

"And Jesus answered him and said: 'It stands written: MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.' " (Duet. 8.3)

The devil has just tempted him: "Since you are Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

"It stands written..." Jesus lived to fulfill every word spoken about Him in the Law, Psalms, and Prophets. He believed in the inspiration and authority of the Old Testament, and obeyed it all.

"Man shall not live..." Jesus loved Deuteronomy-He quoted it from memory more than any other OT book. This is from Dt. 8.3 Jesus believed in feeding daily on the Word of God, and obeying it no matter what the personal cost...even unto death.

Jesus answered temptation with the written Word of God, not His own. He is our example in this. The Devil is a liar and father of all lies. Truth is the antidote for the poison of falsity. The Word of God is Truth, even as Jesus is the Truth. Jesus believed that every Word of Scripture is important; to be fed upon and obeyed every day, more than food! The best way to meet temptation is with the Truth of God's Word.

This was a Messianic temptation. The Devil cannot tempt you or me to turn a rock into bread. It will never happen! That would be delusional. But He who created the universe out of nothing has the power to do anything He desires. The Devil's temptation was extremely subtle- for Jesus to use His Divine power for His own benefit. Check it out. Jesus NEVER used the power of God for Himself. The words hurled at Him in mockery on the cross were true, because of His righteous moral nature: **"He saved others. He cannot save Himself."** Among sinful people, it is true that "absolute power corrupts absolutely." But Jesus was sinless, holy, loving, and pure. He would not use power to benefit Himself, even for something as legitimate as feeding Himself after a 40 day fast!

Think about it. Later on Jesus turned five barley loaves and 2 small fish into enough food to feed 5000 men plus women and children. He **did** use the miraculous power of God to create food, but it was for others, NOT for Himself. The Word of His Father kept Jesus on track to live the Trinity-Life; using and managing what He would later call "ALL power in heaven and on earth" to bless, provide for, and love others sacrificially, but NEVER use that power for self-benefit.

What a glimpse of God's purity, holiness, and moral beauty we catch here in the selfless, very human hunger of Jesus, that would rather starve than exercise legitimate power to benefit Himself. I don't know about you, but seeing Jesus like this makes me fall on my face to worship Him!

"Jesus told him (the Devil): 'It also stands written: DO NOT TEST THE LORD YOUR GOD.' " (Duet. 6.16)

The devil had taken Jesus to the Pinnacle of Temple, and urged Him to jump off, quoting the promise of Ps. 91.1-12 that the Angels would hold Him up to protect Him

"It also stands written..." Jesus answered the Devil's miss-application of Scripture with His own accurate application of Scripture, once again from Duet., this time Chapter Six. (His answer to the 3rd temptation was also from the same chapter.)

"Do not test the Lord Your God." The full verse in **Dt. 6.16** refers to the way God's people tested Him at Meribah/Massah. (Check out the full context of **Ex. 17.1-10** to understand the way they sinned by **"testing the Lord."**)

They questioned God's ability to provide their needs (water) in a place HE had obviously led them to. All of God's promises to provide our needs (which abound in Scripture) are conditioned upon doing His will; God provides what His will requires. They doubted that.

On the other hand, jumping off the Temple roof had nothing to do with the will of the Father for Jesus- it was the Devil who had led Him there in the first place. It served no other purpose than to "test" the Father to see if He would supernaturally intervene by sending Angels when there are no "need" to do so in the Father's plan for Jesus. It would be like playing a game of "Chicken" with God!

Jesus would have none of it. He knew His Father would provide everything necessary to do His will. He didn't need to "test" that truth-He had lived by it since birth, and had never found His Father's faithfulness to be wanting.

Matthew and Luke present the temptations of Jesus in a different order. That does not mean there is a contradiction between their accounts. Why not? Because Matthew **intended** them to be in actual chronological order, and Luke did not. Matthew includes a time-descriptive term, "**then**" in his narrative, indicating the order of events. Luke does not include this term in his record. For Luke, the **content** of the three temptations was important, not their precise order.

We as readers might **assume** Luke was listing them in chronological order, but that was not **his** intention at all. Matthew, on the other hand **did** intend a chronological development. (This is interesting, because Luke is usually chronological in his approach, and Matthew is not! Writers are perfectly free to alter their typical pattern whenever they want.) So, these two accounts do not contradict each other at all.

Why make a such a big deal out of such a seemingly minor point? Because it is an example of a MAJOR principle of Biblical interpretation, and it is key to appreciating Jesus' answer to the Devil in this 2nd temptation.

Here's the key: Words mean what the author/speaker intends them to communicate, not what the listener/reader wants them to mean.

Meaning is always determined by the writer/speaker's intentions.

This is the HUGE gap between what words "say" and what they actually mean. For example, I tell you to "go jump in the lake." What I intend by that imperative is "I do not and will not agree with you." In the context of an argument, you understand that well. However, if you confuse what I literally "said," with what I intended to "mean," you will literally have to find a lake and jump in! Communication means what the sender intends. Matthew intended chronology above, Luke did not. Therefore, no contradiction. Now, move on to Jesus' 2nd temptation.

The Devil quoted Scripture accurately to Jesus. (A sobering point-the Devil knows the Scriptures better than most disciples! That is a very dangerous situation to be in.) But, the Devil cleverly "twisted" the meaning of the text in an erroneous application of it to Jesus.

God never **intended** the promise of **Psalms 91.11-12** to be unconditional and universally applicable in all situations-otherwise He would be giving Angel-flight power to all believers! We would all have the pleasure of sky-diving off every high place on earth and receiving a very soft, safe landing! After all, that is literally what the promise "says."

The promise of Ps. 91 is **intended** by God to apply to those who are "seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" in pursuing total obedience to His will. Jesus did not need to jump off the Temple roof to do His Father's will. That action had nothing to do with His Father's plans for Him. Jesus

knew that well. He answered with a Scripture that did apply directly and intentionally to Him in that very situation.

Interpretations of Scripture that do not match up with God's intended meaning in speaking it are wrong and false. Applications of Scripture that do not remain within God's original intended meaning for that text are wrong and erroneous and ultimately sinful. God is not responsible when we misinterpret His Word and find out that He does not do what we thought He would. The fault is entirely on our side, not His! Yes, this happens all the time. We have jumped into an unintended lake!

"Jesus told him (the Devil): 'For it stands written: 'WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY' " (Duet. 6.13)

The Devil has shown Jesus all the Kingdoms of the world and offered them to Him on the condition that He will worship the Devil.

"For it stands written..." Jesus used a particle here ("**for...**") to conclude the discussion, and back up His command to **"Go away, Satan."** The verbs **"worship"** and **"serve"** are in the future tense, and are often literally translated "shall worship/serve..." I have used the imperative form because this is a special use of the future tense, in which an imperative meaning is intended with a future tense form.

All the 10 commandments were actually given in this same use of the future tense in **Exodus 20**, and in **Duet 6.13**, which Jesus is quoting. (We do the same thing in English. Parents might say: "You **WILL** pick up your toys!" The point in that context is not to pick up the toys in the future, but right now!) Jesus is re-stating the most basic principle of a right relationship with God: Recognize God in awe and reverence for Who He Really IS... and there is None Other Like Him... so the Exclusive Nature of God requires exclusive worship of Him Alone.

(1) The Devil's temptation was again based upon a very clever, subtle deception. **Luke** records an additional statement of the Devil beyond Matthew that makes this more clear. **"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."** 4.6 Not really!

Consider the magnificent **"King of Glory"** Psalm, no. 24. **"The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for HE founded it upon the seas and established it upon the waters."** 24.1, 2. So, **"Who is this King of Glory?"** Most certainly not the Devil! **"The LORD Almighty-HE is the King of Glory."** 24.10 That is why **Psalm 2** records the Father (not the Devil) saying to the Son: **"Ask of Me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession."** 2.8

The Devil claimed that all these had been "delivered over" to him, but that was his trade-mark twisting of the truth. Indeed the Devil is called "The Ruler of this world" by Jesus and the Scriptures, but that is a functional recognition of the fact that the Arch-Liar succeeds in deceiving people into giving him power in their lives, NOT because God has given the Devil all authority. **IF** Jesus has succumbed to this temptation and worshipped the Devil He would have discovered that the Devil is really not in charge after all, and it all would have been for nothing! Of course, Jesus saw through this lie and blasted it away with the Truth of the Word.

(2) This temptation was Messianic, and it appealed to Jesus as a (false) chance to reach the Glory of the Throne without the suffering of the cross. The Father DID make the promise to Jesus of **Ps 2.8** above. However, verse 8 is preceded by **2.7**, which is a direct reference to the resurrection quoted several times in the New Testament (**Acts 13.33; Heb. 1.5, 5.5**). The resurrection is preceded by the suffering of the cross. Jesus later prays: **"Father, if it is possible, please take this cup from Me. Yet not my will, but yours be done."** **MT 26.30**. The offer of the Devil was not real in the first place, but it was nonetheless enormously tempting for Jesus to consider. See the Beauty, Purity, Holiness, and Righteousness of your King here, in His unwillingness to attempt to take the Crown apart from the cross.

(3) Jesus is also subtly reminding the Devil that rather than tempting Jesus, he ought to be worshipping and serving HIM! Satan knew and acknowledged that Jesus IS the Son of God through his use of the 1st class conditional statement structure: **"Since you are the Son of God..."** Therefore, not only the Father, but also the Son is worthy and due worship, as **Psalm 2.10-12** goes on to say: **"Serve the LORD with fear and rejoice with trembling. Worship the Son, lest He be angry with you..."**

Jesus has already been worshipped at His birth in **MT. 2.10** , will be in **14.32** after stilling the storm with just a word, and will ultimately be worshipped as the One with **"ALL Authority"** at the conclusion of **Matthew's gospel in 28.16-20**. So Jesus turned His temptation into a "rebuke and instruct" session for the Devil, who spurned it all.