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May 4th: Deuteronomy 5 & Luke 4:1-30

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The Ten Commandments revisited. The temptations in the wilderness and preaching in Nazareth.

Reflections upon the readings from the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>).

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Transcript

Deuteronomy chapter 5. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord

your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.

You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. Honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder, and you shall not commit adultery, and you shall not steal, and you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, and you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that is your neighbor's. These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice, and he added no more. And he wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.

And as soon as you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. And you said, Behold, the Lord our God has shown us his glory and greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire. This day we have seen God speak with man, and man still live.

Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us. If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die. For who is there of all flesh that has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire as we have, and has still lived? Go near and hear all that the Lord our God will say, and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you, and we will hear and do it.

And the Lord heard your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me, I have heard the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants for ever.

Go and say to them, Return to your tents, but you stand here by me, and I will tell you the whole commandment and the statutes and the rules that you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land that I am giving them to possess. You shall be careful therefore to do as the Lord your God has commanded you. You shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

You shall walk in all the way that the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may

live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land that you shall possess. Deuteronomy chapter 5 returns us to Exodus 20, reiterating the Ten Commandments or the Decalogue. This was given over 40 years ago at Sinai or Horeb, and now it is revisited as they are about to enter into possession of the land.

Moses speaks of the events of Sinai as occurring in the memory of most of his audience. This might seem strange to people who think that the whole generation of those who came out of Egypt died in the wilderness and this is a new generation. In some senses it is, but a significant number of the people that Moses is talking to were present as children or as teenagers.

They witnessed the events of Sinai and so this isn't something that their parents told them about. They saw it with their own eyes. Beyond those who were children at the time there would also be a great number of women who did not die out with the men who were destroyed from the first generation.

Beyond all of this Moses also speaks about the experience of Israel in the Exodus and the wilderness as if a living body of memory that is constantly being returned to and renewed. The Ten Commandments were at the core of the covenant document. These were the central principles that were expounded and unpacked in all of the rest of the material.

In the present context these Ten Commandments are the basis for all the laws that follow. It's the introduction to the main body of the book. The claim that there were ten commandments is something that we get from the text itself in Deuteronomy 4.13 And he declared to you his covenant which he commanded you to perform that is the ten commandments and he wrote them on two tablets of stone.

The structuring of the commandments in terms of the number ten divided into two tables is something that is common to most accounts of the law. The tablets of stone are the great symbol of the covenant document. God takes Israel to himself as he delivers them out of Egypt and brings them to Sinai where a covenant is made with them.

They are taken as his bride or according to a different metaphor as his firstborn son. And this document is not just a dry series of laws that will be enforced by judges in the life of Israel. It is the document that expresses God's relationship with his people and his people must meditate upon it and delight in it and live it out in all areas of their lives.

The laws as Moses recounts them here differ from those in Exodus chapter 20 in some slight ways. For instance the rationale for the Sabbath in the fourth commandment has changed from that given in Exodus chapter 20. In Exodus chapter 20 it focuses upon creation that God created in six days and rested on the seventh whereas here the emphasis lies elsewhere.

It's upon the Exodus. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. There are further details of this commandment that differ from those that we have in Exodus chapter 20.

For instance the purpose of the law is given in part that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. That was not found in Exodus chapter 20. Again therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

That is another statement that is not found in the earlier body of law. It is also a statement found in the fifth commandment for honouring father and mother. A commandment that also includes an additional element in the statement and that it may go well with you.

Beyond some other minor changes we see that the order of items in the last commandment have changed. In Exodus chapter 20 verse 17 we read you shall not covet your neighbour's house, you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's. Whereas here it says and you shall not covet your neighbour's wife and you shall not desire your neighbour's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's.

The change in order might seem minor but there is something significant about it in so much as the wife is removed from the house as it were. The wife stands apart from the household in a way that she doesn't in Exodus 20 and then the rest of the items of the household are listed. Looking through the first five commandments there are a number of things that we can observe.

First of all they seem to move from the most serious offences down so it begins with offences against God, having another God beside the Lord, then various other offences of worship, moving down through the Sabbath to honouring father and mother and then into various commandments concerning one's neighbour. The first five commandments can be contrasted with the later five commandments in that they have explanations or warnings or rationales or some other thing attached to them such as a promise. The final five commandments by contrast tend to be just straightforward imperatives.

In Deuteronomy's list of the ten commandments we also recognise that the Lord's name is found in each of the first five commandments but not in the ones after that. The first five commandments seem to deal with vertical offences, offences against those who are over us, God particularly but then also father and mother, and the next five commandments are commandments dealing with offences against our neighbour. There is a logic as we follow through them as well.

First of all we notice that there are two positive commandments at the centre. There's

the laws concerning the Sabbath day to remember it and to keep it holy and then there's the commandment concerning honouring father and mother which is not a negative commandment in the form of you shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery or you shall not bear the name of the Lord your God in vain. It's a positive commandment and at the very heart of these things we see a positive vision emerging like the marble that must be removed by the sculptor to reveal the great image beneath.

The commandments list a number of things that must not be done surrounding some positive things that must be done and when you remove those negative things what you see emerging is the positive vision at the heart, a vision of people giving rest and enjoying rest, a vision of people remembering and celebrating the great works of deliverance and creation of the Lord, a vision of father and mother joined together, male and female in peaceful union and then peace between the generations and honour between the generations. This is the positive vision at the heart of the law and all the rest of the law surrounds this. The law can also be summarised in two great principles.

The first great commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and then the second is to love your neighbour as yourself. That first greatest commandment is found in the chapter that follows this and the other is found in Leviticus chapter 19. In the ten commandments there's also a movement through from one commandment to the next which can elaborate and develop certain principles.

So the first great commandment begins with the statement of the Lord's deliverance which both introduces the first commandment and the commandments as a whole. At the very outset it lays out the principle of exclusivity and faithfulness to the Lord and then it moves on into an elaboration of what that means in the second commandment that a carved image or a likeness of anything in heaven and earth that is worshipped is again usurping the place of God, is standing in the place of God and is a form of spiritual adultery and then from there into a further commandment, a commandment concerning bearing the name of the Lord in vain. That bearing is not just a matter of cursing, it's not just a matter of taking a vow and not keeping it in the name of the Lord.

It can also include the fact that Israel has the name of the Lord placed upon them. The notion of bearing the name of someone can be found in Exodus chapter 28 where the high priest would bear the name of Israel into the presence of the Lord. Israel bears the name of the Lord before the nations and they must not bear the name of the Lord in vain.

Faithlessness to the Lord is not just seen in serving other gods, it's not just seen in idolatry and setting up images, it can also be seen in unfaithfulness that causes others to blaspheme his name. Much as we bear our family name and we must live in a way that honours our family name, Israel bears the name of the Lord their God and they must bear it with honour before the nations. The fourth commandment concerns the Sabbath

day and as we've looked through the covenant in Exodus particularly we've seen the Sabbath day as the core commandment of the covenant.

This is the sign of the covenant, particularly expressed in Exodus chapter 31 but also seen elsewhere. It is the Sabbath principle that sums up their deliverance from Egypt and this is why in this particular context it is the rationale for the celebration of the Sabbath because they have been released from Egypt, they have to celebrate this day of release and give rest to their servants too. It's an expression both of the principle of creation that God rested on the seventh day but also the principle of redemption, the principle of deliverance from slavery that they experienced as they were taken out of Egypt.

The importance of the Sabbath is seen particularly in places like Leviticus chapter 23 and 25 as it's expanded into an entire festal calendar and then into things like the Sabbath year and the year of Jubilee. One thing that the law of the Sabbath highlights is that God is a God of time. God is a God of time in creation but God is also the God of time in redemption in history.

God has acted in history and he acts according to particular rhythms. These must be remembered and they must be observed and Israel as it celebrates this day will participate in the meaning of what God accomplished in the exodus. They will give liberation to their servants as God gave liberation to them as servants of Pharaoh.

Israel's deliverance from Egypt is never intended to be an event in the past that's left behind, that's a foundation of the nation that's then forgotten. No, it's supposed to be instituted in their ongoing life and every time they celebrate the Sabbath day they are looking back to that original event of deliverance and instituting it in their ongoing life as a principle to observe. The Christian celebration of Sunday has a similar principle.

We are looking back to the principle of new creation and of new covenant. The Sabbath day looked back to the original creation and the event of the deliverance from Egypt. We look back to the new exodus that Christ accomplished in his death and resurrection and the new creation that he brought in as he rose from the grave.

In many respects the fifth commandment is a transitional commandment. It has many of the features of the first five. It has the name of the Lord mentioned within it, it has the lengthy explanation or rationale for the commandment and it also deals with vertical relationships.

However at this point we're moving from our relationship with God primarily to our relationship with other human beings. The commandment to honour father and mother as it gets impact elsewhere includes the way that we must honour other figures that God has set up in society. Our submission to father and mother is also a submission to leaders that have been placed over us in different roles.

Honouring father and mother should not however just be thought of in terms of obedience. Honouring is a far broader principle than that. We can honour father and mother for instance in honouring the sacrifices that they have made, the seeds that they have sown in their lives, tending, watering, protecting and then bringing those seeds to harvest so that the work of a people can continue over multiple generations, that each generation is not in rebellion against the one that has preceded it.

And the rationale for this is that people's days may be long in the land, that it might go well with them. When the generations are at peace with each other this will be the natural result. We can see the same principle in relationship to the second commandment.

I the Lord your God am a jealous God visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. Thousands being generations. Faithfulness continuing over generations has a cumulative effect and it builds up a great legacy that can be passed on and continued but it's a fragile thing.

In a generation that abandons the faithfulness of their fathers and mothers all can be lost. Beyond the broader generational principle we should also observe that it refers to father and mother. This is not just about honouring your father, it is about honouring both of your parents in their distinct stations in life and in their respective labours.

The two fundamental bonds that lie at the heart of any society are the bonds between men and women and the bonds between the generations. In father and mother, male and female being brought together and the honouring of both of them in the generation that arises from them we're seeing all these bonds being held intact and the integrity of society being secured at its very heart. If the Lord is the true and the living God, the unique creator of all things, it might seem that the most fundamental form of rebellion against him would be to take life.

Creatures cannot create life but we can destroy life. Murder is a fundamental assault upon those created in the image of God. It is for this reason an assault upon God himself.

It should not surprise us that Satan is described as a murderer from the beginning. God created mankind in his image. He also created mankind male and female and the image of God is expressed in the bringing together of male and female.

If murder is a fundamental assault upon the image of God then adultery or anything else that attacks the bond of marriage is an assault upon that expanded sense of the image. Beneath the heading of this commandment is included a great host of sexual sins. If the most fundamental attack upon the image of God is murder and the more extended attack upon the image of God is seen in adultery there is an expansion of the notion of attack upon persons in the eighth commandment concerning not stealing.

To steal from someone is to take something that is an extension of their person. When someone steals from us there is a violation of our integrity. It is a seizing of our property, of something that is proper to us.

But I am not just my life nor my life and my union with a person of the other sex in the bond of marriage nor even in those things plus my property. I also have standing in society. I have a name.

I have a reputation. I have a status and all of these things can be assaulted in different ways and the ninth commandment particularly relates to those things. It relates to the various ways in which we can use systems and laws to attack other people, words to slander them or otherwise to offend against their dignity.

And the tenth commandment takes these principles even further. Envy is something that is fundamentally opposed to the dignity of my neighbour. In envy is found the great seed of antagonism towards my neighbour.

In envy I want to be my neighbour. I want to occupy his place in the world. I want to occupy his possessions.

I want his house to be my house. I want his wife to be my wife. His existence and his well-being is experienced as a slight against my person.

The ten commandments bring this sin to light and they challenge it. This sin that lies at the heart of so much dysfunctional social relation. We should also observe the way that the tenth commandment turns the attention in.

We are no longer thinking about an external action here. We are thinking about a posture of heart and as that is appreciated it will influence the way that we read the entire body of the ten commandments. The ten commandments are ultimately fulfilled not in a set of prescriptions and proscriptions but in a posture of heart.

In loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and loving your neighbour as yourself. It's a posture of heart and the tenth commandment draws our attention to where the root problem lies and once that root problem has been observed the nature of the health that it undermines will also be perceived. All of these commandments were received in the context of the Theophany of Sinai.

A Theophany that was glorious and dreadful that terrified those who saw it and struck awe into their hearts. Through publicly speaking to Moses in such a manner God confirmed that he had been speaking to Moses all along. As Israel witnessed the terrifying voice of the Lord, the divine source of the covenant and also the authorisation of Moses was made very clear.

Furthermore once they witnessed these things they called for Moses to go in before the

Lord for them because they could not approach the Lord themselves. So Moses' intermediation for Israel occurred at their own request. In the later part of this chapter then Moses is justifying and providing the rationale for his place relative to Israel.

This is something that was established by and testified to by God but also something that the Israelites called for themselves. A question to consider when we think about law we might think about dry and dusty tomes of legal statutes on the record that lawyers and others might pour over. We do not think of something that is a living part of the life of a people that they return to and meditate and reflect upon and chew over and delight in but that is exactly what the law is within the book of Deuteronomy.

Simply looking at this chapter what are some of the ways in which the law as it is recounted here differs from what we would usually think of as law and what lessons might we learn from that? Luke chapter 4 verses 1 to 30. And Jesus full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for 40 days being tempted by the devil and he ate nothing during 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 will 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 he will command his angels concerning 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 put the Lord your God to the test and when the devil had ended every temptation he departed from him until an opportune time and Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country and he taught in their synagogues being glorified by all and he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up and as was his custom he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day and he stood up to read and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him he unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written the Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor he has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him and he began to say to them today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing and all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth and they said is not this Joseph's son and he said to them doubtless you will quote to me this proverb physician heal yourself what we have heard you did at Capernaum do here in your hometown as well and he

said truly I say to you no prophet is acceptable in his hometown but in truth I tell you there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the heavens were shut up three years and six months and a great famine came over all the land and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath in the land of Sidon to a woman who was a widow and there were many lepers in Israel in the time of prophet Elisha and none of them was cleansed but only Naaman the Syrian when they heard these things all in the synagogue were filled with wrath and they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built so that they could throw him down the cliff but passing through their midst he went away Luke chapter 4 tells the account of Jesus temptation in the wilderness each of the accounts of the gospels of Jesus temptation in the wilderness differs slightly each account is introduced with different language for instance language that sets up different sets of echoes Matthew speaks of Jesus being led up to the wilderness by the spirit the allusion here seems to be Israel being led up out of Egypt into the wilderness by the spirit the pillar of cloud and fire in the exodus where they were there for 40 years Mark speaks of Jesus being cast out by the spirit into the wilderness perhaps reminiscent of David being driven out from Saul's court into the wilderness while in the wilderness David lived with the wild beasts resisting the temptation to snatch the kingdom for himself before it was time Luke however phrases things differently Jesus full of the Holy Spirit was led by the spirit in the wilderness this is the language of the prophet caught up and transported by the spirit the sort of language that we find in the book of Ezekiel the hand of the Lord was upon me and I was led in the spirit we should also note the similarities with Luke chapter 2 verse 27 where Simeon comes by the spirit into the temple another interesting parallel might be seen in Revelation 17 verse 3 where the seer John is carried away in the spirit into the wilderness where he encounters the whore of Babylon on the beast if Matthew's introduction to Jesus temptation in the wilderness foregrounded themes of the exodus and the law and marks foreground themes of kingship in Luke the themes are more those of the prophet we have already noted earlier similarities with the story of Ezekiel the similarities seen for instance in the fact that Jesus was about 30 years old when he was baptized by John in Ezekiel chapter 1 verse 1 it's in the 30th year that Ezekiel sees the heavens opened and sees visions of God and Jesus in his baptism sees the heavens opened and there is a vision of the spirit descending upon him in the form of a dove but the allusions seem to continue here the hand of the Lord came upon Ezekiel and he was carried in the spirit into the wilderness valley of dry bones in Ezekiel chapter 37 verse 1 and then there's a continued pattern from there he's first transported by the spirit into the wilderness then to a very high mountain in chapter 40 verse 2 then to various extremities of the temple in 40 verse 17 24 28 32 and then in chapter 41 42 43 and 44 at the very beginning this visionary journey is also mirrored in Revelation which begins in the wilderness 17 verse 3 then goes to the mountain in 21 verse 10 and then to the temple in 21 verse 22 following the mountain and the temple are closely related as in Ezekiel and the devil seems to be giving Jesus a sort of false apocalypse here a twisted alternative to the visions of God's future that are received by the prophets this is what

the future could look like if Christ bows to Satan and takes his route there might be ways we are reminded of the exodus story here beyond the fact that it's 40 years there is the water crossing connected with baptism of the red sea there is a period in the wilderness associated with miraculous bread manna the idea of turning the stone into bread might recall both the manna and the rock in the wilderness there's coming to the mountain of Sinai the high place and then there's the temple or the tabernacle you also see similar patterns in the story of Elijah Elijah is fed with miraculous bread baked on hot stones in first kings chapter 19 verses 5 to 8 and that gives him strength to go without food for 40 days and nights this is accompanied by the word of the lord he then goes to the mountain of Sinai where he is given a vision and a commission for the future of the kingdom refusing to eat the food of the land bearing the curse the prophet is fed with heavenly bread the Israelites rejected the old leaven and ate manna bread from heaven Moses went without bread for 40 days on the mountain receiving tablets of stone from God David ate the holy bread of the tabernacle in first Samuel chapter 21 verses 1 to 6 Elijah is fed by the ravens and then by the miraculous bowl and jar then by the bread from the angel the devil wants Jesus to produce bread from the curse bearing territory rather than relying by faith upon God's bread this might be part of what's going on it's what James Jordan has suggested the wilderness becomes the source of a feast both in Ezekiel chapter 39 verses 17 to 20 and in Revelation chapter 19 verses 17 to 21 after the great victory has been won Luke has already mentioned a miraculous transformation of stones in chapter 3 verse 8 notice that in Luke the devil calls Jesus to produce bread from a single stone rather than from many Christ has been connected with Adam in the verse immediately before the temptation account he is then described as being filled with the spirit the breath of God like Adam he is tempted by the devil to eat forbidden food and to jump the gun on God's kingdom plants like the serpent in the wilderness the devil seeks to twist God's word the last Adam resists in the hunger of the wilderness what the first Adam failed to resist in the plenitude of the garden we should also recognize the importance of the statement if you are the son of God Jesus has just been declared to be the son of God with the voice from heaven and he's also been declared the son of God at the end of the genealogy now he's being tested concerning that is he a faithful son is he a son that will obey the word of his father where Adam the first born man of the dust failed seeing all of the kingdoms in a moment in time might be like the visions in Daniel of the different successive empires the devil is the ruler of the wider empire making him the direct adversary of Gabriel who has appeared earlier to announce the births of John and Jesus John's baptism of the mightier Jesus leads to this conflict as Jesus will fight on Gabriel's behalf against his greater adversary perhaps we should relate what Jesus is doing here to the role of Michael the heavenly prince of Israel in supporting Gabriel against the opposing kings in Daniel chapter 10 verse 13 and 21 Michael is connected with the angel of the Lord in Zechariah chapter 3 and perhaps Jude verse 9 fills this out a bit the angel of the Lord or the angel of the covenant is connected with Christ in other places Malachi 3 verse 1 is a key verse here as it relates the coming of the angel of the covenant to the ministry of John the Baptist and Christ the Lord the

messenger of the covenant is Christ once this has been appreciated I think an interesting picture starts to emerge Gabriel tells Daniel that Michael will stand up at some point in the future in Daniel chapter 12 verse 1 Luke presents us with the coming of the mighty champion who will equip Gabriel to defeat the devil and his princes John speaks of Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon the full grown serpent in Revelation chapter 12 verses 7 to 9 the references to angelic rulers the heavenly army and conflict with the devil in these early chapters of Luke should make clear that there is a battle of spiritual powers occurring throughout the gospel and that we shouldn't merely focus upon the surface events the devil's second temptation is an invitation to Christ to rule under and with him rather than under the father this temptation would be a way for Jesus to avoid the great battle of the cross when Jesus resists his second temptation the devil tempts Jesus to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the temple to cast himself out of the realm of God's presence assuring him that the angels will protect him much as Shadrach Meshach and Abednego were protected in the fiery furnace if Jesus won't rule alongside the devil on the devil's terms the devil assures Jesus that God will protect him if he exiles himself rather than plundering the strong man and resisting the devil's claims over God's house Jesus would be protected if he abandoned the house to the devil it would be so much easier for Jesus if he just cast himself away from Israel all of Jesus's responses to the devil involve quotations from the book of Deuteronomy chapter 8 verse 3 chapter 6 verse 13 chapter 10 verse 20 and chapter 6 verse 16 and all refer to the testing of Israel in the wilderness we're supposed to think back to what happened to Israel and how Israel failed and think about how Christ is fulfilling what Israel had failed to achieve the devil departs from Jesus until an opportune time presumably Gethsemane we should observe the emphasis upon trial which is probably a more appropriate word than temptation in the garden of Gethsemane in Luke chapter 22 verses 39 to 46 we see this the same word for trial is used here as in chapter 4 verse 13 perhaps we should see some relationship between the trials in the wilderness and the trials leading up to and upon the cross so one possibility would be that the first trial is found in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus must live by every word of the father and the father's word takes the form of a cup that he must drink while Jesus could reject the cup of his father and eat the portion of the devil he chooses to live by the word of his father the second trial could relate to his claims of kingship while before Pilate and Herod the kingdoms of this world cast their judgment upon Christ ridiculing and condemning him even though the kingdoms of this world are his proper inheritance Jesus could assert his reign in a demonic fashion but he accepts the crown of thorns and is raised up on the cross the third and final trial occurs while Jesus is on the cross those watching the crucifixion the rulers among them the soldiers and even one of the criminals crucified with him call upon him to save himself to cast himself down from the cross to abandon the temple and his mission Luke's account of the temptations of Christ in the wilderness is followed by his teaching in the synagogue of Nazareth he begins with reading from the book of Isaiah his reading brings together Isaiah chapter 61 verses 1 to 2 and chapter 58 verse 6 the acceptable year of the lord might be a reference to the jubilee in Leviticus chapter 25

verses 8 to 17 we read about the jubilee it would fit well with Luke's emphasis upon economic themes Jesus is bringing the release of all debts this would also relate to the sabbath and the true fast spoken of in Isaiah chapter 58 Jesus doesn't quote the end of Isaiah chapter 61 verse 2 with its reference to the day of vengeance his current ministry is one of blessing and restoration the day of vengeance comes later for Israel in AD 70 and unsurprisingly the expression occurs in that context later on in Luke chapter 21 verse 22 Jesus proclamation of liberty should be related to his defeat of the devil's power over the land restoring the land to its original owners the people of Nazareth observe that Jesus is Joseph's son with this they're attempting to exert some sort of authoritative claim upon Jesus physician heal yourself it's the claim that Jesus owes them special treatment on the miracle front he should recognize the greater duty that he has towards his own country literally his fatherland in verse 23 and Jesus challenges this claim with the examples of Elijah and Elisha the reference to Elijah and Elisha here is significant not merely on account of the numerous allusions that have already been made to them in the book so far later on in the book there are healings that are reminiscent of Elijah and Elisha the healing of the centurion's son in chapter 7 verses 1 to 10 is a miracle done at a distance for a military man of a foreign power and that can be related to Elisha's healing of Naaman the Syrian another foreign military man which Jesus mentioned in verse 27 the raising of the dead son of the widow of Nain relates to Elijah's raising of the widow of Zarephath's son the widow of Zarephath is mentioned in verse 26 there seems to be something interesting going on here when we read this passage alongside the account of the temptations there are some peculiar features of the text that should grab our attention first of all the fact that the quote from Deuteronomy in response to the first temptation is not completed man shall not live by bread alone we know the words that come next they're given in Matthew but they're not given here but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God but we're not told that and yet in the story of the preaching of Nazareth we hear some reminder of those words the people marvel at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord if you're talking about speaking it's a rather strange way to speak about speaking but this is the expression that Luke uses in this context and presumably because he wants us to think back to Jesus's response to the first temptation in Luke chapter 4 verse 17 Jesus is handed the scroll of prophecy and then he proceeds to speak the word of prophecy as a word that he incarnates one of the peculiar features of this text are the many references to the scroll it's referenced three times he is handed the scroll he opens the scroll he gives the scroll back now if he had wanted to Luke could have said that Jesus got up and he read from the prophet Isaiah why mention the scroll it seems to me that again this is a connection to the story of Ezekiel in Ezekiel chapter 2 verse 9 Ezekiel has handed the scroll of prophecy the word of God he then eats it and as the prophet he holds that word within himself it comes from out of him the prophets were fed by the word of the Lord and he eats this scroll in chapter 3 verses much as John does in Revelation chapter 10 verse 8 to 11 and that word received into his mouth is then something that he can speak forth from within

him Jesus is doing the same thing he's handed the scroll and then the words proceed from him they come out of him they're not from the scroll primarily he's not reading from the scroll so much as reading from within the scroll expresses something that has come true in that time in Christ himself that scroll and its meaning is standing before them what does this mean well it helps us to understand the response to the first temptation man shall not live by bread alone how does man live man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God and Jesus is living by the scroll of the Lord that he has taken into himself and now he is speaking forth he's speaking out his mission and that mission is a mission of liberation of deliverance to the captives Jesus is the one by whom the true bread of God's word is given rather than the bread of the devil there are other things to be observed here at the very end of the events in Nazareth they tried to cast him down from the brow of the hill in verse 29 this it seems to me should be related to the third temptation Jesus's own people are seeking to cast him down from the temple to exile him from them to cast him off which would mean for Jesus an abandonment of his purpose and his vocation to deliver the people he could allow them to cast him down and he would just go off and he would no longer be associated with them and the people would perish they would be given over into the clutches of satan but he stands even when they are trying to cast him down and in the same way as he remains on the cross even if he could come down and deliver himself and abandon the people to their fate he remains faithful he remains faithful in the experience of complete rejection by his townsfolk and he remains faithful not just in the rejection and the abandonment that he experiences at calvary but in the deep agony that he experiences too he will not allow israel to cast him away because he will be cast away for israel this leaves us with the question of whether there is a reference to the second temptation in this account of the preaching in nazareth and i believe there is specifically jesus rejects the attempts of his own people to get him to serve them he's going to serve god alone his vocation is given to him by his father not by his townsfolk not by his countrymen rather than proudly seeking demonic mastery of the world he chooses to minister deliverance to the gentiles according to the will of his father as elijah and elisha did a question to consider in what ways analogous to the specific ways in which jesus was tempted might we be tempted as christians in the present day