

“The Second Adam”

Luke 4:1-13

On Ash Wednesday, we began our Lenten series entitled “Behold the Man.” These are the words of Pontius Pilate, “Behold, the man.” Ecce homo in Latin. There is the Ecce Homo arch at the beginning of the Via Delarosa (The Way of Soros) which is the journey Jesus took carrying His cross. The Ecce Homo arch is built into some of the original stones which were from Pilate’s courtyard where he brought out Jesus, having been beaten by the Roman soldiers, wearing a crown of thorns – Pilate offers up an unintentional, yet profound sermon, “Behold, the man.”

In Jesus, God is man. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Three years or so before Jesus would stand before Pilate and be condemned to die on the cross, He would suffer in the wilderness for 40 days.

Chronologically, this event takes place immediately following His Baptism where God the Father proclaimed in no uncertain terms that “This is My Son whom I love, with whom I am well pleased.” He is announced by God the Father that Jesus of Nazareth is the Son of God. In Luke’s

Gospel, Luke places the genealogy of Jesus in between His Baptism and His time in the wilderness being tempted.

I know that when I start talking about genealogies in the Bible (these lists of names of the generations of the people of God) that I start to get blank stares (and that's just from my family). But the genealogy in Luke's Gospel starts with Jesus "being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, and then goes through the generations concluding with Him being "the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the Son of God."

And then Luke tells of Jesus going out into the wilderness, fasting for 40 days, being tempted by the devil. This is not the fake fasting done among us feasting on fried fish on Fridays (which we all know is an experience which is the opposite of fasting) or giving up some pet vice for the season. For 40 days, Jesus ate nothing. Luke very much understatedly reports that He was hungry. You don't say!

As I said Wednesday, "Behold the man, the incarnate God, with a stomach and intestines that have been empty and aching for 40 days." The First Adam was tempted and sinned by eating. The Second Adam will fast before enduring an onslaught of temptation, withstanding every temptation.

Everything that Jesus does is with a purpose. He, as the Second Adam, came to undo the damage done by the First Adam. Adam was expelled from the paradise of the Garden of Eden and sent out into the wilderness. Jesus, having willingly departed the paradise of heaven, takes on Adam's punishment and goes out into the wilderness. Adam refused to

humble himself before the Lord – Christ willingly suffered humiliation. Satan conquered Adam when he ate of the tree. Jesus conquers Satan in the wilderness when he refused to eat. And when Jesus wins the final victory over Satan, there is a tree involved in that also – the tree of the cross.

Satan comes to Jesus with his lies and half-truths, with his false promises that he can't fulfill. The First Adam listened and believed the false promises of Satan. "If you eat, you won't die. You will be like God." The Second Adam did not yield to the desires of His stomach, and He repeatedly rebuked Satan with the Word of God – which is the greatest and most nourishing bread.

Luke brilliantly takes the Baptism of our Lord, the genealogy of our Lord, and Jesus' first confrontation with Satan and places an emphasis on the reality that the Son of God has become human in every sense. On Wednesday, that was a clear emphasis, with me probably overkilling it in regard to the listing of body parts.

However, we live in a culture which has embraced the ancient heresy of Gnosticism which wants to push God out of the physical and solely into the spiritual realm. Go to a Christian bookstore and try to find a recently authored book which mentions, let alone emphasizes the physical resurrection of the body. For them the afterlife is all about heaven and angels. Now I am pro heaven and pro angel. But we don't become angels,

and heaven is not our ultimate goal – the resurrection of the body is what we long for, and what the saints in heaven are waiting for.

Go to a bookstore today, and you won't find much if anything about the physical resurrection or Jesus saying, "My flesh is real food, and My blood is real drink, and unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man you have no life in you." But you will find plenty of encouragement to be "spiritual but not religious." We have all heard someone say, "You don't have to go to church to be a Christian." All of that is an attempt to substitute safer, spiritual platitudes for real physical, fleshly realities. Jesus says, "Take and eat; this is My Body. . . Take and drink; this is My Blood."

Our world loves pious-sounding, hyper-spiritual pretensions. God isn't like that. The incarnation – the taking on of flesh has been in His mind from before the first words of creation. Immediately, when God confronts Adam in the garden after the Fall, God's first promise is to send a Savior who will be "the Seed of the woman," that is, God would become man so that man may be saved. As we will say throughout this Lenten season: "Behold the man!"

In Jesus the man, we find the eternal God and man who does not live on bread alone. In Jesus the man, we find the Second Adam, the fulfillment of the promise made to the First Adam, and the only hope of the world. Amen.