

■ No. 126 An Invitation to Live by the Word 《Commentary and Meditation》

● First Reading: Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7

In this passage, we learn:① that human beings were created by God;② that they were given both an “environment” and “freedom”;③ and the origin of original sin entering humanity. “Man (Adam)” was formed from the dust of the ground. As a creature belonging to God, he became a living being when God “breathed into him.” Body and soul were united, and thus he became “a living person.” The “Garden of Eden” symbolizes joy and abundance, and man was “placed there” to receive both a mission and a dwelling place.

At the center of life stands the “Tree of Life” (Revelation 22:2), symbolizing living in dependence upon God. Because genuine love requires freedom of choice, God also placed the “Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.” Humanity’s plan of salvation had already been “foreknown before the foundation of the world” (1 Peter 1:20).

The “crafty serpent,” seeking to separate humanity from God, first spoke to Eve. Since Adam had directly received God’s command (Gen. 2:16-17), the serpent attacked the one who was easier to approach in terms of responsibility. Adam, who bore responsibility for keeping God’s word, did not reject Eve’s action (Gen. 3:6).① He placed Eve above God. ② He wanted to judge for himself.③ He failed to do what he ought to have done, and thus sinned (James 4:17). As the serpent had said, when they ate the fruit, their eyes were “opened.” In their once-innocent hearts, shame was born. Realizing they were “naked,” they attempted to hide their sin by covering their waists.

God created the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil to grant freedom of choice so that humanity might decide whether to make themselves their own master or entrust themselves to God. Without this tree, they would not have sinned; yet without freedom of choice, obedience would have become compulsion. God desired not coercion but love, for “God is love” (1 John 4:8), and that love continues to live even now.

[A Word from the Author] I am grateful to have touched the depth of God’s love and will.

● Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

Through the disobedience of Adam, the representative of humanity, mankind entered into a “state inclined toward sin.” “Sin entered the world,” and through it “death entered,” and death “spread to all people.” Thus all humanity was placed “under the dominion of sin.”

The Law was given to make sin conscious, for “where there is no law, sin is not recognized as sin.” Even over those who did not commit a sin like Adam’s transgression against God’s will, death reigned because of original sin.

“All have sinned” means that “there is no righteous person, not even one” (Romans 3:10), a quotation from Psalm 53:4. Jesus, who was to come after Adam, is the “one who was to come,” and Adam prefigures Him. The saving “grace” that God gives unilaterally is the “gift” brought about through Jesus’ cross and resurrection. It is poured out abundantly upon many without distinction.

God’s judgment is strict: in judgment, even one sin results in a verdict of guilt. Yet when grace is at work, the verdict becomes acquittal.

Through Adam (the representative of the Old Covenant), “death reigned” in the world. Through Jesus (the representative of the New Covenant), the world lives and reigns. Adam’s “disobedience” made many sinners, but Jesus, who was obedient to God even unto death (Philippians 2:8), made many righteous through His obedience.

[A Word from the Author] Although individuals do not bear the sins of their ancestors or parents (Deuteronomy 24:16), Adam’s disobedience as the representative of humanity brought sin and death into the whole human race.

● Gospel Reading: Matthew 4:1-11

This passage clarifies how Jesus, before beginning His public ministry, chose to live as the “Son of God,” and it recounts His victory over temptation.

Although the devil tempts Him, Jesus experiences temptation only within the limits permitted by God (cf. Job; 1 Corinthians 10:13). Led by the Holy Spirit, He enters the wilderness a place of testing where faith is tried. During the “forty days” of trial (recalling Israel’s forty years in the Exodus), He fasted day and night, bringing His body to its limits and emptying Himself. When He was in His weakest state, temptation came.

“If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread,” the devil said, urging Him to display His power. But Jesus answered that human beings do not live by material things alone; communion with God is essential: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Next, the devil took Him to the holy city and set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, a place where one could most dramatically display oneself. “If you throw yourself down… the angels will support you” (Psalm 91:4). Jesus replied, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test” (Deuteronomy 6:16).

Finally, the devil took Him to a “high mountain,” symbolizing power and dominion, showed Him the splendor of the kingdoms, and offered temporary rule in exchange for worship: “All these I will give you, if you bow down and worship me.”

Jesus answered decisively: “Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only” (Deuteronomy 6:13). With this final word, the devil departed from Him, and “angels came and ministered to Him.”

[A Word from the Author] As I reflect on my daily walk, I sense that I have been skillfully guided through a minefield of temptations and protected by the Lord.

Translation: AI