

# Just Say No (Part 4)

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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.’” <sup>13</sup> And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time. (Luke 4:1–13)

### Only the Beginning

- A. We have now dealt in detail with the 3 temptations delineated for us here—from the Wilderness, to the Mountain, to the Temple. And the Son, in His combat with the devil, has logged victory after victory after victory.
  - 1. But the devil is not yet defeated, nor is he done. In fact he's only just begun.
- B. Lest we think that these initial victories have made a full stop of Satan, Luke concludes this scene in his gospel with a verse that ought to make our souls shudder: “And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time” (v. 13).
  - 1. We get the sense, then, that the devil is not off somewhere sulking and nursing his wounds. No! This verse invites us to see him as lurking in the shadows, biding his time, marshaling his strength...waiting for just the right moment to strike.

### Two Opening Questions

I want to ask 2 questions of v. 13 at this point that will help set up the course this message is going to take from here.

- (1) What Is this “Opportune Time”?

- A. First: What is this “opportune time”?—“he departed from him until an opportune time.”
1. Hopefully it comes as no surprise to you now that I would suggest that the “opportune time” Luke refers to here has in view the Son’s final entrance into Jerusalem and the coming crisis of the cross.
- B. For one thing, the whole narrative of Luke’s gospel, perhaps more than any other gospel, is oriented around Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem to die. As we shall see, from [ch. 9](#) on, we understand everything to be happening in view of the Son’s impending death in the Holy City.
1. This is the critical “time” that Luke is driving His whole narrative towards.
- C. But beyond this, we recall from our earlier analysis of our text in [Luke 4](#) that, even in these 3 temptations themselves, at every point Satan and Jesus have the coming crisis of the cross in view.
1. There’s a war waging above ground as the devil tempts the Son with bread, kingdoms, and Scripture quotes.
    - a. In all of this, Satan has the same 3 goals we defined previously as: (1) Defamation of Character—get the Son to question who God is; (2) Identity Crisis—get the Son to question what God says about Him; (3) Tyranny of the Urgent—get the Son to question God’s timing.
  2. But there is a subterranean clash as well. 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. Satan is trying to sow doubt into Jesus’ heart now in hope that it just might flower into full-on denial of the cross later.
- D. Satan has been relentlessly attempting to turn Christ away from the cross, and Jesus has even more relentlessly been turning Satan right back towards it. Both have their eyes fastened onto the coming crisis of the cross.
- E. And if we have any doubt that this is the “opportune time” Luke is referring to in our text, consider [Luke 22:53](#):
1. When the band of men come to arrest Jesus to take Him away to be tried and ultimately crucified, He responds by saying: “This is your hour and the power of darkness.” “Alright Satan, this is your opportune time. Bring all you’ve got!”

## (2) Did the Devil Actually Depart?

- A. The second question we must ask is: Did the devil actually “depart” from Jesus until this opportune time?—“he departed from him until an opportune time.”

- B. Some commentators have gone so far as to say that Luke portrays the period from 4:13 to 22:3 as “Satan-free” (BECNT, 382), but this view doesn’t hold up to close analysis of the gospel.
  - 1. In fact, as we’ll soon see, before ch. 4 is even over, Jesus is already fighting off rebel attacks from Satan’s demonic entourage (vv. 31-37, 41).
    - a. I think this is Luke’s way of saying: just because the devil’s departed from him, in one sense, until an opportune time, it doesn’t mean the devil isn’t there beside Him, in another sense, all along the way.
- C. But if we are to do justice to v. 13 and this idea of the devil’s departure, we must conclude that: while it does not indicate Satan’s total absence until the opportune time, it does seem to indicate that satanic pressures will intensify at that later point.

## Turning Up the Heat

- A. Last time, to picture Satan’s activity in the 3 temptations I gave us the image of a fisherman baiting his hook.
  - 1. Now as we consider Satan’s activity in the unfolding gospel narrative, I want give us another image. I see him as one operating a furnace. And as Luke’s gospel progresses, it’s as if he’s turning the heat up: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 until the flame is white-hot against the Son on Calvary’s hill. “Let’s see if we can get the Son to break!”
- B. Those 3 levels are my 3 points. I want to follow this satanic combat towards the “opportune time” of the cross.

## Level 1

### “You Are the Son of God!”

- A. I cannot spend much time on this first level but I do want to show you briefly what I just referenced regarding the demonic onslaught near the end of ch. 4. Let’s look at vv. 40-41: “<sup>40</sup> Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. <sup>41</sup> And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.”
  - 1. It is interesting to note the shift in tactics here between the devil in the first vv. of ch. 4 and the demons here in the last vv. of ch. 4.
    - a. The devil began his temptations with “If you are the Son of God” (vv. 3, 9). Certainly there was no doubt in the devil’s mind concerning Jesus’ identity but he was trying to sow doubt in Jesus’ mind.

- b. Now, the demons make a clear declaration: “You are the Son of God!” (v. 41a). But Jesus silences them “because they knew that he was the Christ” (v. 41b).
- B. Why? Because He knows the Jewish people don’t yet have the proper understanding of Messiah. They think He will be a political deliverer and king. They have no category in their minds for a suffering, a crucified Christ.
  - 1. And so the demons try to incite here a crowd of people ready to make Him king now on the earth (much like the 2<sup>nd</sup> temptation): “Here He is; Here’s your Christ; Here’s your King!”
    - a. Maybe if He gets used to the power now, He’ll forego the cross later.
- C. But Jesus will not have it. “Silence! I will ascend to the throne of David, but it will be through death, even death on a cross!”
  - 1. So Satan says: “Okay, I see your resistance...and I turn up the heat.”
- D. O Christian, how do you react when everyone is ready to speak well of you? Is that your life’s goal? Would you rather reign as king now apart from the Father, or reign later with Him?

## Level 2

- A. I mentioned earlier that Luke orients his entire gospel around Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem to die—a journey which begins in ch. 9: “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem” (v. 51).
  - 1. The time is drawing near. It’s as if the center of gravity starts to shift in Luke 9 and the sheer weight of the coming conflict at Calvary starts to pull in the whole narrative.
    - a. And consequently, we find it is here that the devil turns up the heat.

## A First Confession and First Prediction

- A. First, in vv. 18-20 we have what really amounts to the climax of this first part of Jesus’ ministry. For it is here for the first time that Peter, on behalf of the Apostles, confesses Jesus as the Christ: “‘But who do you say that I am?’ And Peter answered, ‘The Christ of God’” (v. 20).
  - 1. As the ESV Study Bible notes: “Jesus’ identity as the ‘Christ’—confessed by angels (2:11);...by demons (4:41); and by Jesus Himself (4:18)—is now confessed for the first time by the Twelve” (p. 1972).
- B. But Jesus will not let this go misunderstood. He has the same concern at this point that He had back when He silenced the demons. For we read immediately following Peter’s

confession that: “<sup>21</sup> He strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one,<sup>22</sup> saying, ‘The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised’” (vv. 21–22).

1. The first confession on human lips that Jesus is the Christ is met by Jesus’ first full disclosure that He, as the Christ, has, in fact, come to die.

## Dueling Rebukes

- A. Now it is at this point that I want to borrow from Matthew’s gospel for a moment, because the exchange is too important. Do you remember Peter’s response to Jesus’ full disclosure here of His Messianic mission?
  1. “Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, ‘Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you’” (Matt 16:22).
    - a. “You’re the Christ! Christ’s don’t ‘suffer many things’, or get ‘rejected’, or get ‘killed’. They reign! Far be it from you to do anything else, Lord!”
- B. But Jesus, always sober-minded and watchful, rebukes Peter in return: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man” (v. 23).
  1. “I recognize that voice! Satan’s talking through your lips, Peter. You’re spitting out the logic of demons. I will reign, but it will be through death, even death on a cross.”

## The Mount of Transfiguration and the Valley of Demons

- A. Now, from here we move to a critical scene in [Luke 9:28-36](#)—the Mount of Transfiguration.
  1. As the shadow of the cross is now darkening the complexion of the Christ, as the devil has now turned up the heat of his furnace yet another level, God brings His Son up the mountain to encourage Him.
- B. We read in vv. 29-30 that on that mountain: “<sup>29b</sup> The appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white.<sup>30</sup> And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah,<sup>31</sup> who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure [Gk. exodos], which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem.”
  1. All of this is to say: “Son, I know the cross will be devastatingly hard, but it will end in glory for You and for all those for whom You are accomplishing this great Exodus deliverance!”
- C. And then we read in v. 35 that God’s voice again pierces through the heavens—the majestic voice which we have not heard in Luke’s gospel since Jesus’ baptism in [ch. 3](#).

1. And the Father speaks over His Son now words amazingly similar to those He spoke over Him back then: “This is my Son, my Chosen One...”
- D. The Father spoke over the Son at His baptism in order to equip Him for war with the devil. And so He does here as well: “The devil’s voice is getting louder, Son. Soon he will be screaming in Your ear. O how I want My voice to ring louder in your heart still—You are My beloved Son; with You I am well pleased; You are My Son, My Chosen One!”
1. For just as the Son returned from His baptism only to be immediately thrust out into the wilderness with the devil, so now the Son descends from the Mount of Transfiguration straightaway into the Valley of Demons (vv. 37-43).
    - a. And from here on, He sets His face like steel for Jerusalem (v. 51).
- E. O Christian, is the love of the Father enough for you? Do you know His love for you, His delight in you? There is no other way to successfully resist the devil...even unto death!

## Level 3

- A. While much clashing occurs between Jesus and the devil in the chapters that follow ch. 9, we move now through ch. 19, where Jesus finally enters Jerusalem, to ch. 22, where the devil turns up the heat one more notch—white-hot.
1. The “opportune time” of 4:13 has arrived!

### His Friends: Betrayal and Denial

- A. First, the devil’s going to start with His friends.
- B. “<sup>3</sup>Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was of the number of the twelve.<sup>4</sup> He went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them” (22:3-4).
1. Do you remember how Matthew records Jesus response to Judas’ final betrayal of Him in the garden of Gethsemane? “Friend, do what you came to do” (Matt 26:50).
    - a. “We’re not just going to use noted enemies here, we’re going to use disciples, friends.”
- C. I used to read Satan’s entering of Judas as suicidal rage—like he knew he was going to lose by killing Jesus but he no longer cared. Like a suicide bomber: “I don’t care if I die in this, so long as you die with me!”
1. But I no longer think this is the case. I think Satan is ever the optimist. Pride will do that to you. I think he goes after Judas, a friend, because he’s still thinking: “If I can make the Messiah hurt deeply enough, if I can break His heart through and through, I just might be able to turn Him against His Father on that cross and get Him to save Himself and come down.”

- a. This is not a suicide bomber here. This is more like Russian roulette—by picking up this revolver he might lose, but he just might win!
- D. And, of course, then there's Peter: "<sup>31</sup> Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat... <sup>34</sup> I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me" (Luke 22:31, 34).
- 1. Luke alone records that after Peter's 3<sup>rd</sup> denial, Jesus from His place inside the high priest's house, "turned and looked at Peter" (22: 61).
    - a. He must have heard him—one from His inner circle (the 3), one who earlier so boldly professed Him as the Christ—now denying that he ever even knew Him. Peter's denial might have cut even deeper than Judas' betrayal!
      - i. The Son's heart is laid utterly exposed and the devil is pressing his sharpened yellowing fingernails in deeper still.

## The World: Crucifixion and Death

- A. Then finally, having turned His friends against Him, the devil's going to turn the whole world against Him at the cross: Jews and Gentiles alike, railing at the Son of God...who's come to save them!
- B. And here's a most profound observation (owed to one of my seminary professors): just as there was a threefold temptation at the inaugural point of His ministry so now we find a threefold temptation at its terminal point.
  - 1. As the Son hangs, beaten and bloody on the cross, 3 voices are heard calling out for Him to forego the suffering and come down: "<sup>35b</sup> the rulers [Jews] scoffed at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself, if he is the Christ of God, his Chosen One!' <sup>36</sup> The soldiers [Gentiles] also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine <sup>37</sup> and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' ... <sup>39</sup> One of the criminals who were hanged railed at him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!'" (Luke 23:35b-37, 39).
- C. We've heard this before have we not? "If You are the Christ; if You are the Chosen One; if you are the King of the Jews"...sounds an awful lot like Luke 4:3, 9: "If You are the Son..."
  - 1. The devil has come to complete what he began back in the wilderness. He's come now to harvest those seeds he scattered years before.
- D. Though men may be railing at Him, it is truly the devil who is howling in his ear at this point:
  - 1. "Where's your Father now?! This is a little worse than hunger in the wilderness isn't it? Your Daddy lied to You. He's gone. You said it Yourself. He's forsaken You"—(Defamation of Character).

2. You're not His Son. You're not His Boy. He doesn't love You. He's not well-pleased with You. You're not His Chosen One"—(Identity Crisis).
  3. Give me a break! Give it up. Save yourself. Enough with this foolishness. You come down from the cross now by a display of Your power, and these people will make You King straightaway!"—(Tyranny of the Urgent).
- E. But how would the Son respond in the heat of such white-hot temptations and trials?
1. We go on to read in vv. 44-45 that he hung on that cross in utter darkness for 3 long hours. And "Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last" (v. 46).
    - a. With that word—"Father"—He slams the door in the devil's face once and for all: "Let the devil say what he will! You are my Father, my Abba. I am your beloved Son, your boy. And I will wait for your salvation through death...even death on a cross!"

## Another Voice

- A. But there is another voice crying out in this narrative is there not? While the rulers, and the soldiers, and the criminal are all aligning their voices with the devil's, one lone man is aligning his voice with the Father's.
1. There is another criminal hanging next to Jesus. And he sees in Christ the only hope for his salvation. The cross is not a problem for him, it is the solution: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" (Luke 23:42).
- B. To which Jesus responds: "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (v. 43).
1. "I've come as God's answer to all that went wrong with Adam. I've come to both do what Adam failed to do, and undo what Adam did. I've come that fallen sons of Adam might become redeemed sons of God.
    - a. Today, criminal, today, Nick, today...you will be with Me in the paradise-presence of God!"
- C. This is the very reason Jesus endured such temptations and trials! He wants to be with you! He's paying for your sins, lifting your debt to the Father, so that you can finally break your ties with the devil and come home to God!
1. Criminal, come home. Sinner, come home. The Son has made a way!
- D. May we add our voices to this criminal's in praise of the Son—the first and only One to ever tell the devil "No!" and hold it firm to the end. He did it for us!