

Sermon Outline
Defeating the Darkness
Luke 4:1-13
The Third Sunday in Epiphany

Luke has recorded the announcement from heaven that Jesus is the Beloved Son of God, the Father making this declaration at Jesus' baptism, sealing him with the Holy Spirit. Immediately following this, Luke offers Jesus' genealogy, which reaches back to Adam, who is also called "the son of God." This sets the stage for the contrast between these two sons, these two heads of peoples, and how they responded to Satan's advances against them.

Adam faced the enemy in paradise, in the company of his beautiful bride, filled with the good food the Garden provided, full of strength and power.

Jesus faced the enemy in the wilderness, alone, hungry from fasting for forty days, physically weakened yet also filled with the Holy Spirit (see also Romans 5:12 ff.).

But there is more. In Exodus and the Psalms Israel is also called "God's son," and they, too, having been given the promise of a new creation, a land flowing with milk and honey, will also face temptation and testing in the wilderness. They will pass through the wilderness for forty years, depending on God's supply and not their own ability in order to learn how to trust God as they enter the land of promise.

The Adam and Israel stories must be born in mind as we read of Jesus' encounter with the powers of darkness at the end of his forty-day fast in the wilderness. He is a new Adam; he is the true Israel, who, having come through the waters, will pass through the wilderness and begin to possess the land. He faces three temptations, corresponding to the three attributes of the fruit offered to Eve and Adam: it was "good for food, beautiful to the eye, and desirable to make one wise" (Genesis 3:6). These, in turn, correspond to the corruption that is our world, a way of living we are called to overcome: "the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life..." (1 John 2:16).

Three Temptations

- I. A Temptation Concerning Provision: Luke 4:3-4
? We live from God's Word rather than from and for our insatiable passions
- II. A Temptation Concerning Power: Luke 4:5-8
? We live for God's Glory rather than from and for the beauty of this age's seductive power
- III. A Temptation Concerning Protection: Luke 4:9-12
? We live under God's Providence rather than from and for our own presumptuous plans

Two Outcomes

- I. Our Head's victory over Satan is ours – Romans 5:17-19
- II. We are to follow in his victory over Satan as we journey in the wilderness towards the inheritance – 2 Corinthians 11:2-3

One Principle for Living

- I. Between the Promise and the Provision there is a Problem: this is why the Church is called the community of those who overcome. We are victorious not in any strength we possess, but because our head has won the victory and leads us always in his triumph. Because he has been tempted and triumphed he comes to our aid when we are tempted and empowers us for the day of trial. 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Hebrews 4:14-16

Jesus' answers to the devil come from Deuteronomy, the book that describes God's faithfulness to Israel in the wilderness. It was written as Israel stood on the banks of the Jordan, poised to enter into its inheritance. Jesus, the new Israel, stands again on Jordan's banks and retells with his own wilderness temptation Israel's old story. He will now go throughout the land, by preaching and teaching in the power of the Spirit casting out the enemies that had held the people captive.