

Proper 11
Cycle B RCL
Revised

2 Samuel 7:1-14a

In context, this passage explains why the mighty David was nevertheless unable to build a temple to the Lord in David's own capital city. It is also the classical statement of the so-called *Davidic Theology*, the belief that God established David as the first of an eternal dynasty of divine rulers in Jerusalem. The king, upon his accession to the throne, will, like the Egyptian pharaoh, become the divine Son of God (7:14), but unlike the pharaoh, he could expect to die and sleep with his forebears just like any other human being (7:12). The end of the Davidic dynasty in 586 BCE left some Jews with the expectation that God would redeem the promise made to David in the person of a new king in David's line who would restore the national fortunes of Israel. Christians applied that expectation to Jesus.

Psalm 89:20-37

Although Psalm 89 may have been a composite of a *hymn* (verses 1-18), a *prophecy* concerning David's dynasty (19-37), and a *lament* over the decline of the Davidic kingdom (38-52), the result is a *hymn* that celebrates God's covenant with David (see 2 Samuel 7) within the context of God's cosmic power and faithfulness. Yet the psalm also envisages the possibility of the loss of the Davidic covenant and the cessation of the royal line, suggesting the final form of the psalm may not date before the end of the dynasty in 586 BCE. The Great Sea is the Mediterranean, and the River is the Euphrates.

OR

Jeremiah 23:1-6

This passage reflects the closing days of Judah's existence as a nation. After Judah's defeat in 597 BCE Nebuchadnezzar installed *Zedekiah* (a name meaning "the LORD is righteousness") as king in Jerusalem despite the fact that King Jehoiakin was still living as a captive in Babylon. This situation resulted in a longing for the restoration of the legitimate kingship to Jerusalem, and Jeremiah promises that God will indeed restore to Judah the "righteous branch" of David's royal line (23:7). God will install the new king on David's throne with a name that means "the LORD is our righteousness," a play on the name of the current, illegitimate ruler.

Psalm 23

This beloved psalm, together with Psalms 11, 16, 62, 125, 129, and 131, belongs to a category of psalms known as *psalms of trust*. All but Psalms 125 and 129 are individual statements, and all present the worshiper's confidence in the God of Israel to heal and save. The actual function of psalms of trust in the liturgy of the Temple remains unknown, but they may have functioned in a way similar to the *thanksgiving* psalms, *i. e.* to accompany sacrifices of thanksgiving after deliverance from some evil such as illness or national distress.

Ephesians 2:11-22

Perhaps the main differences between the follower of Paul who wrote Ephesians and his honored predecessor are found in these verses. The unknown writer of Ephesians believes that the law has

been abolished (2:15), and God through Christ has already broken down the walls that separate Jew from Gentile. It is not at all clear that Paul himself expressed any expectation that the law would be abolished, and he believed that human divisions “according to the flesh” would continue until the end of this age. We see emerging here what some interpreters call *Paulinism*, a Christian teaching that is based on Paul’s thought but that also differs in some respects from it.

Mark 6:30-44, 53-56

This is the first of two miraculous feedings in Mark. The second is the feeding of the four thousand in 8:1-10. Emphasis in this passage rests upon Jesus’s compassion for the crowd and for the lost (6:34), and this compassion leads him both to teach and to feed the crowd. The blessing and breaking of the loaves picks up the language we also find in Mark 15:22 that describes Jesus’s blessing and breaking of the bread at the Last Supper. Use of the term “apostle” (from Greek *apostello*, "send") for the disciples in 6:30 is otherwise found in Mark only in 3:14. In ordinary Greek, an apostle is one who acts as the legal agent for another, a function taken over into Jewish law in the Talmud (the *saliar* from *salax*, "send"). In 3:14 and 6:30 Jesus’ disciples are presented not only as his students but also as those charged to act as his agents in the world.

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