

Come Follow Me
Elo viz production
Week 41
Isaiah 58-66

After Jesus was baptized and fasted in the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights He returned to Natzarath and went to the temple where the customer was to read out of the scriptures on the sabbath. Either Jesus volunteered or He was appointed to read that day. This was it! All that He had been preparing for up to this point in His mission, His ministry would begin with this big announcement. He stood and was handed the scriptures. He opened to the book of Isaiah and began to read out of what we know as Isaiah 61:

“18 The *“Spirit* of the Lord *is* upon me, because he hath **anointed** me to **preach** the **gospel** to the **poor**; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to **preach deliverance** to the **captives**, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at **liberty** them that are bruised,

19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4:18-19)

He then closed the book and sat down. Everyone's eyes in the congregation were on Him. Why did He stop? What about the rest of the passage? Once the clamor had subsided and He had all their attention He said: “This day is this scripture **fulfilled** in your ears.” (Luke 4:21)

The hall erupted in outrage. “Is this not Joseph's son?” they cried. Could this man be the Messiah they had been waiting for this man that we have all known since He was a child? The scripture says they were wrath with Him and Threw him out of the city and led Him out that they might kill Him. But He vanished from their sight.

What a magnificent event to start the Saviors earthly ministry. Do you think He might have been nervous? In our language, this was His ward, His people that He grew up with that He was to declare His divine mission to. He was the one that they had been waiting for. What if that was your ward, how would you have reacted?

Before we address the principle that we see here I'd like to just point something out quickly. There are many commentaries on the comma found in Isaiah 61 verse 2. Where Jesus stopped His reading. Most believe that it is because He was announcing the first coming and after the comma is the revelation concerning His second coming. Thus He stopped after that verse because that was all that He was instructed by God to reveal at that time. I don't want to focus on that too much, but I did want to plant that seed that you might find some time to study the significance of that comma in that chapter.

What I would like to focus on is the events that led up to this moment when Christ stood and revealed who He was and what He was there to do. What I also find extremely exciting is the principle of how Isaiah knew this was going to happen 700 years before Christ was even born. But that is a topic for another time.

When Jesus approached John the Baptist at the river Jordan to be baptized was really the first time that His identity was revealed in public. However most of the people thought that

John the Baptist was a lunatic and didn't think much of his declaration of "behold the lamb of God". Perhaps Jesus brushed off the pronouncement because it wasn't time yet. But some knew and that must have been encouraging to Him even though the circle was small.

After His baptism Jesus went into the wilderness for 40 days and 40 nights to fast. This was not some vacation He took to gather His thoughts. We know He was tempted by Satan, but let's look a little closer at this encounter. This is found in the first verses of Luke chapter 4:

"1 And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,"

This single verse teaches us a ton. First that Jesus had the Holy Ghost with Him and that It led Him into a situation that would be extremely hard for Him. Having the Holy Ghost with you will not make your life all joy and happiness. This trail for Jesus the Spirit led Him to be tempted for 40 straight days. But it was for a purpose. There will be moments when we will be prompted to do something and it won't turn out as we thought. And that is ok. This is part of our faith that even though God's thoughts are not our thoughts and His ways are not our ways, we can still trust that it's all part of His plan and that there is a purpose in it.

Remember that there is always a balance that has to take place in the universe. When something magnificent happens in our life there will always be a trial before or after that event. Or when something bad happens and we find that we are right in the middle of a situation not caused by our own doing, but a circumstance of fate. We can be sure that there will come a great blessing from enduring it well. So the principle revealed in the verse is that we must always follow any prompting from the Holy Ghost but it won't always be as we think it may be. So hold on and trust in God to teach you and change you.

"2 Being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, he afterward hungered.

3 And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."

I think any time we fast it's a temptation that we face not to eat. I couldn't imagine fasting 40 days. I think I would die after a few days. So it would be expected that at Jesus's hardest moment in that fast that the devil would come tempting Him. Other translations of verse 3 are rendered at "since you are the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread". One thing is for certain; Satan knew who Jesus was and why He was there.

"4 And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."

Here Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3. What I find amazing is that in this passage he is referring to it is speaking about the children of Israel who are suffering in the wilderness, listen closely to what it says one verse prior:

“2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to **humble** thee, *and* to **prove** thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

3 And he **humbled** thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with **manna**, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that **man** doth not live by **bread** only, but by every **word** that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

Is it just me, or do you find it incredible that what Israel was going through in the wilderness was a symbol or a representation of what would happen to Jesus when He was 40 days in the wilderness. Everything points to Christ. Jesus was not only quoting a scripture to Satan, He was saying, remember what you did to the children of Israel in the wilderness? Do you remember who delivered them? When we truly understand the temptations of the Devil, and we view them with the perspective of the spirit we see very quickly the empty promises that come with his selfish motives. Do you recall what Nephi said concerning this: 2 Nephi 2:27

“27 Wherefore, men are **free** according to the **flesh**; and **all** things are **given** them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to **choose liberty** and eternal **life**, through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be **miserable** like unto himself.”

When we see the adversary for who he really is and the outcome of his motives, we can quickly make the choice to say as Jesus did, “Get thee behind me Satan.”

As you recall in this account, it says that the Devil brought Jesus to a high mountain and to the pinnacle of the temple. Let me just point out that the Joseph Smith translation shows us that the “Spirit” brought Jesus to those places, not the devil.

But look at verse 13:

“13 And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.”

If we are faithful in every situation the adversary will leave, though it may only be for a season, but he will leave. It truly is the little battles that make the biggest difference. What I mean by that is: when you have down time during the day, what do you turn to? Do we whip out our phones and start scrolling through social media? Or do we turn to God in meditation or prayer, do we put on some talk or music that will bring the spirit or do we try to drown out our own thoughts and crank up the radio? These little battles define what path we are on and what the destination will be. Remember the adversary will usually come at our weakest moments. So hold fast to that rod, look constantly towards the light. Love God for His presents and not just because of His power. And if you do you will receive the joy and peace that only the master of our souls can give.

In the sacred name of Him who conquers all, even Jesus Christ, Amen.