

Second Sunday after Epiphany

OLD TESTAMENT – 1 Samuel 3:1-10

The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions. ² One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down. ⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." ⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸ The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

3:1-10 The first point to be made is that like God's choosing, God's calling is undeserved. This applies both to Israel as a nation (Deut 7:6–9) and to the prophets God chose and called to serve his people. In the calls of Moses (Exodus 3–4), Isaiah (Isaiah 6), Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1), and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1–3), a common feature is the prophet's protest that he is sinful, unworthy, and incapable of fulfilling his call without a special disposition of God's grace. God responds by sanctifying the prophet's mouth in some way so that he will be able to proclaim God's word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

It is important to remember that these calls were not sought. In fact, they came as a surprise, indeed as a shock . . . [the calls] were not regarded as a summons to greatness (i.e., honor and acclaim) but rather to humble service . . . [they] plunged a person into both inner torment and outward persecution at the hands of those being served. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The perfect paradigm for called prophets, pastors, and indeed all believers, is the Messiah (Is 42:1; 52:13–53:12). He is the role model, yet much more than a mere example. He is our righteousness. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

In the Servant Songs we have the profoundest use of *kaleo* . . . linked with an exceptionally frequent appearance of *eklegomai*, *choose*. It is the elect one (Is. 41:8; 43:10) whom God calls in righteousness (Is. 42:6) and by name (Is. 43:1; 45:3). He is a type of all who have been called from the beginnings of humanity (Is. 41:2,4). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

God's call comes through the Word. Samuel and the other prophets received a special call into the office directly from God in person (1 Sam 3:10). The call to all God's people also comes through the Word, but the gospel is mediated to them through the called prophets, apostles, pastors, and teachers (2 Thess 2:14). All those called respond by calling on God. The called apostle tells those whom God has called through him that they are "called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The verb *kara*, "to call," dominates our OT text, occurring 11 times in the 10 verses. Of these, 5 occur in connection with Samuel's mistaken assumption that Eli had called to him, while 6 are in reference to Yahweh who is the true source of the call. The confusion over who is calling is a major issue in the account. It results from Samuel's inexperience with direct revelation and the scarcity of such revelations in those days (1 Sam 3:1, 7). One reason for God's relative silence may be inferred as the wickedness of the priests (1 Sam 2). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

The divine call came to Samuel in time and space. The physical location was the Lord's tabernacle. by the ark of God (1 Sam 3:3), the place where the glory of the Lord resided. Similarly, Isaiah received his call in the temple (Isaiah 6). God's glory (*cavod*) is his "incarnational" presence which is fully realized in the Word made flesh who dwelt among us (*eskēnōsen*, John 1:14, alluding to *mishkan*, the tabernacle). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

3:1 *boy Samuel*. See 2:11, 18. Samuel is now no longer a little child (see 2:21, 26). The Jewish historian Josephus places his age at 12 years; he may have been older. (CSB)

Samuel continued his faithful assistance to the aged Eli. Many of his duties could best be described as custodial – opening the doors of the house of the Lord, trimming the wicks on the lamp just outside the Most Holy Place, and filling them with enough oil to last the hours of darkness. (PBC)

the word of the LORD was rare. See Pr 29:18; Am 8:11. During the entire period of the judges, apart from the prophet of 2:27–36, we are told of only two prophets (Jdg 4:4; 6:8) and of five revelations (Jdg 2:1–3; 6:11–23; 7:2–11; 10:11–14; 13:3–21). Possibly 2Ch 15:3 also refers to this period. (CSB)

People had little interest in hearing what God had to say. The five books of Moses were kept in the tabernacle, but even the priests neglected them. Not since the death of Moses had there been a great prophet in Israel. This was also true in the time of Luther. No greater judgment can fall upon a nation than when it suffers the loss of God's Word. When people do not appreciate the gospel, God often takes it from them. Are we aware that by our repeated neglect we can bring about such a famine of God's Word? (PBC)

Literally, “there was no vision spread abroad,” made public frequently. There was lacking, on the one hand, a pious, God-fearing priesthood and, on the other hand, an appreciation of the divine Spirit’s work through the Word. “Jehovah had indeed promised His people to send prophets, who should reveal to them His will and counsel, Deut. 18, 15 ff.; cp. Num. 23, 23; but since divine revelation presupposes willingness to accept the truth on the part of man, the unbelief and the disobedience of the people was able to hinder the fulfillment of this and similar prophecies, and God could in punishment deprive the idolatrous people of His Word.” (Kretzmann)

Amos 8:11-12 “The days are coming,” declares the Sovereign LORD, “when I will send a famine through the land— not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it.”

visions. Cf. Ge 15:1. (CSB)

Implies that prophets typically received God’s Word through visions. Although God’s Word was still active in sustaining creation and was continually handed on in the Law and in sacrificial worship, God did not frequently proclaim His Word through inspired prophets. His Word was not widely received in faith by the people (cf Am 8:11-12). (TLSB)

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”

Hebrew *chazon*, revelation from God, which has been preserved in the Scriptures. The Lord moved the prophets to preach His Word lest the people circumvent and distort the moral law through sinful reasoning. Secular moral philosophy cannot sustain a nation. (TLSB on Proverbs 29:18) (CSB)

3:3 *The lamp of God had not yet gone out.*† The reference apparently is to the golden lampstand, which stood opposite the table of the bread of the Presence (Ex 25:31–40) in the Holy Place. It was still night, but the early morning hours were approaching when the flame grew dim or went out (see Ex 27:20–21; 30:7–8; Lev 24:3–4; 2Ch 13:11; Pr 31:18). For the lamp to be permitted to go out before morning was a violation of the Pentateuchal regulations. (CSB)

temple. See NIV text note and **note** on 1:9. (CSB)

May mean Samuel was in the tabernacle courtyard, not within the tabernacle itself. The wording suggests that Samuel was ready for priestly service and that his character was fit to hear God’s voice. (TLSB)

ARK OF GOD WAS - The ark was the hub of God’s presence in the tabernacle. The technical term used to express Yahweh’s presence on the ark was *yashav*, “to sit (enthroned).” “If the ark was viewed as a throne, as far as the human eye could tell, it

was an empty throne upon which Yahweh was invisibly present . . . the visible testimony to the invisible and continuing presence among the Hebrews of Yahweh, their God from Sinai.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

3:4 HERE I AM – Expresses willingness to serve, as in “Yes, sir!” (TLSB)

3:5 RAN TO ELI – At first, Samuel was sure that Eli was calling him. The next two times Samuel was called (vv 6-8), he did not run to Eli, but simply “arose and went, suggesting Samuel’s growing uncertainty about who was calling him. (TLSB)

Eli said. Eli’s failure to recognize at once that the Lord had called Samuel may be indicative of his own unfamiliarity with the Lord. (CSB)

3:7 *did not yet know the LORD.* In the sense of having a direct experience of him (see Ex 1:8), such as receiving a revelation from God (see the last half of the verse). (CSB)

Eli’s sons did not “know” the Lord (2:12) because of their refusal to submit to God. Samuel does not yet “know” God because of his lack of experience with God’s direct revelation. Samuel will “know” God through his submissive trust in God’s direct revelation. (TLSB)

3:8-9 It seems likely that the Lord does not reveal Himself to Samuel in Eli’s presence because the Word of judgment that has to give. The Lord, in commissioning Samuel to be His messenger of judgment, frees Samuel to exercise trust in His Word, rather than seek human approval. (TLSB)

3:10 CAME AND STOOD - The concreteness of Samuel’s call is emphasized by the phrase “The Lord came and stood there” (3:10). “This was no mere dream . . . When Samuel responded as Eli told him to, God addressed him with the articulate words in a physically audible voice. The contents of the message could leave Samuel no doubt as to the identity of the Speaker. God announced that he would not only execute judgment on the house of Eli but also would bring about disaster that would cause ears to ‘tingle’ (3:11 or ‘ring’) with astonishment and horror.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 1, Part 1)

SPEAK, FOR YOUR SERVANT IS LISTENING – Isn’t it interesting that when the Lord looks for someone to speak for him, the very first qualification is that the person be willing to listen when the God speaks. The secret of Samuel’s success as a prophet was not that he excelled in speaking but in listening. (PBC)

Samuel is not only an example of obedience, but also of willingness to hear the voice of the Lord. Like him all believers should open their ears and hearts to God and give heed to the voice which comes to us in the Word. (Kretzmann)

A prayer worthy of memorization by every believer. Recite this each time you open Scripture or hear God’s Word from a faithful preacher. (TLSB)

EPISTLE – 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

¹² “Everything is permissible for me”—but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is permissible for me”—but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³ “Food for the stomach and the stomach for food”—but God will destroy them both. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴ By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Paul has just warned the Corinthians that living in sin is incompatible with the Christian faith; no one who does so will inherit God’s kingdom (1 Cor 6:9–10). This is a most serious statement. Now Paul turns to another issue in which the Corinthians were failing to show proper judgment and spiritual discernment and so were jeopardizing their salvation. In chapter 5 he dealt with their failure to judge a man who was guilty of a form of sexual immorality not even found among pagans. In 6:1–11 he expressed his concern that the Corinthians seemed incapable of judging and settling disputes among themselves. Now he addresses their lack of discernment regarding a form of sexual immorality which was very much to be found—even taken for granted—among pagans, and which apparently persisted among some recent converts from paganism. (CC)

Not only was prostitution legal in Paul’s day, but it was socially acceptable for men to have sexual relations both with boys and with prostitutes. Paul included two terms for homosexuals among those who will not enter God’s kingdom (6:9). Some of the Corinthian Christians seem to have defended their right to continue consorting with prostitutes. “After all,” they may have argued in the Stoic-Cynic fashion, “we are σοφοί [‘wise’], we are ‘free to do anything.’ We now move on a higher plane; what we do with our bodies does not affect our new spiritual existence.” Concerned at this perversion of Christian freedom, Paul warns the church that resorting to prostitutes definitely comes under his condemnation of sexual immorality (πορνεία, 6:13, 18). Such behavior excludes a person from God’s kingdom (6:9–10). The remedy—Christian marriage—is set forth in chapter 7. (CC)

Paul’s response to the Corinthians’ sinful laxity falls into three parts: (1) In 6:12–14 he quotes the slogans they used to justify visiting prostitutes, and adds some correctives. He also tries to instill a proper respect for the body as belonging to the Lord. (2) In 6:15–17 he argues specifically against prostitution, showing the incompatibility of union with a prostitute and union with Christ. (3) Finally (6:18–20), in case they still haven’t been persuaded, he specifically forbids sexual immorality with a direct command. (CC)

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6:12-13 The quoted words may be slogans to which Paul is responding. (TLSB)

6:12 *Everything is permissible for me.* Paul is probably quoting some in the Corinthian congregation who boasted that they had a right to do anything they pleased. The apostle counters by observing that such “freedom” of action may not benefit the Christian. (CSB)

All ... lawful. An expression of freedom. (TLSB)

The slogan “all things are in my power” (6:12) seems to have arisen from pagan Greek philosophy. The Corinthians may have tried to justify it by appealing to their newly found freedom and spiritual power in Christ. As Christians, each of them was “a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none.”²³ But they failed to understand that Christian freedom from sin and the Law’s condemnation is *not* freedom *to sin*, but instead is freedom to live by the power of the Spirit in accord with God’s Law (e.g., Romans 6; 13:10). Christians must keep in mind the other part of the paradox: a Christian is also “a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” To that end, Paul supplies the necessary corrective: “Not all things are beneficial” (1 Cor 6:12; cf. 7:35). The verb συμφέρει (“are beneficial”) is synonymous with οικοδομεῖ (“build up”) in the parallel passage in 10:23 (“not all things build up”; cf. also 12:7). The Corinthians have been thinking only of themselves, rejoicing in their spiritual privileges, without giving sufficient thought to what benefits the whole body of Christ. They are causing offense to the Gospel and are defaming their Lord. (CC)

Christian freedom is to be used for what is helpful and good and right. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

not all ... helpful. Freedom, however, includes the ability to make unproductive and destructive choices. (TLSB)

not be mastered by anything. One may become enslaved by those actions in which he “freely” indulges (see **note** on 10:23). (CSB)

“Freedom of choice” can itself become a master if we follow our will rather than God’s. (TLSB)

exousiazō is passive and means “to exercise power over, to wield authority over others.” When Christians say “everything is permissible” without recognizing at the same time the all-encompassing, life-giving authority of Christ (Mt 28:18), they are in

danger of being re-enslaved and mastered by the sin from which Christ freed them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

2 Peter 2:19-20 “They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning.”

Galatians 5:1 “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

As they sin, they are remaining enslaved to the passions of their sinful nature, which must be crucified and die (e.g., Rom 6:6–11). Scripture sometimes personifies sin as a tyrant, which tries to overpower its devotees and keep them subject to its authority (Gen 4:7; Rom 6:12–16). Like the ancient serpent (Gen 3:5) and the false prophets castigated in 2 Peter, sin promises freedom, but fails to deliver; its subjects find themselves caught in a cycle of bondage and corruption that leads to death and hell. “A person is a slave to whatever masters him” (2 Pet 2:19). Those who call Christ “Lord” are to serve him, not their passions. (CC p. 215))

6:13 *Food for the stomach and the stomach for food.* Paul quotes some Corinthians again who were claiming that as the physical acts of eating and digesting food have no bearing on one’s inner spiritual life, so the physical act of promiscuous sexual activity does not affect one’s spiritual life. (CSB)

Suggests freedom from dietary laws (cf Mk 2:27). (TLSB)

Paul cites another of the Corinthians’ slogans, “The foods are for the stomach, and the stomach is for the foods, and God will destroy both it and them” (1 Cor 6:13). It was the Christian position that all foods were clean (Mk 7:19; Acts 10:9–15) and could be eaten freely. But the Corinthians seem to have drawn an analogy between the need to satisfy one’s hunger with all kinds of food, and an (alleged) need to satisfy one’s sexual appetite, even if it meant resorting to prostitutes. Thus, they apparently claimed, sexual indulgence is as natural as eating. Besides, what one does with one’s physical body is unimportant; God will one day destroy it just as he will destroy the foods that sustain it.²⁶ So a person may just as well “eat and drink [and fornicate!], for tomorrow we die” (1 Cor 15:32). (CC)

The Corinthians were trying to equate the appetite for food with the appetite for sex. If there’s no spiritual consequence to eating various foods, they would say, why should there be any spiritual consequence in having sexual relations with someone apart from marriage? They were trying to separate body and soul, their spiritual and physical lives. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

GOD WILL DESTROY THEM BOTH – katargeo means to “make ineffective, to do away with.” The organs of digestion will be changed at the resurrection and the physical

constitution of the resurrected body will be different from that of the mortal body. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Neither is eternal. This does not mean they are unimportant. (TLSB)

The body ... for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. The body is important to the Lord, who made it. It is a temple dedicated to God (v 19). (TLSB)

The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord. Paul here declares the dignity of the human body: It is intended for the Lord. Although granting that food and the stomach are transitory, Paul denies that what one does with his body is unimportant. This is particularly true of the use of sex, which the Lord has ordained in wedlock for the good of mankind (cf. Heb 13:4). (CSB)

Sin naturally destroys both body and soul, which even unbelievers could recognize. (TLSB)

But Paul rejects the analogy between eating and sexual sins. To be sure, foods belong to this passing age, as do our bellies with their digestive functions. True, marriage and reproduction will not continue in heaven (Mt 22:30). All these belong to “the form of this world” that “is passing away” (1 Cor 7:31), the corruptible “flesh and blood” which cannot inherit the kingdom of God (15:50). But Paul distinguishes bellies from bodies. The belly, representing digestion as a process necessary to sustain life, may pass away, but the body will be raised. Plato and other Greek philosophers had a low view of the body. But the biblical view is that the body, as the physical aspect of a person and an essential part of human beings, created by God, is to be honored. A Christian’s body is God’s property, an integral part of a person he has redeemed and claimed for the resurrection. At the resurrection, our bodies will be transformed to be like Christ’s glorious body (Phil 3:21; cf. Mt 22:20; 1 Cor 15:44, 51). With this glorious destiny ahead of us, God’s will for our bodies is not immorality, but sanctification and unhindered devotion to the Lord Jesus (1 Cor 7:35; 1 Thess 4:3). Compare Rom 14:7–8, where Paul again uses the dative of personal benefit (as in 1 Cor 6:13: “the body is ... *for* the Lord, and the Lord is *for* the body”) in speaking of the mutual devotion of the Lord and the believer: “For none of us lives to himself and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.” (CC)

A major reason for ascribing such dignity to the body is God’s promise of the bodily resurrection. Paul’s argument against the Corinthians degrading of the body by sexual sinning continues with an appeal to this fundamental doctrine. Just as God raised the Lord Jesus’ body from the grave (15:4, 15, 20; see also Rom 8:11), so he “will raise us” (1 Cor 6:14). Paul identifies himself with all those who, by the time of the parousia, will have died in Christ (cf. 2 Cor 4:14). God will achieve this great result of resurrection “through his power” (1 Cor 6:14). According to the parallel in Rom 8:11, God’s powerful instrument for raising our mortal bodies will be “his Spirit, who dwells in us” (see Mk 12:24 and 2 Cor 13:4 on the resurrection as a display of God’s power). (CC)

Paul is trying to show them that there is no separation between their physical and spiritual lives. This would be a particularly significant statement to someone living in

Greek culture. For the Greek generally thought of the body as inferior to the spirit, especially in the realm of religion. The body was at best incidental and at worst an encumbrance to one's religious life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Porneia means “unchastity, fornication, prostitution, every kind of sexual activity outside of marriage.” It is the Greek word behind English “pornography.” From the same root is *porne*, “prostitute,” in verse 15 and 16. So bad was the moral condition of Corinth that one of ancient writers coined the word *Corinthianize* to mean “practice fornication.” God put his blessing on the first man and woman as the two became flesh in holy matrimony. Those who become one flesh sexually outside of the holy bond of marriage have no share in that blessing, and are under the curse of God's law. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

6:14 *God raised the Lord ... us also.* As an illustration of God's high regard for the body, Paul cites the resurrection of Christ's body and, eventually, the believer's body (15:51–53; 1Th 4:16–17). A body destined for resurrection should not be used for immorality. (CSB)

A crucial fact: the Lord cares enough for the body that He resurrects and glorifies it (cf 15:20). (TLSB)

Here in 1 Cor 6:14 Paul is stating briefly what he will spell out at length in chapter 15. The doctrine of the bodily resurrection has important ethical implications for the Christian life. In chapter 15, the apostle speaks in general of the way our resurrection hope should dispel the frivolous attitudes of those who say, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die” (15:32). In our present text, his specific concern is to show the folly of associating with prostitutes in light of the glorious destiny God has in store for our bodies. The Christian's body belongs to Christ, the Lord (6:13), and so the Christian must not defile Christ's possession by sexual immorality. (CC)

In this connection Baptism and the Lord's Supper pertain to the Christian's proper use of his body. In Baptism the body is washed (Eph 5:26; Titus 3:5–7) and the name of the Lord Jesus is applied (1 Cor 1:9–16). The baptized believer, body and soul, belongs to the Lord. In Baptism a person is made a member of Christ's body (1 Cor 12:13). The Lord's Supper is a communion in the body and blood of Christ (10:16), which the communicant receives into his body orally (11:23–32). The Christian must recognize and discern Christ's body (11:29), lest he sin against the body and blood of Christ (11:27). Since the Christian is a member of Christ's body and has received Christ's body and blood, his body must be kept pure “for the Lord” (6:13). (CC)

In order to emphasize the integral role the body in one's “spiritual” life and its value to God, Paul goes on to speak about the resurrection. If the body was insignificant or irrelevant to one's life before God, why would it be raised from the dead? Why should we have a Lord who himself was bodily raised from the dead? Since we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come, then certainly what we do in the body is an essential and vital aspect of our Christian lives in this world right now. Paul also makes the fundamental connection between Christ's resurrection and our

own. It is by the same power that both he and we are raised from the dead. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Romans 8:11 “And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.”

6:15–17 *members*. Gk *melos*, “limb” or “part” of a body. *members of a prostitute?* Sexual intercourse is a union so intimate that the two become one flesh (Gn 2:24). A fornicator or adulterer involves Christ and all the Church in his or her sin. *joined to the Lord*. Union with God is not crassly physical, like that with the prostitute, but spiritual (cf 3:1). (TLSB)

6:15 DO YOU NOT KNOW – For the fourth time in this chapter, Paul asks, “Don’t you know?” (6:15; also 6:2, 3, 9). This is the first occurrence in his epistles of the analogy of Christ’s body and its members. It will recur in 1 Cor 12:12–31 and Rom 12:4–8. This analogy probably was part of Paul’s fundamental instruction to the Corinthian converts. The imagery seems to have arisen from the connection Paul draws between the communion with Christ’s body in the Lord’s Supper and the church thereby being built up as “one body” (1 Cor 10:16–17). Part of the background may also be found in the apostle’s experience on the Damascus Road, when the Lord asked him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” In persecuting the members of the church, Paul was persecuting the head to whom they belonged and with whom they were organically joined. Christ is the head of his church and of each believer (11:3). (CC p. 217)

members of Christ. See 12:27. It is not merely the spirit that is a member of Christ’s body; it is the whole person, consisting of spirit and body. This fact gives dignity to the human body. (CSB)

We are both spiritually and physically join to Christ by means of his Word and Spirit and body and blood. This saving, life-giving Gospel reality is the foundation of all that Paul says in this passage. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Against this background, the apostle is understandably horrified at the idea that some of Christ’s members (μέλη) were being removed from their intimate connection with their head and made members (μέλη) of a prostitute. Morris comments: “The use of the same word both times [μέλη, ‘members’] brings out something of the intimacy and incongruity of the union with the prostitute. There is a horrible profanation of that which should be used only for Christ.” (CC p. 217)

UNITE THEM WITH A PROSTITUTE...NEVER – Paul is likely referring to pagan prostitutes. It is inconceivable that a Christian’s body, which is a member of Christ’s body, would be joined to another’s body for sexual immorality. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Paul's abhorrence is expressed in the words *μὴ γένοιτο*, "By no means!" or "God forbid!" (6:15). We find this expression in passages where Paul finds himself in fundamental opposition to views that would destroy the essentials of the faith. (CC p. 218)

1 Corinthians 12:13 "For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

6:16 With another "don't you know?" (6:16), Paul addresses the issue of the close intimacy between a man and a prostitute. The participle *κολλώμενος*, "who joins himself," comes from a verb which in classical Greek meant "to glue, cement." In the KJV, the verb is sometimes translated "to cleave" (e.g., Mt 19:5; Rom 12:9). But the close bonding that takes place when two pieces of paper are glued together, or when one pane of glass is laid on top of another, are inadequate analogies to describe the fusion of two persons into one physical entity in the act of sexual intercourse, that "unique mode of self-disclosure and self-commitment." In a mysterious way, the two become one (Eph 5:32). God intended this to happen only within the covenant of marriage, which is the lifelong union of one man and one woman (Mt 19:3–6). However, Paul warns, even in the gross caricature that takes place when a man consorts with a prostitute, he becomes one body with her. As Seebass has commented, "He who unites himself to a harlot has a common existence with her. There is no purely sexual sin. The spirit of the brothel and the Spirit of Christ mutually exclude one another." Similarly, Morris comments: "'Casual sex' is anything but casual. It is an act of sacrilege. Temples like our bodies are not meant for profanations like this." (CC)

one with her in body. In a sexual relationship the two bodies become one (cf. Ge 2:24; Mt 19:5), and a new human being may emerge from the sexual union. Sexual relations outside the marriage bond are a gross perversion of the divinely established marriage union. (CSB)

Paul now adds the scriptural basis. While the Creator's words in Gen 2:24 describe and undergird the institution of marriage (Mt 19:5; Eph 5:31), they also describe the relationship that develops when a man visits a prostitute. They, too, are no longer two, but "one flesh" (1 Cor 6:16). But unlike a man and woman joined in holy matrimony, unmarried sexual partners are bonded together in an unholy union which results in "both defilement and confusion." Desecration is the result not only of prostitution, but also of unmarried heterosexual lovers, and of all homosexual and lesbian relationships. (CC)

This "one flesh" bonding with anyone other than the lawfully wedded spouse is simply incompatible with the believer's union with the Lord. As Paul warned in 6:9–10, those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. In Deut 10:20, Moses commands God's people: "You shall fear the Lord your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you *shall hold fast*" (LXX: *κολλάω*, as in 1 Cor 6:16). The psalmist confesses: "For me it is good to *cling to* [LXX: *προσκολλάω*] God" (Ps 73:28 [LXX 72:28]). Solomon's downfall resulted when his devotion to the Lord weakened and he began to *consort with* (LXX: *κολλάω*) many foreign women (1 Ki 11:2). (CC)

6:17 *one with him in spirit.* There is a higher union than the marriage bond: the believer's spiritual union with Christ, which is the perfect model for the kind of unity that should mark the marriage relationship (cf. Eph 5:21–33). (CSB)

The middle verb form *kollaomai*, “to join oneself together with another suggests an active and ongoing involvement with Christ in spiritual and sacramental life. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

But the person who is united with the Lord “is one spirit [with him]” (1 Cor 6:17). His union with the Lord was effected through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, poured out in Baptism and operative through God's faith-generating Word (1 Cor 12:13). When the words of Christ, which are Spirit and life, dwell in his heart, he enjoys a spiritual, mystical union with his Lord, even as a bride enjoys union with her bridegroom. John's gospel describes this union as a mutual indwelling: Christ dwells in the believer; the believer dwells in Christ. (Jn 6:63; 14:23; 15:4–5; cf. 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19) (CC p. 219)

6:18 FLEE FROM SEXUAL IMMORALITY – *phaugo* is a present imperative and suggests a continual, habitual fleeing from sin, in the same way a person would flee from any life-threatening danger. The same verb occurs in Mk 14:52. Joseph too ran away without his garment, but he is an excellent illustration of literally fleeing from adultery (Gen 39:12-18). Sexual sin desecrates the body in a way unlike any other sin. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Finally, the apostle pleads, “Flee from sexual immorality!” (6:18). Christians must run away from sexual temptations, as Joseph fled from Potiphar's wife (Gen 39:12). Christians should not dally with temptation, but “flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace” (2 Tim 2:22; cf. 1 Cor 10:8; 1 Tim 6:11). (CC)

It is most likely that 1 Cor 6:18b is part of Paul's own argument and not another Corinthian slogan in defense of the Corinthians' view that their sexual sins did not threaten their salvation. Assuming all of the words in 6:18 are Paul's words, the meaning must be that sexual sins harm the body and personality like no other sins. All other sins, by contrast, are “outside the body.” What this means has been subject to debate. Other sins, too, like drunkenness and gluttony, have their grim effects on the body. However, those sins involve the abuse of things which come from outside the body; sexual immorality involves the direct misuse of the body itself.⁴¹ Fisk writes: “Other sins may be physically destructive (e.g. suicide, gluttony), corporately destructive (e.g. gossip, divisiveness), or spiritually defiling (e.g. idolatry) but for Paul, because sexual sin is uniquely body-joining, it is uniquely body-defiling.” The ravages of sexually transmitted diseases tend to confirm that assessment. Later in his epistle to the Romans, Paul will refer to the bodily harm suffered by the sexually immoral. God gives them over to “the degrading of their bodies with one another” (Rom 1:24). This is “the due penalty for their perversion” (Rom 1:27, specifically about homosexuality and lesbianism; cf. 1 Cor 6:9). (CC)

Not a call to monasticism (cf 5:10), but a call to live in the world without accommodating its morality. (TLSB)

other sins ... are outside his body. Perhaps means that in a unique way, sexual immorality gratifies one's physical body. Or, since the word "other" does not occur in the Greek text, Paul may be quoting a Corinthian slogan (see [note](#) on v. 12), which he refutes in the second half of the verse. (CSB)

Paul is focused on self-indulgent sins (6:9–10) rather than self-destructive sins such as suicide or murder. Sexual sins uniquely involve sinning against others with the body as an instrument, in contrast with gluttony, drunkenness, etc. (TLSB)

he who sins sexually sins against his own body. The body is a temple of the Holy Spirit (v. 19); thus to use it in prostitution disgraces God's temple. Furthermore, the prostitutes of Corinth were dedicated to the service of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and sex. (CSB)

Thus, Paul has argued, not only does the sexually immoral person sin against the church and her spiritual union with the Lord (6:15–17), but he also defiles his own body. This body, which has been consecrated by God as a temple of his Holy Spirit (3:16–17), which has been bought for a price, and which is destined for resurrection, has now been torn from its spiritual union with Christ and joined in an unholy union. Again, that desecration takes place in all sinful liaisons—in any sexual act besides that between husband and wife. (CC p. 220)

6:19 *your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.* The Christian should value his body as a sacred place where God dwells and should realize that by the Spirit's presence and power he can be helped against such sins as sexual immorality (Ro 8:9). (CSB)

A word to the congregation; "body" is singular and "you" is plural throughout the passage. This is a bold illustration of congregational unity with one another and with God. (TLSB)

A sixth and final "don't you know?" (6:19) shows Paul's agitation over what seems to have been a widespread problem. Now he reminds the Corinthians of the high honor God has bestowed on their bodies in making them temples of the Holy Spirit, whom they had received from him. The bright cloud of God's glorious presence had filled the tabernacle and then the temple which replaced it (Ex 40:34–38; 1 Ki 8:10–11). Those structures had been superseded by the greater temple, the body of the Lord Jesus himself (Jn 2:21). Each believer in Christ serves as a "living stone," a mini-temple of the Spirit within the great "spiritual house" of the new aeon (1 Pet 2:4–5). (CC p. 220)

Thus, Paul has argued, not only does the sexually immoral person sin against the church and her spiritual union with the Lord (6:15–17), but he also defiles his own body. This body, which has been consecrated by God as a temple of his Holy Spirit (3:16–17), which has been bought for a price, and which is destined for resurrection, has now been torn from its spiritual union with Christ and joined in an unholy union. Again, that desecration takes place in all sinful liaisons—in any sexual act besides that between husband and wife. (CC)

Back in 1 Cor 3:16–17 Paul had spoken of the whole congregation as God’s temple. There his concern was the sins of jealousy, strife, and pride, which were tearing the congregation apart. Now, in ascribing the glorious designation “temple” to each believer (6:19), he wishes to impress on the Corinthians that abusing their bodies by sinning sexually violates the very holiness and presence of God. Since the Holy Spirit had taken up residence in their bodies through Baptism (12:13), this indwelling had given “a dignity to the whole of life, such as nothing else could do.” They should take care not to grieve their divine guest (Eph 4:30; 1 Thess 5:19). Hays speaks of the church’s need to recover the Pauline image of “the body as temple”:

Sex education ... might begin by seeking to cultivate a deep awareness of the indwelling presence of God. An authentic reverence for the reality of the Holy Spirit’s presence in our bodies might facilitate the recovery of the Bible’s powerful categories of holiness and purity as meaningful norms for our sexual practices. Could the teaching of such reverence within the church help to overcome the growing cultural tendency to accept premarital and extramarital sexual relations as normal and inevitable? (CC)

Naos means “temple, dwelling place, sanctuary.” As opposed to a pagan temple where prostitution occurred, our own bodies are the temple of the Spirit, but not in an individualistic sense. Our bodies are the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit because they are members of the body of Christ, who is the new temple. . (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

John 2:19 “Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.”

1 Peter 2:5 “you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.”

not your own. Cf. 1Pe 2:9. (CSB)

In contrast to the Corinthians’ slogan (v 12), the believer is God’s child, a member of His household. (TLSB)

This flies in the face of the thinking of our culture. Nevertheless, Christians know that they don’t have the right to control their own body, in regard to sex or anything else; for their body is not really theirs. It belongs to God alone who created, redeemed, and sanctified it. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Now that their bodies had become the Spirit’s residence, the Corinthians could no longer live for themselves (see Rom 14:7). “You are not your own,” Paul writes (1 Cor 6:19). Earlier he had reminded them whose they really were: “You are Christ’s” (3:23)—and God’s. (CC p. 221)

6:20 WERE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE – agoradzo means “to buy in the market place” (agora, “market, public square”). It is used for the purchasing of slaves in 7:23. Christ bought us and freed us from our slavery to sin, death, and the devil. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 7, Part 1)

Living for themselves as if they were autonomous, “free,” and “in control” was no longer possible, “for you were bought for a price” (ἠγοράσθητε γὰρ τιμῆς, 6:20). No other NT saying brings together in such compact form both the essence of the Gospel and its implications for the Christian life. So powerful is this idea that Paul repeats it in 7:23. On the one hand, the Gospel shines forth brilliantly, pointing to God’s once-for-all action on Calvary as an accomplished fact. On Calvary, the ransom price was paid, “not with silver or gold ... but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish or spot” (1 Pet 1:18–19; cf. Acts 20:28). God’s grace did not come cheaply! It was a costly ransom from slavery, from captivity to the power of sin (Rom 6:18, 22). Like the rest of the NT, 1 Corinthians is rich in metaphors describing God’s acquisition of the sinner and the sinner’s liberation from the hands of his tyrannical masters, using terms like “redemption” (ἀπολύτρωσις, 1 Cor 1:30) (Also Rom 3:24; Eph 1:7; cf. Gal 4:5) and “acquire, win” (Paul acquires or wins people for God, κερδαίνω, 1 Cor 9:19–22). Again Paul’s theology of the cross comes to the fore in a succinct and powerful way. (CC p. 221)

honor God with your body. Cf. 10:31; Ro 6:12–13; Col 3:17. (CSB)

Not simply in personal goodness, but in faith and hope as members of Christ’s Body. (TLSB)

At the same time, God’s purchase of the sinner from slavery does not mean he is now free to go his own way. Rather, through that purchase he comes under new ownership. Implicit in the Gospel, while it retains its character as a free expression of God’s grace, is the understanding that the believer now has a new Lord. At the same time he rejoices both in his freedom and also that he has become a slave of Christ (7:22). This “slavery” is perfect freedom because it frees a person to serve God in holiness and righteousness, as God originally intended for his creatures. Christ’s yoke is easy, and his burden is light (Mt 11:30). (CC pp. 221-222)

So, having opened the final paragraph of the chapter with the negative command “flee from sexual immorality!” (6:18), Paul closes it with the positive exhortation “glorify God in your body!” (6:20). The apostle expects the Corinthians to follow his example (4:16; 11:1) so that their entire life magnifies Christ (Phil 1:20). His appeal to them as God’s temple is similar to the great introduction to Romans 12: “I urge you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice that is living, holy, acceptable to God” (Rom 12:1). (CC)

6:12–20 Because Christ has united us with Him and with one another, immorality has no place among us. Freedom to live in Christ excludes living in opposition to Him. When we fall into sin, we can repent of the disunity we have brought. Jesus Christ will restore and renew us as His very own. • Father, be glorified in our freedom, which You grant us in Jesus. Amen. (TLSB)

GOSPEL – John 1:43-51

⁴³ **The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”** ⁴⁴ **Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida.** ⁴⁵ **Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses**

wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”⁴⁶ “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip.⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, **“Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.”**⁴⁸ “How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, **“I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.”**⁴⁹ Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.”⁵⁰ Jesus said, **“You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see greater things than that.”**⁵¹ He then added, **“I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”**

1:43-51 Important for anyone preaching on this text is the use of days in the first chapter of John’s Gospel. The connection with the creation theology of the prologue is clear. An astute Jewish person would pick up on what is going on here. The phrase “the next day” assumes an understanding of what went before and what went after the events of this pericope. By counting the number of times this phrase appears in the first chapter, “the next day” of our pericope would be the fourth day of the Jewish week. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

One interpretation sees the first day as the day John the Baptizer denies being the Christ (Jn 1:19–28). The second day, then, is the day Jesus comes down to the Jordan River and is called by John the Baptizer “the Lamb of God” (a title carrying obvious Jewish overtones). The third day is the day Jesus calls Andrew to be his disciple. The fourth day is the day Nathanael is called to be Christ’s disciple, and three days later (or the seventh day) is the day on which Jesus turns water into wine, completing the seven-day week of the new creation. If we move the whole week back one day by counting the creation of the cosmos and the fall into darkness (sin) as the first day, then the changing of the water into wine at Cana becomes the eighth day. The message is still the same. God is beginning a new creation. The number eight in Jewish circles connoted a new creation. For the same reason many baptismal fonts today are made with eight sides. The Jewish person would know that with the coming of the Word in flesh, God is beginning something new. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

The preacher of this pericope needs to sense that God is here beginning a new creation. God is revealing his design to save all mankind by disciplining these men from Galilee. This is similar to God establishing the 12 sons of Jacob (Israel) as the heads of his people. This pericope is either the fourth or fifth day of God’s new creation, a new design. This design is rooted and founded on his gracious and recreating Word. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Following the beautiful prologue to his Gospel (1:1–18), John describes the beginnings of Jesus’ public ministry and gathering of disciples. John the Baptist is confronted by priests and Levites from the temple in Jerusalem. They’ve been sent to inquire whether John claims to be the promised Messiah. Just as John insists that he is not the Messiah, Jesus appears. Note that there is no “messianic secret” in John’s Gospel. The very next day, Jesus comes to John the Baptist, who immediately confirms both Jesus’

identity and his mission. “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (1:29). Although the evangelist does not report the event directly, the implication is that this was the day of Jesus’ baptism and the beginning of his public ministry. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

Jesus immediately turns to the task of making disciples. The first disciples are two former disciples of John the Baptist who leave him to follow Jesus. One of them is Andrew. He begins a pattern of going and telling others to come and see Jesus, which concludes in today’s reading. Immediately after becoming a follower of Jesus, Andrew went and told someone else about him. He brought his brother Simon and introduced him to Jesus. Here is the first example of one who comes to see Jesus and then goes to tell someone else about him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

These verses immediately follow the pericope (Jn 1:29–42) in which the Baptist identifies Jesus as “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29) and the one upon whom the Spirit of God descended and remained in his Baptism (Jn 1:33) and the Son of God (Jn 1:34). This preceding pericope also mentions Andrew and Peter as the first two “followers” of Jesus. They recognize that Jesus is the Messiah, the Christ. This then leads into the Gospel for this day, wherein Philip “follows” Jesus, and then speaks of this one to Nathanael, who will also become a follower of the Son of God. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

These verses are immediately followed by three pericopes: the wedding at Cana (Jn 2:1–11), the cleansing of the temple (Jn 2:12–25), and the dialogue with Nicodemus (Jn 3:1–21). In all three, Jesus’ promise to Nathanael in today’s Gospel—“You will see greater things than these” (Jn 1:50 ESV)—is beginning to be fulfilled. In these three, Jesus performs a miracle, turns over the tables of the cashiers, and speaks of a ritual. They, however, all refer to much greater things: the Lord’s Supper, Jesus’ crucifixion and resurrection, and Holy Baptism, respectively. It must be noted how the Sacraments surround the single event of Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The Sacraments point to the atonement, and the gifts of the atonement are given through the Sacraments. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

1:43 NEXT DAY – On the fourth day of the events which are here so carefully chronicled, Jesus had planned to begin His journey up to Galilee. But as He was about to leave, He finds, by design and intention, Philip of Bethsaida. In this case, the simple command: Follow Me, was sufficient. The call of Jesus determined Philip to become a disciple of Jesus. And the call of Christ in the Gospel has at all times the power to influence men in the same way. Only we must not grow weary in sounding it forth at all times. (Kretzmann)

The next day Jesus goes up from the Jordan to Galilee, where he will choose his disciples. The region of Galilee had many fishermen, who were not noted for keeping up on the latest world events. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

tē hepaursion This Greek word translated “tomorrow” is common in the New Testament (Mt 27:62; Mk 11:12; Jn 6:22; 12:12; Acts 10:9, 23). The biblical writers give us a tightly sequential narrative. On the preceding day, Andrew was called by Jesus. Andrew’s first

act as a disciple was to find Simon and announce, “We have found the [Messiah]” (v 45). The word has kingly connotations, referring to the anointed Judean kings (Psalm 2), who were thought to be God’s sons, his representatives on earth. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

FOLLOW ME – Philip is the first one, so far as we know, to whom Jesus said “Be following me.” Very likely all five of these were disciples of the Baptist.

Philip. Like Andrew and Peter, he had a Gk name. *Follow Me.* Christ’s powerful call makes Philip His follower and an apostle. (TLSB)

Christ’s powerful call makes Philip His follower and an apostle. (TLSB)

Jesus decides to go to Galilee. He specifically asks Philip to follow him. The imperative *ajkolouvqei moi*, “follow me,” is more than a suggestion, it is a direct command. God doesn’t simply say “come if you want”; he commands us to follow him. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

Akolouthei moi, “Follow me”: One can only imagine what these words sounded like from the lips of Jesus. I imagine them being filled with compassion, irresistible compassion. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Please note that Jesus found Philip and not the reverse. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Jesus took the initiative and found Philip, as the Lord takes the initiative with all of us and invites us by His Word to follow Him. (PBC)

1:44 *Bethsaida.* See note on Mt 11:21. (CSB)

All five were from Bethsaida which was known as the “house of fish.”

Bethsaida provides a geographical background for the pericope. Moreover, it connects Andrew and Peter of the previous pericope with Philip and Nathanael in this pericope, all from the same location. Furthermore, this tiny geographical location of the first apostles stands in sharp contrast to their later travels throughout the Mediterranean world. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

1:45 PHILIP FOUND – Philip, in turn, driven by the joy of his new discovery, of the faith of his heart, feels urged to tell his friend Nathanael (or Bartholomew) of his happiness. His words gush forth in a joyful stream: Of whom Moses wrote in the Law and the prophets, Him have we found. He had the right understanding, His faith was firmly based upon Jesus, known as the son of Joseph, of Nazareth, as the promised Messiah. Philip was well versed in the Old Testament prophecies. He referred to Moses and the prophets as having given a clear picture, in unmistakable prophecies, of Christ. And the antitype, the fulfillment of the prophecies, Philip found in Jesus of Nazareth. His

knowledge was not yet perfect, but was fully sufficient for his purpose, that of bringing another man to his Master. (Kretzmann)

NATHANAEL – In Hebrew this name means “gift of God.” Nathanael’s guilelessness is a gift of God, so is his confession later. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 1)

Probably Bartholomew, paired with Phillip in the other Gospels (Mt. 10:3; Mk. 3:18; Lk. 6:14; cf. Acts 1:13). (TLSB)

IN THE LAW ABOUT WHOM THE PROPHETS WROTE – cf Lk 24:44); another way of referring to the OT. *Nazareth*. Jesus’ hometown (Mt 4:13; Mk 1:9; Lk 1:26; 2:4, 51; 4:16–44). (TLSB)

That the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament prophesied of Jesus is a common theme throughout the New Testament, e.g., Lk 16:31; 24:27. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

Philip based his faith on the sure words of Scripture. (PBC)

hon egrapsen (whom . . . wrote about). Philip and Nathanael are Jewish. They know Moses and the prophets. God’s design had already been planted in their hearts. The name Nathanael in Hebrew means “gift of God.” Nathanael’s guilelessness is a gift of God, so is his confession later. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

son of Joseph. Not a denial of the virgin birth of Christ (Mt 1:18, 20, 23, 25; Lk 1:35). Joseph was Jesus’ legal, though not his natural, father. (CSB)

Huion tou Hiōsēph. Here Jesus is identified with his stepfather, Joseph, not Mary. Does this mean that Joseph is still living? Joseph does not follow Jesus to the cross, but Mary does. Does this mean that Joseph died between this scene and Jesus’ crucifixion? (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

1:46 Nazareth. See 7:52; see also note on Mt 2:23... A rather obscure town, nowhere mentioned in the OT. It was Jesus’ hometown (13:54–57; see Lk 2:39; 4:16–24; Jn 1:45–46). *He will be called a Nazarene*. These exact words are not found in the OT and probably refer to several OT prefigurations and/or predictions (note the plural, “prophets”) that the Messiah would be despised (e.g., Ps 22:6; Isa 53:3), for in Jesus’ day “Nazarene” was virtually a synonym for “despised” (see Jn 1:45–46). Some hold that in speaking of Jesus as a “Nazarene,” Matthew is referring primarily to the word “Branch” (Hebrew *nešer*) in Isa 11:1. (CSB)

CAN ANYTHING GOOD COME FROM THERE – Five of these disciples were from Bethsaida. Nathanael was from Cana. Nazareth, Bethsaida and Cana were close to each other geographically. But though these six disciples grew up close to Jesus they

did not “find” him until the Baptist testified of him or they compared the OT prophecies with what he was until he called them directly. The Word led them to Jesus.

Despite Nathanael’s roots, he is skeptical. He has in his mind what many had thought of Nazareth. Nazareth is a new town and has no reputation of note, unlike Bethlehem, the town from which King David had come. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

John Chrysostom: “His mode of living was ordinary, and His garments not better than those of the many. For He was not girt with a leathern girdle, nor was His raiment of hair, nor did He eat honey and locusts. But He fared like all others, and was present at the feasts of wicked men and publicans, that He might draw them to Him” (NPNF1 14:55). (TLSB)

He scoffs at the possibility that anything good, let alone the Messiah, could come out of Nazareth. This is one more reminder that God calls his children in spite of their weaknesses, not because of their strengths. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

Luther: “Christ chooses as His apostles the poorest and lowliest He can find” (AE 22:192). (TLSB)

COME AND SEE – Philip did not argue with Nathanael. He merely invited the skeptical Nathanael, as Jesus had invited Andrew and John, to come and see. There is no other way. We can’t argue or force someone into faith in Jesus. We can only show Jesus as He has revealed Himself in His Word and the leave the rest to the Holy Spirit. We today can do no more and must do no less than Philip. We can invite all who will listen: “Come and see.” (PBC)

This is an invitation to discard preconceived notions and to believe in the fulfillment of the OT. (TLSB)

The Jews in general, could not and still cannot do that. The disciples struggled with this until after the resurrection.

The Word of Christ overcomes the weakness and objections of man. "He who candidly examines the evidences of the religion of Christ will infallibly become a believer. No history ever published among men has so many external and internal proofs of authenticity as this has. A man should judge of nothing by first appearances or human prejudices. Who are they who cry out, The Bible is a fable? Those who have never read it, or read it only with the fixed purpose to gainsay it. ...God has mercy on those whose ignorance leads them to form prejudices against the truth; but He confounds those who take them up through envy and malice, and endeavor to communicate them to others. (Kretzmann)

Isaiah 42:1-4, “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations. ² **He will not shout**

or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. ³A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; ⁴ he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope.”

1:47, 51 These two verses point back to Jacob in the Old Testament. Jacob deceived his father (Genesis 27) and later had a dream of angels ascending to and descending from heaven (Gen 28:10–17). In contrast, Nathanael is the anti-Jacob in that he is without guile. In addition, Nathanael is promised that he will see the angels ascending from and descending upon Jesus. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

1:47 *a true Israelite.* See 2:24–25. (CSB)

Here we find the first demonstration of Jesus’ divine knowledge, giving credence to Philip’s words (vv. 45-46) and verifying the OTs teaching that true Israelites will come to Christ. (TLSB)

THERE IS NOTHING FALSE – *dolos* means “bait” with which to catch fish. The fisher man, by using bait, deceives the fish. Deceit was the characteristic fault of the Jew. Nathanael is not deceitful. Jesus wished to give Nathanael a practical demonstration of the truth of Philip’s words. This man belonged to the small number of those in Israel that were members of God’s people in truth, not merely by carnal descent, but by spiritual knowledge and faith. His hope was in the Messiah and his spiritual kingdom.

Jesus’ response reveals so much of what is in the heart of our Lord. Just as when he graciously demonstrates an awareness of the private life of the woman at the well in John 4, Jesus here reveals a loving knowledge of Nathanael’s heart. Yet he declares that he is *alēthōs Israēlitē en hōi dolos ouk estin*. Grace marks God’s new creation, just as the Gospel writer has already said in v 14. Grace empowers and enables, making men and women new. Eph. 2:8–9 ends with v 10, “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” In and through Christ’s grace-filled words, Nathanael is recreated, redesigned for discipleship. There is no water here, but this pericope has baptismal implications. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Jesus says of Nathanael that he is “a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.” *dovlo* means simply “deceit” or “guile.” This should not be interpreted to mean that Nathanael was in some way “better” than others. Note that *dovlo* is the same word used in Ps 32:2 in the Septuagint: “Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.” But it is clear that Nathanael doesn’t play games—he doubted that anyone good could come out of Nazareth, and he didn’t try to hide his feelings. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

Nathanael will speak the truth about Jesus (v. 49). (TLSB)

Jesus wished to give Nathanael a practical demonstration of the truth of Philip's words. As he was approaching, the Lord said to those that were standing near Him, but so that Nathanael could hear His words: Behold in truth an Israelite, in whom guile is not. This man belonged to the small number of those in Israel that were members of God's people in truth, not merely by carnal descent, but by spiritual knowledge and faith. His hope was in the Messiah and His spiritual kingdom; he was free from guile and falsehood, the characteristic faults of the Jews. "Therefore Christ wants to say here also: There are true and false Israelites; the Israelites are of two kinds, which, indeed, are both descended from the patriarch Israel, but have not all kept the promise and the faith of Abraham. (Kretzmann)

1:48 *fig tree*. Its shade was a favorite place for study and prayer in hot weather. (CSB)

Fig trees are cited both literally and metaphorically throughout the Bible. Sticking to Johannine literature, the apostle saw "the stars of heaven [fall] to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind" (Rev 6:13 NKJV) when the sixth seal was opened. If Nathanael is one of those metaphorical figs, then "the great day of His wrath has come" (Rev 6:17 NKJV) that is, the Day of the Lord is at hand in the incarnate Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 16, Part 1)

God's knowledge of us is personal and intimate as seen in Psalm 139. We cannot escape God's knowledge of us. Sitting under a fig tree meditating, as Nathanael may have been—intensely involved in our job or traveling to foreign countries or staying at home—wherever we are God knows our whereabouts (Ps 139:8). A major theme in St. Augustine's *Confessions* is God leading him all the way up until the present moment of faith. Ten years after his conversion he writes, "O God, you have created us for thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee." (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 10, Part 1)

Jesus says, "I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you." Fig trees, with their broad leaves, provided shade in the parched areas of Palestine, and sitting under a fig tree was considered to be a prime location for an Israelite to meditate on the Word of God. For example, 1 Ki 4:25 suggests that the greatest peace and prosperity of the Kingdom of Israel was known under kings David and Solomon, when "Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree." The prophet Micah indicated that in the messianic age "every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid" (Micah 4:4). Thus Nathanael may have understood Jesus' comments as a claim to his messianic identity. Even so, Martin Luther suggests that Nathanael and the others probably hoped Jesus would be the kind of political Messiah for which many Israelites longed: (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

No, they thought that the son of Joseph would one day sally forth spectacularly, as David and Solomon had done, and place himself over kings and Roman emperors. They placed the Messiah on as high a pedestal as we do an emperor today. Messiah means "the anointed one." The kings' heads were anointed with balsam and precious perfumes, as the three ecclesiastical electors today anoint and bedaub the emperor's back. And now these good fellows wished Christ, the Anointed, to be the foremost king in heaven and on earth and to liberate them from Roman bondage. With such thoughts

in mind they exclaimed: “We have found the Messiah!” They meant to say: “Until now we have lived under the yoke of the Romans. But God be praised! Now our Horn of salvation has come, who will manifest himself as a true Judge” (Lk 1:69). But Nathanael proves himself a silly old sheep when he says: “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” He wished to imply that if it came from Jerusalem or some other large city of Judea, all this might be credible. (LW 22:188–89) (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

Under the hot Mediterranean sun, people commonly sought the refreshing shade of a fig tree, where they meditated and prayed (see 1 Kings 4:25; Micah 4:4). It was not necessarily a momentous revelation for Jesus to have placed Nathanael under a fig tree. Given Nathanael’s reaction, however, clearly Jesus, by identifying the place and time, also knew the subject of Nathanael’s meditation and prayer. Had he been praying for the Chosen One of Israel to come? Was he meditating on his soul’s eternal well-being? Had he asked to see the fulfillment of God’s prophecies? Whatever it was, Jesus knew. (PBC)

1:49 *Son of God.* See vv. 14,18,34; 3:16; 20:31. At the beginning of Jesus’ ministry Nathanael acknowledged Jesus with this meaningful title; later it was used in mockery (Mt 27:40; cf. Jn 19:7). (CSB)

Nathanael is not only confessing what Jesus is but also what Jesus means for him personally.

The Messiah has a special relationship not only to God but also to God’s holy nation. (TLSB)

King of Israel. See 12:13. In Mk 15:32 “Christ” and “King of Israel” are equated. (CSB)

The Son of God is Israel’s royal Messiah. (TLSB)

1:50 YOU SHALL SEE GREATER THINGS – Even though a believer is without deceit, acknowledges the God-man as the Son of God and King of Israel, Jesus is always promising him that he will see greater things. Just think of our many sins, doubts and weaknesses! Even the most brilliant theologian must listen to this promise from Jesus. The longer he lives the more he must realize his own selfishness and unworthiness but also the wonders of the person, Word and work of Jesus.

1:51 I TELL YOU THE TRUTH – *aman* always denotes divine, irrevocable Truth.

From Hbr *’aman*; verb meaning “to confirm” (source of Eng “Amen”). Stresses importance of something said. In the Gospels, it is used only by Jesus; in John’s Gospel, it is usually doubled. (TLSB)

heaven open. In Jesus' ministry the disciples will see heaven's (God's) testimony to Jesus as plainly as if they heard an announcement from heaven concerning him. (CSB)

Heaven opened in Jacob's dream at Bethel and also at Jesus' Baptism. God has revealed and continues to reveal the way to Himself through Jesus, the Word made flesh (1:14; 14:6). (TLSB)

the angels of God ascending and descending. As in Jacob's dream (see Ge 28:12 and note), thus marking Jesus as God's elect one through whom redemption comes to the world—perhaps identifying Jesus as *the* true Israelite (see v. 47). (CSB)

There is now direct communication between God and man, Jesus himself being the Mediator. Something much more beautiful than the ladder of Jacob, Gen. 28, has now unified earth and heaven – the full atonement through the blood of the Savior.

Alluding unmistakably to Jacob's dream at Bethel when he fled from the anger of Esau (Gen. 28:12), Jesus offered an open heaven as the greater thing He had to give Nathanael and the others. Yes, He was "the Son of God." Yes, He was "the King of Israel." And as such He was the only way to get to heaven. In his dream Jacob had seen the angels of God ascending and descending on a stairway that reached from earth to heaven. "I" Jesus was saying, "am the stairway that links heaven and earth." (PBC)

Jesus describes and then applies to himself what Jacob saw at Bethel ("a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it," Gen 28:12). The Jews believed that the stone pillow that Jacob had used at Bethel was the "touchstone" on the floor of the Holy of Holies in Herod's temple. In this statement Jesus claims to be the replacement for the touchstone and all it represented for the Jews. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 3)

Son of Man. Jesus' favorite self-designation (see notes on Mk 8:31; Lk 6:5; 19:10). (CSB)

This is a term He used 8 more times in John's gospel and a total of 55 times in all the gospels. As the Son of Man, Jesus was in essence a human being like us. He had the same emotional makeup, the same facilities, the same physical needs. However, He was also as human being were meant to be from creation, namely, without sin. As the Son of Man He could live the perfect life the rest of us fail to live and die the death we deserve to die. As the Son of Man He came to win the forgiveness of sins for all people, not just for Israel. (PBC)

1:35–51 When Jesus calls the first disciples, He reveals Himself to be the Messiah—the Son of God and Son of Man—the way to heaven. Today, people may still question Jesus' invitation to follow Him. Yet, Jesus overcomes unbelief through the Gospel testimony and graciously opens the way to heaven through His Word. • Son of God, give me the strength I need to follow You daily and to testify that You are the only Savior. Amen. (TLSB)