

In the name of ✠ Jesus.

The devil is out to get you. He wants to make you stumble and fall. He wants to “*deceive [you] or mislead [you] into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice*” (Luther, Explanation to the Lord's Prayer, 6<sup>th</sup> Petition). He had success with our first parents. The liar and deceiver took the form of a serpent in the primordial garden, and he deceived Adam and Eve. They sinned, and the creation was subjected to futility, the creation was shackled to corruption, the creation — including mankind — has been groaning ever since.

But the devil is not done. He wants you. He wants to get you. Expect it. It's part of what it means to be a son of Adam. And sadly, we're in worse shape than Adam. Adam was created in God's image; we're now born in the image and likeness of Adam, and that means we're born with the stain of Adam's sin. As St. Paul says, sin “*came into the world through [the] one man,*” Adam, and so “*all sinned*” (Romans 5:12). Ever since the garden transgression, the offspring of Adam have been conceived and have been born with this sin (Psalm 51:5). Not surprisingly, the devil finds success with us, too.

Sadly, in our fallen state, man is simply incapable of doing anything about our situation. God promised that in Adam's eating, he would die, but the consequence was greater than Adam could have imagined. By his transgression, death spread from Adam to all men (Romans 5:12). And not just physical death, but spiritual death: “*dead in ... trespasses and sins,*” dead as we follow “*the course of this world,*” dead as we follow “*the prince of the power of the air,*” — that's the devil again — spiritually dead “*sons of disobedience*” (Ephesians 2:1-2).

Adam and Eve were not laughing at this trespass. It was a bleak picture. It was shameful; it was frightening. At first, they sought their own ways out: blame someone else; blame God Himself. But God was not having it. He was not to blame. God did not create sin — law breaking — and He did not create Adam and Eve to sin. God is not the cause of death. Man is.

On the other hand, God would be the solution to sin and death. And so, God promised the solution already in the Garden. “*I will put enmity between you [O serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.*”

This offspring, of course, we hear about in the Gospel today. He is Jesus, the long-promised offspring of the woman, the Son of God who assumed humanity into Himself becoming true man in flesh received from His virgin mother. In this flesh, He felt the devil's urging to sin. But, thanks be to God, He did not fall prey to the devil's wiles. Thanks be to God, the second Adam obeyed when the first Adam did not.

This is what was necessary for the second Adam “*to fulfill all righteousness*” for us and be our substitute. He would have to experience the guile of the devil and truly be tempted as part of what it means to be true man.

And so Jesus began His ministry being baptized vicariously for us, beginning His work of fulfilling all righteousness for us. And then immediately after His baptism, God, the Holy Spirit, Himself led Jesus out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, to continue this work.

And He can't be a pretender when it comes to being one of us and one with us. For the Scriptures remind us that Jesus was “*one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin*” (Hebrews 4:15). Here was God's son, born of woman, placing Himself under law, in order that He might fulfill the law for us and redeem us who are burdened under the law (Galatians 4:4-5).

Jesus was no pretender. He took on our flesh, with the weaknesses of our flesh. And so His temptations were real. He was truly tempted. It was a burden, for as Scripture says, “*he himself ... suffered when tempted*” (Hebrews 2:18).

There is an interesting correlation with the garden temptations and the wilderness temptations. Two Adam's strove with Satan; the first lost; the second won. The first, who had the run of the garden, save the fruit of one tree, succumbed to the devious “*Did God actually say, 'You shall not eat of any tree in the garden'?*” He ate. The second, who had been fasting 40 days and 40 nights and was hungry, resisted the temptation: “*command these stones to become loaves of bread*” He responded: “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*”

The first Adam fell prey to the temptation: “*Eat it! 'You will not surely die.'*” The second Adam escaped the devil's deceit: “*Throw yourself down*” from this pinnacle of the temple. You'll not die. “*He will command his angels concerning you; they will bear you up.*” Jesus escaped with the word: “*You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.*”

The first Adam's lust for power and status was his downfall as the devil used it to get that Adam to transgress God's law: “*when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God.*” The second Adam humbled Himself, setting aside His Divine privilege to become a man, despised and rejected, and foregoing a temporal glory—“*All these [kingdoms...all this glory] I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.*” Jesus rejects the easy part and chooses for Him the cross. “*Be gone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'*”

With Jesus, the second Adam, the system has been given a reboot. The first Adam caused a corruption that required it. Purge out the old corrupted memory; things had to be made new. That's what Jesus does.

Not that Satan was done with Jesus after this defeat, either. He had one more trick up his sleeve, one more attempt to get Jesus to worship him rather than the Lord God, deflecting Jesus from the purpose for which He was sent, echoes of the wilderness temptations this time heard on Mount Calvary: *“if you are the Christ, save yourself. Come down from the cross”* (Luke 23:25, 27). If Satan had had success there and kept Jesus from taking on sin's punishment, in one fell swoop all the world would have been his. But Jesus would not be deterred. He would ward off this wily foe's temptation. He would die.

For us. To open our way to paradise. To put us on the right path, the lighted path. To be sure, our path as Christians remains difficult. Satan would like nothing better than to entice us to follow the first Adam's way of transgression rather than the second Adam's way of righteousness. The first way is easier, and the devil wants you to think it's better, but it's the way to death; the second way is difficult, and the devil wants you to think it's not worth it, but it's the way of everlasting life. Therefore, resist this adversary, this murderer, who prowls around like a roaring lion seeking to separate you from the church and kill you and devour you (1 Peter 5:8). The devil, though defeated, is still out to get you.

And look to Jesus, our substitute, who by His victory in the wilderness and on the cross, gave the world the reset it needed to be brought from present sufferings to future glory, from futility due to the first Adam's transgression to hope by the second Adam's obedience, from bondage to the prince of this world to freedom in Christ, from our groanings under sin's corruption to rejoicing in sin's and death's and the devil's defeat. Yes, thanks be to God for the second Adam, Jesus Christ, for the abundance of His grace, for the free gift of righteousness, for our justification through faith, for eternal life in Him.

And thanks be to God, He has given us a baptismal reboot, if you will, the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit that unites us to Jesus' obedience, and, because we continue to sin, a daily reboot that drowns the first Adam in us in contrition and repentance, that the new man recreated in image of the second Adam might emerge and arise to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.

God grant that we may live in this reboot, the second Adam's victory, which is ours by His grace through faith.

In the Name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.