

GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Sheboygan, Wisconsin

The First Sunday in Lent (C)

Deuteronomy 26.1-11

Psalm 91.9-15

Romans 10.5-13

Luke 4.1-13

The lessons for this week introduce the lenten theme of repentance, that "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Luke 4.13).

Deuteronomy 26.1-11

- 1) This passage, which prescribes that the first fruits of the land are to be offered to the LORD, may be read in parallel with 12.1-14, in which sacrifices to the LORD are prescribed.
 - a) The opening line's reference to the time when "you come into the land which the LORD your God has given you" is paralleled in 6.10; 7.1; 11.29; 17.14 and 18.9.
 - b) The v. 2 reference to where to sacrifice is paralleled at 12.5, 11, 14.
 - c) The "priest who is in office at that time" (v. 3): This verse is evidence of a centralized priestly judiciary, *i.e.*, of developments happening after the time of Moses.
 - i) Much of Deuteronomy reflects a later (8th to 7th C., B.C.) editing by the so-called "Deuteronomistic Historian," even if the original traditions in the book can be traced to the time of Moses.
- 2) "A wandering Aramean was my father ..." (v. 5) introduces a central theme in Jewish identity, forming a parallel creed to the central confession of Judaism (that the LORD is Israel's God, who brought Israel out of bondage): the continuation of the covenant made with Abraham.
 - a) The pattern of recitation of oppression, cry for help, and divine response to prayer is typical of deuteronomistic writings (*cf.* Judges 3.7-11).

Psalm 91.9-15

- 1) This is a psalm of trust, concluding with an oracle of salvation.
 - a) The psalm is thought to be Davidic in origin.
- 2) The reference in vv. 11-12 to guardian angels is uncommon in earlier Judaism. It becomes more common in late Old Testament times (*see, e.g.*, Tob. 5-12).
 - a) Earlier references exist to the LORD acting through an angel for all the people (*e.g.*, Exod. 23.20), but this reference is to angels watching over an individual.
 - i) Ps. 34.7-8 is a parallel, probably near contemporary.
- 3) Vv. 11-12 are quoted to Jesus by Satan at Luke 4.10-11.
 - a) Jesus corrects the Devil's interpretation of Scripture!

Romans 10.5-13

- 1) The way of righteousness is open to all; the path is easy, as Scripture shows.
 - a) In the Old Testament the phrase "those who call upon the name of the LORD" denoted sincere and pious Israelites. Paul transfers this title to Christians.
- 2) The new way of righteousness does not ask of humans that we follow all of the rigors of the Law.

- a) The heights have been scaled and the depths plumbed for us by Jesus Himself.
 - i) Paul is drawing a parallel to Deut. 30.11-14, in which Moses assures the Israelites that the Law can be observed.
- 3) Paul recites the basic creedal statement of the early Church, that Jesus is Lord. This confession is one of an inward faith that guides the whole person.
 - a) Paul makes clear that this faith is extended to all persons.
 - b) Paul uses the term “Lord” (Greek *Kyrios*) in a vocal construction parallel to the Old Testament confession of the LORD as God of all (see, e.g., 1 Sam. 12.17; 2 Sam 22.7), referring explicitly to such a formula found at Joel 3.5.
 - i) However, in the context (esp. after v. 9), “Lord” refers to Jesus as the risen Lord of both Jew and Greek.
 - (1) Rom. 10.9-10 borrows the language (mouth, heart) of Deut. 30.12 and applies it as Christian confession:
 - (a) Confess with your *mouth*: “Jesus is Kyrios!”
 - (b) Believe in your *heart*: “God raised him from the dead.”
 - (c) Note that v. 10 creates a chiasm, restoring logical order (believe . . . confess).
 - (d) Vv. 11-13 complete the thought:
 - (e) Christ is the object of faith (Isa. 28.16; cf. Isa. 8.14)
 - (f) Confirmation that Jesus is Kyrios! (Joel 3.5)
 - (g) And that He is Kyrios of both Jew and Gentile.

Luke 4.1-13

- 1) Luke bases his account of the temptations of Jesus on Mark, as well as on another source common to Luke and Matthew (probably an oral tradition among the apostles, referred to by scholars as “Q,” from the German word for source, *quelle*).
 - a) The order of the temptations is changed, and the final one is set in Jerusalem.
- 2) When Jesus is on the cross at Jerusalem (23.34b-39) he will again encounter temptations like those offered here by the devil, and will conquer them and evil both by His person and His faith.
 - a) Throughout his writing Luke reflects a type of apocalyptic thought which looks for the overthrow of the devil: Luke 10.17-20; 11.22; 22.3, 53; Acts 10.38; 26.18.
- 3) “*Full of the Holy Spirit*” (4.1): Jesus is the model for Christians under duress.
 - a) The only other appearances of this phrase are in Acts 6.5; 7.55 (Stephen) and 11.24 (Barnabas).
 - b) The Spirit, which descended upon Jesus at His baptism, sustains Him through temptation.
 - c) The devil (Luke does not name him “Satan” as does Matthew) asks “if you are the Son of God”:
 - i) He is referring to Jesus’ baptism (3.22).
 - d) Every time the devil quotes Scripture to Jesus, Jesus quotes Scripture to show the true will of God.
- 4) Jesus’ statements make clear that His fasting is symbolic of the will of God; He seeks at all times to do the Father’s will.