

Deuteronomy 26:4-10

Psalms 91 :1-2, 10-15

Romans 10:8-13

Luke 4:1-13

In the first reading Moses reminds the people that the Lord heard their cry, saw their toil, afflictions, and hardships. They were brought out of bondage by God's terrifying power and they witnessed his many signs and wonders. In thankfulness they are to bring offerings to the altar of the Lord and with the community celebrate the good things given them.

The psalmist emphasizes that the faithful who completely trust in the Lord will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. The just are always working in the presence of danger and the angels will guard them so they do not stumble and fall. Those who continually call upon the Lord will be delivered and their prayers will be answered.

In the second reading, the question, "Are you saved?", often asked by some Christians is addressed. Being saved involves "confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised him from the dead." Confession leads to salvation and faith from the heart to justification; no one who believes in Jesus' saving power will be disgraced.

In the Gospel Jesus is led into the desert by the Holy Spirit where he fasts for forty days and is tempted by the devil. Each temptation is appropriately countered with Scripture and each is typical of what Jesus and his followers will experience throughout their ministry.



Temptation

The way in which Jesus was to meet his responsibility and show what kind of person he is can be exemplified by his testing in temptations. After 40 days of fasting and prayer Moses returned to the people with God's ideal for a new nation (Deut 9:8-11) and Jesus perfects this ideal during his ministry.

It is said some of the stones in the wilderness looked like loaves of bread and the temptation to turn one into the other would have immediately relieved Jesus' hunger. Perhaps this suffering in hunger made him more aware of the struggles that many people had for the bare necessities of life. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 8:3.

When the devil sought to be worshipped by Jesus one could have thought of an interim compromise with evil in the hope of gaining a greater advantage for good at a later time. Jesus refused to compromise his ideals and break a commandment. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:13.

When tempted to throw himself from the temple the devil may have thought that if Jesus is not saved from the fall that is the end of him, but if he is miraculously saved it would demand God's immediate support and this would be tantamount to testing God. Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:16.

Jesus' temptations modeled an aspect of all temptations, namely, receiving some kind of immediate and personal pleasure instead of working for a greater good that can eventually be shared for the benefit of others.

If Jesus had to combat temptations then it is clear that no one is so holy and good that he will not be tempted. The disciples realized this when Paul said, "*It is necessary for us to undergo many hardships to enter the kingdom of God.*" (Acts 14:21)

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