St. Peter (January 16), St. George (April 23), Saints Cyril and Methodius (May 11), Saints Constantine and Helen (May 21), St. Jude (June 19), St. Vladimir (July 15), Saints Boris and Gleb (July 24), St. Panteleimon (July 27), and the Procession of the Cross (August 1).

2. The Gospel of St. Matthew—divided over seventeen weeks beginning with the Monday of the Holy Spirit (the day after Pentecost). From the twelfth week, it is read on Saturdays and Sundays while the Gospel of St. Mark is read on the remaining weekdays. The Gospel of Matthew is also read on Sunday and Wednesday and Saturday of Meat-fare week as well as the Saturday and Sunday of Cheese fare week. During Great Lent, the Gospel of Matthew is read on the Wednesday and Thursday of the First week of Great Lent, from the Monday to Friday of the Second week of Great Lent, from the Monday to Friday of the Third week of Great Lent, from the Monday to Friday of the Fourth Week of Great Lent, for the Commemoration of St. John Climacus (Fourth Sunday of Great Lent), and on Friday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent. The Gospel of Matthew is also read on Holy Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and parts of it are read on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and on Holy Saturday. The Gospel of Matthew is also read on September 1 (For St. Simeon), September 13 (Dedication of the Church of the Resurrection), the feast of St. James (October 23), St. Matthew (November 16), St. Sabbas (December 5), the Sunday before Christmas, Christmas Day (December 25), Synaxis of the Mother of God (December 26), Sunday after Christmas (St. Joseph), St. Stephen (December 27), Saturday before Theophany, Theophany (January 6), Saturday and Sunday after Theophany, St. Theodosius (January 11), Three Holy Bishops Basil, Gregory, John Chrysostom (January 30), 40 Great Martyrs of Sebasta (March 9), St. Simon the Zealot (May 10), Discovery of Head of St. John the Baptist (May 25), Saints Peter and Paul (June 29), Sunday of the Holy Fathers of First Six Ecumenical Councils, and Holy Transfiguration (August 6).

3. The Gospel of St. Luke—divided over nineteen weeks beginning on the Monday of the Eighteenth Week after Pentecost. From the Monday of the Thirtieth Week after Pentecost, it is only read on Saturdays and Sundays, while St. Mark's Gospel is read on the remaining weekdays. The Gospel of Luke is also read during Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of Cheese fare week (the week before Great Lent starts). During Great Lent, the Gospel of St. Luke is read on the Monday and Friday of the first week of Great Lent, from Monday to Friday during the fifth week of Great Lent, Akhatist Saturday (the fifth Saturday of Great Lent) as well as the Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday of the Sixth week of Great Lent. Part of the Gospel of Luke

is also read on Holy Thursday and Good Friday. The Gospel of Luke is also read on the following days: Beginning of Church year (September 1), Archangel Michael (September 6), Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8), Conception of John the Baptist (September 23), St. Chariton (September 28), Protection of Mother of God (October 1), St. James (October 9), St. Luke (October 18), St. Parasceva (October 28), Heavenly Powers (November 8), Presentation of Mother of God into Temple (November 21), St. Nicholas (December 6), Conception of St. Anna (December 9), Sunday of the Patriarchs, Holy martyrs Eustratius and others (December 13), Saturday before Christmas, Christmas Eve (December 24), St. Basil the Great and Circumcision of our Lord (January 1), Theophany Eve (January 5), St. Anthony (January 17), St. Euthymius (January 20), Presentation of Jesus into temple (February 2), Annunciation of Mother of God (March 25), St. James (April 30), Saints Bartholomew and Barnabas (June 11), Nativity of John the Baptist (June 24), St. Athanasius of Mount Athos (July 5), St. Elias (July 20), Dormition of St. Anna (July 25), St. Matthias (August 9), Dormition or Assumption of Mother of God (August 15).

4. The Gospel of St. Mark—read during the Lenten period on Saturdays and Sundays — with the exception of the Sunday of Orthodoxy, where the Gospel of John is used. The Gospel from St. Mark is also read on the first Wednesday of Great Lent. Beginning on Monday of the 12th Week after Pentecost, the Gospel according to Mark is read sequentially on weekdays through Friday of the 17th Week after Pentecost, and is also read on weekdays from the Monday of the Thirtieth week after Pentecost until the Friday of Meat-Fare Week. During Great Lent, besides Saturdays and Sundays, the Gospel of Mark is also read on the Tuesday of the Sixth Week of Great Lent, and parts of St. Mark's Gospel is read on Good Friday. The Gospel of Mark is also read on the following feasts: Sunday after the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Sunday before Theophany, St. Mark (April 25), Synaxis of Twelve Apostles (June 30), Beheading of John the Baptist (August 29).

The interruption of the reading of the Gospel of Matthew after the Elevation of the Holy Cross is known as the "Lukan Jump" The jump occurs only in the Gospel readings, there is no corresponding jump in the Epistle. From this point on the Epistle and Gospel readings do not exactly correspond, the Epistles continuing to be determined according to the moveable Paschal cycle and the Gospels being influenced by the fixed cycle. The Lukan Jump is related to the chronological proximity of the Elevation of the Cross to the Conception of the Forerunner (St. John the Baptist), celebrated on September 23rd. In late Antiquity, this feast marked the beginning of the ecclesiastical New Year. Thus, beginning the reading of the Lukan Gospel toward the middle of September can be understood. The reasoning is theological, and is based on a vision of Salvation History: the Conception of the Forerunner constitutes the first step of the New Economy, as mentioned in the stikhera of the matins of this feast. The Evangelist Luke is the only one to mention this Conception (Luke 1:5-24).

The Apostolos lectionary begins each year on Pascha with the Acts of the Holy Apostles, which are read sequentially, for the most part, for fifty days through the Sunday of Pentecost (including Saturdays and Sundays). There are, however, several exceptions to the sequential reading: Thomas Sunday, Mid-Pentecost, Sunday of the Samaritan Woman, Ascension Day, Pentecost Sunday. It is also interesting to note that most of Chapter Seven of the Acts of the

Apostles is omitted from the lectionary (only the beginning and ending verses are read). Beginning on the Monday after Pentecost (i.e., the day of the Holy Spirit, where Ephesians is read), the Epistles are read on weekdays almost always sequentially in the same order as given in the English Bible (from Romans to Jude) until the beginning of Great Lent. The book of Revelation is never used as scripture for Liturgical services.

On Saturdays and Sundays during the Pentecostal and Lenten seasons, different Epistles are read as follows: *The Sunday of All Saints (First Sunday after Pentecost), the Saturday and Sunday of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th weeks of Lent and Saturday of the 6th week of Lent (all where Hebrews is read); the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th, 6th Saturdays after Pentecost, the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th Sundays after Pentecost, the Saturday and Sunday of the 7th week after Pentecost, the Saturdays of the 8th, 9th and 10th weeks after Pentecost, the Saturday and Sunday of Cheese Fare Week, and Holy Saturday (all where Romans is read); the 8th, 9th, 10th Sundays after Pentecost, the Saturday and Sunday of the 11th, 12th, 13th weeks after Pentecost, the Saturday of 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th weeks after Pentecost, the 34th Sunday after Pentecost (Prodigal Son), the Saturday and Sunday of Meat-fare, the Fourth all Souls Saturday (Fourth Saturday of Lent) (all where 1st Corinthians is read); the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th Sundays after Pentecost, the 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th Saturdays after Pentecost (all where 2nd Corinthians is read); the 20th, 21st, 22nd Sundays after Pentecost, and the 25th, 26th, 27th Saturdays after Pentecost, the Fifth Sunday of Lent (St. Mary of Egypt) (where Galatians is read); the 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th Sundays after Pentecost, the 28th, 29th, 30th Saturdays after Pentecost, and the Sunday of St. John Climacus (Fourth Sunday of Lent) (all where Ephesians is read); the 28th, 29th, 30th Sundays after Pentecost and the 31st Saturday after Pentecost (all where Colossians is read); the 31st, 32nd (Zacchaeus Sunday) Sundays after Pentecost, and the 34th Saturday after Pentecost (all where 1st Timothy is read); the 32nd Saturday after Pentecost, the First all Souls Saturday (Meat Fare), Second and Third all Souls Saturday (Second and Third Saturday of Lent) (all where 1st Thessalonians is read); the 33rd Saturday after Pentecost, the 33rd (Publican and Pharisee) Sunday after Pentecost (all where 2nd Timothy is read); and Palm Sunday (where Philippians is read).*

There is only one major adjustment to the Apostolos lectionary, and that is the realignment that takes place before the beginning of the Lenten Triodion. There is also a minor adjustment that pertains to the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (the second Sunday before the Nativity), for which the Apostolos reading is always taken from the 29th Sunday after Pentecost. If the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers falls on some Sunday other than the 29th Sunday after Pentecost, the Apostolos reading appointed for that other Sunday is read on the 29th Sunday. On the Saturdays and Sundays before and after the Nativity and Theophany, special readings are appointed. These readings are generally sufficient to cover any gaps that might occur in the lectionary as a result of the realignment with the beginning of the Lenten Triodion. In most cases, the usual Saturday and Sunday lectionaries are interrupted by these special Saturday and Sunday readings. Following the Saturday and Sunday after Theophany, the usual Saturday and Sunday lectionaries are resumed as needed in order to accomplish the realignment with the beginning of the Lenten Triodion. However, when Pascha occurs late, there is a need for readings for one additional Saturday and Sunday. These readings are then taken from the 17th

Saturday and Sunday after Pentecost. On weekdays, the Apostolos and Gospel lectionaries are read through without a break until the readings for Friday of the 33rd Week after Pentecost have been completed. If additional weeks remain until the beginning of the Lenten Triodion, the readings for the final weeks of the Apostolos and Gospel lectionaries are then repeated as needed. It should be noted that the lessons are only repeated on those particular days when there is no readings appointed in the Menaion or when the repeated lesson was previously omitted in connection with the feasts of the Nativity or Theophany (including the day before and after each feast) and the Circumcision.

The Epistle Readings during Cheese-Fare Week and the Weekday Readings during Lent do not follow any set order. Since these weekdays are aliturgical (Divine Liturgy is usually not served during these days), the readings are taken from a variety of Epistles, such as Romans, Ephesians, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Hebrews, Galatians, Colossians, 2nd Timothy, and 1st Thessalonians.

There are also readings from the Old Testament, called "parables" (Paroemia), which are read at Vespers on feast days and Saturdays. These parables are found in the Menaion, Triodion or Pentecostarion. During Great Lent, parables are read every day at Vespers and at the Sixth Hour. These parables are found in the Triodion. The Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts that is done during the Lenten Season has readings from the Book of Genesis and the Book of Proverbs. And many other Eastern Services such as Molebens, Akhatists, Lenten Liturgy of the Hours, Matins and Vespers can have various readings from both the Old and New Testaments, such as the Prophecy of Isaiah, the Book of Daniel, and the Psalms, etc.

And there are many verses from the Old Testament found throughout the Divine Liturgy. For example: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us" comes from the Bible References: Isaiah 6:3, Isaiah 57:15, Revelation 4:8, Saint Luke 1:49, Psalms 42:2.