

Former Prophet
2 Samuel 5:1-5 (6-8) 9-10

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron,
and said, 'Look, we are your bone and flesh.

²For some time, while Saul was king over us,
it was you who led out Israel and brought it in.

The LORD said to you: It is you
who shall be shepherd of my people Israel,
you who shall be ruler over Israel.'

³So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron;
and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron
before the LORD,
and they anointed David king over Israel.

⁴David was thirty years old when he began to reign,
and he reigned for forty years.

⁵At Hebron he reigned over Judah
for seven years and six months;
and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah
for thirty-three years.

*6 The king and his men marched to Jerusalem against the
Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, 'You
will not come in here, even the blind and the lame will turn you
back'—thinking, 'David cannot come in here.'* ⁷Nevertheless,
David took the stronghold of Zion, which is now the city of
David. ⁸David had said on that day, 'Whoever wishes to strike
down the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the
lame and the blind, those whom David hates.* Therefore it is
said, 'The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.'

⁹David occupied the stronghold,
and named it the city of David.
David built the city all around
from the Millo inwards.

¹⁰And David became greater and greater,
for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.

Reading the Former Prophet this Week

This next fencepost, skipping through Samuels,
Extends David's rule beyond Judah to include Israel
By request of the northern tribes, meeting at Hebron

They hearken back to Saul's days,
And to shepherding
But the backstory is 7 years of resistance,
And before that, insurgency

The cracks in this alliance exist already
Will be exploited in civil wars of succession
And be reflected in the divided kingdoms,
After Solomon's rule

We could have some fun with the omission,
Likely an etiological story for an old saying:
'The blind and the lame shall not come into the house'
But theologians of disability, go to town!

What's lost in avoiding the offensive story
Is the backstory of Jerusalem
Previously a Jebusite town
Source of one of David's wives,
A people noted earlier in Joshua's settlement stories
And later as a continuing set of neighbours

The fortification of Jerusalem in the 900's
Will mean more through sieges –
Assyrians rebuffed in mid and late 700's BCE
Babylonians successful in 580's BCE
(and finally, Rome's levelling in 70CE

Epistle
2 Corinthians 12:2-10

*It is necessary to boast;
nothing is to be gained by it,
but I will go on to visions
and revelations of the Lord.*

²I know a person in Christ
who fourteen years ago
was caught up to the third heaven
—whether in the body
or out of the body
I do not know;
God knows.

³And I know that such a person—
whether in the body
or out of the body
I do not know;
God knows—

⁴was caught up into Paradise
and heard things
that are not to be told,
that no mortal is permitted to repeat.

⁵On behalf of such a one
I will boast,
but on my own behalf
I will not boast,
except of my weaknesses.

⁶But if I wish to boast,
I will not be a fool,
for I will be speaking the truth.

But I refrain from it,
so that no one may think better of me
than what is seen in me or heard from me,
⁷even considering
the exceptional character of the revelations.

Therefore,
to keep me from being too elated,
a thorn was given to me in the flesh,
a messenger of Satan to torment me,
to keep me from being too elated.

⁸Three times I appealed to the Lord about this,
that it would leave me,
⁹but he said to me,
'My grace is sufficient for you,
for power is made perfect in weakness.'

So,
I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses,
so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

¹⁰Therefore
I am content with weaknesses,
insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities
for the sake of Christ;
for whenever I am weak,
then I am strong.

¹¹ I have been a fool!
You forced me to it.

Indeed
you should have been the ones
commending me,
for I am not at all inferior
to these super-apostles,
even though I am nothing.

¹²The signs of a true apostle
were performed among you
with utmost patience,
signs and wonders and mighty works.

¹³How have you been worse off
than the other churches,
except that I myself did not burden you?
Forgive me this wrong!

Reading the Epistle this Week

We may get further reading this with sarcasm
Is Paul claiming his own vision in ecstatic transport?
Did he reach the third of seven heavens?
Or is he making fun of such untestable claims by others?

In the body, out of the body
Paul doesn't know – it doesn't matter to him
Should it matter to us,
And what weight do we give
To claims to have heard the unspeakable?

More familiar is Paul's claim in weakness,
And a confession of a particular 'thorn in the flesh'
A favorite 'hermeneutical key' for some of you –
'that explains Paul, then!'

I find it a rhetorical flourish
To return to the theme of weakness,
Echoing 1 Corinthians 'foolishness' talk

We're invited again
to imagine Paul's opponents,
'super-apostles' –
Presumably eager to claim visions
and secret knowledge
of which Paul has just poked fun

He closes with more sarcasm –
Pointing out that he took no pay in Corinth
And apologizing
That they have been robbed
of claiming to have done so
as other churches do
want to talk clergy pay?

Reading the Gospel This Week

After the chapters of teaching and healing, 4 & 5,
The Galilean ministry is ending –
Time for resistance, closer to home

People in the hometown Nazareth
Find dissonance in his wisdom and power
Given his origins among them
And within his family of origin

One traditional, fruitless discussion
Struggles with the BVM having other kids,
Just as the challengers in the story do

More likely this is a pronouncement story
Setting up a familiar saying,
Here attributed to Jesus

The peculiar Mark issue
Is about how Jesus' power depends on others
Last week the trust of 2 women
This time the mistrust of a town

We tend to catch the pastoral issue –
'do I trust enough to be healed?'
But not the Christological one –
'how important is Jesus' subjective state of mind,
and ours in response, to effect redemption?'

What, in turn, makes disciples effective
As agents of this gospel
Not only its cognitive content
But also its power to effect change
In Mark's terms,
Exorcisms and miracles?

Gospel
Mark 6:1-13

He left that place
and came to his home town,
and his disciples followed him.

²On the sabbath
he began to teach
in the synagogue,
and many who heard him
were astounded.

They said,
'Where did this man get all this?
What is this wisdom that has been given to him?
What deeds of power are being done by his hands!

³Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary
and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon,
and are not his sisters here with us?'
And they took offence at him.

⁴Then Jesus said to them,
'Prophets are not without honour,
except in their home town,
and among their own kin,
and in their own house.'

⁵And he could do
no deed of power there,
except that
he laid his hands
on a few sick people
and cured them.

⁶And he was amazed
at their unbelief.

Then he went about among the villages
teaching.

⁷He called the twelve
and began to send them out two by two,
and gave them authority over the unclean spirits.

⁸He ordered them to take nothing
for their journey
except a staff;
no bread, no bag,
no money in their belts;
⁹but to wear sandals
and not to put on two tunics.

¹⁰He said to them,
'Wherever you enter a house,
stay there
until you leave the place.

¹¹If any place
will not welcome you
and they refuse to hear you,
as you leave,
shake off the dust
that is on your feet
as a testimony against them.'

¹²So they went out
and proclaimed
that all should repent.

¹³They cast out many demons,
and anointed with oil
many who were sick
and cured them.