

Trinity Sunday
Cycle B RCL

Isaiah 6:1-8

This is Isaiah's inaugural vision, set by the editor of the First Isaiah (Isaiah 1-39) in the year 742 BCE by reference to the death of King Uzziah. It presents the prophet as performing the duties of the high priest on the Day of Atonement by standing before the presence of the Lord in the Holy of Holies. Some commentators believe the Trisagion ("Holy, holy, holy..." verse 3b), Isaiah's protest of unworthiness (verse 5), and the touching of his lips with a live coal (verses 6-7) are all parts of the ancient Day of Atonement liturgy. The "us" in verse 8 for whom Isaiah should speak refers to the entire heavenly host and not just to God. (There is no divine nor royal plural in Hebrew.)

Psalm 29

This *hymn* is an "enthronement psalm" that celebrates God's rule over heaven and earth. The physical power of a thunderstorm is the psalm's figure for the power of God which the hymn calls upon all the gods of heaven (29:1) to acknowledge along with the worshipers in the Temple (29:9-11).

or

Benedictus es, Cantic 2 or 13 (Song of the Three Young Men 29-34)

In the Greek version of Daniel, we find a song ascribed to Azariah (Abednego), and a song attributed to the three young men in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego) between Daniel 3:23 and Daniel 3:24 of the Aramaic text. The versification used here begins with the first word after 3:23 as verse 1 and ends on verse 68 before 3:24. Cantic 1 (Cantic 12) derives from verses 35-65 and Cantic 2 (Cantic 13) from 29-34. Cantic 2 (Cantic 13) is a *hymn* that celebrates God's presence in the Temple as king.

Romans 8:12-17

Paul uses the term "flesh" to refer to those things that are appropriate to the present evil age, things that will not survive into the age to come. Conversely, the term "spirit" refers to what is appropriate to the age to come. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:44 refers to both a "psychic body" and a "spiritual body." The "deeds of the body" here clearly are those of the "psychic body."

The Aramaic word '*abba*' (verse 15) means "father," and with the sign of the emphatic (*-a*) at the end must be taken as a formal and respectful address. Although this word has been taken over into Modern Hebrew to mean "daddy," Aramaic in the time of Jesus would have accomplished this familiar address with '*avi*, "my father."

John 3:1-17

The story of Nicodemus depends on the double meaning of the Greek word *anōthen* ("again" or "from above"). Nicodemus understood Jesus to be saying that it was necessary to be born a second time, "again," to see the kingdom of God. The reader, however, chuckling at the ridiculous image of Nicodemus trying to reenter his mother's womb knows that Jesus means birth "from above," *i. e.* from God.