

Notes for Next Sunday

First Sunday in Lent

The Point of this Week's Readings

Old Testament (Genesis 3:1-21). These verses reveal the fall of man. They are marked by the trickery of the devil as well as the willingness of Adam and Eve to buy into being like God. It changed the world forever and has a great impact yet today. It also makes know many characteristics of God which are also still true today. He will not put up with sin and metes out punishment for man's disobedience. However the on other hand God comes to seek out His wayward children cares for both their physical and spiritual needs.

Epistle (Romans 5:12-19). This is contrast between Adam and Christ. Adam introduced sin and death into the world; Christ brought righteousness and life. The comparison begun in v. 12 is completed in v. 18; these two verses summarize the whole passage. These two men also sum up the message of the book up to this point. Adam stands for the condemnation of all people (1:18–3:20); Christ stands for the justification of all people (3:21–5:11). (CSB)

Gospel (Matthew 4:1-11). The significance of Jesus' temptations, especially because they occurred at the outset of his public ministry, seems best understood in terms of the kind of Messiah he was to be. He would not accomplish his mission by using his supernatural power for his own needs (first temptation), by using his power to win a large following by miracles or magic (second temptation) or by compromising with Satan (third temptation). Jesus had no inward desire or inclination to sin, for these in themselves are sin (Mt 5:22, 28). Because he was God he did not sin in any way, whether by actions or word or inner desire (2Co 5:21; Heb 7:26; 1Pe 2:22; 1Jn 3:5). Yet Jesus' temptation was real, not merely symbolic. He was "tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (Heb 4:15). He was confronted by the tempter with a real opportunity to sin. Although Jesus was the Son of God, he defeated Satan by using a weapon that everyone has at his disposal: the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Eph 6:17). He met all three temptations with Scriptural truth (vv. 4, 7, 10) from Deuteronomy. (CSB)

For more in-depth commentary on each reading, read the notes found after each text below.

OLD TESTAMENT – Genesis 3:1-21

Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden?'"² The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,³ but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"⁴ "You will not surely die," the serpent said to the woman.⁵ "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.⁹ But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?"¹⁰ He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."¹¹ And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"¹² The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."¹⁴ So the LORD God

said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. ¹⁵ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.” ¹⁶ To the woman he said, “I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” ¹⁷ To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat of it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. ¹⁸ It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. ¹⁹ By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.” ²⁰ Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living. ²¹ The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.

3:1 serpent. The great deceiver clothed himself as a serpent, one of God’s good creatures. He insinuated a falsehood and portrayed rebellion as clever, but essentially innocent, self-interest. Therefore “the devil, or Satan,” is later referred to as “that ancient serpent” (Rev 12:9; 20:2). (CSB)

3:1 crafty. The Hebrew words for “crafty” and “naked” are almost identical. Though naked, the man and his wife felt no shame (2:25). The craftiness of the serpent led them to sin, and they then became ashamed of their nakedness (see v. 7). (CSB)

3:1 Did God really say ... ? This first temptation was (and remains) the temptation to doubt God’s Word. Satan implies God has selfish motives, but there is no hint from Moses that God had ill motives toward Adam and Eve or planned their fall. Moses makes clear that the destructive effects of sin only grieved God (6:6). (TLSB)

3:3 and you must not touch it. The woman adds to God’s word, distorting his directive and demonstrating that the serpent’s subtle challenge was working its poison. (CSB)

3:4 You will not surely die. Satan moves from doubting God’s Word to outright denial and rejection of it. Luther says: “When Satan sees these beginnings [of temptation], he now exerts himself with his utmost power, as though against a leaning wall, in order to overwhelm her altogether” (AE 1:155). (TLSB)

3:6 good for food ... pleasing to the eye ... desirable for gaining wisdom. Three aspects of temptation. Cf. 1Jn 2:16; Lk 4:3, 5, 9. (CSB)

3:6 he ate it. Adam must have fallen exactly as Eve had, with as little excuse, with as great a guilt. The only difference appears to be that, as Eve had eaten and apparently had suffered no ill effect, this constituted an additional argument why Adam need not hesitate to adopt the same course. (Leupold)

3:9 Where are you? A rhetorical question meant to make Adam think about what he and Eve had done and what it had led to at this point in time. It is also a reminder that we can’t hide from God and that he looks deeper than just earthly surface matters. The passages below confirm the saying, “You can run but you can’t hide from God.” (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 10, Part 3)

3:14 eat dust. † Synonymous with groveling defeat and humiliation (Ps 72:9; 44:25; Isa 49:23; 65:25; Mic 7:17). (CSB)

3:20 called ... Eve. Both Adam and his wife received the first Gospel proclamation in silence; they believed the promise and arose from their fall with due repentance. This is shown even in the name which

Adam applied to his wife, calling her “life,” or “source of life,” because she became the mother of the entire human race, whose propagation and life was dependent upon her. (Kretzmann)

EPISTLE – Romans 5:12-19

¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. ¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶ Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought Justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. ²⁰ The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, ²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

5:14 one man. There was no sin in God’s perfect creation until the fall of Adam (Gn 3:1–7). (TLSB)

5:14 spread. Parents have transmitted mortality to their children since the fall. (TLSB)

5:14 death reigned. All humans were mortal and under death’s power. (TLSB)

5:20 law was added. As men, after the giving of the written law, had more commands and obligations which they knowingly violated, the number and guilt of their sins was greatly increased. Thus the law, through their opposition to it, and their voluntary disobedience of it, aggravated their condemnation; and was adapted to make them feel that if they were ever saved, it must be by grace, and thus prepare them to believe on Christ. (CB)

5:20 grace abounded all the more. God’s grace is enough to forgive every sin revealed by the Law. “Mercy is more comprehensive than sin” (Ap V 29). (TLSB)

GOSPEL – Matthew 4:1-11

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.” ⁴ Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” ⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written:” ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.’” ⁷ Jesus answered him, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’” ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ “All this I will give you,” he said, “if you will bow down and worship me.” ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, “Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.’” ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

4:1 led by the Spirit ... to be tempted. This testing of Jesus (the Greek verb translated “tempted” can also be rendered “tested”), which was divinely intended, has as its primary background Dt 8:1–5, from which Jesus also quotes in his first reply to the devil (see v. 4 and NIV text note). There Moses recalls how the Lord led the Israelites in the desert 40 years “to humble you and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.” Here at the beginning of his ministry Jesus is subjected to a similar test and shows himself to be the true Israelite who lives “on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.” And whereas Adam failed the great test and plunged the whole race into sin (Ge 3), Jesus was faithful and thus demonstrated his qualification to become the Savior of all who receive him. It was, moreover, important that Jesus be tested/tempted as Israel and we are, so that he could become our “merciful and faithful high priest” (Heb 2:17) and thus be “able to help those who are being tempted” (Heb 2:15; see Heb 4:15–16). Finally, as the one who remained faithful in temptation he became the model for all believers when they are tempted. (CSB)

In Judea. The desert was a place associated with demons (cf. 12:43). God also led Israel into the wilderness to wander 40 years (Dt. 8:2). (TLSB)

4:1 tempted by the devil. These temptations were not willed by the devil but by God, whose eternal plan called for the Savior to be tempted and to triumph. Jesus met the test as Israel had not (Ex 15:25; 20:20). As true man, Jesus experienced genuine temptation. As true God, He could overcome temptation. (TLSB)

4:2 forty days and forty nights. The number recalls the experiences of Moses (Ex 24:18; 34:28) and Elijah (1Ki 19:8), as well as the 40 years of Israel’s temptation (testing) in the desert (Dt 8:2–3). (CSB)

4:2 He was hungry. Israel had also experienced great hunger in the wilderness (Ex 16:3; 24:18). The devil’s first temptation attacked a basic need. (TLSB)

4:6 throw yourself down. Once again, the NT antitype to the OT incident is greater and contrasting. Satan cites Ps 91:11 in part, though he cites Scripture out of context and omits a key line (see the textual note on Mt 4:6). He fails to include that the LORD promised “to keep you in all your ways” (Ps 91:11b), that is, to protect his people *as they live according to the “ways” he has taught them*. The psalm speaks of God’s “protection from dangers that approach the righteous, not testing God to see if he will really do what Scripture promises.” (CC)

4:9 worship me. Though Satan has some dominion in this world (Col 1:13; 1Jn 5:19), here he offered things that were not his to give. Satan demanded that the Son of God worship him rather than do His Father’s will. (TLSB)