

1 Samuel 16:1-13

The LORD said to Samuel,
'How long will you grieve over Saul?
I have rejected him from being king over Israel.
Fill your horn with oil and set out;
I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite,
for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.'

²Samuel said,
'How can I go?
If Saul hears of it,
he will kill me.'

And the LORD said,
'Take a heifer with you,
and say,
"I have come to sacrifice to the LORD."

³Invite Jesse to the sacrifice,
and I will show you what you shall do;
and you shall anoint for me
the one whom I name to you.'

⁴Samuel did what the LORD commanded,
and came to Bethlehem.

The elders of the city
came to meet him trembling,
and said,
'Do you come peaceably?'

⁵He said,
'Peaceably;
I have come to sacrifice to the LORD;
sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.'

And he sanctified Jesse and his sons
and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶When they came,
he looked on Eliab
and thought,
'Surely the LORD's anointed
is now before the LORD.'

⁷But the LORD said to Samuel,
'Do not look on his appearance
or on the height of his stature,
because I have rejected him;
for the LORD does not see as mortals see;
they look on the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks on the heart.'

⁸Then Jesse called Abinadab,
and made him pass before Samuel.
He said,
'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.'

⁹Then Jesse made Shammah pass by.
And he said,
'Neither has the LORD chosen this one.'

¹⁰Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel,
and Samuel said to Jesse,
'The LORD has not chosen any of these.'

¹¹Samuel said to Jesse,
'Are all your sons here?'

And he said,
'There remains yet the youngest,
but he is keeping the sheep.'

John 9:1-41

And Samuel said to Jesse,
'Send and bring him;
for we will not sit down
until he comes here.'

¹²He sent and brought him in.

Now he was ruddy,
and had beautiful eyes,
and was handsome.

The LORD said,
'Rise and anoint him;
for this is the one.

' ¹³Then Samuel took the horn of oil,
and anointed him
in the presence of his brothers;
and the spirit of the LORD
came mightily upon David
from that day forward.

Samuel then set out
and went to Ramah.

¹⁴ Now the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul,
and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him.

¹⁵And Saul's servants said to him,
'See now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you.

¹⁶Let our lord now command the servants who attend you
to look for someone who is skilful in playing the lyre;
and when the evil spirit from God is upon you,
he will play it,
and you will feel better.'

As he walked along,
he saw a man blind from birth.

²His disciples asked him,
'Rabbi, who sinned,
this man or his parents,
that he was born blind?'

³Jesus answered,
'Neither this man nor his parents sinned;
he was born blind
so that God's works might be revealed in him.

⁴We must work the works
of him who sent me
while it is day;
night is coming
when no one can work.

⁵As long as I am in the world,
I am the light of the world.'

⁶When he had said this,
he spat on the ground
and made mud with the saliva
and spread the mud on the man's eyes,

⁷saying to him,
'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam'
(which means Sent).

Then he went
and washed
and came back
able to see.

⁸The neighbours
and those who had seen him before as a beggar
began to ask,
'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?'

⁹Some were saying,
'It is he.'

Others were saying,
'No, but it is someone like him.'

He kept saying,
'I am the man.'

¹⁰But they kept asking him,
'Then how were your eyes opened?'

¹¹He answered,
'The man called Jesus
made mud,
spread it on my eyes,
and said to me,

"Go to Siloam
and wash."

Then I went
and washed
and received my sight.'

¹²They said to him,
'Where is he?'

He said,
'I do not know.'

¹³They brought to the Pharisees
the man who had formerly been blind.

¹⁴Now it was a sabbath day
when Jesus made the mud
and opened his eyes.

¹⁵Then the Pharisees also began to ask him
how he had received his sight.

He said to them,
'He put mud on my eyes.
Then I washed,
and now I see.'

¹⁶Some of the Pharisees said,
'This man is not from God,
for he does not observe the sabbath.'

But others said,
'How can a man who is a sinner
perform such signs?'

And they were divided.

¹⁷So they said again
to the blind man,
'What do you say about him?
It was your eyes he opened.'

He said,
'He is a prophet.'

¹⁸The Judeans did not believe
that he had been blind
and had received his sight

until they called the parents
of the man who had received his sight
¹⁹and asked them,
‘Is this your son,
who you say was born blind?
How then does he now see?’

²⁰His parents answered,
‘We know that this is our son,
and that he was born blind;
²¹but we do not know how it is
that now he sees,
nor do we know
who opened his eyes.

Ask him;
he is of age.

He will speak for himself.’

²²His parents said this
because they were afraid of the Jews;
for the Jews had already agreed
that anyone who confessed Jesus
to be the Messiah
would be put out of the synagogue.

²³Therefore his parents said,
‘He is of age;
ask him.’

²⁴ So for the second time
they called the man
who had been blind,
and they said to him,

‘Give glory to God!
We know that this man is a sinner.’

²⁵He answered,
‘I do not know
whether he is a sinner.
One thing I do know,
that though I was blind,
now I see.’

²⁶They said to him,
‘What did he do to you?
How did he open your eyes?’

²⁷He answered them,
‘I have told you already,
and you would not listen.
Why do you want to hear it again?
Do you also want to become his disciples?’

²⁸Then they reviled him, saying,
‘You are his disciple,
but we are disciples of Moses.

²⁹We know that God has spoken to Moses,
but as for this man,
we do not know where he comes from.’

³⁰The man answered,
‘Here is an astonishing thing!
You do not know where he comes from,
and yet he opened my eyes.

³¹We know that God does not listen to sinners,
but he does listen to one who worships him
and obeys his will.

³²Never since the world began
has it been heard
that anyone opened the eyes
of a person born blind.

³³If this man were not from God,
he could do nothing.'

³⁴They answered him,
'You were born entirely in sins,
and are you trying to teach us?'

And they drove him out.

³⁵ Jesus heard that they had driven him out,
and when he found him, he said,
'Do you believe in the Son of Man?'^{rk}

³⁶He answered,
'And who is he, sir?
Tell me, so that I may believe in him.'

³⁷Jesus said to him,
'You have seen him,
and the one speaking with you is he.'

³⁸He said, 'Lord, I believe.'

And he worshipped him.

³⁹Jesus said,
'I came into this world for judgement
so that those who do not see may see,
and those who do see may become blind.'

⁴⁰Some of the Pharisees near him heard this
and said to him,
'Surely we are not blind, are we?'

⁴¹Jesus said to them,
'If you were blind,
you would not have sin.'

But now that you say
, "We see",
your sin remains.

Reading the Former Prophets This Week

We don't often go to 'The Former Prophets' in the lectionary,
Dismissing them as 'histories of Israel' after Torah
Vague about the several centuries and empires involved

This long story may ring a bell from Sunday School –
the youngest son, nearly overlooked, gets chosen –
the shepherd turned music therapist

Round this narrative are darker shadows –
Why is Saul, first anointed king, rejected and replaced?
Where is the David and Goliath, or David the guerilla, here?

The book, and this story, foreground Samuel
His job is to discern and mark the next leaders,
since the sons of his patron Eli are corrupt

Looking back, we ask 'didn't he choose Saul first?'
The succession of Saul by David was sloppier –
instead of Saul's sons, including Jonathan, over years

It's not just the 7 older sons of Jesse passed over
(3 named here, 7 plus 2 daughters in 1 Chronicles 2)
It's one tribe of 12 or 14 providing a 'divine right' monarch

Where do you place yourself in the story, or point your camera?
Are you the audience of the movie produced as 'Samuel'
Who is the star, and the villain?

'What was so great about the good old days?'
For chapter-a-day audio and notes of 1 Sam 16:

<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2021/06/i-samuel-16.html>

Reading the Gospel This Week

Here's another long reading from John
The whole treatment of 'the man born blind'
Encounter, action, responses of disciples, others

We can recognize the headline slogans:
I once was blind, but now I see
Jesus says 'I am the light of the world'

It's a different discipline, to replay the whole,
not a soundbite or promo clip or ad for Jesus
what type of show are we streaming here?

The disciples frame and construe the problem:
Whose sin resulted in this blindness?
(Is 'Sin' just moral rule-breaking 'sins'?)

Jesus' response is show-and-tell
What's God's work in him?
(What's 'salvation' or 'redemption'?)

Are we selling miraculous healings as proof of divinity?
Is this the foundation of Christian medical missions?
Is this 'just a metaphor or symbol'?

The erstwhile beggars neighbours ask more
The Pharisees respond differently
The healed one simply bears witness

Where do you place yourself in the story, move your camera?
Are you the audience of the Fourth Gospel movie?
Which parts are voice-over narrator, which Jesus himself?

I won't preach this gospel text this year – here's my 2005 take:
<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2005/04/blamed.html>