

Luke 4:5-8

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The devil tempts Jesus a second time by offering Him immediate power and glory in exchange for worshipping him. Jesus rebukes the devil to depart and quotes Deuteronomy a second time.

The parallel gospel accounts for this passage are Matthew 4:8-10 and Mark 1:12.

Before jumping in, it is interesting to note that the second and third temptations of *Jesus* in Luke are presented in the reverse order as Matthew's. This is most likely due to Luke's original purpose of his Gospel account, which was "to write [everything] out for you in consecutive order" (Luke 1:3). Luke's Gospel account likely presents events in chronological order while Matthew probably listed the temptations thematically.

The *devil's* second temptation is the offer of giving kingly power to *Jesus* in exchange for worship. *Jesus* does not contest that Satan has the power to give *Him* rulership over the earth. But He refuses the counterfeit of passing riches, temporary position, and the fading glory of this life in exchange for eternal goods that would not fade away. *Jesus* declines the offer to take a "short cut."

And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whoever I wish" (v 5-6).

For the second temptation, the devil took *Him* to a very high mountain and showed *Him all the kingdoms of the world and its glory*. This could have been a literal mountain, or the devil could have shown these things to *Jesus* in a vision. *All the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time* could refer to all the earthly kingdoms that existed at that time—including Rome; or it could refer to *all the kingdoms* throughout the history of the world, all the kingdoms that were yet to come. Or it could be both. Each *kingdom* would involve a political power structure, with rulers and subjects. The glory of a kingdom stems from the accomplishments of its people, who serve under the sovereign. When *the devil* says *I will give You all this domain and its glory*, Satan is referring to the authority to rule over all the kingdoms.

It is important to note what *Jesus* does not say to this offer; *Jesus* does not tell *the devil* that it is impossible for him to give away *all the kingdoms of the world*. This raises the interesting reality that Satan is still the ruler of this world. *The devil* himself says of the visible *domain and its glory*, "for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." *Jesus* referred to Satan as the "ruler of this world" in John 14:30 and John 16:11. He states that by completing His work "the ruler of this world will be cast out" (John 12:31). Therefore, while Satan is currently the ruler of this world, he is a "lame duck" ruler. *The devil* still occupies the position, although he has been defeated and it is certain he will be replaced. Of course, Satan will be replaced as the ruler of this world by *Jesus*, who will become the ruler of the world as King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 19:11-16).

Satan currently has free access to both heaven and earth. We see this in the first chapter of the book of Job. We also observe in the book of Revelation that as the end approaches for the age of this world and this earth, Satan is cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-13). He ultimately is cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

“Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours” (v 7).

In exchange for becoming the ruler over all these things, *the devil* tells *Jesus* that he must fall down and *worship before* him. Matthew’s Gospel is more descriptive of *the devil*’s demand: “fall down and worship Me” (Matthew 4:9). *Jesus* knows the earth will be His to rule. But *the devil* offers a short cut—a path where *Jesus* can skip the suffering of the Cross and rule the kingdoms of the earth immediately. The logic might be “You are going to get this anyway, why not skip all that suffering and just have it now. I will gladly provide it, only acknowledge one thing, that you will now work for me instead of working for your Father.” Satan offers an easier path. An immediate path. But *Jesus* knows better than to *worship* Satan. He knows that Satan promises everything, but delivers nothing.

Interestingly, in the Garden of Gethsemane, *Jesus* will ask His Father for an easier path, perhaps similar to the one *the devil* is offering Him here in the wilderness. But *Jesus* also tells His Father that He will follow His Father’s plan rather than His own desires (Luke 22:42).

If *Jesus* were to succumb to the tempter’s offer, He would immediately become the ruler of the world for this age. However, He would have submitted to Satan and rejected God. The Bible occasionally tells us what would have happened. In this case it does not. It seems reasonable that Satan’s scheme was to avoid being displaced as “ruler of this world” if he could get the Anointed One to work for him.

By submitting to God, and steadfastly obeying Him, *Jesus* is able to endure humility and suffering, and despise the shame of the cross for the joy set before *Him* (Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 12:2). The “joy set before him” was to sit down “at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2). In realms with kings, it was a capital offense to sit in the presence of the king, unless you were also royalty. To sit down at the right hand of the throne of God is a symbol of reigning. *Jesus* waited to be installed as ruler of the world until God did it in His appointed time and manner. Therefore, *Jesus* will sit on the throne forever.

After *the devil* makes his illicit offer, *Jesus* rebukes *the devil* a second time and quotes Deuteronomy again: “*It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only’*” (v 8).

The fuller passage from Deuteronomy continues by stating the negative command not to worship other gods and ends with a warning that disobeying this command will surely provoke God’s anger and “He will wipe you off the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 6:13-15). This divine rebuke reminds *the devil* that his time to reign is short.

Biblical Text

5 And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. 6 And the devil said to Him, “I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. 7 Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours.” 8 Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.’”