

Job 42: 1 - 6, 10 - 17

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

Hebrews 7: 23 - 28

Mark 10: 46 - 52

### **Notes on the Old Testament Lessons**

Most of the book of Job (Chapters 3 - 37) contains the argument between Job, his three friends, and the young man, Elihu. In this section, Job passionately defends his own righteousness and demands a hearing from God so that Job could defend himself before the one (that he assumes) who is tormenting him. When God does speak to Job (Chapters 38 - 41) it is not to explain Job's sufferings, but to state forcefully the difference between the human and the divine. Following the tongue-lashing that he receives from God, Job is no longer defiant. Indeed, it is hard to imagine one more contrite and humble than Job in this week's passage.

The second part of this week's passage (verses 10 - 17) is the conclusion of the original narrative. You may recall that the first two chapters of Job and verses 7 - 17 of the last chapter are written in a Hebrew that is much older than the majority of the book in between. The story ends with Job's fortunes restored. In addition, the relationships between Job and those who "had known him before" were restored as they shared a meal together. Job's life was literally made into a new creation.

The Psalter Lesson for this week offers the assurances for which Job called: that those who serve the Lord are saved from "all their fears" and "every want" and "shall have no trouble". Although Job cried out for God to keep these promises, it was not until he became humble that he received these blessings. It was not on Job's timetable that his fortunes were restored but on God's. While the concept of the Prosperity Gospel finds no support in the Book of Job, (indeed, most scholars hold that the book was written to contradict such beliefs), the message that "God's ways are not our ways" and that God's schedule is not our schedule are important for us to hear again and again.

### **Notes on the Gospel Lesson**

This story is placed at the conclusion of the Travel Narrative (Mark 10, Luke 9: 51 - 19:27) in which Jesus arrives in Jericho on his way to his Passion in Jerusalem. Matthew and Luke have parallel descriptions of this event although it is only in Mark's Gospel that the blind man is named. In Matthew's account (Matthew 20: 29 - 34), as is common for Matthew, there are two people who are healed.

The name of the blind man tells us a great deal about him. The word "bar" means "son of". Remember Jesus' words in Caesarea Philippi, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah" (Matthew 16:17). A man in first century Palestine was known as the son of his father. Jesus' full name would have been Jesus Bar-Joseph. This custom is continued in the modern Middle East except that the name of a man's eldest son is added to the full name and is the moniker primarily used. (This is why Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is also referred to as "Abu Mazen". Mazen

is the name of his oldest son. His full name is Mahmoud Abbas abu Mazen ibn \*his father's name\*.)

The blind man in Jericho is the “son of Timaeus, also known as the son of Timaeus”. He has no name of his own; no identity of his own. He is a nobody. The life of a beggar was all to which he could aspire. When he hears that it is Jesus who is coming through Jericho, he causes a disturbance.

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” he cried. Those around him told him “sternly” to be quiet but he shouted even louder. His statement is worth examining more closely. One of our late Jerusalem Institute faculty members stated that this cry of Bartimaeus was the cry of every true believer. “Jesus, Son of David” or “Jesus, the Messiah” or “Jesus the Christ”; “have mercy on me!” or “save me!” If John 3:16 is the gospel in miniature, then this cry of a nobody from Jericho is a worthy candidate for our response. Certainly the subsequent action of Bartimaeus should be our example. As soon as he “regained his sight (he) followed him on the way.”