

I greet thee  
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning,  
 so be it now and for ever. Amen. / Good morning to you: and for our prayer-  
 time together this day, a little more of the Word of God in scripture than I've been  
 presenting for you in these programmes lately. The words of the bible have a very  
 special importance and place in prayer, for Christians and for many other people  
 too - we consider these writings to be, in a very particular sense, the very  
 Word of God - God's own expression, communication, message, talking -  
 but talking to whom? who's listening? Well, we hear or read these words,  
 some of them anyway, often enough... or maybe, indeed, not often enough...  
 simply not often enough, or not often enough with the attention, reverence and  
 awe that might be expected from our saying that these are the Word of God.  
 So to listen and hear or read God's word, taking it as God's revealing of  
 self, God's own telling - that's already an attitude of prayer, a prayer itself.  
 To listen & hear, not for curiosity or study or critique, but to accept &  
 take in, and then react/respond in a mutual communication: prayer. St.  
 Augustine wrote about hearing a voice tell him to take up and read, and he  
 opened the book at random, and came across a passage that spoke to him with  
 particular force and aptness. Many people do that kind of thing with the Bible,  
 and I suppose find words that inspire or feel specially relevant to mood or  
 occasion... But maybe they, or St Augustine, might have responded much in  
 the same way to almost any other text they might have thus randomly chosen.  
 Maybe. Anyway, one method of choosing what bit of the bible to listen to,  
 either daily throughout the year, or from time to time, is the selections chosen  
 and assigned for the daily liturgy of the church, the celebration of the word and the  
 Eucharist. And in that scheme, today, Monday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> "ordinary" week of  
 the year, this year gives us this text from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bk of Samuel: the word of

God for you this morning: "All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron. 'Look',  
 they said, 'we are your own flesh & blood. In days past when Saul was our king,  
 it was you who led Israel in all their exploits: and the Lord said to you, "You  
 are the man who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you shall be the leader of  
 Israel"' So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David  
 made a pact with them at Hebron in the presence of the Lord, and they anointed  
 David king of Israel. David was 30 yrs. old when he became king, and he reigned  
 for 40 yrs. He reigned in Hebron over Judah for seven yrs. & 6 months: then he  
 reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel and Judah for 33 yrs. David and his men  
 marched on Jerusalem against the Jebusites living there. These said to David:  
 'You will not get in here. The blind are the lane will hold you off' (That is to  
 say, David will never get in here). But David captured the fortress of Zion,  
 that is, the Citadel of David. He grew greater & greater, and the Lord, the  
 God of hosts, was with him." - the Word of the Lord, from ch 5 of the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
 Bk of Samuel. A little bit of history, the history of Israel and one of its greatest  
 kings who's still very much remembered today. Indeed, it's his Jerusalem that's  
 still today a bone of contention between states, and a most revered holy place for  
 not only David's Jewish descendants but his Christian and Muslim ones as well.  
 So it's not just ancient history: we are David's own flesh & blood thro' Jesus Christ,  
 and in the story of David, God's choice, there's more than a description of the  
 politics and military activities of a state that existed some 3000 yrs ago, but of  
 God acting in that history too, God directing through human agency the unfolding of  
 divine purpose and power at work among us, then as also today. And today's  
 political & other problems in the Middle East (and elsewhere where two 'kingdoms' are  
 finding a new unity) should engage our thoughts & prayers of intercession and  
 petition. But first now as a prayer in response, "Jerusalem" says to

DEC-E.

1392

2' 2:48

the choir of Paisley Abbey, Scotland

MUSIC (Jerusalem)

Blake's "Jerusalem", with music of Parris

PRAYER

Ps 88 + response. (Nissal)

None to end today.

Something more from the biblical word of God: perhaps something more easy to pray with, or to pray from... for I suppose, at least for us who're Christians, that it's easier to relate to the person of Jesus Christ, to hear about Him and to listen to His own words as recorded for us in the books of the Good News. The piece I'm reading (from St Mark's gospel, and also the text assigned to today's celebration of the Eucharist) ... this piece has a couple of lines about what there's been a lot of conjecture and speculation about what exactly Jesus meant by "blasphemy against the Holy Spirit." The passage highlights the opposition to Jesus, and the criticism of Him that already began quite early in His career — and it's something still going on now, today, even become more "fashionable" lately, in places like HK. But like now, prayerfully, to the "Good News" as Mark tells it, in ch. 3 of his book:

☉☉. Nissal Nov 3.