

Our first reading comes from Psalm 139 verses 1 through 16, Common English Bible translation:

Lord, you have examined me.

You know me.

2 You know when I sit down and when I stand up.

Even from far away, you comprehend my plans.

3 You study my traveling and resting.

You are thoroughly familiar with all my ways.

4 There isn't a word on my tongue, Lord,
that you don't already know completely.

5 You surround me—front and back.

You put your hand on me.

6 That kind of knowledge is too much for me;
it's so high above me that I can't reach it.

7 Where could I go to get away from your spirit?

Where could I go to escape your presence?

8 If I went up to heaven, you would be there.

If I went down to the grave, you would be there too!

9 If I could fly on the wings of dawn,

stopping to rest only on the far side of the ocean—

10 even there your hand would guide me;

even there your strong hand would hold me tight!

11 If I said, "The darkness will definitely hide me;
the light will become night around me,"

12 even then the darkness isn't too dark for you!

Nighttime would shine bright as day,

because darkness is the same as light to you!

13 You are the one who created my innermost parts;

you knit me together while I was still in my mother's womb.

14 I give thanks to you that I was marvelously set apart.

Your works are wonderful—I know that very well.

15 My bones weren't hidden from you

when I was being put together in a secret place,

when I was being woven together in the deep parts of the earth.

16 Your eyes saw my embryo,

and on your scroll every day was written that was being formed for me,

before any one of them had yet happened.

Our second reading comes from the book of Judges chapter 6 verses 1 through 16:

6 The Israelites did things that the Lord saw as evil, and the Lord handed them over to the Midianites for seven years. 2 The power of the Midianites prevailed over Israel, and because of the Midianites, the Israelites used crevices and caves in the mountains as hidden strongholds. 3 Whenever the Israelites planted seeds, the Midianites, Amalekites, and other easterners would invade. 4 They would set up camp against the Israelites and destroy the land's crops as far as Gaza, leaving nothing to keep Israel alive, not even sheep, oxen, or donkeys. 5 They would invade with their herds and tents, coming like a swarm of locusts, so that no one could count them or their camels. They came into the land to destroy it. 6 So Israel became very weak on account of Midian, and the Israelites cried out to the Lord.

7 This time when the Israelites cried out to the Lord because of Midian, 8 the Lord sent them a prophet, who said to them, "The Lord, Israel's God, proclaims: I myself brought you up from Egypt, and I led you out of the house of slavery. 9 I delivered you from the power of the Egyptians and from the power of all your oppressors. I drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10 I told you, 'I am the Lord your God; you must not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living.' But you have not obeyed me."

11 Then the Lord's messenger came and sat under the oak at Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite. His son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to hide it from the Midianites. 12 The Lord's messenger appeared to him and said, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!"

13 But Gideon replied to him, "With all due respect, my Lord, if the Lord is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his amazing works that our ancestors recounted to us, saying, 'Didn't the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has abandoned us and allowed Midian to overpower us."

14 Then the Lord turned to him and said, "You have strength, so go and rescue Israel from the power of Midian. Am I not personally sending you?"

15 But again Gideon said to him, "With all due respect, my Lord, how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I'm the youngest in my household."

16 The Lord replied, "Because I'm with you, you'll defeat the Midianites as if they were just one person."

May God bless the reading of the Word.