

# Lent 1

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## Prayer of the Day

Lord God, you led your ancient people through the wilderness and brought them to the promised land. Guide now the people of your Church, that, following our Savior, we may walk through the wilderness of this world toward the glory of the world to come; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever

Or

Lord God, our strength, the battle of good and evil rages within and around us, and our ancient foe tempts us with his deceits and empty promises. Keep us steadfast in your Word and, when we fall, raise us again and restore us through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

## Deuteronomy 26:1-11

*{1}* When you have come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, *{2}* you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. *{3}* You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, "Today I declare to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our ancestors to give us." *{4}* When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the LORD your God, *{5}* you shall make this response before the LORD your God: "A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. *{6}* When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, *{7}* we cried to the LORD, the God of our ancestors; the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. *{8}* The LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; *{9}* and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. *{10}* So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O LORD, have given me." You shall set it down before the LORD your God and bow down before the LORD your God. *{11}* Then you, together with the Levites and the aliens who reside among you, shall celebrate with all the bounty that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house.

2: The occasion for this action is the Feast of Weeks which is discussed in Deuteronomy 16:9-12.

1-4, 10b. These verses describe what the people should do to present the first fruits of their harvest to Yahweh.

5-10a: These verses provide the words of dedication to be recited when the first fruits are presented. One of Gerhard von Rad's "little historical Credos." Others are Deuteronomy 6:20-24 and Joshua 24:13-14. [1] They were, he believed, recited as a part of a covenant renewal ceremony annually at the Feast of Weeks, where on the basis of Yahweh's mighty acts the people declared their loyalty to the covenant with Yahweh. There have been many

modifications to von Rad's thesis, but it seems likely that something of this sort took place in the cult of the northern kingdom until its fall, and later perhaps, after the scroll of the law was found during Josiah's reign, in Jerusalem. "By nature the credo was always in some sense historical, but its historicity was always theological." [2]

*11. the Levites and the aliens who reside among you:* The Levites are mentioned because they did not receive an allotment of land in Israel, and so they had no produce to present, and strictly speaking, were not able to participate in the action described here. But in verse 11 they are specifically required to participate, no doubt with produce offered by others. The "aliens" who lived in Palestine were alien only in Israel's view, and they were expected to participate in the worship of Yahweh even though he was not their God. Similar expectations are found concerning the Passover (Exodus 12:19, 48; Numbers 9:14), and the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10, Deuteronomy 5:14). Other provisions concerning aliens may be found in: Exodus 22:21; 23:9; Leviticus 16:29; 17:12; 18:26; 19:10, 33-34; 24:22; 25:47ff; Numbers 19:10; 35:15; Deuteronomy 24:17, 19, 20, 21; 27:19.

### **Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16**

{1} You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who abide in the shadow of the Almighty, {2} will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." ... {9} Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your dwelling place, {10} no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. {11} For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. {12} On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone. {13} You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot. {14} Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name. {15} When they call to me, I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. {16} With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

*9. you have made the Lord your refuge:* A persecuted person takes shelter in Yahweh and is protected against all evil.

*11-12:* These verses were quoted by the devil in Matthew 4:6 and Luke 4:10f. as a temptation to test the promises of God. The angels are the guardian angels who protect one who has taken refuge in Yahweh.

*13:* "...the boldest of all statements, namely v. 13, was by Jesus himself promised to the disciples that were sent out. [Luke 10:19]" [3]

*14-16:* Yahweh speaks, in an oracle of assurance, directly to the one who has called on him.

*14. those who know my name:* To know someone's name is to be intimately associated with them.

*16. long life:* In a time when life was short, a long life was considered a sign of God's favor. Solomon was commended by Yahweh because he did not ask for long life (1 Kings 3:11).

### **Romans 10:8b-13**

{8b} "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); {9} because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. {10} For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. {11} The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." {12} For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. {13} For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

*8b:* Verses 6-8 are a free adaptation of Deuteronomy 30:11-14. This quotation is contrasted with Leviticus 18:5. One must **do** the law if one is to live by it; on the other hand one

believes in Jesus and his resurrection and confesses it to have righteousness and life in Christ. There is almost the sense that these are seen as two different but equivalent ways of approaching God, "For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek."

9. *if you confess...and believe...you will be saved*: "The NT church in preaching, singing, praying, and witnessing increasingly gave expression to Christian faith in more or less fixed formulas, for example, in 1 Cor 15:3-7; Phil 2:6-11; Matt 28:10 and *Rom 10:9*.... [a] simple christological affirmation declaring the lordship of Christ...." [4]

*Jesus is Lord*. In Greek *kurios Iesous*. This is probably modeled on the Roman acclamation *kurios Kaisar*, "Caesar is Lord."

10. *believes...confesses*: Christian faith has both an interior and an exterior component. Neither one without the other reflects true faith.

11: The quotation is from Isaiah 28:16. "In Isaiah the words referred to the precious cornerstone laid in Zion by Yahweh...; they are again accommodated by Paul to faith in Christ and used as an assurance of salvation for all who believe in Christ, Jews included." [5]

12. *There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all*: The Gentile is not less because (s)he was not a member of the chosen people, nor is the Jew compromised by the denial of Christ by other Jews. The metaphor includes not only those who are strictly Jew or Greek, but all human beings.

13: A quotation from Joel 2:32 (LXX). "In the original context the prophet speaks of the awesome day of the Lord, when deliverance and survival will come to those who invoke Yahweh. Paul applies the title [Lord] to his *Kyrios*." [6]

## **Luke 4:1-13**

{1} Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, {2} where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over, he was famished. {3} The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." {4} Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'" {5} Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. {6} And the devil said to him, "To you I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please. {7} If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours." {8} Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" {9} Then the devil took him to Jerusalem, and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, {10} for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,' {11} and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" {12} Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" {13} When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

1. *Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit*: Jesus was the Son of God from his conception (Luke 1:35). At the same time, the meaning given to Jesus' baptism is that in his baptism Jesus is possessed of the Spirit in a special way.

2. *in the wilderness...for forty days*: This seems to reflect Deuteronomy 8:2: "Remember the long way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commandments."

3. *the devil*: Mark and Matthew have "Satan." In Mark the emphasis is on the proper work of the Satan, the prosecuting attorney, that of inducing a person to sin, and then denouncing him before the judge, in this case, Yahweh. In Luke the issue is simpler: Jesus was tempted by a supernatural being, a "devil" seeking to disrupt God's plan. We need to be very careful

about identifying the Satan with ontological evil. There is no real place in the monism of the Bible for the dualism of such a power. Each person is responsible for any breaches of God's will they may commit.

3-4: "The first scene ends with the quotation of Deut 8:3.... Jesus rejects the diabolic challenge and alludes to the Deuteronomic hortatory recapitulation of the Exodus event. Jesus' answer is cryptic, but it implies that Yahweh will supply him with 'manna' once he lifts his eyes beyond desert stones." [7]

*If you are the Son of God:* Also verse 9. This may be a challenge to the truth of the declaration of the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism. It may also be seeking a definition of the nature of divine sonship. If one is God's son, the one should expect and demand special treatment. God's children should not go hungry or have to suffer for their foolish risks. If God will not treat his children properly, then the devil can give them glory and authority.

5-8: "The second scene ends with the quotation of Deut 6:13.... This testing...is challenging him to acknowledge someone other than the Father as his master and Lord.... Jesus rejects the challenge to worship anything other than Yahweh, his Father, and makes it clear that his mission is solely to see that God's kingship is established over all." [8]

9-12: "The third scene ends with the quotation of Deut 6:16.... Jesus rejects the challenge to demand miraculous protection of himself and his heaven-commissioned role. Implicit in his answer is the rebuke to remember that no one can demand such intervention from God merely to suit his fancy or whim." [9]

*13. an opportune time:* This may be the reason why Luke omits both Peter's rejection of Jesus' announcement of his coming Passion, and Jesus' rebuke to Peter, "Get behind me Satan..." (Luke 9:18-22). The next specific mentions of Satan are in Luke 23:3, 53, where "Satan" enters into Judas. Earlier in Luke 21:31 Jesus tells Simon that "Satan has demanded to have you."

**Comment:** "Luke is said to have reversed the order of the last two scenes because of his geographical perspective—the climactic scene takes place in Jerusalem.... Other considerations reveal that the Matthean order is the more original." [10] "The scenes depict temptations of Jesus coming from external sources; they do not suggest that they proceed from an inner conflict. They symbolize the seduction in the hostility, opposition, and rejection which confronted him constantly throughout his ministry. These are the elements that should be regarded as the 'real basis in the life of Jesus.' The opposition was such that he was constantly tempted to use his power as Son to overcome it.... The three scenes then depict Jesus as the Son of God obedient to his Father's will and refusing to be seduced into using his power or authority as Son for any reason other than that for which he has been sent.... The unifying link in the three is the series of quotations from Deuteronomy, derived from passages that recall three events of the Exodus in which the Israelites in the desert were put to the test and failed.... in Luke it receives little attention outside of this episode. Here in particular it emphasizes by contrast the fidelity of Jesus as Son." [11]

## Reflection

The first and second lessons contain ancient biblical creeds, succinct, confessional statements, stating in fixed formulae some article or articles of faith. The Credo in the first lesson speaks of the sojourn of the people of Israel in Egypt, their suffering at the hands of Pharaoh, and Yahweh's act of power in bringing them out of Egypt. The one in the second lesson declares that Jesus is Lord, and that salvation rests on confessing him as raised from the dead. Some one said that it does not matter *what* you believe as long as you are sincere. Those who wrote the lessons (the Bible), and those who receive it as the source and norm of their lives would most heartily disagree with such an idea.

The Gospel for the first Sunday in Lent focuses our attention on Jesus' temptations.

Jesus faces them in his capacity as Heaven's emissary and Son.... they are not recorded for a hortatory purpose (i.e. to give Christians a model for the temptations of their own lives). [12] Nevertheless, there is the clear lesson to be learned. There is no special treatment for God's Son, nor for his children. To seek the glory and authority of the world is not an option.

### **Hymns [13]**

*With One Voice* (e.g. 762v), *Hymnal Supplement* 1991 (e.g. 725s) and *LBW* (e.g. 32).

E=Entrance; D=Hymn of the Day; I=First Lesson, P=Psalm; II=Second Lesson; G=Gospel

323 --E--O Lord of Light,  
454 --D--If God Himself  
99 --D--O Lord, throughout  
562 --I--Lift Every Voice  
780v --P--What a Fellowship

779v --P--You Who Dwell  
126 --II--Where Charity and  
292 --II--God Loved the  
657v --G--The Glory of These  
738s, 484, 312, 263

### **Prayers of the People [14]**

A: In our Lenten journey we reflect on our sin while walking toward new hope. We need the strength of God's outstretched arm to guide us through this holy season, and so we offer our concerns and petitions to God, praying in Jesus' name, and responding, "Amen."

A: In the wilderness, our Lord was tempted by the devil to forsake the truth for a lie. When we are so tempted, give us the strength of Jesus to answer the tempter with bold faith in your truth. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: Hearing the story of Israel's entry into a land flowing with milk, honey, life, and abundance, we think with sadness of the many threats to your creation that our lifestyles have caused. Open our eyes to our guilt in the destruction of the environment, and move our hearts and hands to work in this world with loving stewardship. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: We pray for people displaced by war, famine, and persecution. Compassionate God, be for these people a fortress and refuge, and encourage our peaceful nation to extend good will to our distressed neighbours. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: We pray for the sick and the dying among us, especially \_\_\_\_\_. Comfort and support them in their time of darkness. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A: We pray for this congregation, that we might learn to call upon your name, O Lord, so that all our undertakings may be accomplished according to your will. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

P: We lift up these prayers and the unspoken prayers of our hearts, trusting in your compassion and relying on your strength to rescue us from our struggles. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### **Or [15]**

*Presider or deacon*

God made our ancestors a great nation in a land flowing with milk and honey

Let us pray for all peoples on earth, and especially for those preparing for baptism.

*Deacon or other leader*

For the holy catholic church throughout the world, sharing the death and resurrection of Christ.

For *N* our bishop, for presbyters and deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.



For *NN* our catechumen(s) and *NN* their sponsors(s).

For all nations, peoples, tribes, clans, and families.

For all who are oppressed, afflicted, or in need.

For the dying and the dead.

For our families, friends, and companions, and for all those we love.

Remembering the blessed Virgin Mary, *N*, and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

*Presider*

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who placed your word on our lips and in our heart. Hear our prayers for all peoples. Receive sons and daughters into your family, wash them in the waters of new life, and feed them with your bread and wine. Glory to you for ever and ever.

## Notes

[1] Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, 1966, pp. 1-78.

[2] J. I. Durham, "Credo, Ancient Israelite," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1976, p. 198b.

[3] Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1989, p. 225.

[4] John H. Leith, "Creeds, Early Christian," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ed. by David Noel Freedman). New York: Doubleday, 1992, vol. 1, p. 1204, col. 2.

[5] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. New York: Doubleday, 1992, p. 592.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 593.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 511.

[8] *Loc. cit.*

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 512.

[10] Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. Garden City, New York, 1981, p. 507.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 510-511.

[12] *Ibid.* p. 509, "They are moreover, scarcely born of temptations suffered by Christians themselves and retrojected into the ministry of Jesus himself."

[13] <http://www.worship.on.ca/text/rclc0001.txt>

[14] [http://www.worship.on.ca/text/inter\\_c.txt](http://www.worship.on.ca/text/inter_c.txt)

[15] <http://members.cox.net/oplater/prayer.htm>