**Notes for Next Sunday**

Trinity Sunday

**The Point of this Week’s Readings**

The word “Trinity” does not appear anywhere in the Bible. However, there are many texts that identify the Trinity. With the exception of the psalm, each of our readings point to the three persons of the Trinity.

The Psalm (Psalm 29) is a hymn in praise of God the King of creation. The glory of the Lord is not only visible in the creation, it is also audible in creation’s most awesome sounds. The name Yahweh (“the Lord”) is sounded four times; in the body of the psalm it is heard ten times. The voice of the Lord” is repeated seven times—the seven thunders of God. The numbers four, seven, and ten often signified completeness in OT number symbolism.

The Old Testament (Isaiah 6:1-8) is about the calling of Isaiah to a life as God’s prophet and preacher to the nation of 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 persons of the Trinity.

The Epistle (Acts 2:14a, 22-36) is a continuation of Peter’s Pentecost sermon. Most of the verses are about Jesus and His ministry. The mention of the Father is found where the word “God” is used and is sprinkled throughout this text. The Holy Spirit is spoken of in verse 33.

The Gospel (John 3:1-17) is Jesus’ teaching Nicodemus about the Kingdom of God. Jesus is the speaker and points Nicodemus to the purpose of Jesus’ ministry as explained in these verses. The Father is again found where the word “God” is used. The Holy Spirit is identified in verses 5, 6, and 8.

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

**Psalm 29**

1﻿ **Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. ﻿2﻿ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. ﻿3﻿ The voice of the LORD is over the waters; the God of glory thunders, the LORD thunders over the mighty waters. ﻿4﻿ The voice of the LORD is powerful; the voice of the LORD is majestic. ﻿5﻿ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars; the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon. ﻿6﻿ He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirionlike a young wild ox. ﻿7﻿ The voice of the LORD strikes with flashes of lightning. ﻿8﻿ The voice of the LORD shakes the desert; the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh. ﻿9﻿ The voice of the LORD twists the oaksand strips the forests bare. And in his temple all cry, “Glory!” ﻿10﻿ The LORD sits﻿ enthroned over the flood; the LORD is enthroned as King forever. ﻿11﻿ The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*29:1–2* This is a summons to all beings in the divine realm to worship the Lord—adapted from a conventional call to praise in the liturgy of the temple.

*29:3–9* God’s people are to praise of the Lord, whose voice the crashing thunder is. The sound and fury of creation’s awesome displays of power proclaim the glory of Israel’s God. (CSB)

*29:5* *cedars of Lebanon.* Lebanon was famous for its tall, strong cedar trees. Canaanite worship honored such trees. With a word, the Lord breaks the trees. (TLSB)

Even inanimate things that people stand in awe of will be humbled so that “the Lord alone will be exalted.” Seldom has this been felt more keenly by man than when he has stood before a shattered tree of the forest, cast down and blasted to bits, as the mighty cedars sometimes were.

*29:6 skip.* The formidable mountains are likened to calves that flee from loud noises. (TLSB)

*29:6 Sirion.* It was also known as Mount Hermon and was the tallest mountain in Syria.

*29:10–11* The Lord’s absolute and everlasting rule is committed to His people’s complete salvation and unmixed blessedness—the crowning comfort in a world where threatening tides seem to make everything uncertain. (CSB)

**Psalm 29** God’s power is a terrifying thing. The sound of His voice brings forth creation, shakes the mountains and trees, and unleashes the great flood that destroyed the earth. We sinners might be destroyed by the power of His holy, powerful voice. Yet “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14). God came to us in Jesus to speak His love and grace. In Baptism, flood and voice combine to cleanse us (this psalm was traditionally used at Baptisms). Hearing His gracious voice, we join heaven and earth in praise. • O Word of God, You became flesh to be our Savior. Let us hear Your powerful voice. Amen. (TLSB)

**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. ﻿2﻿ Above 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. ﻿3﻿ And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” ﻿4﻿ At 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.” ﻿6﻿ Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ﻿7﻿ With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” ﻿8﻿ Then 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!”’**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

This is a turning point in Israel’s history. They had become complacent and it would be Isaiah’s job to confront them about their lacks worship and living habits.

*6:1 filled the temple*. This indicates the completeness of God’s rule. This would be of great comfort to Isaiah as he carried out his ministry

*6:1 temple.* What is meant here 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.

*6:2 seraphs.* This is a Hebrew plural noun, occurring only here and in v 6 as a name for celestial beings. It 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.

*6:3 The Holy One*. This is used 39 times in Isaiah. He cannot tolerate sin and requires that his people be holy too.

*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.

*6:5 I am ruined*. It means to be destroyed or obliterated. Isaiah recognizes the vast gulf between himself and God the Holy One. He is grievously aware of his sinful condition.

*6:5 eyes have seen the King.* Isaiah feared because his eyes had seen the Lord, and he knew that no one can see God and live (Exodus 33:20). But God has chosen to reveal Himself to the prophet. The vision is for the benefit of Isaiah, for the benefit of ministry, and for us. God grants the vision to this sinful man by undeserved love. He will not die, but will live.

*6:6 live coal.* Coals of fire were taken inside the Most Holy Place on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:12), when sacrifice was made to atone for sin. (CSB)

*6:7* *touched my mouth.* By cauterizing Isaiah’s lips, God prepared him to be a spokesman of purification to his unclean people. God does the same for Jeremiah (1:9) and Ezekiel (2:8-3:11)

*6:8 then I heard a voice.* No longer the seraphim (v 7), now God Himself speaks. In contrast to the fear that followed the seraphim’s voice, here the prophet is encouraged by the Lord’s voice. (TLSB)

*6:8 Here am I.* In thankfulness, Isaiah was ready to do whatever God asked for, even though God had not yet declared what exactly Isaiah was to do.

**Epistle – Acts 2:14a, 22-38**

**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.**

*2:14 listen.* It literally “let it be put in your ears.”

**﻿﻿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.’﻿c﻿ ﻿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.”**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*2:22 accredited … by miracles, wonders and signs.* The word “accredited” means to be approved by a higher power.

*2:25-28*This is a quote from Ps 16:8–11. Peter states that the words cannot refer to David, for his flesh did undergo decay. This psalm rather refers to King Messiah, “great David’s greater Son,” whom David himself prefigured. The flesh of Jesus, wounded for our transgressions, is not dead but rather living and life-giving (Jn 20:27). We cannot see it as did Thomas, and Jesus does not instruct us to touch it with our hand. We can, however, receive it to eat in blest reality. As Jesus promised, “This is my body given for you” (Lk 22:19).

*2:33 to the right hand of God*. That is, Christ exercises the power of God and enjoys the honor of God. What He had from eternity according to His divine nature He now has and uses according to His human nature as well. He has the authority to send the Spirit whom He promised to send and he sent Him.

*2:37 The Lord said to my Lord.* The Lord (God) said to my Lord (the Son of David, the Messiah). According to Peter, David addressed his descendant with uncommon respect because he, through the inspiration of the Spirit, recognized how great and divine he would be (Mt 22:41–45).

**Gospel John 3:1-17**

**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 Spiritgives 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.**

The following are some insights to individual verses…

*3:1 a man of the Pharisees.* Although both the Pharisees and “the Jews” are frequent antagonists and often targets of Jesus’ barbs, here we meet one of the rulers—a member of the Sanhedrin—whom John presents in a more favorable light.

*3:2 at night.* Perhaps We do not know precisely at what time this happened. Why did he come at night? His secret visit was probably because he feared he would be exposed to the ridicule and hatred of his fellows, or because he thought himself too eminent a person to compromise his dignity by making this visit in public.

*3:3 I tell you the truth*. Literally, it means “truly, truly” or “amen, amen.” 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. Jesus' answers clearly show the utter necessity and truth of conversion, a work of God in man.

*3:3 can see the kingdom of God.* “Can see" means "to experience." Like most Jews of his time, Nicodemus thought of the kingdom of God in political terms. He expected that one day God would send a revolutionary leader, who would inspire the Jews to throw out the Roman army of occupation.

*3:3 born again.*† The Greek also may mean “born from above.” This is speaking of Jesus’ redeeming work.

3:8 *wind*. † The work of the Holy Spirit is beyond human comprehension (v. 9). He works as he pleases in the rebirth of believers. (CSB)

*3:9-13*Jesus makes the point that one cannot teach what one does not know. Jesus knows because of what he has seen. His worldview is not confined to an earthly point of view. His worldview is from the heavenly point of view, which sees the kingdom of God for what it is and knows how we can enter it. His word is to be trusted.

*3:14-21*Jesus is sharing these words with Nicodemus, a Pharisee and member of the Jewish ruling council. Nicodemus calls Jesus “Rabbi.” He recognizes that Jesus is the one who has come from God because of the miraculous signs he is doing. Jesus shares with Nicodemus that he must be born again through water and the Spirit. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 13, Part 2)

*3:15-16*Jesus makes clear that salvation is a gift, for the Son of God is himself a gift that God gave. No restrictions are placed upon the recipients, for “whoever believes” lives. The Son of God come down at Christmas finally fulfilled his mission on Good Friday.