

First Sunday in Lent February 14, 2016

LUTHERAN

## LIVING THE ^ LECTIONARY

A weekly study of the Scriptures for the coming Sunday.  
An opportunity to make the rhythms of the readings  
become a part of the rhythms of your life.

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February 11, 2016 (Thursdays at 10:00 AM)

Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, OH

*(Also presented as a part of the bible study/worship service on Wednesdays, 5:30pm, at the home of Robert Russo, a Puritas Lutheran Church member. E-mail [puritaspastor@hotmail.com](mailto:puritaspastor@hotmail.com) for details.)*



<http://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large-5/the-temptation-of-christ-on-the-mountain-duccio-di-buoninsegna.jpg>

### Hymn of the Day

Lutheran Service Book (LSB) 656/657 The Lutheran Hymnal (TLH) 262

“A mighty Fortress”

A commentary on this well known hymn found in 586 hymnals.

“Luther wrote this text sometime between 1527 and 1529 as a paraphrase of Psalm 46, though stanza four comes directly from Luther’s own persecution experience. The most commonly used English version is a translation by Frederick H. Hedge in 1853. The text is full of battle imagery; this, coupled with the historic use of the hymn in actual battles, can be troubling for Christians who struggle with making sense of warfare. There is a case for arguing that we need to see this hymn in light of the history in which it was written, when Christians were fighting to defend their faith. However, this text also needs to be understood in terms of a spiritual struggle against the powers of darkness. Whether we believe in very real, physical demons and tempters, or less concrete forces, we are in the midst of a very real war between good and evil. That sounds very dramatic and almost cliché, but it is important to remember. Luther reminds us that we can’t simply sit back and watch as horrible things unfold in our world, but that we must join the battle, knowing that God is on our side, and that we fight for a side that has, in a sense, already won.”

[http://www.hymnary.org/text/a\\_mighty\\_fortress\\_is\\_our\\_god\\_a\\_bulwark](http://www.hymnary.org/text/a_mighty_fortress_is_our_god_a_bulwark)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkOo72cULNk> An acapella version by Glad



An additional resource for lectionary based music is “Sing for Joy”.

<http://www.stolaf.edu/singforjoy/listen/2016-02-14>

Offered by St Olaf College, an ELCA institution in Minnesota. “The *Sing For Joy* radio program, produced by [St. Olaf College](#), has a simple mission: to explore the weekly themes of Christian worship by providing the best in sacred choral music and thoughtful commentary. The musical performances eloquently “do the talking,” while the concise remarks from host [Pastor Bruce Benson](#) illuminate the meaning of the texts.

A defining trait of *Sing For Joy* is basing each week's music on the scriptural lessons specified in the Revised Common Lectionary. This three-year cycle of readings has become the basis for worship in the services that a majority of the worshipping faithful in America attend.

Listeners from divergent backgrounds appreciate *Sing For Joy* and what it brings them for a multitude of reasons. Certainly, plenty of churchgoers feel that the program complements their weekly worship experience. And many church musicians express their appreciation for the insights and repertoire ideas the program provides. But *Sing For Joy* also appeals to listeners from faith traditions transcending the kind of Christian orientation one might expect.

For [nearly 60 years](#), that breadth of appeal has spoken to *Sing For Joy's* unique presentation of Scripture-based music and related commentary in an engaging, personable and consequential way.

English Standard Version (ESV)

The Holy Bible, English Standard Version Copyright © 2001 by  
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<http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/classic-banners.php?year=C&season=Lent> (A reminder that the Vanderbilt lectionary site offers the RCL readings in a variety of formats with accompanying art work – worth a visit)

**Ash Wednesday was this past Wednesday and officially marks the beginning of Lent. The readings for that day were Joel 2:12-19, Psalm 51: 1-13 (14-19), 2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10 and Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21.**

**Deuteronomy 26:1-11**(*next week: Jeremiah 26:8-15, RCL; Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18*)

### **Offerings of Firstfruits and Tithes**

26 “When you come into the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance and have taken possession of it and live in it, <sup>2</sup> you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from your land that the LORD your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket, and you shall go to the place that the LORD your God will choose, to make his name to dwell there. <sup>3</sup> And you shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, ‘I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come into the land that the LORD swore to our fathers to give us.’ <sup>4</sup> Then the priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down before the altar of the LORD your God.

<sup>5</sup> “And you shall make response before the LORD your God, ‘A wandering Aramean was my father. And he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number, and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. <sup>6</sup> And the Egyptians treated us harshly and humiliated us and laid on us hard labor. <sup>7</sup> Then we cried to the LORD, the God of our fathers, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup> And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great deeds of terror,<sup>[a]</sup> with signs and wonders. <sup>9</sup> And he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup> And behold, now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground, which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And you shall set it

down before the LORD your God and worship before the LORD your God. <sup>11</sup> And you shall rejoice in all the good that the LORD your God has given to you and to your house, you, and the Levite, and the sojourner who is among you.

1. [Deuteronomy 26:8](#) Hebrew *with great terror*

We frequently move right over this reference, and often pronounce it as “Armenian”, but for an Old Testament reader it comes out “**An Aramean Destroyed My Father**”  
**“Commentaries on the Haggadah contrast the evil of Laban with Pharaoh and see Laban as a symbol for political, sociological, and psychological evil.**

By [Jeffrey Spitzer](#)

One of the most difficult texts in the Haggadah is "arami oved avi." This verse from [Deuteronomy 26:5](#), translated as "my father was a wandering Aramean," is part of the formula that was recited when the first fruit offerings were brought to the Temple in ancient times. The Haggadah includes the classic interpretation of the verse, reading it as "an Aramean destroyed my father." Who is the Aramean mentioned in this ritual formula? In this article, the author looks at this verse, which is at the center of the Haggadah, alongside the verse's rabbinic interpretation—which differs dramatically from the Torah text—and the numerous commentaries surrounding it that have arisen over the centuries.

"They pour him a second cup, and here the child asks the parent [about what makes this night different]—and according to the child's understanding, the parent teaches, beginning with shame and concluding with praise, interpreting from *arami oved avi* ('My father was a wandering Aramean') until he finishes the entire passage" ([Mishnah Pesachim 10:4](#))....

**Shame to Praise**

In Temple times, people would recite this passage from Deuteronomy when they brought their first fruits on Shavuot. The Mishnah describes its use in the seder as part of the teaching that proceeds from shame to praise. The shame is the desperation brought on by hunger; the root oved is the same as the root of the word in the second paragraph of the shema "[if you stray from God,] the land will stop producing its fruit and you will quickly perish (v'avad'tem) off of the good land" ([Deuteronomy 11:17](#)).

"My ancestors were starving Arameans." The person bringing the first fruits to the Temple in Jerusalem remembers the shame of the famine that led his ancestor Jacob and the Jewish people into slavery in Egypt and praises God for the redemption from Egypt and the restoration to the Land of Israel with its abundant harvest. The person at the seder recalls this hunger with his invitation, "Let all who are in need, come and eat." And throughout Passover, we remind ourselves of our blessings by eating lehem oni, the bread of poverty".

—*Rabbi Roy Tanenbaum, Congregation Beth Tzedec, Toronto*

<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/an-aramean-destroyed-my-father/#>

**Psalm 91:1-13, RCL; 91:1-2, 9-16 (Psalm 4, RCL; Psalm 27)**

**My Refuge and My Fortress**

91 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High  
will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.

<sup>2</sup> I will say<sup>[a]</sup> to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress,  
my God, in whom I trust.”

<sup>3</sup> For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler  
and from the deadly pestilence.

<sup>4</sup> He will cover you with his opinions,  
and under his wings you will find refuge;  
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

<sup>5</sup> You will not fear the terror of the night,  
nor the arrow that flies by day,

<sup>6</sup> nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,  
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

<sup>7</sup> A thousand may fall at your side,  
ten thousand at your right hand,  
but it will not come near you.

<sup>8</sup> You will only look with your eyes  
and see the recompense of the wicked.

<sup>9</sup> Because you have made the LORD your dwelling place—  
the Most High, who is my refuge<sup>[b]</sup>—

<sup>10</sup> no evil shall be allowed to befall you,  
no plague come near your tent.

<sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you  
to guard you in all your ways.

<sup>12</sup> On their hands they will bear you up,  
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

<sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the adder;  
the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot.

<sup>14</sup> *“Because he holds fast to me in love, I will deliver him;  
I will protect him, because he knows my name.*

<sup>15</sup> *When he calls to me, I will answer him;  
I will be with him in trouble;*

*I will rescue him and honor him.*

<sup>16</sup> *With long life I will satisfy him  
and show him my salvation.”*

1. [Psalm 91:2](#) Septuagint *He will say*

2. [Psalm 91:9](#) Or For you, O Lord, are my refuge! You have made the Most High your dwelling place

## **Romans 10:8b-13 (Philippians 3:17- 4:1)**

### **The Message of Salvation to All**

*Romans 10:5-8 is included to see how leaving out verse 8a would be explained.*

<sup>5</sup> For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them. <sup>6</sup> But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down) <sup>7</sup> “or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup> But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup> because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

“This week’s passage is the third in a series of three arguments Paul makes, beginning in 9:30, in an effort to distinguish between the “works of the law” that Israel pursued (and thereby failed to receive the gift of righteousness in Christ) and the “faith” by which the Gentiles are embraced as part of the family of God.

One of the most important developments in Paul scholarship over the past thirty-five years comes into play here. It is the recognition that at the heart of Paul’s faith versus works distinction is not two different ways in which humans might respond to God.

Instead, “works” specifically has to do with doing the works of Torah -- actions that demarcate Israel as God’s faithful people. “Faith” has to do first and foremost with the faithfulness of Jesus in his death, and then the response of trusting in Jesus as God’s anointed Lord.

For Paul, faith is known by obedience (Romans 1:5; 16:26) and even work (1 Thessalonians 1:3)! When he contrasts faith and works, his goal is not to get people to stop doing things, but to recognize that God has acted in and through Christ and to act accordingly.

Romans 10:5 begins with the word “for.” Paul is giving the reason for what he said immediately prior. Negatively, he had said that Israelites sought to establish their own righteousness rather than being subject to God’s (10:3). Positively, he had said that the law’s goal was Christ, who is the source of this divine righteousness for all who believe (10:4).

The startling claim that Paul makes repeatedly through this section of the letter is that the purpose of the law is not to tell people what to do. Instead, its purpose to refer people to the Christ who was to come and has now arrived...”

[J.R. Daniel Kirk](#) Assistant Professor of New Testament, **Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California** Fuller Theological Seminary, embracing the School of Theology, School of Psychology, and School of Intercultural Studies, is an evangelical, multidenominational, international, and multiethnic community dedicated to the equipping of men and women for the manifold ministries of Christ and his Church. Under the authority of Scripture we seek to fulfill our commitment to ministry through graduate education, professional development, and spiritual formation. In all of our activities, including instruction, nurture, worship, service, research, and publication, Fuller Theological Seminary strives for excellence in the service of Jesus Christ, under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of the Father.

## “The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 4th Chapter”

### “Glory to You, O Lord”

**Luke 4:1-13** (*Luke 13:31-35, RCL; or Luke 9:28-36, [37-43a]*)

4 And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness <sup>2</sup> for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered him,

“It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’”

<sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup> and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him,

“It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’”

<sup>9</sup> And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here,

<sup>10</sup> for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’  
<sup>11</sup> and

“‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’”

<sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered him,

“It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

<sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.

“Accounts of the Temptation in the Wilderness appear in all three Synoptic Gospels. The story in the Gospel of Mark is notoriously brief, consisting of only two verses (1:12-13). The accounts in Matthew and Luke are much longer in comparison, and they are very much alike (Matthew 4:1-11//Luke 4:1-13). On the basis of the two source theory, they are considered to have come from the document known as Q.\* In terms of wording, they are much alike, but they differ remarkably in their sequence of the second and third temptations.

Matthew has the sequence of events at the Temple as the second of the three, and the third for him is the viewing of the kingdoms of the world upon a high mountain. In Luke the viewing of the kingdoms of the world is the second scene, and the Temple event is the third. Whether Matthew and Luke had two different versions of Q, each with its own sequence, or whether one of the evangelists altered the sequence from a common version, cannot be known. If the latter is the case, interpreters differ on which gospel writer is more likely to have retained the sequence of Q more closely.

Since an account of the temptation is the Gospel for the Day on the First Sunday in Lent for each of the three years in the lectionary, the preacher might do well to say to the congregation gathered, that with the coming of Lent, we make a dramatic shift in the church year. Lent is a time to get back to basics of the faith. In the ancient church it was a time for instructing new converts about the faith, followed by baptism on Easter. Our Gospel text is about who Christ is, and it also gets into some things concerning us directly.....

Since the English word "temptation" has so many connotations, often referring to human appetites for things that bring pleasure, it is helpful to think of the temptation of Jesus as "the *testing* of God's Son." The Greek word in question is *peirazomenos*, which has to do with testing. That means that the wording of 4:2 could read: "[Jesus] was tested by the devil..." [https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary\\_id=508](https://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?commentary_id=508)

[Arland J. Hultgren](#) Professor Emeritus of New Testament, **Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN** \* For a discussion of the “Q source as a guide for the writing of Matthew and Luke read the article from Wikipedia - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Q\\_source](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Q_source)

2013-02-12 — Here at Agnus Day Central we believe that nothing says “I’m mortifying the flesh” like a triglyceride count of 480.



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