

The First Sunday of Lent (Year C)

<i>First Reading</i>	Deuteronomy 26:4-10
<i>Response</i>	Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.
<i>Psalms</i>	Psalms 91:1-2, 10-11, 12-13, 14-15
<i>Second Reading</i>	Romans 10:8-13
<i>Gospel Acclamation</i>	One does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.
<i>Gospel</i>	Luke 4:1-13

The 1st Sunday of Lent for Year C in the Gospel of Luke begins in a similar fashion to the First Sunday of Lent for Years A and B, namely with the account of the temptations of Jesus in the desert. Jesus' temptations are recorded in Matthew, Mark and Luke, and because it's year C we're going to look at Luke's version of the temptations in Luke 4:1-13. This is what this familiar gospel says:

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit for forty days in the wilderness, tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing in those days; and when they were ended, he was hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone.'" And the devil took him up, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, 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. If you, then, will worship me, it shall all be yours." And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.'" 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; for it is written..."

Notice, Satan gets into the game. Jesus has quoted scripture twice to him in rebuttal; now Satan quotes the book of Psalms, Psalm 91.

"for it is written, 'He will give his angels charge of you, to guard you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a

stone.” And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not tempt the Lord your God.’” And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time.¹

Ok, let’s stop there. There are lots of important questions raised by this famous, well-known gospel passage; several of them leap out at us immediately.

First (number 1), why does Jesus go into the desert for forty days? What’s the significance of the forty days? What would it have meant in a 1st century Jewish setting?

Number 2, why does the devil encounter Jesus in the desert and tempt him with these three temptations? You’ll notice, Luke’s account is interesting at the end there, it says “when the devil had ended every temptation”. Well, there’s a sense, a kind of implication there, that there’s a completeness to what the devil has done. But I can name a few temptations that the devil did not give to Jesus here. Obviously this doesn’t mean every possible temptation, but these three particular temptations had a comprehensive dimension to them. Why these three temptations? What’s the significance of the bread into stone, and showing him the kingdoms of the world, and then asking him or inviting him to jump off the pinnacle of the temple and let the angels catch him? What’s the nature of these temptations? Why these three?

And then, third and finally (actually, two more things) – third, notice the role that scripture plays. This is actually quite important. Whenever the devil puts a temptation before Jesus he always responds not by debating with the devil or discussing with him, he just responds simply by quoting the Bible; by quoting the Jewish scriptures. So why does Jesus quote the scriptures this way and also, why does the devil quote scripture in response to Jesus? Because you’ll notice, out of all the quotations, the devil’s is the longest; it gets the most attention. Luke (kind of) draws our attention to the devil’s quotation of Psalm 91 in rebuttal of Jesus.

And then, fourth and finally (but by no means least significantly), why does the Church pick this passage to be given to the faithful every year on the 1st Sunday of Lent? Why do we always begin the Sundays of Lent with the account of Jesus’

¹ Unless otherwise indicated, all Bible citations/quotations herein are from *The Holy Bible: Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA, 1994.

temptation in the wilderness? What's the connection between this event and the mysteries of Lent? So we'll walk through each one of those together and some of these answers overlap with one another.

The first point is one I've made before in previous videos but still bears repeating. Namely that, in the Old Testament, the number "40" has a symbolic value, for a period of purification, of testing, and also of preparation. So for example, think here of the 1st account of forty days and forty nights, it's the account of Noah's flood in Genesis 7-8. In those chapters the forty days and forty nights of rain serve both to purify the world of sin (cleanses the world of sin), they also put the faith of Noah to the test, as he has to trust God that he's not going to be swallowed up in the waters of the flood, but that he'll come out on the other side of it alive. It's also a preparation, it's a beginning for a new creation that's going to follow the flood. The same thing's true of the next account of the number 40, it's in the story of the Exodus from Egypt. This is definitely in the background because if you recall in the Old Testament (Book of Exodus), Israel gets out of Egypt and then goes out into the desert for 40 years. And in this case, the time of "40" is a purification of sin; so the Israelites are being purified of the sins of idolatry that they fell into when they were in Egypt. It's also a period of testing because they're being put to the test by the Lord. Are they going to trust God even when they're in the desert, even when they're hungry, even when they're thirsty, even when they're coming up against enemies, even when there are snakes and serpents that are attacking; are they going to trust the Lord? Are they going to pass the test? Or, are they going to fall into sin, like idolatry with the golden calf? It's also a time of preparation; so the forty years prepare the Israelites to enter into the promised land. So the forty years of testing and purification in the desert are a preparation. God did not bring Israel out of Egypt in order to stick them in the desert. The desert is a penultimate stage on their journey to the ultimate stage, which is the promised land of Canaan. That penultimate stage is meant to prepare them to enter into the Promised Land of Canaan and of Jerusalem.

In the same way, Jesus here in the Gospel of Luke is (in a sense) embodying the people of Israel in himself. He's inaugurating a new exodus by recapitulating what happened in the first exodus. Like Israel before, he's going to go into the desert for forty days and forty nights. Now, Jesus himself doesn't have to be purified of sin, but he has become man, and so on behalf of humanity (just like he was baptized in chapter 3 of Luke with John's baptism of repentance for sins, not because he himself was a sinner, but to act as our head, who's going to go down into the waters of

baptism on our behalf) so too now he goes into the desert (on our behalf) to do battle with the devil, who led human beings to sin in the beginning of Genesis, and also to be tested (to be put to the test) by the temptations of the devil, and then finally as a preparation for his public ministry, which is going to begin right after the temptations are ended. As soon as the temptations are over he's going into Nazareth (in Luke 4) and he's going to start preaching and teaching. But he doesn't start preaching and teaching until he's passed the test, until he has proven his obedience to the Father in his ability to conquer the devil in the midst of these temptations.

So that's what's going on in the account of the temptations in the wilderness. Another question I had asked was, "Why these three temptations?" And in this case, I think the answer (I've actually discussed this in previous videos, other videos on the Gospel of Matthew when it deals with temptations, but I think it's worth reiterating here), because it's especially clear in Luke that the three temptations of Jesus in chapter 4 of Luke's gospel parallel the three reasons for the fall of Adam and Eve in the book of Genesis.

Students will ask me all the time, "Dr. Pitre, why do Adam and Eve fall in the book of Genesis? It says they're created "good", they're not created in sin; they're created in a state of original holiness and righteousness, why would they fall? Was Eve just stupid? What's the reason? It seems irrational for Adam and Eve... Were they fools? Why would they act that way when they were created good? And the answer to the question is: They're not fools; they're not stupid; they are free. They're free, and Genesis actually tells you that there were three reasons for the fall. It says in the book of Genesis 3 that when Eve saw that the tree was (number 1) "good for food," (number 2) "a delight to the eyes," and then (number 3) "that it was desirable to make one wise, she took of the fruit, ate, and gave some to her husband who was with her and he ate." I think I quoted that pretty much verbatim, just so you're clear there. If you want to look it up in the Old Testament, it's in Genesis 3:6.

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband [who was with her, the Hebrew is explicit there], and he ate.

So three reasons: good for food, delight to the eyes, desirable to make one wise. Now in the New Testament, that triple reason for the fall gets developed into a tra-

dition that is reflected in the 1st letter of John, where he speaks about the triple lust, these three disordered desires that human beings have: the lust of the flesh (number 1), the lust of the eyes (number 2), and the pride of life (number 3).

In Christian tradition, this has been called the Threefold Concupiscent. It's basically the universal, human, experience of a disordered desire for pleasure (the pleasure of the flesh, that's the lust of the flesh), whether it be sexual pleasure or the pleasure of food and drink. Number 2, a disordered desire for possessions, that's the lust of the eyes. We see something that doesn't belong to us and we want to possess it, like Eve saw the fruit and wanted to possess it, even though it didn't belong to her. And the third one is pride or vanity. It's a disordered love of self to the exclusion of the love of God, and that's what happens to Adam and Eve. It was desirable to make one wise like God. In other words, they want the wisdom of God, they want to be wise like God, by breaking God's commandment (which is irrational, but it's what drives them). So they choose three things that are actually good. The fruit is good, food's good; possessions are good, God gives Adam and Eve the whole word; and even the desire to be like God is a good thing, to be wise is a good thing. But in this case, they want good things but in a bad way. They think that the only way to acquire the good is by breaking the commandments. And so they break them, and they fall, and they basically transmit a fallen human nature to all humanity, so that every single one of us has this disordered desire for pleasure, possessions and pride (the triple concupiscence).

When Jesus goes into the desert in Luke's gospel, the order of the temptations is actually different in Luke than in the Gospel of Matthew. If you look at the two, the temptations are the same, but the ordering is different. And I think that the reason — we don't exactly know which order they happened in but you can make a strong case — is that in Luke's account, he's highlighting the order that corresponds to the order of Adam's fall, of Adam's three temptations, because in Luke's account, the first temptation is to turn the stones into bread — that's the lust of the flesh; the desire for pleasure. Do you think Jesus (in his human nature) was actually hungry after 40 days of fasting? Yes. Try fasting for four days in the air conditioning. Then do 40 days of fasting in the desert, in the wilderness. He would be starving, literally, for food. And yet, he rejects the temptation to turn the stones into bread (which he has the power to do, by the way). So it's a real temptation, it's a real test. That's the lust of the flesh.

The lust of the eyes, what does Satan do? He shows Jesus in a vision all the kingdoms of the world in their glory. So he is showing him the beauty and the splendor of all the kingdoms and Satan says, “Look, they’re all mine, because basically, they were given to me.” Now he doesn’t say who gave them to him, but the obvious answer is Adam, because Adam was created to have dominion over the whole earth in Genesis 1. He’s the king of the world. Eve’s the queen of the world. But they forfeit their kingship and they forfeit their queenship by sinning. They put themselves, they subjugate themselves, to Satan. So then Satan now becomes what Jesus calls him in the gospel of John: the prince of this world. He has a legitimate authority over the human kings of the world. They belong to him. But what Satan’s saying here is “Look, see all this glory and power and splendor? It’s all yours. All you have to do is take a knee. Genuflect to me, just kneel before me, and they will all be yours.” So he tempts Jesus with the desire to possess the kingdoms of the world, which by the way, are rightfully his, because he is the true king. I would say too (I mean, this is speculative, but it’s worth pointing out), there’s a sense in which you can make the case that this is a real test for Jesus, because what he’s done is come into the world to win back those kingdoms from Satan. It’s not just the glory and splendor; it’s all the human beings in those kingdoms who are under his power. And Satan’s saying “Look, I’ll give them all to you, but no cross. Just, real easy, just one genuflection and it’s all yours.” And what does Jesus say? “Worship the Lord, your God, alone.”

And then finally, the third test, is a test of (I think) pride. It correlates to Adam’s pride, because Satan says, “Look, if you’re the son of God then prove it to everyone. Show everyone your power. Jump off the pinnacle of the temple (which would be the highest place in Jerusalem) where everyone can see (Get it?). And then they’ll know that you are in fact the son of God, when the angels bear you up, catch you so that you don’t dash your foot against the stone.” So he quotes Psalm 91 which is about the guardian angels. And Jesus says, “You shall not tempt the Lord your God” (that’s the RSV) – literally it’s “put the lord your God to the test”, because in Greek the word for temptation and test is the same word. To “test” someone or to “tempt” someone, one has a positive another has a negative connotation, but they’re the same basic word. Think about it, because you can give someone a test because you want them to succeed, but you can also test someone because you want them to fail. The difference between God testing us is that he tests us because he wants us to succeed and grow in virtue. The devil tempts us because he wants us to fall into sin. Both of them (though) are difficulties, they’re tri-

als, and so the question is how do we respond to the test, and how the person giving the test...what is their intention?

There are some professors (I can speak as a professor) who give tests that are designed to make you fail and then there are others who give tests that are designed to help you acquire the virtue of having mastered the material. They're meant to make sure that you have mastered what you need to master. So there's a difference there between testing and tempting. Anyway, you have to look in the context whenever it occurs.

When Jesus says "You shall not tempt the lord your God", what he's saying there is "You shall not put the lord your God to the test", which is what he'd be doing (in other words) if he's jumping off the pinnacle of the temple to show to everyone, to prove to everyone that he is the son of God, when that's not God's will. The way the Father will prove to everyone that Jesus is the son is through "being lifted up at the cross", not by performing this magic trick or this supernatural act so that everyone can see his power and glory. The power and glory of Jesus is going to be on Calvary, not at the pinnacle of the Temple.

Is this a real test of Jesus? Is it a real temptation? I think so, in the sense that in his human nature, Jesus would have a natural desire to reveal his true identity to everyone, to have everyone believe in him as son of God, which is what many people would do if they were to see him suspended and levitating in the air above the Temple Mount. "Clearly this guy is the son of God or clearly this man has powers from God", which is not what they're going to say when he's hanging on Calvary. They're going to say, "If you're the son of God, come down from the cross", effectively replicating Satan's temptation here. "If you're the son, then prove it. Prove it."

Okay, so what's going on then? In each of these cases, what Jesus is doing is recapitulating the temptation of Adam in the desert and overcoming it. So whereas Adam fell to the lust of the flesh, Jesus conquers it. Whereas Adam fell to the lust of the eyes, Jesus conquers it. Where Adam fell into pride, Jesus has humility and follows the will of his Father. So he is a new Adam, undoing the effects of the fall. And if you have any doubts about that, just remember that Luke 4:1, the beginning of the temptation, comes right after Luke 3:38, which is the end of Luke's genealogy. And in Luke's genealogy he doesn't do like Matthew, where Matthew begins with Abraham and David and then goes down to Joseph. Luke's genealogy begins with Joseph and goes backwards all the way to Adam. So the last word before the

temptation narrative in Luke's gospel is, "the son of Adam, the son of God." So he's just told you about Adam and now Jesus goes into the desert and has these three temptations which recapitulate the temptations of Adam in the desert to show that he is now overcoming them. So that's what's going on in the temptation in the desert which is why we use it for Lent, because effectively, what's taking place then, in the Season of Lent, is that we are now going to recapitulate the temptations of Jesus in ourselves. Just as he spent forty days and forty nights in the desert, so too we enter into the season of Lent, which is forty days and forty nights, and during this time we're called to do three things: pray (more intensely), fast (more intensely), and give alms (more intensely). That's why the reading for Ash Wednesday is from Matthew 6. When you pray, don't tell anybody about it; when you fast (not if you fast), don't tell everyone about it (do it in secret); and then when you give alms, do it in secret. Each of those three directives that Jesus gives in the Sermon on the Mount (and in the reading for Ash Wednesday) are tied to the three temptations.

So how do I overcome the lusts of the flesh? How do I battle my disorder-desire for the pleasure of the flesh? Well, by putting that desire to death, by mortifying it voluntarily through fasting. It's really important. Jesus assumes his disciples will fast and the Church calls us not just to abstinence during Fridays of Lent, but she reads the words of Jesus calling us to fast, to abstain from food. We're only required to do it on Good Friday, that's a binding day of fasting, but, the Church's tradition for time immemorial has been that Lent is a season of fasting. So whatever fasting you do (or don't do) during the regular part of the year, during Lent that needs to be intensified; there needs to be an intentional commitment to fasting. Not because food is bad, but because it's good; because we're too attached to it. And so in order to build up the virtue of being detached from the lust of the flesh, we fast.

The same thing with the lust of the eyes. Do you have a problem with a disordered desire for possessions? Well then give them away. Do acts of charity and almsgiving during Lent — not just during Christmas but during Lent — to help build up the virtue of detachment from possessions. And then finally, prayer helps us to build up the virtue of humility. Are you prideful? Do you have a disordered self-love? (If you're human, say yes). Okay, well, then pray. Intensify your prayer, because in prayer we grow in humility, especially if you try doing it for any length of time, you will learn very quickly that you have no idea what you're doing and that as competent as you may be at everything else in life, whether it's business or finances or whatever skills you might have, when it comes to prayer, you're like a

little kid just flailing in the shallow end of the pool. So we need to grow in our strength, the virtue of humility, recognizing that prayer is a gift and growing in prayer is a gift, and we need God to help us with that. So those are the spiritual disciplines, traditionally, for lent: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. So this Lent, don't just make it about losing a few pounds or abstaining from chocolate. Jesus did not come into the world so that we can abstain from chocolate for forty days a year. He came into the world to help us, to show us that this triple concupiscence can be overcome, he conquered it, and then to give us the grace and strength to do the same, and to give us practical disciplines for doing that: prayer, fasting and almsgiving. And if you live a religious life, if you live a consecrated life, you live that in a radical way through three vows: poverty, chastity and obedience.

With that in mind, I want to hit (really quickly) two points: first, I will not follow my usual tactic of reading the first Old Testament reading. Basically, it's from the book of Deuteronomy 26:4-10 and it's essentially a summary of the story of salvation. It begins with Abraham and his call out of the land of Chaldea and how he wandered about, ended up in Egypt, and then how the Israelites grew (as a people) in Egypt until they were delivered by God from slavery and brought to the Promised Land at the time of the exodus. The reason we read this first reading for Lent (of Deuteronomy 26:4-10) is not because it had anything to do directly with the gospel. One of the interesting things about Lent that's important to remember is that during Lent, the gospel and the Old Testament reading are (kind of) on two independent tracks. Normally, during ordinary time, the Old Testament is (kind of) typological and tends to point forward to the gospel as a means of fulfillment, but during Lent that actually changes, and what the Church does is the Lenten readings for Sundays (this first reading on Sundays during Lent) is from the Old Testament telling the history of salvation leading up to Christ. It's not meant to correlate with the gospel *per se*.

In this case, what the Church is doing is starting with the call of Abraham, and it's going to walk through salvation history. Keep your eyes on the first readings for the Sundays in Lent and you'll see they get closer and closer to the New Testament. This goes back to the ancient tradition of teaching catechumens about the Old Testament history before you gave them the sacraments at Easter, so that they would understand what the sacraments were fulfillments of, and so the story of the exodus is there. Now of course, there is one link with the New Testament there, because the exodus was forty years in the desert and Jesus' forty days in the desert. So the first reading does help us realize that in Lent we're moving into a season of

transition, purification, preparation and testing. If you don't think you're being put to the test during Lent, just think about your last Lent. What penances did you take up at the beginning and did you fail? Did you fail the test, or were you faithful to them throughout the Lenten season?

I'd like to focus instead on the Responsorial Psalm for today, because in this case it's something really interesting. The Church picks, for the Responsorial Psalm, the same psalm that Satan quotes in his response to Jesus. It's Psalm 91. Now I'm going to read the first 13 verses of the psalm. They're not all used in the response, but I want you to get the full context and then you'll see why the Church uses this psalm and also why Satan quotes the psalm...Okay, I'll just tell you before we read it that way you know. Psalm 91 is chosen here, not just because it's the psalm that Satan quotes, but Satan quotes this psalm (arguably) because in ancient Jewish tradition Psalm 91 was a psalm of exorcism. Actually, in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered in the 1940s, one of the scrolls says that David wrote four Psalms to perform over the possessed. What would happen, is ancient Jewish exorcists would recite psalms over a person who was possessed by a demon in order to drive the demon out; and the premiere psalm of exorcism was Psalm 91. Another example: in the Jerusalem Talmud it's very clear about this. It actually refers to Psalm 91 as "the psalm of the afflicted", or literally, "the psalm of demoniacs". This is the psalm that you would chant over someone possessed by a demon. That's in the Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Eruvin. And what's interesting about that passage is that in the Talmud (which is like a collection of Jewish traditions) it says that you can't do two things on the Sabbath: you don't recite the scriptures used to heal someone and you don't recite the scripture over the possessed. So you're not supposed to heal people on the Sabbath or cast out demons.

In the gospels, what is Jesus doing all the time? He's going to the synagogues and he's healing on the Sabbath and he's exorcising people, but he doesn't have to pronounce the psalm to exorcise. He just says "be silent, and come out" and that's why they're amazed by him, that he has the power of his own word to cast out demons. So why does Satan quote Psalm 91? Well on one level you could say, "because he knows that one." He's heard it before. But there's a little something more deep going on here. So just listen, with all that in mind, to the Responsorial Psalm 91. You'll recognize it if you've ever heard the contemporary psalm "On Eagle's Wings", because it's actually based on this psalm (just kind of interesting).

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,
who abides in the shadow of the Almighty,
will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress;
my God, in whom I trust."
For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler
and from the deadly pestilence;
he will cover you with his pinions,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.
You will not fear the terror of the night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

And if you pause there, the Greek translation of that is “the noonday devil” or “the demon of noonday”, and that’s how the tradition has always held this, that the middle of the day, the heat of the day, is a time of temptation, especially the temptation to sloth and the temptation to lust. So “the noonday devil” is what that’s called. Now if you pick up in verse 9, it says:

Because you have made the LORD your refuge,
the Most High your habitation,
no evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent.
For he will give his angels charge of you
to guard you in all your ways.
On their hands they will bear you up,
lest you dash your foot against a stone.

Notice, those are the verses that Satan quotes to Jesus. “Jump off the temple because the angels will guard you.” And this is the primary verse for the idea of guardian angels. But what’s fascinating here is what Satan leaves out, he skips the next verse from the psalm which says this:

You will tread on the lion and the adder,
the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

And some translations will have there “the dragon”. Either one is a translation of this ancient, serpent-like beast, this image that should make you think of Genesis 3, of the serpent whose head will be crushed by the seed of the woman who will eventually come, which the Jews interpreted as the Messiah. So it’s fascinating; a good principle here, Satan always interprets the Bible by quoting verses out of context. So if you like to take verses out of context then your favorite bible interpreter is the devil because he’s basically proof-texting, he’s wrenching it out of its original meaning. But for our cases, I think it’s really powerful and important for us to see here that (effectively) Satan is trying to rebuff Jesus by misquoting the psalm of exorcism, and of course Jesus responds to him by quoting the Torah of God, by quoting the law of God, by using scripture as his weapon.

In closing then, what do we take from this? What’s the upshot of this? I want to make two points: first, as I’ve said before, during Lent, the reason we’re reading this text is because Lent is about uniting ourselves to the mystery of Jesus in the desert. We are living out that mystery in our own lives during the forty days of Lent. Second, and I think fascinating (I just realized this, learned this recently), in the living tradition of the Church it is so interesting that Psalm 91 continues to play a very important part in our lives. In the Liturgy of the Hours, the psalm for evening prayer on Sundays (and after solemnities), is Psalm 91. So before you go to bed at night, if you pray the Liturgy of the Hours on Sundays, you’re going to recite the words of Psalm 91. Now I’m not going to read the whole psalm because we don’t have enough time, but real quick, the antiphon for that night is this:

Night holds no terrors for me sleeping under God's wings.

And the introductory verse is:

I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions.

That is from Luke 10. And then the final prayer after evening prayer is this (or this is an alternate). We say:

Lord, we beg you to visit this house and banish from it all the deadly power of the enemy. May your holy angels dwell here to keep us in peace.

And then the other prayer says:

May we now rest in your peace, safe from all that can harm us[.]

So what has the Church done? It's taken the primary psalm of exorcism from the Jewish tradition, and it's made it the standard night prayer. That if you pray the divine office (the Liturgy of the Hours), you're going to say this every Sunday and after every solemnity. It's a prayer for spiritual protection from demonic activity. It's a prayer of spiritual protection, that the last thing we say before we go to sleep at night is to ask for the Lord's angels to watch over us, pray for us and protect us, using Psalm 91. So it's a powerful reminder to us that to this day, scripture is still our most powerful weapon in the spiritual warfare that is the Christian life.