



CAPITOL COMMISSION

TESTING AND WHAT IT MEANT (Luke 4:1-13)

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Since the beginning of the divine record, a testing or probationary period has always been part and parcel of the Creator's plan.

Why? (Deuteronomy 29:29)

Adam was given a charge to **guard** and to **till** his portion of Eden. (Gen. 2:15) His failure was evident in a two-fold manner: he didn't prevent the assault of the serpent upon Eve (who only had a mediated instruction) and his subsequent participation in eating the forbidden fruit. The responsibility for this transgression was his.¹

Adam serves as The Federal head of fallen humanity. What do we mean by "Federal Head"? Objectively, every succeeding human has flowed from the loins of Adam. In one sense, when Adam transgressed, we all were present. This is why the text says, "...for as in Adam all die..."²

Jesus serves as the Federal Head of redeemed humanity³. In this capacity as Federal head of redeemed humanity, Jesus must endure and pass the probationary period in which Adam failed.

Similarly, the ethnic nation of Israel, a picture of God's true vine⁴ which failed in its wilderness testing⁵, Jesus, the True Vine⁶ and True Israel⁷ must succeed.

This lays the biblical foundation for what proceeds in this narrative. It also lays the foundation for the New Testament priority in terms of interpreting the Old Testament.

And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness for forty 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.

Presentation for the testing:

Jesus was led/driven⁸ by the Spirit into the wilderness for this testing.

This testing was not accidental nor incidental, but part of the warp and woof of redemption. Why the wilderness, given the 1st Adam's failure in an Edenic environment? Probably a conflation of two testing's in one environment.

Jesus will be tested as the 2nd Adam and as true Israel. Both "representatives" failed in their respective testing, Adam in the Garden and Israel both in the wilderness and throughout her subsequent history.

Should Jesus succeed in the testing He will qualify as a 2nd Adam and as True Israel, the representative head of two biblical entities: redeemed humanity and True Israel.

This test, in the economy of redemption is no small matter. It is a **Big Deal** in the greater narrative.

Time Frame

Throughout the divine record we note the number 40. Forty days, forty years and/or 400 years. Our first instance is in terms of the Noahic Flood: 40 days and nights of rain⁹ followed by a similar 40 day period after the waters subsided and Noah opened the Ark's window¹⁰. Next we find the prophecy of Abraham regarding the 400 years of Israel's bondage in Egypt¹¹ following which Moses spend 40 years in Midian as part of his development¹²(Moses killed the Egyptian at age 40, died at age 120¹³ having led Israel 40 years in the wilderness¹⁴). We could repeat this litany of settings, but will refrain having established the pattern.

Arena of testing

The wilderness or a desert place. As we noted above, Moses and Israel were tested in a wilderness setting. Generally, the wilderness was a literal setting, though it could be figurative.

BIBLE STUDY

TUESDAY @ 8:00 A.M., ROOM 100 RYAN BUILDING

PENNSYLVANIA

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Purpose of the testing

This is best stated in Deuteronomy 8: *And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.*

In the beginning (Bereshith bara Elohim)

In the beginning, God.

He created the visible and the invisible. He crowned His creation with mankind (male and female) created in His image and likeness and presented them with a life program, if you will, summarized simply: *live by my word*. You know the result. From that day til today, and on into the distant future, the testing of mankind will focus on this Truth: by whose word will you live?

The wisdom writer of Proverbs stated it succinctly:

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths¹⁵.

God created mankind with knowledge and understanding¹⁶ and in his wise counsel provided mankind with the first testing¹⁷. Since then, generation after generation beginning with Adam and his progeny, then on to the nation of Israel the test has always been presented with the “testee” failing in three principle areas, time and again:

The passions: lust of the flesh.

We are physical creatures with hungers, passions, etc. legitimate and illegitimate. Sorting out the differences and making the distinctions is the challenge; personally and collectively. We, in our unredeemed mind-set vacillate between Libertarian anarchy and Collectivist controls.

As believers, upon what do we lodge our ultimate confidence? Which ultimate source of reality is to be our guide-the God of the Bible - or the god of man’s making whether democratic, socialistic, etc.?

The perspectives: lust of the eyes:

Because we are finite creatures gifted with intellect and perception we are sorely tempted to trust in those faculties. Such trust is labeled, in my mind as Empiricism. Yet, the writer of the Proverb admonishes us to “not lean on our own understanding”. If we pause to reflect on Israel’s wilderness testing and God’s stated purpose in Deut. 8 we see the design pressing us to trust in His Word as our standard of truth¹⁸. We are not to ignore our intellect, perceptions, and deductions but to bring the Bar of His Word. Obviously, as any of us can attest-we do not “see” accurately. We do “see” adequately, but are bound to bring our perceptions to some standard of testing, judicial or communal.

The Pursuit of Power-pride of life

Herein lies the most subtle, from my perspective. The first two tests are generally easy to identify, by ourselves and others. This last one is the more difficult.

At this point, let me suggest a *Lewisology*. (Take it or leave it.)

Because we have been created in the image of God, though fallen by virtue of Adam’s transgression, we still retain an inherent “deliverer and/or savior” mind-set. Created in the image of God, though “fallen” by virtue of Adam’s conduct, we all tend to think we have “the answer” to the prevailing problems and if only we were in power things would be different!

"Men never do evil so completely and cheerfully as when they do it from religious conviction."¹⁹. We see this today with Islamic Extremists, with religious ideologues of every stripe, and we see it among ourselves within the household of The Faith whether we be Rs, Ds, Ls or whatever.

What Did His Testing Mean?

As the 2nd Adam, the True Israel, Jesus established the true paradigm for those *in-Christ*²⁰. As the Federal Head of all who trust in Him, He secured our eternal destiny along with providing us an avenue to experience on this side of the veil some of the “sacred sweets”²¹.

How is this possible given the impact of Adam’s Stain? The Apostle Paul makes this abundantly clear in his epistle to Rome²², to the church at Ephesus²³, and to the church at Colossae²⁴.

Application How have you been personally faring in your testing experiences?

¹ Romans 5: 12-14

² 1 Corinthians 15:22

³ 1 Corinthians 15:22

⁴ Isaiah 5

⁵ Deuteronomy 8

⁶ John 15

⁷ Hoshea 11:1

⁸ Mark 1:12

⁹ Genesis 7:4

¹⁰ Genesis 8:6

¹¹ Genesis 15:13

¹² Acts 7:23

¹³ Deut. 34:7

¹⁴ Deut. 29:5

¹⁵ Proverbs 3:5, 6

¹⁶ Job 38:36 & John 1:9

¹⁷ Genesis 3

¹⁸ John 14:6; 17:17; Isaiah 8:20, and 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

¹⁹ Blaise Pascal

²⁰ 2 Corinthians 5:17

²¹ Stanza Three: **Marching Through Zion**

²² Romans 12:1, 2

²³ Ephesians 4:22-24

²⁴ Colossians 3:1-4