

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness 2 for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. 3 And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." 4 And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'"

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.'"

9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here;

10 for it is written,

'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,'

11 and,

'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'"

12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

On the way home from church last Sunday morning Pam said that I lost her in there somewhere after Isaiah, so I'll have to figure that I lost some of you also.

The main point I was trying to get across is that the Kosmos, the world systems the worlds order, or as it were, dis-order and chaos are all being run by Satan. He does have that authority on this planet.

And there's one verse that sums that up very quickly and easily better than I could do with a morning's teaching, and that verse is 1 John 5:19;

We know that we are of God, and that the whole world is under the power of the evil one.

There's really only two groups of people in the world. *We*, us born again believers who are trusting Jesus for salvation and who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, *we are of God*. We belong to God. He owns us and He rules over us. We are His. He has seperated us from this world.

The 2nd group mentioned in that verse is inclusive. The whole world, all other human flesh except those who have a relationship with Jesus, the whole rest of the world is under the power, the authority to reign, of the evil one.

Jesus didn't argue with Satan about that. Satan is boasting when he tempts Jesus and some of what he says is empty boast.

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.

First of all the boast that he can do as he pleases with this authority to reign. Nope, we see him in the old testament and the new, asking the Almighty to grant him permission to do different things.

He has to ask permission to torment poor Job. And then a second time he has to get permission to increase the pressure on Job.

In Zechariah's prophecy he is seen accusing Joshua the high priest and God says; The Lord rebuke you Satan. The devil would have Joshua but God tells him, sorry Joshua is mine. I've snatched him out of the fire.

Satan asks permission to sift Peter like wheat. Those are just some of the references that we have that tell us, this boast that he owns this world and can give the authority to whomever he wishes; empty. Hollow boasting.

Now, how about the other claim? He can give this authority to reign to whomever he pleases because it has been handed over to him. What of that.

There is a sense that claim is a partial truth. God created the world sinless and perfect and gave the rule of everything to Adam. But when Adam sinned, there's a sense in which the world is despoiled. Defiled. It's like the value went out of it in a way.

This is a dopey example but it's like you unwrap a tootsieroll pop and your brother grabs it and puts it in his mouth and then offers it back to you. No, I don't want it now. So Satan is bragging it's been handed over to me, and really, it's a defiled place and God planned from that moment, and actually before that moment from the foundations of the world that Jesus would return and depose Satan and take this world back and return it to it's former glory, it will be a fit home for the Almighty to dwell.

But on the other hand, Jesus doesn't argue with the Devil. In fact He calls him the ruler of this world. Well, even a leper colony has a ruler. And Jesus affirms that this defiled and despoiled world full of death and

decay is ruled by the person that made it that way.

It's ironic that in this temptation Satan offers Jesus not just the dominion, the authority to reign on this earth, but he has the audacity to say, and the glory; *6 And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory;*

We read about the real glory that will be restored to this world when Jesus deposes Satan and reigns on His rightful throne for a thousand years. Incomparable to the spoiled glory of a sinful ruined world that Satan is offering in this temptation.

But I want to take a few moments before we move on to develop this idea of the authority and ownership of this world and all of it's inhabitants that Satan does in fact have.

Jesus refers to Satan 2 times as the *prince of this world*. In John 12:31 Jesus looks into the future and speaks of the accomplishment the Father will give Him for His obedience, and He speaks in the present tense as if it has already happened. And in heaven, it has. It's already done. John 12:31 *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

Then a second time in John 14:30 Jesus refers to Satan as the prince of this world. On the night of His betrayal as darkness closes in He says; *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world is coming, and has nothing in me.*

A very important distinction in that verse. Yes Satan is the prince of this world, but Satan holds power of his human subjects by sin. He is also called the accuser of the saints. And that's how Satan claims ownership. Sin. These belong to me because of sin. He makes that claim on every human. Sin equals power and ownership.

That's the sense that this world and all of it's power has been handed over to him. It's defiled by sin, and God will not have sin in His presence. So Satan owns every sinner. Every man, except one.

Only one man ever born can say the prince of this world is coming, but he has nothing in me. The accuser can't accuse one man. One sinless man. One perfect life. Satan has no claim.

And for those of us who are in Christ . . . no claim. We can say with Jesus; he has nothing in me, if and only if our sinful stain has been removed and bourn away at the cross on the one perfect man, and God has imputed to us, His perfection.

That is a positional truth. Practically, I still sin. But positionally, I am in Christ, and His perfect righteousness has been imputed to me, positionally, but some day, when I see His face, that becomes practical truth too.

Satan can accuse, and he's got plenty to accuse me about. No shortage of sin. And the accuser is saying, this Jim is full of sin. He did this and this and this, and sadly, he could go on and on.

But because of the one man who Satan had nothing on, has taken my sin and given me His righteousness, God will say; and I'll read this directly from the prophet Zechariah chapter 3, and you can substitute my name and your name for Joshua's because this is how it will go down with the accuser of the saints;

I Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him.

That little scenario could be duplicated for every saint. Satan at the right hand saying, he's a sinner, he belongs to me, and God saying, well, we'll just read on how this goes down.

2 The LORD said to Satan, “The LORD rebuke you, Satan! Indeed, the LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?” 3 Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments and standing before the angel. 4 He spoke and said to those who were standing before him, saying, “Remove the filthy garments from him.” Again he said to him, “See, I have taken your iniquity away from you and will clothe you with festal robes.” 5 Then I said, “Let them put a clean turban on his head.” So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments, while the angel of the LORD was standing by.

Satan the boaster, bragging that the spoiled world has been handed over to him. In that scenario I just read, the word in vs. 3 that explains that Joshua was clothed in filthy garments, the word for filthy is the same word that would describe open sewage. You get the idea.

So on the one hand you have Satan boasting of all his kingdoms and their glory, and on the other, we get a glimpse of God's point of view, and the glory Satan has to offer is sewage. Defilement. Gross. Sin is vile stuff.

Paul refers to Satan as the prince of the power of the air in Ephesians 2:2 *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:*

He rules this world and devises wickedness, schemes that keep his slaves blinded. But he has no sin to accuse Jesus of, and his big shot at tempting Jesus and getting something that he can accuse the Son of God over, is not going so well.

We'll pick it up in vs. *9 And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, “If You are the Son*

of God, throw Yourself down from here;

The pinnacle of the temple would be a wall that bordered the eastern wall of Jerusalem and beyond the wall a steep ravine so that the total fall would be in the neighborhood of 450 feet. Instant death for normal men.

And Jesus is 100% human. He has no super-human strengths like the comic book super hero's. He would be just as dead as anyone else if he did what Satan was suggesting.

But here we learn something incredibly important about Satan and God's revealed truth.

Jesus has responded to every other temptation with what? It is written . . . it is written . . . it is written, over and over we hear Him say that like a broken record.

The Jews would challenge Him and he would say "have you not read . . . " and that one was particularly sarcastic because that's all they did do was study the minutiae of the books. Not just the inspired revealed books, but also all of the layers and layers of baloney added to it by their traditions of the elders.

But Satan loves to use God's revealed truth but with a caveat. He twists it to mean something different than what God meant when He revealed it. This is Satan's oldest trick. He used it in the garden with poor Eve. Hath God said?? And then he twists it up and spits it back out as a lie.

So Satan says to Jesus, if you like to quote the book so much, let's quote the book. Throw yourself off this temple . . .

10 for it is written,

'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO

GUARD YOU,'

11 and,

*'ON their HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP,
SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A
STONE.'"*

You can make the Bible say anything you want it to if you twist and contort the words out of context from their original intent. It's like the old joke; *Judas hanged himself* (Matthew 27:5). "*Go and do likewise*" (Luke 10:37). "*That thou doest, do quickly*" (John 13:27).

And Satan is busier than ever today doing just that. Twisting the scripture to not mean what God meant and to make things OK that aren't OK.

I was reading a column in the opinion section of the Washington Post this week that said basically, why are you mad at the guys in Virginia. The Pences are worse. Their sin of discrimination against the LGBTQ community is a worse evil than what the two idiots in Virginia did. Get with it people. Real Christians who honor God's intent in His authoritative revealed truth are the worst offenders.

And then they tell you, Jesus would never act like that. Like the vice president and his wife. Jesus loves everyone. He doesn't exclude anyone.

Oh, really. This book is telling me He's going to exclude almost everybody from His kingdom and His glory. He's going to return and judge wickedness, according to this book. Wickedness defined in this book.

That's Satan at work, twisting God's truth, and he's busier than ever before. I'm the bad guy because I believe the crystal clear truths of this

book and I not only believe them, I will tell you they have far more authority than the supreme court.

So beware. Satan will throw the book at you, and if you are ignorant of this book, like I said two weeks ago. You'll be snacky food for the devil.

Jesus! You're the Son of God. Redemption depends on you. Throw yourself off of here and prove it. If you really are who you say you are, God will send His angels to catch you before you hit the bottom. He'll have to, or His plan of redemption is over.

Not only that, but when He does catch you in thin air by His angels, just think about how everybody will believe in you after THAT!

It all sounds pretty good doesn't it. Satan has got theology all figured out.

Satan is quoting scripture. This is from Psalm 91. Let's read a bit from that Psalm so we can understand the context; Psalm 91

*1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
Will abide in the shadow of the Almighty.*

*2 I will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress,
My God, in whom I trust!"*

*3 For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper
And from the deadly pestilence.*

*4 He will cover you with His pinions,
And under His wings you may seek refuge;
His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.*

5 You will not be afraid of the terror by night,

- Or of the arrow that flies by day;*
- 6 Of the pestilence that stalks in darkness,
Or of the destruction that lays waste at noon.*
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side
And ten thousand at your right hand,
But it shall not approach you.*
- 8 You will only look on with your eyes
And see the recompense of the wicked.*
- 9 For you have made the LORD, my refuge,
Even the Most High, your dwelling place.*
- 10 No evil will befall you,
Nor will any plague come near your tent.*
- 11 For He will give His angels charge concerning you,
To guard you in all your ways.*
- 12 They will bear you up in their hands,
That you do not strike your foot against a stone.*
- 13 You will tread upon the lion and cobra,
The young lion and the serpent you will trample down.*
- 14 “Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him;
I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name.*
- 15 “He will call upon Me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble;
I will rescue him and honor him.*

*16 “With a long life I will satisfy him
And let him see My salvation.”*

What we have here is the calamity of the judgement of the wicked. Every kind of calamity possible. Pestilence and arrows and falling mountains and everything the Lord can throw at His enemies. Not pretty.

But what about the people who have hidden themselves in God, who have trusted Him for forgiveness, who belong to Him?

The world is coming apart around you, but if you belong to Him . . . it's like what Jesus said in Luke 12; *16 “But you will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death, 17 and you will be hated by all because of My name. 18 “Yet not a hair of your head will perish.*

They will put some of you to death . . . yet not a hair of your head will perish. How does that work? Well, it works just exactly how Sovereign God, the King of Kings wants it to work.

If you belong to Jesus, all they can do is kill you. But God is in authority over anything that Satan can do to you. Satan can't touch one hair on one head of those who belong to God. But there will be thousands and thousands of martyrs.

God is sovereign over it all, and He will protect all who belong to Him, according to what? His sovereign will. His will.

Now does Jesus throwing himself off the pinnacle of the temple fall into anything like what we just described? Do you think it's sovereign God's will for Jesus to do that because Satan mis-quoted some verses?

You hear these stories of missionaries who were imprisoned and tortured

who spent long tormented time in solitary confinement in some black hole, and they share that it crossed their minds that if they made a break for it and started running for freedom, some guard in some tower would gun them down and it would all be over, right?

It's very similar to what Satan suggests Jesus do. In both cases, you have side stepped the sovereign will of God and taken actions in your own hands. Outside the will of God.

Throw yourself down Jesus. It'll be like angel bungie jumping. They'll have to catch you to keep God's plan on track. No redemption if you hit the ground, so the angels will be forced to intervene.

I've got news for you. As soon as Jesus does one act outside of His Father's sovereign will, redemption is over anyways. Satan has taken the Psalm about God's protection of those He owns and loves and said, Make Him Prove It.

Faith says, His Word is all the proof we need. I may be martyred some day, that would be an honor, but not a hair will perish until God gives the command to allow it.

12 And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'"

Putting God to the test is . . . it's the polar opposite of faith. OK, God, you said it, but I don't believe it, so I'm going to jump off the pinnacle and we'll find out if it's true or not.

That's a sin. God said His angels would bear you up. I think I've proved it a few times doing stupid stuff that kids do. And adults. Passing people on a two lane road with a 4 cylinder Ford Ranger may have needed an angel or two from time to time.

There may have been thousands of times angels bore me up and protected me, that I don't have a clue about. I believe every word of that Psalm. I'm not going to jump off the top of the court house to bolster my dis-belief. Even if Satan tells me it's a good idea.

Jesus quotes Moses here from Deuteronomy 6:16 *“You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.*

OK. What happened at Massah? We need to study to find out what the context of what Moses told the people here is. Anybody know how the people tested God at Massah? It must be important, because Moses said it and Jesus quoted it. Don't put God to the test.

So we need to go back to Exodus 17 and read so that we can understand what it means: to put the Lord your God to the test. Exodus 17:

1 Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. 2 Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” 3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” 4 So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.” 5 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. 6 “Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. 7 He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us, or not?”

Ok, this seems like a legitimate complaint. People and animals cannot survive without water.

How many had died of thirst before they began complaining to Moses? Anyone care to venture a guess? They were thirsty, but how many had died at this point? Zero recorded deaths from thirst.

But they're angry at Moses. And Moses is like, help me out here, Lord, a bit longer and these folks will murder me. Where's the water?

We'll never find out, will we, what God's solution would have been if the people had trusted Him and not complained and taken things in their own hands. About to kill poor Moses. Accusing him of planning evil against them.

I'm thinking if they hadn't complained, rainstorm. Put the pots out, God will fill 'em up. And next day a big old river to camp next to. But they didn't believe God or Moses. The test is in vs. 7. *they tested the LORD, saying, "Is the LORD among us, or not?"*

Jesus tells Satan, I will not prove to you the answer to that question by taking a swan dive off the temple.

Jesus said, I will never leave you nor will I forsake you. Do we take that at face value and put our trust in it because the book says it's true, or do we light the church on fire and see if God will put it out.

It is a wickedness and sin to disbelieve in the Lord's love and benevolence and care for you. You may not always like His time schedule. You may be thirsty, like the Israelites in the desert. But we do not put God to the test by saying; *Is the Lord among us, or not?* He said in His book He IS. To question the book . . . is sin.

13 When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Jesus, victorious! Jesus never sinned. Not once. Perfect righteousness is His, and He offers it freely, to me, and to you. I want to be that guy in Psalm 91 that's hiding myself in Him.