

Monday 1st November

Psalm 2

¹ Why do the nations conspire and the peoples plot in vain?

² **The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,**

³ 'Let us break their chains and throw off their shackles.'

⁴ **The One enthroned in heaven laughs; the Lord scoffs at them.**

⁵ He rebukes them in his anger and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,

⁶ **'I have installed my king on Zion, my holy mountain.'**

⁷ I will proclaim the LORD's decree: He said to me, 'You are my son; today I have become your father.

⁸ **Ask me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession.**

⁹ You will break them with a rod of iron; you will dash them to pieces like pottery.'

¹⁰ **Therefore, you kings, be wise; be warned, you rulers of the earth.**

¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear and celebrate his rule with trembling.

¹² **Kiss his son, or he will be angry and your way will lead to your destruction, for his wrath can flare up in a moment.**

Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

Matthew 1: 18-end

Joseph accepts Jesus as his son

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: his mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

²² All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ 'The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us').

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Tuesday 2nd November

Psalm 5

¹ Listen to my words, LORD, consider my lament.

² **Hear my cry for help, my King and my God, for to you I pray.**

³ In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait expectantly.

⁴ **For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness; with you, evil people are not welcome.**

⁵ The arrogant cannot stand in your presence. You hate all who do wrong;

⁶ **You destroy those who tell lies. The bloodthirsty and deceitful you, LORD, detest.**

⁷ But I, by your great love, can come into your house; in reverence I bow down towards your holy temple.

⁸ **Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness because of my enemies – make your way straight before me.**

⁹ Not a word from their mouth can be trusted; their heart is filled with malice. Their throat is an open grave; with their tongues they tell lies.

¹⁰ **Declare them guilty, O God! Let their intrigues be their downfall. Banish them for their many sins, for they have rebelled against you.**

¹¹ But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

¹² **Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous; you surround them with your favour as with a shield.**

Matthew 2:1-15

The Magi visit the Messiah

² After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.'

³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

⁴ When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the

law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. ⁵ 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, 'for this is what the prophet has written:

⁶ "But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, 'Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.'

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

The escape to Egypt

¹³ When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: 'Out of Egypt I called my son.'

Wednesday 3rd November

Psalm 9

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;

I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

² **I will be glad and rejoice in you;**

I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

³ My enemies turn back; they stumble and perish before you.

⁴ **For you have upheld my right and my cause,
sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.**

⁵ You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

⁶ **Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies, you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished.**

⁷ The LORD reigns for ever; he has established his throne for judgment.

⁸ **He rules the world in righteousness and judges the peoples with equity.**

⁹ The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

¹⁰ **Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.**

¹¹ Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.

¹² **For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.**

¹³ LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,

¹⁴ **that I may declare your praises in the gates of Daughter Zion,
and there rejoice in your salvation.**

¹⁵ The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.

¹⁶ **The LORD is known by his acts of justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.**

¹⁷ The wicked go down to the realm of the dead, all the nations that forget God.

¹⁸ **But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.**

¹⁹ Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.

²⁰ **Strike them with terror, LORD; let the nations know they are only mortal.**

Matthew 2:16-end

¹⁶ When Herod realised that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷ Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ 'A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.'

The return to Nazareth

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead.'

²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father

Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Thursday 4th November

Psalm 15

LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?

Who may live on your holy mountain?

² The one whose way of life is blameless, who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from their heart;

³ whose tongue utters no slander, who does no wrong to a neighbour, and casts no slur on others;

⁴ who despises a vile person but honours those who fear the LORD; who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and does not change their mind;

⁵ who lends money to the poor without interest; who does not accept a bribe against the innocent. Whoever does these things will never be shaken.

Matthew 3

³ In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea ² and saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.' ³ This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

'A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

"Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him."

⁴ John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt round his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. ⁶ Confessing their sins, they were baptised by him in the River Jordan.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not think you can say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our father." I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ The axe has been laid to the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ 'I baptise you with water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will

clear his threshing-floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire.'

The baptism of Jesus

¹³ Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?'

¹⁵ Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.' Then John consented.

¹⁶ As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'

Friday 5th November

Psalm 16

Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.

² I say to the LORD, 'You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing.'

³ I say of the holy people who are in the land, 'They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight.'

⁴ Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.

⁵ LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.

⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

⁷ I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

⁸ I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,

¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Matthew 4:1-11

Jesus is tested in the wilderness

4 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting for forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.'

⁴ Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."'

⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written:

"He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'"

⁷ Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. ⁹ 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.'

¹⁰ Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Saturday 6th November

Psalm 18:31-end

For who is God besides the LORD? And who is the Rock except our God?

³² It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure.

³³ He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
he causes me to stand on the heights.

³⁴ He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze.

³⁵ You make your saving help my shield, and your right hand sustains me;
your help has made me great.

³⁶ You provide a broad path for my feet, so that my ankles do not give way.

³⁷ I pursued my enemies and overtook them;
I did not turn back till they were destroyed.

³⁸ I crushed them so that they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet.

³⁹ You armed me with strength for battle;
you humbled my adversaries before me.

⁴⁰ You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes.

⁴¹ They cried for help, but there was no one to save them –
to the LORD, but he did not answer.

⁴² I beat them as fine as windblown dust;
I trampled them like mud in the streets.

⁴³ You have delivered me from the attacks of the people; you have made me
the head of nations. People I did not know now serve me,

⁴⁴ foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me.

⁴⁵ They all lose heart; they come trembling from their strongholds.

⁴⁶ The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock! Exalted be God my Saviour!

⁴⁷ He is the God who avenges me, who subdues nations under me,

⁴⁸ who saves me from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes;
from a violent man you rescued me.

⁴⁹ Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing the praises of your name.

⁵⁰ He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing love to his anointed,
to David and to his descendants for ever.

Matthew 4:12-22

¹² When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee.

¹³ Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in
the area of Zebulun and Naphtali – ¹⁴ to fulfil what was said through the
prophet Isaiah:

¹⁵ 'Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the
Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles –¹⁶ the people living in darkness have seen a
great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has
dawned.'

¹⁷ From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven
has come near.'

Jesus calls his first disciples

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon
called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for
they were fishermen. ¹⁹ 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out
to fish for people.' ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and
his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their
nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father
and followed him.

