

(Hebrew Messiah) and shares the same nature with God. Declaring "Jesus is Lord" is also a statement of owning and trusting His lordship – a vital transition.

10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

"Believe and are justified" – made right with God by affirming who Christ your Lord is, His death in your place and His resurrection showing the Father's approval. The affirmation of faith, freely spoken, is outward evidence of a heart that is changed – and also confirms that faith to the one speaking it.

11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in Him will never be put to shame."

12-13 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile – the same Lord is Lord of

IN PRACTICE The word that seals our assurance of salvation is near, not distant or out of reach. Yet so many of us go through our lives lacking the encouragement to simply do what this passage says to do. What is that? To pray out loud our personal declaration of Jesus' lordship; and our trust in Him as the One crucified to pay our penalty and risen again to eternal life to show the Father's glory. A 'religion by proxy' just doesn't cut it, and we don't find that anywhere in the New Testament. It is not enough for others to do the "calling on the name of the Lord" for us, when what He wants is a personal relationship with us. He longs to hear us accept it from Him through Jesus. He really does richly bless all who call on Him. We just need to exercise the bit of faith needed to do the calling, and resolve not to take a lesser path which offers no real salvation and no remedy for our soul's historic infirmity. "Jesus is Lord" was the cry of praise of the early church. We must make it our day by day confession, too.

QUESTION *How free are you to say the words of praise "Jesus is Lord" over of all areas of your life's provision, and as one who stands in agreement with His word of truth, and personally, one whose witness is "Jesus is my Lord"?*

PRAYER Father, all that I have is Yours, and I desire to honour You as my provider. Help me to regard possessions as lent by You, and to love Your Word as my main way of hearing from You. May I grow more and more willing to let You be Lord of my life and future, that others may see and want to know You, too. Amen.

all and richly blesses all who call on Him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

"Everyone" – the OFFER of salvation is for everyone, but it is wrong to conclude that everyone is saved. Faith is required, "anyone who believes in Him..." , v.11, and the response of faith in turning to Christ, "...who calls on the name of the Lord", v.13 This brings the assurance of salvation. Paul quoted this, from Joel 2:32, to a mainly Jewish audience on the day of Pentecost.

"No difference" – both Jew and Gentile are on exactly the same footing as far as salvation is required. The same would apply to a person given a religious upbringing. Entry to God's kingdom comes by a personal faith in Jesus, freely expressed.

The Living Word

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The Bible readings for Sunday, March 10, 2019 with commentary notes

Revised Common Lectionary readings for **March 10** in Bible order

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

Theme: **Honouring God with His Lordship over all things**

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 – Honouring God by giving Him the first of everything

Luke 4:1-13 – Jesus overcomes Satan's attack by honouring the Word

Romans 10:8b-13 – The path to personal salvation, declaring our faith

Also: Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Deuteronomy 26:1-11 – Giving God honour in the first part of everything

The principle of worshipping God in His lordship of all our provision

1-3 When you have entered the land the Lord your God (Yahweh) is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the Lord your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come to the land the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us."

"Firstfruits" – the principal of giving back to God the tithe had been established, Deut. 18:4. This, however, was to be a once-only offering of the first produce from the new land God would give them.

4 The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God.

5 Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.

"Wandering Aramean" – meaning Jacob, who married the daughters of his uncle Laban, one of the

Aramaic-speaking Aramean people, Genesis 28:5.

6-7 But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labour. Then we cried out to the Lord, the God of our ancestors, and the Lord heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression.

The first declaration of worship in the new land would begin with praising God's deliverance and provision in the nation's election, His protection in oppression, deliverance in exodus and gift of land.

8-10 So the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; and now I bring the firstfruits of the soil that You, Lord, have given me." Place the basket before the Lord your God and bow down before Him.

11 Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the Lord your God has given to you and your household.

"Rejoice" – recalling the earlier commandment of Deut. 12:12 to "...celebrate there in the presence of the LORD your God with your sons and daughters and all your servants."

IN PRACTICE Everything we have comes from God, and our relationship with Him works best when we put a high value on His provision. That is not to say we don't do our part – it is more how we honour Him in His part. This reading assumes the practice of the tithe – literally a tenth, but in spirit, more a heart decision to give to God the firstfruits of any crop or the first part of any earnings. The passage anticipates honouring God with the offering of what is produced first, in this new land of Canaan. They haven't made it there yet – so faith is involved. Faith, trust and honour are part of the currency of God's kingdom, because it is a partnership like no other. God provides everything, receives back a small fraction of it as worship, and then allows us to keep all the rest. One key instruction is to celebrate and rejoice in His provision – our worship is to be characterised by joy.

QUESTION *How much do we see God as the provider of everything we have, rather than our efforts in earning it? And how joyful are we in celebrating with Him?*

Luke 4:1-13 – Jesus overcomes Satan's attack by honouring the Word

Jesus in the wilderness uses God's truth to break Satan's lies

1-2 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days He was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them He was hungry.

"Full of the Holy Spirit" – Jesus, full of the Spirit from birth, received a special impartation or anointing for public ministry at baptism – and received the oppressive attention of the enemy which usually comes at the start of any faith venture.

"Wilderness... forty days" – Luke's language explicitly connects Jesus' experience in a remote place with Israel's "forty years" in the wilderness, Numbers 14:34.

• **For further study**, read Numbers 32:13; Deut 2:7; 29:5; Nehemiah 9:21; Amos 2:10.

3 The devil said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

"The devil" – the term diabolos is a Greek translation of Hebrew satan, meaning 'accuser' or 'adversary'. Luke uses both terms. In the Garden of Eden Adam and Eve were put to the test, and failed; here, Jesus, the second Adam, resists temptation, thereby reversing the judgment

against Adam and Eve, 1 Cor. 15:22, 45.

4 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'"

"If you are... It is written" – the devil tries to bait Jesus, with some ridicule, to exercise His divine power in a wrong way. Jesus' role, however was to endure the hardship as a perfectly obedient human waiting for God's deliverance.

"Not... bread alone" – Jesus answers by quoting the written Word of God in Deut. 8:3. Israel's needs in the wilderness were met not just by manna but also by the presence of God and His Word.

5-7 The devil led Him up to a high place and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to Him, "I will give you all their authority and splendour; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. If You worship me, it will all be yours."

"Showed Him" – this temptation is being momentarily shown, and falsely offered, the world's power structures.

"It has been given to me" – as a result of Adam and Eve's mistake Satan gained influence in the world, but what he says is a lie: all authority belongs to God.

• **For further study**, read John 8:44, John 12:31, Eph. 2:1-2, 1 John 5:19; and Psalm 24:1, Daniel 4:17, Romans 13:1-4.

8 Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.'"

"Worship... Him only" – Jesus echoes the first of the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:3, as He blocks the devil's lie with the truth of Deut. 6:13

9 The devil led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw Yourself down from here.

"The highest point of the temple" – the final temptation (Matthew's order varies) has Jesus overlooking the Kidron Valley 100 feet below the temple colonnade.

10 "For it is written: 'He will command His angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike

your foot against a stone.'"

"For it is written" – the devil attempts to quote Scripture, Ps. 91:11-12, but blunders by using Scripture in presumption to try to manipulate God's provision, not faith submitted to God and His purposes

12 Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

"Jesus answered" – in the words of Deut. 6:16, "Do not put the LORD your God to the test as you did at Massah."

13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left Him until an opportune time.

"Opportune time" – at Gethsemane and the betrayal by Judas Iscariot, Luke 22:3-6, 21-22, 39-48

IN PRACTICE Jesus' experience of oppressive examination by Satan teaches us an important principle about the the Word of God and its power. Firstly, when we step up in faith or mission, so does our enemy. So when things start to go wrong, it can be a sign that we are starting to go right! Then there is the lesson of how we handle it – our way or the Jesus way? Not only does Jesus deftly despatch Satan's deceptions by His use of the 'Sword of the Spirit', to use Paul's illustrative phrase from Ephesians 6:17-18, but we find that even the devil has a reluctant admiration for the power of the Word. His dark kingdom is based on fear and lies, and these have a power for just as long as we entertain them. The moment we stand up with truth in our mouths and the resolve to speak it out in praise WHATEVER objections our feelings might present, the fear and lies are exposed for what they are and shrivel like a burst balloon. Why is the Bible central in our worship? So that we learn to make it central in life, to thrust and parry like Jesus did.

QUESTION *You probably know more Scripture by heart than you think you do. Will you now use it against those fears and doubts nagging thoughts – and honour the One who is the Word?*

Romans 10:8b-13 – The path to personal salvation, declaring our faith

We honour God by speaking out our trust in Him

8b-9 "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

"Word is near you" – alluding to Deut. 30:11 and 14. The essential principle of the Old Covenant law was not remote; if you were talking about it, you were probably doing it. The New Covenant version of this is speaking out what is in your heart, that Jesus is your Lord. Those who genuinely are the Lord's will be saying this freely.
"Jesus is Lord" – He is Christ, the Anointed One