

First Sunday in Lent
Cycle C RCL
Revised

Deuteronomy 26:1-11

This is a confession of faith for ceremonies surrounding the presentation of first fruits (Leviticus 23:9-11 and Numbers 28:26-31), which occurred during the great pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The confession remembers Israel's origin as a wandering people from the Syrian steppe and celebrates God's deliverance from Egypt. Although the confession begins with the first-person singular (26:5), it quickly shifts to the first-person plural (26:6) and becomes a statement of Israel's corporate memory of salvation.

Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16

Wisdom psalms have no known function in the worship of the First Temple and may have become popular during the Babylonian Captivity when there was no temple. Scholars composed *wisdom psalms* for the instruction of their students in how to conduct a successful life. During the exile in Babylon, wisdom instruction became increasingly religious, unlike the older, secular wisdom represented in Proverbs 10-31. Psalm 91 belongs to this period as is shown, for instance, by its assertion that the heavenly beings will protect the righteous student in the exercise of piety (91:11-12).

Romans 10:8b-13

Paul here applies Deuteronomy 30:12-14, in which the author affirms that God's will for Israel is as close as one's own lips and heart, to argue that salvation is not only for Israel but for anyone who confesses with the lips and believes with the heart, whether Jew or Greek. Salvation requires no spiritual gymnastics, only honest confession and trust.

Luke 4:1-13

Matthew (4:1-11) and Luke both follow Mark 1:12-13 in recording Jesus' testing in the Wilderness of Judea, but Matthew and Luke also record the actual tests. They are the same in both Gospels, but Luke reverses the order of the last two, as they occur in Matthew, to make the test on the pinnacle of the Temple the last one.

Both Matthew and Luke agree that Jesus' successful passing of these three tests banished the devil, but Luke reminds us that this banishment was only for a short time. In Luke 22:3 Satan reappears, entering into Judas' heart to entice him to betray Jesus (22:3).