

“Forty Days”

by Ray Winter

“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.”

Insufficient.

I want to know what transpired in those forty days in the desert,

Those forty days of fasting before Satan came asking for Messianic miracles.

The Word doesn't tell us the details of that trial,

That forty day denial of human instinct to

Feed the bubbling bile, and then deny the vile offer of a glorified lifestyle.

But I imagine . . .

Jesus spent days one, two, and three on His knees,

preparing His mind, body and soul for the role of Savior of the world.

And days four through seven He appeased His hunger

with the unleavened bread of life, starting with the appetizer of God's creation in Genesis,

chewed through the Levitical laws and finished by sinking his jaws into the Jewish exile

in the desert. “How ironic,” he thought.

Day eight he cleaned his plate by pondering on the place of the Pentateuch

In the post-high priest world that He was about to present.

But he was still hungry.

Days ten and eleven Jesus lay on His back and stared into heaven . . .

Twelve . . . Thirteen . . . Fourteen,

Fifteen and still no food from the earth, but He savored the solitude with the One who made it.

Sixteen, Seventeen. Eighteen. Nineteen.

The night is cold under a waning moon and the day blisters His thirsty tongue.

He prays, "The Spirit gives life, the flesh counts for nothing."

Days twenty-one through twenty-nine He refines His plan, dines on double-checking God's prophecies

That undoubtedly confirm that, yes, He is "The Son of Man."

By the way, it was on day 29 that he thought of BOTH turning water into wine and

The line, "I am the vine, you are the branches." He knew those were keepers.

Thirty. Thirty-one. Thirty-two.

Day thirty-three found him under a cedar tree he would see . . . again,

And He exalted it's creation with tears and prayer.

Thirty-four brought the mustard seed metaphor; He could all but taste it.

Thirty five was filled with future feasts of fish and loaves, grapes and yeast,

The final bread and wine as He dined for the last time,

and He took this soon to be last meal into His heart, and it tasted bitter and glorious.

Day thirty-six found him holding the fragrant thorny branches of the desert jujube tree,

And his appetite for God's will swelled powerfully in Him.

He knew that this spiritual supper,

This sacred solitude and holy Abba communion

with the refining midnight fires of self-denial . . . neared an end,

Knew that He was filled with the spiritual food of His Father,

Knew the world was starving for His lamb's blood sacrifice.

He knew He would need His strength for this task that awaited Him,

And after forty days,

Jesus was hungry.