

# Just Say No (Part 3)

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## Introduction

### The Text

<sup>1</sup> And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness <sup>2</sup> for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup> The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” <sup>4</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” <sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’” <sup>9</sup> 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, <sup>10</sup> for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ <sup>11</sup> and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” <sup>12</sup> And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’” (Luke 4:1–12)

## (1) The Mountain Temptation (vv. 5-8)

### Baiting the Hook for a Second Cast

- A. We move now from the Wilderness Temptation of vv. 1-4 to the Mountain Temptation of vv. 5-8. And as we transition, it might help us to see the devil here along the lines of a fisherman. It's as if he's rummaging through his tackle box looking for the right bait. "What's it going to take to get the Son of God on my hook?"
1. My father-in-law took us out fishing a couple of weeks ago and I was reminded how critical the right bait is. With the wrong bait you could be sitting all day without even a nibble. But with the right bait, you could be getting hit by the minute. So you're out there, and you're trying different things. And when the guy next to you pulls in a decent trout, you're asking him what he used. You're looking for the right bait.
- B. In our text, Satan's just reeled in the line from his first temptation and he's baiting his hook now for a second cast: "<sup>5</sup> And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.”
1. “Okay Son of God, you resist turning against Your Father in the face of extreme poverty, how will you respond in the face of extreme prosperity. If bread in the

desolate wilderness won't hook you, what if I give you a mountaintop experience and put at your disposal the kingdoms of the world?!"

## The Temptation in both Poverty and Prosperity

- A. Certainly, we would all agree, there is temptation to turn away from God in times of want.
  - 1. When we are suffering under the weight of cancer, or the death of a loved one, or bankruptcy—O we question God then, we put one foot out the door of the church then. "This God isn't kind, He's out to hurt me!"
- B. But what about prosperity? What if you could have, not just enough to survive the day, but more than you could ever dream of? Would you leave God for that?!
  - 1. You see, if Satan can't get us to leave God because of our pain, he will try to get us to leave God because of the world's pleasure. If He can't get us to conclude that God is malevolent and against us, certainly he will try to get us thinking that other things are more pleasurable. "I don't hate God, I just love all of this more!"
    - a. But it's a trap. For "friendship with the world is enmity with God" (Jam 4:4).
- C. It's this sort of thing that the devil is doing here with Jesus, it seems to me. "If starvation won't turn you against God, what about sovereignty—what about the prospect of power, prosperity, and pleasure?"
  - 1. "I will give You all of this. All You have to give me, is Your soul."

## Is this the Devil's to Give?

- A. Satan makes some bold claims here: "The kingdoms of the world...[have] been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will."
  - 1. But is this true?! Are the kingdoms of the world really the devil's to give? Some of you watching the news lately might say: "Yes! Isn't it obvious? Why else would things be so bad?!"
- B. But the biblical answer is both: Yes...and No.
  - 1. Consider one commentator on this point: "The devil claims [absolute political] authority has been given to him by God and thus presumes to commandeer God's authority to decide and divide. In one sense this is true, for the devil exercises real power in this world. But ultimately it is not true, for the devil's power is not equal to God's, but entirely subordinate to it. The devil possesses power only as long as the sovereignty of God allows" (Edwards, PNTC). Yes...and No.
    - a. Yes. He is called "the ruler of this world" (Joh 12:31; 14:30); "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2); "the god of this world" (2 Cor 4:4). And

we're told that "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 Joh 5:19).

- b. But...No. There is everywhere a sense that Satan is on a leash, like a dog on a chain, that his time is short, that though he barks and bites and foams at the mouth, he will come to find he's only served God's sovereign design in the end.
  - i. Gen 3:15 promises his demise. Rev 20:10 drives the last nail in his coffin: "The devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur...and [he] will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

(1) Make no mistake about it: there will be no kingdom for the devil in the end!

## But the Temptation Was Real

- A. So, as another commentator concludes: "Satan's offer is at best...an oversell, and at worst...a lie. Nonetheless, the temptation was real" (Bock, 376).
  - 1. God has long promised His Son the kingdom (and He promises it to us as well in Jesus) but it will be "through many tribulations" (Act 14:22).
    - a. Satan slithers up to the Son in this moment and whispers: "Be done with all this tribulation nonsense. Break allegiance with your Father and I will give you everything now!"
- B. Is there a snake at your feet these days?
  - 1. Some of us relate more with the first temptation. You're starving. You feel the deficiency, the emptiness, the suffering. And you're tempted to break with God just to survive another day.
  - 2. Others of us, relate more to this second temptation. The world seems to have been set before you for the taking. This is Silicon Valley. You've got the job. You know how to play the game. You're getting closer to the top. You want that salary that will allow you to have and do everything you ever wanted and more. The only catch: you have to sell your soul to get it.
    - a. Consider a text I just came to in my devotions: "<sup>6</sup> Godliness with contentment is great gain, <sup>7</sup> for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. <sup>9</sup> But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare [of the devil (cf. 3:7)], into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. <sup>10</sup> For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some

have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs” (1 Tim 6:6–10).

- i. The sure way to pierce yourself with many pangs and plunge yourself into ruin and destruction is to martial all your energies towards the attaining of a kingdom for yourself now.

(1) Deep inside, you know it’s not going to last. You know moth can eat it, rust can corrupt it, thief can steal it. So even when you get it, you don’t have it!

## You Shall Worship the Lord Your God

- A. The baited hook is hanging in front of our Savior. What’s He going to do?! “And Jesus answered him, ‘It is written, “You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve”” (v. 8).
- B. He responds with yet another quote from the book of Deuteronomy—Deut 6:13. Let’s read it in context, remembering again that we are listening to Moses addressing the people right before they are about to enter the land of Canaan: “<sup>10</sup> When the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build,<sup>11</sup> and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full,<sup>12</sup> then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.<sup>13</sup> It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear.<sup>14</sup> You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you—<sup>15</sup> for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth” (Deut 6:10–15).
  1. God is giving Israel prosperity that they did not labor for, that they do not deserve, as an expression of His abounding love and grace.
    - a. But we know what Israel did with all this prosperity: they fell in love, not with God, but with His stuff. And they forgot Him: “<sup>4</sup> I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no savior.<sup>5</sup> It was I who knew you in the wilderness, in the land of drought;<sup>6</sup> but when they had grazed, they became full, they were filled, and their heart was lifted up; therefore they forgot me” (Hos 13:4–6).
- C. So in our text unimaginable power and prosperity is offered to the Messiah on the one condition that He forget His God and turn to another. But He will not bite.
  1. O He will get His kingdom, but He will wait to receive it from His Father’s hand, in His Father’s timing, according to His Father’s will, by way of the cross!
- D. Our call is the same in many ways, brothers and sisters. “Take up [your] cross daily and follow me” (Luk 9:23b). O Christ give us strength!

## (2) The Temple Temptation (vv. 9-12)

### One Final Cast

- A. In this now third and final temptation recorded for us, Satan gets particularly cunning. He's always learning, adapting.
  - 1. In these first 2 temptations, 2 things have become particularly clear about his target, the Son of God: (1) He trusts and is fully submitted to His Father; and (2) He values and is deeply committed to the Scriptures.
    - a. The devil couldn't turn Him from His father with either poverty nor prosperity. And every time, the devil's overtures were met with Scripture.
- B. So what's the Devil going to do, as he's back in his tackle box? He's going to bring both of these things together, bait his hook, and give it one final cast: "<sup>9</sup>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,<sup>10</sup> for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,'<sup>11</sup> and 'On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone'" (vv. 9-11).
  - 1. "Okay, you trust God to look after You, You trust God's word, I can work with that. What says trust and surrender like literally throwing yourself into His hands? And you want a Scripture to prove it? Here you go."
- C. Don't you understand, beloved, that the devil is studying us like this? He knows what we're all about, what we value. And he knows how to twist until we don't even know which way is up. Were it not for our Savior, we would be lost!

### The Devil Quotes Scripture

- A. We do well to step back for a moment and observe this profound fact: the devil quotes Scripture. That's a sobering thought.
  - 1. We must recognize, then, that merely quoting the bible doesn't necessarily make one biblical. Some of the worst heretics in church history became so with bibles in hand.
    - a. Perhaps the prototypical example is found among the Jews themselves. Why did they put Jesus to death? Chapter and verse, Jewish orthodoxy: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut 6:4). "One, Jesus, not two, not three. One! We are monotheists. Therefore, if You are making Yourself out to be the Son of God, equal to God, we will kill you... 'Crucify Him!'"
- B. O what a horror this is: we can deny the Bible even as we quote it. But we will always be found out in the end.

1. The Devil quotes from [Psa 91](#) here. And he's feeling pretty sly, but if he'd only keep reading, he'd see that he's quoting from a text that actually prophecies his own demise: "<sup>11</sup> For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways. <sup>12</sup> On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone. <sup>13</sup> You will tread on the lion and the adder; the young lion and the serpent you will trample underfoot" ([Psa 91:11–13](#)).
  - a. Context really matters! O it is true that the angels will preserve the foot of the Messiah, but they are preserving His foot so that He can with it trample on the serpent in fulfillment of [Gen 3:15](#)!
    - i. The text with which Satan is trying to undo the Messiah, actually predicts the Messiah's undoing of Satan!

## Unbelief Masquerading as Faith

- A. We might again wonder, as we did with the bread: what precisely is the temptation at this point? "Throw Yourself down, God will catch You." Where's the harm in that?
  1. After all, it seems perhaps Satan is calling Jesus to do the sort of thing we remember doing at summer camp with our friends. Fall back and someone would catch you. The game builds a sense of camaraderie and trust.
    - a. But isn't that just it? The action helps one to build trust, which actually seems to indicate one lacks trust in the first place. We wouldn't need the game if we already had trust! It's putting the other to the test. It's saying, "Though in one sense I'm sure of you, in another sense I'm quite suspect. Will you actually be there for me?!"
- B. Here again the subtlety of the devil becomes evident. By all accounts it looks like throwing one's self down would be an expression of great faith. But, as one commentator puts it, truly such an act would be "[unbelief masquerading as faith](#)" ([Bock, 381](#)).
  1. There's question about God's ability and willingness to provide and protect—"Will He be there for me?!" There's question about Jesus' identity: "[If you are the Son of God](#)"—"Am I the Son? Let's see." There's demand for immediate proof instead of trusting and waiting. "I know you spoke love over me at my baptism but I need proof now. Your words, Your pleasure in me then are not enough for me now."
    - a. Such an act, far from expressing faith in God, would actually be a slap in God's face!
- C. We are tempted here as well, are we not? We're always looking for some external proof of His love for us.
  1. We draw conclusions regarding God's love for us like a little girl picking petals from a daisy: "He loves me, He loves me not." I just got a raise: "He loves me!" I just got

fired: “He loves me not!” I just got a new car: “He loves me!” I just got in a car accident: “He loves me not!” We play this game with our circumstances. “He loves me...He loves me not!”

- a. But from the cross, a voice cries out. There is no stuttering. There is no stammering. There is no waffling. There is no hesitation. There is only one voice ringing out with utter clarity: “I love you now and forever!”
  - i. The One who trusted in His Father’s love through death, will love us through the same. We can trust His love, now and forever, no matter how hard it gets!

## You Shall Not Put the Lord Your God to the Test

- A. The baited hook is hanging yet again in front of our Savior. What’s He going to do?! “And Jesus answered him, ‘It is said, “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test”’” (v. 12).
  - 1. Another verse from Deuteronomy—[Deut 6:16](#). Another blow to the head of the serpent. This Son of God, unlike Israel and Adam before Him, will not bend His knee.
- B. When we read this verse in context we find that it connects us to another narrative from Israel’s wilderness wandering. The full verse reads: “You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested him at Massah” ([Deut 6:16](#)). Which begs the question: how did Israel test Him at Massah?
  - 1. Immediately following the story of Manna and bread from heaven in [Exo 16](#), we come to the story of Massah and water from the rock in [Exo 17](#): “<sup>1</sup>All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin...but there was no water for the people to drink.<sup>2</sup>Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?”<sup>3</sup>But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, “Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”<sup>4</sup>So Moses cried to the Lord, “What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.”<sup>5</sup>And the Lord said to Moses, “Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.<sup>6</sup>Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.” And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.<sup>7</sup>And he called the name of the place Massah [testing] and Meribah [quarreling], because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (vv. 1–7).
- C. Israel tested God in the wilderness. “O sure we know you freed us from the Egyptians yesterday, but what does that matter if we die of thirst today?”

1. But Jesus, in quoting from [Deut 6:16](#) which recounts this incident is saying: “I will not fall to the same line of thinking. I will not push for His provision and protection. I will trust and wait—‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

## The Cross Hidden in Plain Sight

- A. But He is saying more than just this, isn't He?! For, just as we saw last week with His quote concerning manna, so now we see it here: the gospel of the cross is here hidden in plain sight.
- B. We remember that the devil, underneath all of these temptations, has one endgame in mind: set the Son on a trajectory now that will have Him foregoing the cross later.
  1. Why the temple? Why “Throw Yourself down from the temple”? He could've done this when they were on the mountain. Why the temple in Jerusalem?
    - a. Because this is where the Lamb of God will be offered for the sins of the world. Because this is where Jesus is headed to die. Because if He can get Jesus to start doubting His Father's love for Him in this place now, He just might be able to get Him to come down from that cross later.
- C. But Jesus will not have it! And He quotes from the text He does to rub this in the devil's face: “Not only will I not put my God to the test, but do you remember Massah? Do you remember the groaning and the grumbling? You thought you'd won, until God responded to all this sin, with grace: ‘Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink’ (v. 6). Water from a stricken rock, so that sinners can live. Satan, that rock is Me ([1 Cor 10:4](#))!”
  1. “When the staff of God is lifted over my back, and it's about to come down upon Me with the full force of His wrath, I will not call for a legion of angels to protect me (cf. [Matt 26:53](#)). I will trust my Father through death, and I will rise to find that the accuser of My brothers has been thrown down ([Rev 12:10](#)).”
- D. Satan has been relentlessly attempting to turn Christ away from the cross, but Jesus has even more relentlessly been turning Satan right back towards it.
  1. He will overcome the Evil One, and now we do as well in Him. Hallelujah, what a Savior!