*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

September 2 - 7

*Jesus’ Use of Old Testament Texts*

**Monday, September 2 Luke 4:1-4; Deuteronomy 8:1-5**

*“People do not live by bread alone”*

Jesus was clear about his mission as the Messiah, but now he had to deal with the question of strategy. Being who he was, called to redeem and reconcile a fallen world, how would he go about it? This is the whole focus of the temptations – the *how* of life. And the interesting thing is that during his encounter with the devil, the Scriptures were Jesus’ resource. The answers that he gave to the devil in response to all three temptations came right out of Deuteronomy.

Jesus has been in the wilderness for forty days and has had nothing to eat all that time. In the first temptation the devil suggests Jesus should take care of his physical needs. But Jesus understands that the devil’s suggestion is to be independent of God and replies with Deuteronomy 8:3, arguing that life is run by more than food. In fact, in the priority of things, life is not defined by bread at all. Instead, life is defined by doing God’s will and depending on his provision. In the Deuteronomy verse, the next line refers to living by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. To follow God is to live.

*May your Word, Lord, guide me when I am tempted. Amen.*

**Tuesday, September 3 Luke 4:5-8; Deuteronomy 6:10-13**

*“Worship the Lord your God”*

The second temptation is an invitation to worship Satan and abandon loyalty to the Father, a direct challenge to the first commandment which is to have no other gods. Satan allows Jesus to see all the kingdoms in the world and promises him authority over all of them if he will only worship him. The proposal is of an alliance between the Son and Satan. But, although Satan possesses great authority, he can’t grant this wish for the kingdoms in the world do not belong to him. The proposal is a delusion and a lie, as are all of Satan’s attempts to get us off track.

Jesus’ reply makes it clear he knows which way is true. There is no quick and easy road to messianic glory or to spiritual survival in a hostile world. Jesus opts to receive from the Father what is the Father’s to give. Therefore, Jesus replies with Deuteronomy 6:13. Only one Being is worthy of worship – the Lord God. That verse notes one other important reality, that with worship comes service. True service means remaining allied to God.

*You alone, Lord, will I worship and serve. Amen.*

**Wednesday, September 4 Luke 4:9-13; Deuteronomy 6:14-19; Psalm 91:9-16**

*“Do not test the Lord your God”*

The third temptation, like the second, involves a vision-like experience. Jesus is taken to the temple in Jerusalem and invited to jump off its highest point, which scholars tell us loomed over a cliff and the Kidron Valley some 450 feet below. To cast oneself down from such a height and survive would take divine intervention. Satan shows that he, too, knows Scripture, by citing Psalm 91:11-12, a text that promises God’s protection for his own. The premise is, “If God protects his own and you are his Son, then you can jump and not worry.”

As spiritual as this sounds, Jesus recognizes the remark as a presumptuous test of God’s care. God has not asked Jesus to jump from the temple, and to do so would artificially create a need for God to act. Since it puts God in a “show me” position, the action is really a private test of God and a sign of a lack of faith. These kinds of tests God’s children are not to pursue. So Jesus replies with Deuteronomy 6:16, a text that rebuked Israel for testing God in places like Massah.

*I will trust you, Lord, without putting you to the test. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

September 2 - 7

*Jesus’ Use of Old Testament Texts*

**Thursday, September 5 Luke 4:14-19; Isaiah 61:1-11**

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me”*

The synagogue was without clergy and, as was the custom, someone was selected each Sabbath to be the particular teacher. Often a visiting rabbi would be chosen. On this Sabbath, Jesus was the choice – local boy makes good. They had heard about this young man who was teaching in the synagogues and was “praised by everyone” (verse 15). Jesus found and read Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6.

Considering the people to whom Jesus brought the Good News during his ministry, “the poor” here certainly includes those who live in a socially and economically limited environment. But according to the use of this term in the Old Testament, that is not all that is intended here. The Old Testament background points to the *anawim,* the “pious poor.” These are the humble whom God will exalt, for they are frequently the first to recognize how much they need God. To such spiritually open folks, Jesus proclaims release, recovery of sight, and freedom from oppression, and through his ministry he will accomplish what he has proclaimed.

*I humbly confess my need of you, Lord, and praise you for your salvation. Amen.*

**Friday, September 6 Luke 4:20-30; 1 Kings 17:8-24**

*“The Scripture has been fulfilled this very day”*

Jesus tells his audience that they are seeing the fulfillment of the words of Isaiah 61, words associated with the salvation of God. The crowd reacts with marvel at the words spoken by Jesus, but the issue of Jesus’ pedigree raises questions in their minds. This is Joseph’s son, so how can such a humble figure possibly be all the things declared by Isaiah? They cannot fit Jesus’ ancestry with his claims. Despite their amazement, they are skeptical.

Jesus points to the period of the prophet Elijah, one of the lowest, most godless periods in Israel’s history. He reminds the people that during that time, Elijah did little work among the Israelites but he did raise a Gentile woman’s son from the dead. This remark is strong for two reasons: (a) It compares the current era to one of the least spiritual periods in Israel’s history, and (b) it suggests that Gentiles, who were intensely disliked among the Jews, were more worthy of ministry than they were. A choice surrounds Jesus, and to choose wrongly is to lose the opportunity for blessing and instead to gain judgment.

*May I not be skeptical, Lord, when you seek to bless me. Amen.*

**Saturday, September 7 Luke 4:20-30; 2 Kings 5:1-19**

*“There is a true prophet in Israel”*

When Jesus began talking about the here and now, claiming that the words of Isaiah were being fulfilled that very day, his hearers were uneasy. Their reaction showed that Jesus did not fit their expectations about the origins of God’s great prophets. Some people never get past Jesus’ background. Would the God of the universe manifest his glorious message in someone of such humble roots? Was Jesus truly a prophet?

In response to their questioning of his status as God’s prophet, Jesus reminds them of the story of the prophet Elisha and Namaan. Namaan was the commander of the king of Aram’s armies, and he was a leper. In his household there is a young girl, a Jewess captured during one of his raids into Israelite territory. She tells her mistress, Namaan’s wife, that if her master were to go to the Israelite prophet he might be cured. When Elisha hears of the matter, he says: “Send Namaan to me, and he will learn that there is a true prophet in Israel.” So it is with all who come to Jesus – they will learn that there is a true prophet in Israel.

*You, Jesus, are God’s Prophet sent to us with the message of salvation. Amen.*