

**Proper 28 RCL**  
**Cycle B**  
**Revised**

**1 Samuel 1:4-20**

There is some reason to believe that the Samuel birth story was at one time a birth story about Saul. Among other indications of this is the frequent word play on the root *sh'l* (ask, request, dedicate) in 1 Samuel 1:17, 20, 27, 28. Another old tradition that animates our passage is that there was a temple at Shiloh, not simply a tent cultus. Verse 9 is explicit: “And Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the LORD’s temple.” The shrine has architectural features and is expressly called a *hexal*, “temple.” The birth of Samuel to a previously barren mother who vows to make her son a Nazirite connects the passage to the story of the birth of Samson in Judges 13. The author has reworked all of this material into Samuel’s birth narrative mainly by superimposing details of Samuel’s birth on the older traditions.

**Song of Hannah, 1 Samuel 2:1-10**

This psalm is a *hymn*, describing God’s defeat of enemies and beneficence toward the faithful and the poor. The dating of the psalm is helped by the reference to God strengthening the king and lifting up the horn of God’s anointed (*meshixo*), references that place the psalm within the time of the monarchy and the temple of Solomon. Little more can be done with the dating beyond this. The Deuteronomistic historian (Dtr) has taken over this hymn and put it on the mouth of Hannah to underscore the meaning of Samuel’s birth to Hannah and to the nation.

**OR**

**Daniel 12:1-3**

Michael appears in several Jewish and Christian writings as the leader of the heavenly host against the wicked powers of the underworld. The reference to the resurrection of the dead in 12:2 is the earliest such reference in the Bible and stems from the conviction that God would not consign to eternal oblivion those who had given up their lives in defense of the Torah, Judaism, and the temple without an opportunity to participate in the new order the rebellion was about to inaugurate.

**Psalms 16**

Psalms 16:2b-4 is notoriously corrupt textually. Apparently, it deals with the psalmists’ rejection of paganism, but even that reading is not sure. This psalm has much in common with the laments; but, in fact, it does not ask for deliverance so much as it expresses trust that God will protect the psalmist. As such, it is usually classified with the *psalms of trust* (Psalms 4; 11; 16, 23;.27:1-6; 62; 131) The setting of such psalms within the context of temple worship is not clear.

**Hebrews 10:11-14 (15-18) 19-25**

Having shown that the blood of bulls and goats—the sacrifices of the law—cannot take away sins (Hebrews 1:1-10), the author now turns to the argument that Christ’s single sacrifice, followed by his exultation, can bring us atonement as scripture proves. The writer alludes to Psalm 110:1 and quotes Jeremiah 31:31 (Hebrews 10:16-17) to remind the reader that Jeremiah’s prophecy finds its validation by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:15): God will no longer remember our sins, so there is no need for additional sacrifice (Hebrews 10:17).

Entrance into the sanctuary through Jesus' blood, even into the holiest part of the temple, the dwelling of God behind the curtain, ought to be a matter of "confidence" or "freedom" (*parresia*). Our means to that freedom is obedience to the commandments, both commandments about purity and faith (verses 22-23) and commandments about mutual affection and regular assembly (verses 24-25).

### **Mark 13:1-8**

Mark's "Apocalypse" (Mark 13) is based on Jewish end-of-the-world (apocalyptic) speculation. Modern excavations against the retaining wall of Herod's temple have revealed not only the expected beautifully bossed stones above ground but equally beautiful stonework below ground. The southern staircase has now been partially reconstructed and one may still see in the southern wall the remains of the double gate and the triple gate through which worshippers would stream up through the erroneously named "Solomon's Stables" into the temple plaza just in front of the southern porch. The destruction of the temple in 70 CE, described in Mark 13:2, is the only specific prediction in the chapter. Otherwise, Jesus's predictions in Mark 13:6-8 are very general and have no specific historical referents. Apocalyptic literature often allows us to date it by noting the point where specific events turn into general events. In Mark 13, that turning point is the destruction of the temple; and on that basis, the Gospel of Mark would have to come from a date after 70 CE.

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