

THE TEMPTATION OF TWO ADAMS

Our sermon that breaks through Lent's fast on this Feast Day is taken from our Old Testament Gospel:

And enmity I will put between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed: He will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel.¹

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

It is fitting that the first Sunday in Lent (not of Lent – for Sundays are, as stated in the introduction, days in which the fast is broken) centers the Christian's thoughts on the temptation of two Adams. Both Adams possessed from the beginning of their lives original righteousness. That is they were without sin, and had true freedom of the human will to choose between good and evil. Of all humanity, only these two had that inborn ability and freedom. Who then, are these two Adams?

The first is the man created by God, with His hands. That Adam you know as Adam – the man created from the dust. And that Adam you also know as Eve – the woman created from the side of the man. The two were created from the one flesh, to remain one in Paradise, forever. Adam and Eve together is the first Adam tempted by the Angel of Light, the most beautiful of all God's angels, subordinated to them by God.

The second Adam (I Cor. 15:47) is the Man God brought forth, begotten, not created, out of the womb of the Blessed Virgin. That Adam is named Jesus. He

¹ *Genesis* 3:15.

was born fully Adam – that is of the earth – while remaining fully God. God and Man in the flesh, begotten from all eternity and born in time to remain One on earth, in hell and in Paradise forever. God and Man together in One Person is the second Adam tempted by the Angel of Light, the most beautiful of all God’s angels, subordinated to Him by God.

In all of time, only two Adams had the potential to face temptation and choose good over evil. The first Adam fell into temptation, and brought sin, death and the hell to God’s highest creatures. The second Adam overcame temptation, and brought forgiveness, life and paradise to God’s highest creatures. The first Adam’s death is inherited, and deserved by all his family, as our text declares:

In (the) sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground. For from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return.²

The second Adam’s death is imputed, undeserved, to all his family. That truth is declared in our Epistle reading for this Sunday. God says,

In (the) time acceptable I heard you, and in (the) Day of Salvation I helped you. Behold now (is) (the) time pleasant, behold now (is) (the) Day of Salvation.³

To summarize the last couple of thoughts: the first Adam’s fall into temptation brought death to the living, the second Adam’s conquering all temptation brought life to the dying. Temptation of the two Adams is declared in the readings from Genesis and Matthew. (The men who met yesterday in our regular twice-

monthly Bible study will recall that I was searching for the temptation ties in both readings, with only partial success. However, as the texts opened themselves through more study and trust in the Holy Spirit to work through the Word a common three-fold temptation of the two Adam's became clear). They are:

- Doubt about God's gracious provision;
- Doubt about God's Word and its meaning;
- Appeal to human pride/vanity.

First, the Tempter attempts to work doubt in his victims about God's provision for the Adams. To the woman (and therefore the man) in the Garden, he says, *Indeed, did thus God say you all shall not eat from all the trees in the Garden?*⁴ To the Man (and therefore the Second Person of the Trinity) in the wilderness, he says, *If You remain Son of God, You must say that these stones become loaves.*⁵ These first temptations of the Adams would be sins against what we call the First, Second, Fourth and Sixth Commandments.

Second, the Tempter attempts to increase doubt in his victims about God's Word. To the first Adam in the Garden, he says, *You will definitely not die!*⁶ To the second Adam in the wilderness, he says, *If You remain Son of God, cast Yourself down; for it has been written, "His angels He will command concerning You and by hands they will lift*

² Genesis 3:19.

³ II Corinthians 6:2.

⁴ Genesis 3:1b.

⁵ Matthew 4:3b.

*You, lest You strike Your foot against stone.*⁷ These second temptations of the Adams would be sins against what we call the First, Second, Fourth, and Fifth Commandments.

Third, the Tempter attempts to appeal to pride and vanity in his victims. To the first Adam he says, *Thus God knows that in (a) day that both of you eat from it, then your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim - knowers of good and evil.*⁸ To the second Adam he says, *all these things I will give to You, if, falling down, You will worship me.*⁹ These third temptations of the Adams would be sins against what we would call the First, Third, Fourth, Ninth and Tenth Commandments.

The threefold temptations as outlined today were faced by both Adams in their original state of righteousness. In them, what we have summarized for us in the two tables of the Holy Law were in danger of being violated. The first Adam failed, and lost his/her state of rightness with the Father. The second Adam maintained His state of rightness with the Father.

There is a point that the faithful need to grasp clearly: only the two Adams of this week's texts, from their inception, ever had innate, inborn, original righteousness. All other Adams – those conceived of the line of Adam and Eve through human procreation – all possess innate, inborn, original sin. That means,

⁶ *Genesis 3:4b.*

⁷ *Matthew 4:6.*

⁸ *Genesis 3:5.*

⁹ *Matthew 4:9.*

except for the two Adams of our texts, all other humans have been, are, and will be conceived with wills, natures, desires, spirits, able to only choose among sins. In themselves, humans could not, can not, and will not choose good (that means that which God declares good).

Dear ones in Christ that is a problem. For anyone to remain in the presence of good – God’s good – that one must be declared good by God. Since everyone, except the two Adams of our day’s texts, is conceived evil, with no ability to choose good, that means that no one, in himself or herself has any potential of remaining in the Presence of Good that is God for God is good.

The only way out of the problem of the inborn, contagious disease called original sin, and all other sins that come from it, is to have the Creator take that sin away. How that would happen, is declared by God as He, in correcting the first Adam’s wife, and thus Adam (for what God has joined together no one should separate):

And enmity I will put between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed: He will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel.¹⁰

The same God who had just called out to His sinning Adam, “*where are you?*” to bring them to a knowledge of their sin, and to call them into sorrow over that sin, gives them the means to repent, to turn from sin and receive life.¹¹ That means is

¹⁰ *Genesis* 3:15.

¹¹ *Genesis* 4:9b.

the Promise of the Seed of Woman. The Son of the one deceived would be the One coming to crush the head of the serpent.

But in so doing, that Seed would suffer. The image of the text is of a heel lifted to crush the venomous serpent, who, just before he receives the mortal stomp, strikes the heel coming upon him. This does not stop the crushing of the serpent's head, but it does cause no small amount of anguish to the One doing the crushing.

The first Adam figured out what this meant for him, for his wife, and for all their descendants who would live in the Faith by the Faith. We know this for our text informs us, *then called the Adam (the) name of his wife, Life, for she was the mother of all living.*¹² In a beautiful word-play the name Eve, which means life, is given and received by she who has recently been tricked into leading the first Adam into death. If Adam had not believed in the Promise of this day's theme verse, he would likely have named his wife, "Mot-ha," "death." But by grace, through faith, Adam had heard the Promise of the coming Seed of his wife who would conquer the Tempter, and with him, death.

Have you figured out what this means for you?

It means that the Seed of Life, that is the Son of Eve, comes into the creation to restore the children of Adam to that original rightness with God that was lost long ago. It means that the bruising of the heel was done as He crushed the one who has

power to eat the dust of the earth – that is all the sons and daughters of Adam who have not regarded and held fast to the Promise of Life in the Seed of Eve.

There is much more in this text for the day. However, we are not trained to focus on biblical texts proclaimed through preaching for 45 minutes to an hour and a half anymore, we are citizens of our instant era. Therefore, we will return to God's Promise to Adam out of Eve one last time for today.

And enmity I will put between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed: He will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel.¹³

If you have not heard the Promise clear enough yet, or even if you have, contained in those words is the Promise of fruit of another tree from the Garden. That tree is the tree of life. It was physically forbidden to our first parents, and to all their descendants. However, it is spiritually allowed to those who cling to the Faith in the Promise. Now, it is to be eaten by those who cling to the Promise fulfilled. And this is why: God has taken the full brunt of Adam's sin into Himself. He has tasted of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Person of His Son, Jesus the Christ. He has even allowed Himself to be nailed to that tree whose fruit brought death on account of the fall into temptation. And, by His bloody death on the Tree, He has brought forth the fruit of Life. Come, eat of the fruit of the Tree of Life, and live forever in the Seed who in His death crushed the head of the serpent.

¹² *Genesis* 3:20.

¹³ *Genesis* 3:15.

The peace which passes all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus

Lent I (LSB One-year series)

Genesis 3:1-21; II Corinthians 6:1-11; Matthew 4:1-11

March 1, 2009

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Translation, second draft:

And the serpent was more subtle than all the creatures of the field which YHWH Elohim had made, and he said to the woman, "Indeed, did thus God say you all shall not eat from all the trees in the Garden?"¹⁴

Then says the serpent to the woman, "Not die you will die!"¹⁵

Thus God knows thus in day you all eat from it, then will be opened of you all your eyes, and you all will be like Elohim, knowers of good and evil.¹⁶

Then called out YHWH Elohim to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"¹⁷

And enmity I will put between you and between the woman, and between your seed and between her Seed: He will bruise your head, and you will bruise His heel.¹⁸

In sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground. For from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you will return.¹⁹

Then called the Adam name of his wife, Life, for she was the mother of all living.²⁰

¹⁴ Genesis 3:1b.

¹⁵ Genesis 3:4.

¹⁶ Genesis 3:5.

¹⁷ Genesis 4:9.

¹⁸ Genesis 3:15.

¹⁹ Genesis 3:19.

²⁰ Genesis 3:20.