

Second Sunday After Epiphany
Cycle B, RCL
Revised

1 Samuel 3:1-10 (11-20)

This story is part of the so-called “Late Source” in 1 Samuel, a collection of narratives that regard the establishment of monarchy with suspicion and represent the prophets as checking the many abuses of royal power. An editor during the Exile combined this Late Source with an Early Source that supported the institution of monarchy to form the book we now read. The present narrative is a *call narrative*, the explanation of how a particular prophet received the power to prophesy. See, for instance, the call narrative in Isaiah 6:1-13.

Psalm 139:1-5, 12-17

Verses 19–24 of this psalm would make it a *personal lament*, seeking God’s redemption from wicked enemies. The psalm is unusual, however, in its long, hymn-like meditation on God’s universal knowledge and, specifically, knowledge of the petitioner.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

In answering the false teachers in Corinth, Paul in 6:12-13 repeats some of the slogans used by his opponents and meets each one with a short reply. Evidently, the false teachers have so spiritualized the faith that they believe that their use (or abuse) of the body has nothing to do with their loyalty to Christ. Paul reiterates his belief that the body is important because it functions as a temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells (6:19). He does not share the Corinthian distrust of the body and will present his understanding of salvation in what for the Corinthians will be pretty uncomfortable bodily categories.

John 1:43-51

Archaeologists have only recently located Bethsaida on the northeast coast of the Sea of Galilee and commenced its excavation. Jews in Jerusalem were suspicious of Jews from the Galilee because Jews were such a minority there that some suspected they had been corrupted by Gentile ways. Evidently, Nathaniel shared the general distrust of Galilean Jews, as shown by his question in 1:46. Despite his religious sophistication, however, Nathaniel recklessly proclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God on the basis of Jesus’s vision of him sitting under a tree (1:48-49). Jesus gently teased him that he would soon have more substantial cause than a vision to proclaim Jesus messiah. Indeed, he promised, Nathaniel would have a vision of Jesus as the intermediary between heaven and earth in words that remind us of Jacob’s vision at Bethel (Genesis 28:10-22).

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