

**MONDAY**  
**28 SEPTEMBER**  
**Job 1:6-end**  
**Psalm 17:1-11**  
**Luke 9:46-50**

**TUESDAY**  
**29 SEPTEMBER**  
**Michael and All Angels**  
**Genesis 28:10-17**  
**or Revelation 12:7-12**  
**Psalm 103:19-end**  
**Revelation 12:7-12**  
**or Hebrews 1:5-end**  
**John 1:47-end**

**WEDNESDAY**  
**30 SEPTEMBER**  
**Job 9:1-12. 14-16**  
**Psalm 88:1-6. 11**  
**Luke 9:57-end**

**THURSDAY**  
**1 OCTOBER**  
**Job 19:21-27a**  
**Psalm 27:13-16**  
**Luke 10:1-12**

**FRIDAY**  
**2 OCTOBER**  
**Job 38:1. 12-21; 40:3-5**  
**Psalm 139:6-11**  
**Luke 10:13-16**

**SATURDAY**  
**3 OCTOBER**  
**Job 42:1-3. 6. 12-end**  
**Psalm 119:169-end**  
**Luke 10:17-24**

## REFLECTION

An upbeat week of Gospel readings, as we find Jesus' ministry in full swing and the disciples helping him to spread the Good News. In Tuesday's reading we hear Nathanael's surprised and spontaneous profession of Jesus' kingship: *"you are the Son of God... the King of Israel!"* On Thursday the seventy are sent out, returning on a high on Saturday – like Nathanael, they are astonished and delighted by Jesus' power.

The usual reading for Tuesday, had it not been displaced by Michael and All Angels, would have cast a shadow over the week. Luke 9:51-56 describes how Jesus sets his face towards Jerusalem, *"when the days drew near for him to be taken up"*. It tells how he was not received in a Samaritan village, and how the disciples suggested performing some kind of revenge miracle, only to be rebuked.

Of course we're reflecting on what is included in the week's readings rather than what's left out. But it's interesting to see what a difference it would have made. With all its idiosyncrasies, the lectionary gives us such variations year on year. This year, instead of a dark, lurking awareness of the endgame, we're riding the crest of a wave and, along with the disciples, we're encouraged to *"rejoice that your names are written in heaven"*.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for the variety  
 that is to be found in your word,  
 reflecting life in all its richness.  
 Teach us to rejoice in the upbeat times,  
 when we're riding the crest of the wave,  
 and to keep faith in the dark times.



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## THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

### PART XXVI – EZEKIEL – A BOOK OF HOPE

Richard Greatrex continues our book-by-book series about the Bible.

Ezekiel, like his older contemporary Jeremiah, came from a priestly family. They were of such prominence that, before Ezekiel was old enough to serve, they were exiled to Babylon in 597 BC, casualties of Nebuchadnezzar's policy to subdue the rebellious Judaeans by stripping their country of its elites.

In Babylonian exile Ezekiel received his first vision of Yahweh, his prophetic commissioning, described in the book's opening three chapters, where he is warned repeatedly that even though he must expect to be ignored it is nevertheless his ordained responsibility to speak God's word. Ezekiel responds with fierce imagination, prophesying with some of the most dramatic actions, striking allegories and vivid language in the Old Testament. He piles prophecy upon prophecy, image upon image – some, such as in chapter sixteen, detailing the harlotry of Yahweh's bride, Jerusalem, in shockingly explicit terms. His stark message is that the city's eventual destruction will be a direct consequence of the Judaeans' ongoing depravity.

Then the focus shifts, via prophecies of God's dealing with other nations, to hope. As chapter thirty-three closes, a fugitive from Jerusalem describes its destruction. With the promised land overrun, the Davidic monarchy broken, the Temple destroyed and the covenant sundered, key tenets of Yahwistic theology have been dismantled. At the nation's nadir Ezekiel's visions blossom with positivity, the famous passage about the dry bones being breathed into life by God in chapter thirty-seven bringing hope of restoration. This carries through into the concluding chapters, forty to forty-eight, where a new Temple is described in fine detail, fleshing out the promise of a renewed covenant, a repentant nation and a revitalised monarchy.

Simultaneously complex, convoluted, bizarre, obscure, abrupt and suffused with brilliant imagery, sophisticated theology, a piercing visual sense, Ezekiel is a master of tenacity, unyieldingly dedicated to his divine calling. Refusing to abandon faith in Yahweh, despite the whirlwind of cataclysmic events engulfing his nation, he burns with a living hope and offers unwavering trust in God's eternal forgiveness, justice and loyalty.

LIVE  
 the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU  
 THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
 Caroline Hodgson  
 and  
 Heather Smith



Sixteenth week  
 after Trinity

Monday 28 September  
 to Saturday 3 October  
 2020

WEEK