

Notes for Next Sunday

Trinity Sunday

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Isaiah 6:1-8). This text is about the calling of Isaiah to a life as God's prophet and preacher to the nation Judah. The people had mocked the "Holy One of Israel" (5:19), and now He has commissioned Isaiah to call them to account. *Holy, holy, holy* is a repetition that underscores God's infinite holiness. In Hebrew the repetition expresses a superlative; God is supremely holy. This threefold repetition is also reminiscent of the three person of the Trinity.

Second Reading (Acts 2:14a, 22-36). The setting is Pentecost, the middle of Peter's sermon. Peter was a total coward when it came to his role in Jesus suffering and death. But, here he steps up in front of a very large and mostly hostile crowd. Verses 22-36 describe a very crushing law-filled sermon that bluntly accuses the Jewish leaders of being responsible for Jesus suffering death. Peter uses quotes from David in Psalm 16 and Psalm 110 speaking about Jesus (vv. 25-28, 34-35). Verse 36 is a summary of Israel's actions concerning Christ's crucifixion and affirming that Jesus is both Lord and Christ. In the verses that follow we see that the law has done its work and Peter quickly showers them with the gospel of forgiveness.

Gospel (John 3:1-17). Nicodemus, though "the teacher of Israel," shows that he cannot comprehend the Spirit's miraculous work of new birth through Baptism. Human reason, darkened by sin, cannot accept that God can grant spiritual rebirth through ordinary water used with His Word. But such a great promise has come from none other than the Son of Man, lifted up on the cross for our salvation!

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

OLD TESTAMENT – Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. ²Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. ³And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." ⁴At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke. ⁵"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty." ⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for." ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

6:1 I saw. Probably in a vision in the temple. (CSB)

6:1 train of his robe. The long flowing trail of the royal garment in which the King of kings appeared to Isaiah was so large that it "filled the temple." (May refer to the smoke of the incense offering; cf vv 4, 6.) (TLSB)

6:1 temple. Meant is the heavenly sanctuary, the place where God may be seen by angels and saints. This sanctuary is totally filled with the glory of the Almighty. (Stoeckhardt)

6:2 seraphs. Hbr plural noun, occurring only here and in v 6 as a name for celestial beings. Hbr *saraph* suggests that they were glowing or fiery beings. Though their description is somewhat cryptic, the point of this vision is God's glory, not the details of His attendants. (TLSB)

6:2 *six wings*. Two covered their faces, for even in their perfection the surpassing brilliance of God was overwhelming. With another two they cover their lower body in modesty. The last two are used to serve the Lord. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

6:3 *full of his glory*. All that he has done in creating, sustaining, redeeming, and sanctifying is evidence of his holy majesty and power. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 5, Part 1)

6:4 *doorposts ... shook ... filled with smoke*. Similarly the power of God's voice terrified the Israelites at Mount Sinai, and the mountain was covered with smoke (see Ex 19:18–19; 20:18–19). (CSB)

6:5 *Woe*. Isaiah's cry indicates that he is as good as dead. Ex 33:20 declares no one may see God and live. (TLSB)

6:7 *touched my mouth*. Only when God has forgiven Isaiah will he be able and ready to proclaim God's Holy Word. This holiness is not from Isaiah's own works but is God's gracious gift; Holy Communion is also God's gracious gift. (TLSB)

6:8 *whom shall I send*. The Lord wants to send someone to speak for Him. The question here is for the benefit of Isaiah. God wants to send a human to speak for Him. God could have sent the seraphs who sang in the heavenly temple, but He does not choose to do that. Instead, God desires to send a creature limited not only by flesh and blood but also by sin. The man in God's presence here has just confessed his sinfulness, yet God wants to send him. (PBC)

SECOND READING – Acts 2:14a, 22-36

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷”“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” ²² “Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. ²³ This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. ²⁴ But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. ²⁵ David said about him: “I saw the Lord always before me. Because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. ²⁶ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will live in hope, ²⁷ because you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay. ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.” ²⁹ “Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. ³⁰ But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. ³¹ Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, ^d that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay. ³² God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. ³³ Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, “The Lord said to my

Lord: “Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.”³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

2:22 accredited ... by miracles, wonders and signs. The mighty works done by Jesus were signs that the Messiah had come. (CSB)

2:23 wicked men. Jesus was handed over to the Romans, who were not under the yoke of Moses' Law. (TLSB)

2:27 not abandon me to the grave. David referred ultimately to the Messiah (v. 31). God would not allow his physical body to decompose.

2:29 his tomb is here. The tomb of David could be seen in Jerusalem. It still contained the remains of David's body. (CSB)

GOSPEL – John 33:1-17

Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. ² He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.” ³ In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.” ⁴ “How can a man be born when he is old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!” ⁵ Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. ⁷ You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” ⁹ “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. ¹⁰ “You are Israel's teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? ¹¹ I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. ¹² I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. ¹⁴ Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, ¹⁵ that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

3:2 at night. So that his colleagues would not know. John's presentation of this encounter may symbolize those in the world who come out of evil darkness to Jesus, the light of the world (cf.3:19-21). (TLSB)

3:3 I tell you the truth. Jesus is neither flattered nor does He "talk down" to Nicodemus. Three times Jesus says "I tell you the truth." (3,5,11) Two times Nicodemus says "how." (4,9) And Jesus adds another "how" in 12. Nicodemus' questions clearly show his utter lack of faith. Jesus' answers clearly show the utter necessity and truth of conversion, a work of God in man. (Buls)

3:6 Spirit is spirit. Spiritual life comes only by the Holy Spirit. (TLSB)

3:8 wind. No human being can understand, govern, or control the wind's movement. Jesus urged Nicodemus to discard his narrowly naturalistic view of human beings, as well as any presumption that they produce new birth. The new birth is an act of God (cf 1:13). (TLSB)

3:13 the Son of Man. Luther: “[Jesus] calls Himself the Son of Man who has His existence both on earth and in heaven [simultaneously]” (AE 22:321). (TLSB)

