

just a prophetic voice but His Son.

"By His Son who..." - seven praise definitions follow: (1) heir of creation; (2) creator or co-creator of the universe; (3) the radiance of God's glory; (4) the exact expression of God's nature; (5) the Word of God Himself, the only prophet who is also God; (6) the priest of God, who purifies from sin; (7) the majestic king enthroned at the right hand of the Father.

"Superior to the angels" - first-century Jews revered angels as those who revealed the Mosaic law at Sinai, Hebrews 2:2 but some had difficulty with Jesus' divine status and viewed Him as a mere angel. Jesus - His name and therefore essence is Son - is not to be equated even with angels.

5 It is not to angels that He has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him?"

7-8a "You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honour and put everything under their feet."

8b-9 In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the

**IN PRACTICE** Who is Jesus? The introduction to the letter written with an emphasis on Jewish Christians starts with a well-crafted single sentence that sets out Jesus' identity as the unique prophet, priest and king who is also God. Yet He was also incarnated as a human being whose role as redeemer of mankind was completed in His suffering and death. That puts Him in a logic-defying situation of being identified with, and experiencing with us, every abuse and injustice that part of this world's package - and also being sovereign Lord, the Lord of heaven's better, higher, more just way, over every aspect of our lives. Part of His redeeming purpose is transforming us with the reminder that in Him we have a family relationship - those being made holy are closely related to the One who is holy.

**QUESTION** *The definitions of who Jesus is are arresting; to be called His brother or sister is almost beyond our grasp - but how does this help us in life?*

**PRAYER** Lord, help me to get more fully who You are, and who I am through transformation in You. Help me to live above my humanness as a result. Amen.

angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

"Someone has testified" - Psalm 8:4-6 is fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus needed to become incarnate as man - and lower than the angels - so that the "son of man", the Messiah, could be the truest representative of mankind, Daniel 7:13. The original role intended for mankind at creation came to fulfillment in Jesus Christ sharing our humanity.

10-11 In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what He suffered. Both the One who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

12 He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises."

"Perfect through what He suffered" - no question about Jesus' sinlessness, but showing Jesus to have been qualified for His unique role "through what He suffered", obeying perfectly.

"I will declare Your name... in the assembly..." - from Psalm 22:22, showing that Jesus Christ is present in the gathered church.

# The Living Word

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The Bible readings for Sunday, October 7, 2018, with commentary notes

Revised Common Lectionary readings for **Sunday, October 7** in Bible order

Prepare for Sunday by reading the Bible passages beforehand - read again to reflect on Sunday's teaching

Theme: **Heaven's fairness confronts man's pride and control**

Job 1:1, 2:1-10 - God is over the tests of life which come to all

Alternative OT reading (C of E option) Genesis 2:18-24

Mark 10:2-16 - God's justice and goodness is for everyone equally

Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12 - Jesus enters our world to redeem mankind

Also in this Sunday's readings: Psalm 26

## Job 1:1, 2:1-10 - God is over the tests of life which come to all

### **Satan is allowed to oppress righteous Job to try to get him to blame God**

1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

"Job... was blameless and upright" - his name is a Greek/English way of saying the Hebrew 'iyyob meaning 'Where is the heavenly Father?' This sets the scene for the testing of Job in the story. He is depicted as having a consistent spiritual life (but not sinless), questioning but faithful before God and of spotless character - in contrast to the assumptions of his three friends. This is the tension explored in the whole book.

2:1-2 On another day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them to present himself before Him. And the Lord said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the Lord, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

"On another day" - a second glimpse of angels of the heavenly court with Satan elbowing in, an unwelcome presence. The scene of Job's second test is like the first, Job 1:6-12. In the first test Satan

was bound from harming Job's person and in this second Job's person is vulnerable but his actual life is protected, verse 6 below.

3 Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited Me against him to ruin him without any reason."

"You incited me" - God cannot be stirred up to act against His will. "Have you considered my servant Job" is an indication that God allowed what happened to Job as part of His purpose. God doesn't send afflictions but may allow difficulties which test our trust of Him, hence "Lead us not into temptation" linked to "the evil one" in Jesus' model prayer for disciples, Matt. 6:13.

"Without any reason" - translates the same word used for Satan insinuating that Job did not serve God "for nothing", Job 1:9. The Lord throws "for nothing" back at the Accuser.

4-5 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will give all he has for his own life. But now stretch out Your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he

will surely curse You to your face."

*"Skin for skin" – or quid pro quo. Job maintained his integrity in a test that cost him his skin and the "skin" of his animals. Satan, always the accuser, alleges that Job is only concerned for himself.*

6 The Lord said to Satan, "Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

7-8 So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head. Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

*"Painful sores" – the terms used for the 'plague of boils' in Egypt, Exod. 9:9-11 and the 'painful boils', Deut. 28:35, a specific covenant curse for the disobedient. Job's friends concluded that he was*

**IN PRACTICE** Job's miserable experience meets us where we are, in struggling to understand why bad things happen to good people. Job is presented to us as man of integrity, who honoured God and took trouble to avoid evil. So why is he singled out for affliction? Those who mistakenly (or even subconsciously believe) that God is a fickle creator can stop and reflect right here. We can see that some who are not deserving prosper, while people we know who are unselfish and upright before God face trials, in way which defies all human reason. Job and his friends struggled with this! The lesson is that we have an enemy, perhaps particularly targeting those who have a close walk with God. However, God's purposes are higher, using affliction to test, prove and grow our faith and demonstrate that ultimately He has sovereignty over our lives and circumstances.

**QUESTION** *How would you explain this lesson to a struggling or health-challenged friend, bringing out faith in God in the face of human logic?*

**Mark 10:2-16** – God's justice and goodness is for everyone equally

**In the kingdom of God, husbands, wives and children are esteemed together**

2 Some Pharisees came and tested Him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"

*"Tested Him by asking" – meaning 'try to catch out'. John the Baptist had been beheaded for teaching that Herod Antipas' divorce and remarriage was unlawful. With Jesus in Herod's territory, the Pharisees thought they could indict him before the ruler for agreeing with John the Baptist.*

*being punished for sinning – a severe test of faith.*

9 His wife said to him, "Are you still maintaining your integrity? Curse God and die!"

*"Are you still..." – Job's wife sarcastically echoes God's words in Job's hardest trial yet. She mistakes Job's dogged faith for religious obstinacy.*

10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

*"Shall we accept good... and not trouble" – Job's controlled retort cancels his wife's dangerous near-agreement with Satan and makes the central point of the Book of Job, that spiritual maturity trusts that God is sovereign over our lives whether in good times or adversity.*

*not a command but an acknowledgment that marriages can fail with some protection for the woman's rights. The 'something indecent' of Deut. 24:1 had become 'anything'.*

5 "It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied.

6-9 "But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

*"What God has joined" – Jesus uses Scripture to move the argument from man's interpretation, back to God's intentions at creation, before sin entered; marriage between man and woman is divinely established, Gen. 1:27, 2:24, Exodus 20:14*

10-12 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another

**IN PRACTICE** Like the Jews of Jesus' time, the 'first world' wants to make its own rules about marriage and divorce to accommodate shifts in culture. Jesus entered a male-dominated world with a strong sense of privilege and rank and 'small people', typified by the small people who were children, were dismissed as of little account. His intervention, today as then, is to call us back to God's creation intention – the kingdom order is equal-handed fairness without privilege or discrimination.

**QUESTION** *What is our sense of entitlement to Jesus' kingdom order, and how might He tease out if we have really received it?*

**Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12** – Jesus enters our world to redeem mankind

**The divine prophet, priest and very radiance of God became human, and enduring man's sin and oppression qualified to sit at the right hand of God**

1-2 In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, and through whom also He made the universe.

woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

*"This disciples asked Jesus about this" – they were taken aback by Jesus' reinterpretation of the Law. But He looked to a higher moral righteousness than merely keeping within Israel's civil law, Matt. 5:20.*

13-16 People were bringing little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, He was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And He took the children in His arms, placed His hands on them and blessed them.

*"Let the children... come" – the kingdom of God must be received, like the way a child comes and receives a gift without asserting rights. See Matt. 5:3.*

3-4 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So He became as much superior to the angels as the name He has inherited is superior to theirs.

*"In the past God spoke" – through the many instances and styles of His prophets, and then by the One who was a new category of revelation, not*