

Proper 25
Cycle B RCL
Revised

Job 42:1-6, 10-17

Job 42:1-6 is the last of the book's poetry and contains Job's complete submission to the Lord's argument that Job has no standing to make God defend the divine justice. Although Job had maintained that God's treatment of him had been unjust, he had asked only that God grant him an audience. So in Job 38:1-39:34 the Lord grants Job that audience, an audience in which the Lord insists upon the divine righteousness and denies Job's right to raise questions about it. Still, the Lord's appearance is the answer to Job's complaint and is enough to elicit Job's repentance.

The prose ending of Job has God admit in a way that Job has been wronged. The twofold restitution of oxen, camels, sheep, and donkeys fulfills the rule of thumb in Exodus 22:1-13 that one should repay two-for-one in cases of theft. Did God steal Job's possessions for the experiment God undertook at Satan's behest? Human treasure, however, is not restored twofold in the Hebrew text, though in the Greek the number of new sons and daughters *is* doubled. The human compensation comes in the form of such beauty for the three daughters that they would command a very high dowry. Job's extended life of 140 years is a compensation for his losses as well.

Psalm 34:1-8, (19-22)

This extended *thanksgiving* would be uttered aloud in the temple in fulfillment of a vow made to God earlier while praying for deliverance. The psalm recalls that the psalmist had called upon the LORD in the midst of terror (vs. 4) and was delivered from trouble. Individual laments often include a promise to teach the congregation about God's faithfulness. (See, for instance Psalm 51:13.) Psalm 34 fulfills just such a promise, encouraging those who hear the psalmist to call upon the LORD in their times of distress (15-22).

OR

Jeremiah 31:7-9

Jeremiah 26–35 consists primarily of narratives that show the Jeremiah's relationship to the last kings of Judah. In 597 BCE the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and took many of its citizens to Babylon, placing Zedekiah on the throne as a puppet king. The present passage evidently belongs to the period between that first exile and the final destruction of the city and her temple in 586 BCE and contains the prophet's message of hope in the face of impending disaster for the speedy restoration of the city's fortunes and the return of her exiles.

Psalm 126

Psalms 120-133 are each labeled "A Song of Ascents" and were all likely *pilgrimage songs*, sung by those who were on their way to Jerusalem for various festivals. Although the psalm gives God praise for help in the past and prays for a renewal of the nation's fortunes, it does not fall into the category of a *thanksgiving psalm* or of a *lament*.

Hebrews 7:23-28

The great mystery the Epistle to the Hebrews reveals is the priesthood of Christ according to the order of Melchizedek, and in Hebrews 7 the author reveals it fully. Since Melchizedek is the first priest mentioned in the Bible, many Jews and Christians of the first century considered him to be the first priest in the world; and that unstated assumption is the background for Melchizedek's role in Hebrews. Christ received his priesthood directly from the original priest, Melchizedek, since Jesus could not be a priest in the order of Aaron because of his birth from the house of David. A fascinating discovery among the Dead Sea Scrolls presents Melchizedek as a heavenly redeemer who will appear at the end of days to make atonement for the children of light, leading some commentators to believe that the author

of Hebrews knew this tradition and so presented Christ in his role of redeemer as having received a perfect, heavenly priesthood from Melchizedek.

Mark 10:46-52

The Jericho of the New Testament lies near the northern shore of the Dead Sea about a mile south of the Jericho of the Hebrew Bible. First-century Jews, who did not wish to pass through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem from the Galilee or from Jerusalem to the Galilee, made their journeys through the Jordan Valley, turning west toward Jerusalem or north to the Galilee at Jericho. Mark has Jesus follow this same route. As Jesus exits the city on his way to Jerusalem, Bartimaeus calls out to him using the royal title “Son of David” (Mark 10:47). This cry anticipates the royal entrance Jesus will shortly make into Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives where crowds will cheer him into the city with messianic praises (11:9-10). As always in Mark, the healing occurs not because of some magic power Jesus has but because of Bartimaeus’s reckless faith in Jesus that led him to disregard the censure of the crowd to cry out loudly to Jesus for healing (10:52).

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