

Grace and peace in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We begin the season of Lent with the story of the temptation of Jesus Christ in the desert. This is the chronogram of Jesus' life up to this point; He was born in Bethlehem of the Virgin Mary; He grew up in Nazareth as the son of Joseph the carpenter; He began his public ministry with His baptism in the Jordan River by John the Baptist. In baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. With this baptism, the road to the cross began. But, before the cross, before the public proclamation of the kingdom of God, our text for today says, the Holy Spirit himself led Jesus into the desert, to be tempted by the devil.

"And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry." We talked about the subject of fasting in our Ash Wednesday service. To be alive after 40 days without food or drink is a miracle, but Moses also fasted on Mount Sinai for 40 days and 40 nights. Other parallels: Noah and his family stayed 40 days in the ark and the Israel people 40 years in the desert until they arrived in the Promised Land.

We will reflect on the journey of the Israelites. In one sense, Jesus was the people of Israel in a man. The Israelites during their test time in the desert were not obedient to God. They always complained about the food shortage. But, Jesus does not, for 40 days and 40 nights. Jesus fulfilled God's will instead of his people and in our place as well.

According to our reading of the Old Testament, Genesis 3: 1-21, the devil tempted the first humans, Adam and Eve. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve did not pass the test, so the whole human series was punished with pain, tribulation and finally, physical death. But, according to our epistle (1 Corinthians 15: 21-23), Jesus is the

second Adam who passed the test. "And because death entered by a man, also by a man the resurrection of the dead. Because just as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be quickened." By his birth of a virgin, Jesus broke the cycle of original sin. And now, we have the promise of eternal life in Christ, for the new life that He has not given in baptism, although by the old Adam, the sinful nature, we have to die physically.

The promise in Genesis was that the seed of the woman - only the woman - will crush the head of the snake. In Hebrew, it is clear that the passage refers to the same snake that tempted Adam and Eve, not their descendants. The snake in the garden of Eden has always been understood as the devil.

The creed says that God created the visible and the invisible. The visible creation is the earth, the sun, the trees, the animals and ourselves. The invisible or spiritual beings are angels. God created all angels, like all other things, as obedient and good creatures. But, some angels under the direction of Satan, an archangel or prince of angels, turned against God. Now the devil is the adversary of God, because he wants the destruction of everything God has created.

And the devil tempted Adam and Eve through their carnal desires and pride. "Has God has really told you: Do not eat of any tree in the garden? And the woman answered the serpent: From the fruit of the trees of the garden we can eat; but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden God said: You shall not eat of it, nor touch it, lest you die. Then the snake said to the woman: You will not die; But God knows that the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like gods knowing good and evil. And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a desirable tree to attain wisdom; and she took of his fruit, and ate; and she also

gave her husband and he ate with her. " After eating the fruit, Adam and Eve had the knowledge of good and bad, but for their corruption, not for their well-being. Disobedience brought fear, despair and death.

In the same way the devil made the first step of tempting Jesus. "And the tempter came to Him and said: If you are the Son of God, say that these stones become bread." This is the temptation of our human nature, in our pride to seek the satisfaction of our desires by our wisdom and strength, and not to trust God.

However, Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 8: 3. "It is written: Man will live not only on bread, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." This was the Word God for the Israelites in the desert when they complained about the food shortage.

But the test was not over. "Then the devil took him to the holy city, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said: If you are the Son of God, jump down; because it is written: He will command his angels concerning you, and they will hold you in their hands so that you do not stumble upon your foot on a stone. " The devil can also quote the Bible for his purpose. He used the words of Psalm 91 to lure Jesus to vainglory. The second temptation was to show His divine power to gain the admiration of the crowd. But God does not make signs and wonders for a show. His Word must be enough for us. Then, Jesus responded to the devil with the words of Deuteronomy 6:16, "It is also written: You will not tempt the Lord your God."

Finally, "the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory, and said: All this I will give you, if you bow down to me and worship me." In this temptation, the devil said to Jesus, well, your mission is for all nations. You want to gather all the nations in the kingdom of God. This should not be something so difficult. You need only recognize my power in this

world. You must trust my methods. The path of humility and service is not used to establish a kingdom, only weapons and wealth. Make a deal with me and we will work together.

But Jesus told him, this is not the will of God. The kingdom of grace, that is, of love and mercy, can only be established by the proclamation of the Word of God, not by arms, or it can be bought for money.

"Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and served him." Jesus passed the test. He was not a false messiah who demanded money or boast. He submitted the cross to us. In Him, we have the victory over the devil, the world and death, and in that, the peace that surpasses all understanding. Amen.