

Transcripts of  
**The SATANIC  
ALTERNATIVE**

A Lecture Series by R.J. Rushdoony



**R.J. RUSHDOONY**

(1916–2001)

Rev. R.J. Rushdoony (1916–2001), was a leading theologian, church/state expert, and author of numerous works on the application of Biblical law to society. He started the Chalcedon Foundation in 1965. His Institutes of Biblical Law (1973) began the contemporary theonomy movement which posits the validity of Biblical law as God's standard of obedience for all. He therefore saw God's law as the basis of the modern Christian response to the cultural decline, one he attributed to the church's false view of God's law being opposed to His grace. This broad Christian response he described as "Christian Reconstruction." He is credited with igniting the modern Christian school and homeschooling movements in the mid to late 20th century. He also traveled extensively lecturing and serving as an expert witness in numerous court cases regarding religious liberty. Many ministry and educational efforts that continue today, took their philosophical and Biblical roots from his lectures and books.

Learn more about R.J. Rushdoony by visiting: <https://chalcedon.edu/founder>

# The First Temptation: Stones Into Bread

R.J. Rushdoony

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we come to thee again mindful that because our times are in thy hands and thou doest all things well, thou art our strength and our refuge, a very present help in times of need. We thank thee that in thee, we can face all our tomorrows in confidence, and so, our Father, we come. Bless us by thy word and by thy Holy Spirit, and grant us thy peace, In Jesus name, Amen.

Our scripture is St. Matthew 4:1-4; The First Temptation of Christ.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

As we have analyzed the society of Satan, we have seen that basic to the society of Satan is the insistence that not man, but God must change. That in the society of Satan, man confronts God with an ultimatum and says; “Be converted to our way of life! Be converted to our will, to our demands!” In the society of Satan, therefore, not man but God must change, and God must serve and glorify the creature, and man’s demand is for a paradise that is characterized simply by plenty, and abundance, a material abundance. This is what man demands; “give me my heart’s desire, all the things materially that I crave and hunger for, and then I shall be happy.” And yet, the very results of this world’s own studies indicate that there is nothing that leads to greater unhappiness among men than the fulfillment of their desires.

Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist, by no means a trustworthy guide, has nonetheless recognized that plenty leads to destructiveness, both societal and personal. That when man gets what he wants, instead of being happy, he becomes so thoroughly unhappy that he becomes destructive; destructive of his own life and of the world around him, and even among men who are moderately well-off. A common characteristic of our world today is what has been called; ‘Sunday neurosis,’ an inability of man to face himself, to be alone, to rest. The sickness of man is due to the purposelessness of his life. He associates life with bread, with economics, with satisfaction of his material wants, and having these things, he finds himself progressively more and more unable to live.

When Adam and Eve were tempted, they were in paradise. By succumbing to the temptation of Satan, they changed the world from a garden to a wilderness in which sin and death have ever since ruled, and thus it was fitting that our Lord should be tempted in the wilderness, and by withstanding, as the second Adam, the temptation of Satan, he began the recreation of paradise. Paradise Regained, Milton quite properly termed the victory of Christ over Satan. Christ was in the wilderness, and the Tempter came to him and said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread,” and the first half of that statement is a very interesting one in itself. “If thou be the Son of God.” “If,” conditional, probable, possible, not certainly. “If thou be...” implying doubt. Moreover,

more literally, the statement reads not “the” but “a.” “If thou be a Son of God...” In other words; “If you are one Son among many, “I am a son,” said Satan, “and others are sons of God. We are the true sons of God as it were. We know what the kingdom should be. God the Father has grown a little bit foolish with age, and we, the true sons, know what the kingdom should be. If thou be a son, if you are ready to join our ranks as one of those who understands and knows what the true kingdom should be, then prove that you are of this circle. Command that these stones be made bread.”

After all, if you have miraculous powers, why not use them? People are starving all over the world, and what kind of a savior are you if you’re going to let people drop dead of hunger in China, and India, Africa, and Europe, all over the world? How can you call yourself a son of God when you permit these things to go on?

“If thou be a Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

Satan’s concept of the kingdom is, in part, economics; be a social reformer. Gain instantaneous acceptance by giving the people what they want, give them a social gospel. Men in every age are demanding a satisfaction to their material wants. They are hungry. They feel the pressure of the debt collector. Their income is limited, and they face a perpetual rat-race as they try to keep up with the growing inflation, and at the very time that Satan was tempting Christ, Rome was inflating its currency and the whole Empire was feeling the impact of a false prosperity, and a creeping inflation.

“Here are real problems,” Satan said. “Do you mean to say you’re going to bypass all of these real problems? Real problems of real people? Do you mean to say you’re going to let them drop dead in the streets, of hunger, and you don’t have a program for them? Prove you are the Messiah! Be the Messiah, the kind of Messiah Israel wants. Then, you truly belong to the inner circle of those who understand. Then you’re one of the enlightened sons of God who truly have a capacity for ruling.

“If thou be a son of God, command that these stones be made bread.”

“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Even as our Lord spoke, there were those false messiahs around him. In the capital of Rome, the Caesars were offering bread and circuses, controls, subsidies, inflation, pouring their every effort into economic salvation for Rome. Their concept of economic salvation was the welfare state, the ‘Great Society’ of Rome, and our Lord answered by quoting scripture. His answer to every temptation was, “It is written..., It is written..., It is written...”

In this instance, he quotes from the books of Moses; referring to Deuteronomy 8:2-3 and Exodus 16:4. The reference is Exodus is to manna, and Moses, in declaring that; “...man shall not live by bread alone...,” was commenting upon the incident in the wilderness with reference to manna. Israel had left Egypt through the power of God. God had delivered them. He had confounded the power of Egypt, destroyed Egypt, destroyed the army of Egypt in the Red Sea crossing, taken care of them miraculously, and the moment they faced a problem, they began to complain against God, and against Moses. “We’ve been led out here in the wilderness to starve to death,” and God gave them manna, and he declared that he gave it; “That I may prove them whether they will walk in my law or no.” Manna was given by God in the wilderness to teach his providential care, and to produce faith, and as a rebuke to them. “To humble thee,” God said, to teach faith, to teach them that their every step was in the hands of God and they were totally dependent upon God, that they had been delivered by God from Egypt every step of the way, and how dare they distrust him now. He was able to cause the heavens to open up and food to rain upon them. Could they not have faith in such a God? but they refused to have

faith.

The purpose of manna was to bring them to an acceptance of faith as the principle of relationship with God, to recognize the omnipotence and the power of God, that the God who can do this can do all things, and this is a principle we, too, must accept. The God who gave his only begotten Son to die for us, can also care for us, and it's no problem to him. When he has already made the supreme sacrifice of the death of his only begotten Son, it is no great task for him to minister to our little needs, but Israel took not faith but manna, bread, as the basis of a relationship, and demanded more manna and less faith, and this, in the end, became Israel's fate. In manna, not in God. In economic fulfillment, not in the creator.

Thus, The Apocalypse of Baruch declared;

"The earth will bring forth fruit, one producing ten-thousand. In the vine, there will be a thousand branches, in every branch a thousand clusters, in every cluster a thousand berries, and every berry will yield thirty-six gallons of wine."

This was their dream of the world when the Messiah came. The Book of Enoch said;

"In those days will the whole earth be tilled in righteousness, and vines will be planted on it. The vine which is planted thereon will yield wine in abundance, and of all seed which is sewn thereon will each measure bear ten thousand."

In other words, when the Messiah comes, our wildest dreams will be fulfilled. We will rule the world. We will have no problems, and our vineyards will be so lush that every berry of grape will give thirty-six gallons of wine. Now, that's the kind of world the Messiah will give us; not faith but manna.

This same dream, incidentally, crept in among Christians in all kinds of millennial expectancies, and Paul warned Titus against these Jewish fables in Titus 1:14. This was the Jewish expectation after the first feeding of the multitude. Our Lord created out of one small boy's lunch enough food to feed a vast multitude of men, plus many women and children, and we are told by John in his sixth chapter that the multitude sought to take him by force and compel him to be king. "This is the kind of king we want, one who can produce food out of nothing. This kind of king can give us cradle-to-grave security. This kind of king will usher in the Great Society just by saying the word, this is our man," and they sought by force to make him king, and he rejected them and rebuked them, and declared he wanted no part of them nor would he be their king, because he said; "Ye did eat of the loaves and were filled." Ye worship not me but your full stomachs, not God but economics, and they struck back at this rebuke and retorted, John 6:31; "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness as it is written. He gave them bread from heaven to eat." In other words; "Moses fed us forty years in the wilderness. Now, you're acting high and mighty, and independent of us, and what have you done? Just fed a crowd once. Who are you to exalt yourself above us?" And Jesus answered in John 6:48-51;

"I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

The Israelites in the desert had the fulfillment of economic dreams and they died in the wilderness, an apostate generation. God abandoned them, and saved out of them only Caleb and Joshua, and what is there in economics? "I offer the bread of life of; myself. Salvation from sin and death, and I offer it on my terms. You seek to make me king, but you cannot make me your king." Men cannot command

God, man cannot choose God. God chooses him. This is the wickedness of some revivalism which tells people that salvation is their choosing God, when Christ says; “Ye have not chosen me but I have chosen you,” and we are here today because God has chosen us, has regenerated us, has worked in our hearts and made us delight in him and in his Word. It is his doing, his saving, his choosing.

Jesus Christ, as that perfect savior, as very man of very man, and very God of very God, refused to give unto them manna, bread, and he refuses to give us manna, bread, economics, paradise on earth apart from himself, because it is a poor substitute for himself, and it leaves us still in sin and in death.

Today, our hearts cry out too often for bread, for manna, for an economic answer, not for life. Too often they cry out for material things instead of more faith, more of Christ in us, and the scripture tells us concerning material things that our Father in heaven knows that we have need of all these things, and that certainly we need them, and our Lord, in the temptation did not deny them. He said; “Man shall not live by bread alone.” He needs bread, but he cannot live by bread alone, “...but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” This is the essence of man’s life, this is the certainty, the assurance. “Every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” and our Father in heaven, as a loving Father, will not give us a stone for the true bread, Jesus Christ, nor will he give us the false bread that perishes to keep us from the true manna, Jesus Christ. The hope of the world is not in economics, not in solution to social problems met with bread and economic security, but Jesus Christ.

We had, after all, the solution to the economic problems in this country, did we not? We established it as a free country, under a Constitution that was thoroughly Christian, and we had as ideal a situation as the world has seen since the Garden of Eden, but as men left Jesus Christ, they turned what was the nearest thing to paradise, into a country polluted and perverted, and if suddenly the clock were turned back, and all the conditions of the 1830’s again prevailed, in two or three year’s time, it would be no different than now, men, being what they are.

We, as Christians, are denied our cry for help at times that we might be weaned from the manna that perishes, and be fed on the true manna, Jesus Christ, and even as we often deny our children things that they passionately desire, because we know what is best for them, so our God often denies us things we passionately desire because he knows what is best for us, and knows that our eyes must be first fixed there where our true joys are to be found, even in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Therefore, we need to give heed to the words of the Apostle James;

“Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials. For ye know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness, and let steadfastness have its full effect that it may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing...”

And we, in these days, are indeed undergoing that trial of faith, that we might recognize that the answer to the future is not in economics, but in Jesus Christ, and in every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, that when we have that foundation, Jesus Christ, and then build in terms of that, by the Word of God, we have the answer to the problems of capital and labor, the problems of money, the problems of family, all of man’s problems, because the every word of God speaks clearly, plainly, and powerfully concerning all these things.

Therefore, let us summon men and let us turn ourselves more and more, day by day, unto Jesus Christ, who declares himself to be the manna

“...which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give as my flesh which I give for the life of the world... I am the bread of life... Lord, ever more give

us this bread.”

Let us pray.

Our Lord and our God, we give thanks unto thee that thou hast fed us with the true manna, Jesus Christ, and that in him we have victory over the power of sin and death. In him, we have the assurance that Christ, having died for us, will do yet more and care for us. Teach us, therefore, to cast our every care upon him, knowing he careth for us. Give us grace to walk in the confidence that He who began a new creation, that is victory over Satan, will make all things new, and His is the victory, His kingdom shall prevail. Our God, we thank thee. In Jesus name. Amen.

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**ENDNOTES:**

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1. Rev. Canon R.H. Charles. The Apocalypse of Baruch. London: SPCK, 1918, 53.
2. Charles, R. H., ed. (1913). Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament (Vol. 2, p. 195). Clarendon Press.

# The Second Temptation: Faith versus Sight

R.J. Rushdoony

Let us begin with prayer. We thank thee, our Father, that we can come to thee in the confidence that thou art he dost hear and answer prayer. We thank thee, our Father, that as we face our todays and our tomorrows, we can rest in the assurance that because our times are in thy hands, we can rest and work, and wait in confidence. Teach us, our Father, to take hands off our lives and to commit them into thy keeping, to cease from fretting, to be still and to know that thou art God. Bless us now as we study thy word and grant us thy peace. In Jesus name. Amen.

Our scripture this afternoon is from the Gospel of St. Matthew 4:1-7;

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

The temple is the focal point of the second temptation. In the first temptation, Satan said to our Lord; “If thou be a Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.” In other words, satisfy the economic wants of the people. Give them cradle-to-grave security. Make it unnecessary for them to have any kind of economic problem and prove thereby that you are a fit Messiah for mankind, because this, said Satan, is mankind’s real problem. And so the temptation was to be a political messiah with an economic program, a program of cradle-to-grave security, and our Lord rejected this temptation.

The second temptation, closely allied to the first, had reference to the temple.

“Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.”

The temple has an important part in biblical history. It was preceded by the tabernacle. “And God declared,” in Exodus 25:8; “And let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.” God, as the invisible king of Israel, had his palace in the form of the tabernacle at the center of the camp, as the center of all their life. The Holy of Holies was his throne room, and from thence he ruled as the King of Israel. True, no place, neither tabernacle or temple, could ever contain God, and this they fully knew. Indeed, in the prayer of dedication at the temple, Solomon said; “But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have built!” And yet, the Holy of Holies was God’s throne room in a special sense, and a place of meeting between himself and the chosen representative of his people, and from thence the

sacrifice, the proclamation of the law, the declaration of the righteousness and the purposes of God.

But the people came to trust in form rather than reality, and we find this continually round about us. Every Sunday, millions of Americans worship in countless churches where they have a form of godliness but where the power thereof is entirely lacking. They are beautiful structures, and they can say even as the people of Jerusalem said; "We have the truth priesthood, the priesthood from Levi," or "We have Apostolic succession," or "We have the true creed," and so on and so forth. They have the form but not the reality, and they are content with the form, the form of the faith, the form of Americanism, the form.

People content themselves with these things, and Jeremiah, in the very years before the Fall of Jerusalem, warned the people saying, in Jeremiah 7:4; "Trust ye not in lying words saying The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord." This was their attitude; "the temple of the Lord is with us, we are God's people, we are the cream of all creation, how could anything happen to us? How can we suffer or undergo captivity, or our nation be overthrown in view of these things?" And the warning of Jeremiah was; "...trust ye not in lying words," the temple shall be destroyed. And Jesus, as he left the temple for the very last time, turned to his disciples in Matthew 24:2, and pointed to the temple and said; "See not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." And it happened. Not a stone left standing upon another.

The whole of the temple, a structure that had been years and years in construction, a huge edifice, some of the courts of which alone could seat, or contain, 5,000 and more people was totally destroyed, every stone systematically taken down by the Romans, and the whole area sown with salt, plowed up, because of their anger at its bitter resistance, and this, too, in terms of a fundamental principle of all of scripture; judgment begins at the house of God, this is the word of God. Judgment begins as the house of God, and so it is, over and over and over again, God takes a people, and God takes a church that has the form but not the reality, and there begins his judgment, because they're an offense to Him. They have so much and are so little.

Satan came to our Lord, and said;

"If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down (from this, the pinnacle of the temple): for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

The answer of our Lord to Satan, the first time, was; "It is written." He stood in terms of scripture, and so Satan comes back at him with scripture; "If it's scripture you want, I'll give you scripture!" but he misquotes the psalms, because the psalmist, in a messianic psalm, declares that the Messiah, in the discharge of his duty and the proclamation of God's word and God's warning, should be fully protected, so that God would not suffer him to dash his foot against a stone. The scriptures indeed declare that the Messiah, in the fullness of time, would give his life a ransom for many, and we know that more than once before the appointed time, the leaders of the people purposed to take him and to kill him, but on one occasion very early in his ministry, a mob sought to take him and throw him off the edge of a cliff, but God did not suffer him to dash his foot against a stone before the appointed time, and the words of the psalmist simply said that in the discharge of his ministry, he would be under the total protection and providence of God. It did not say that he had the right to make demonstrations by throwing himself from a pinnacle of the temple and expecting the angels to catch him before he hit the ground, this is what Satan called for.

Here, in the temple, you will have crowds to witness this miracle. On almost any day, the crowds in the temple ran into the thousands upon thousands. On many an occasion, there would be crowds of sev-



eral hundred thousand pouring in and out of the temple area, the many courts and grounds, because it covered many acres. What a dramatic occasion for such a miracle! These pilgrims coming from all parts of the world here to Jerusalem. Think of the impact! Cast thyself down. Why? Make it unnecessary for them to have faith. Give them scientific knowledge. Enable them to walk by sight. Prove to them that you are able to command supernatural power, and to do anything on demonstration so that it is unnecessary for them to have faith.

In the first temptation; make it unnecessary for men to face any kind of problems in this world, give them cradle-to-grave security. In the second temptation, make it unnecessary for man to be tested and tried and put to the acid test of his faith, to be compelled to walk by faith, as seeing the invisible, but enable him to see it, and our Lord answered; "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." The word 'tempt' has, as an important aspect of its meaning, and central here, the idea of 'test' or 'trial.' You shall not test, or put to a trial, the Lord your God.

Now, what Satan proposed was a complete reversal of the whole order of being. God can put man to the test, to the trial. God can say to man; "I am that I am. I am the omnipotent, all righteous, all wise God, and you must walk by faith, that because I am God, the very nature of the universe will sustain you as you walk in confidence, in obedience to me, in righteousness and holiness, and in godly knowledge." But what Satan says is that it should be the other way around, God must have faith in man, and man has the right to say to God, "I am righteous, and holy, and perfect, and good, and every intention I have is perfectly wonderful, and you must believe in me in spite of what you see me do, you must believe no matter what I do, no matter what sin I commit, that my heart is perfect, and I'm alright within, and therefore, you must have faith; faith in me, no matter what test I put your faith to, no matter what I put you through in the course of my life. You, God, must have faith in me." This is the implication, the plain meaning of the temptation. Satan says; "Thou shalt put the Lord thy God to trial. Thou shalt tempt him. Thou shalt test him, to purify him."

Now, the meaning of 'pure' is a very interesting one. Our word for 'pure' is a different one than the Latin, so it fails to convey the accurate biblical meaning. When we talk about purity, our word comes from the Latin 'puris' which means 'fresh, virginal, untouched,' as it were, cellophane-wrapped, but that's the not the Biblical meaning. The Latin word conveys the idea of a new-born lamb, something young and untouched, and unspotted by the world. But the Biblical meaning for 'pure' is associated with gray hairs, and with age, because the Biblical word for 'pure' is literally 'refined, tested by fire,' and it refers to the same kind of process used in smelting gold, thrown into the fire so that all the impurities are burned out. And, in the Biblical sense, purity is not something that belongs to the child, but to the man or woman of grey hairs that is tested, and has stood the testing, and the dross is being burned out, and the gold is increasingly in evidence, and what Satan says is; "God does not have the right to try us, God does not have the right to test us, to require us to have faith in him, and to produce the gold in us, but we shall tempt the Lord our God, we shall put him to the test to see if there is any gold in him, if he believes in us. That's the test." And our Lord said; "It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Again, he quoted scripture. In this case, Deuteronomy 6;16-18, wherein Moses said;

"Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah. Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee. And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord: that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers."

And Moses, in so speaking, was referring as he stated, to Massah. "Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah."

This has reference to the incident described in Exodus in which the children of Israel, as they journeyed through the wilderness, according to Exodus 17, found themselves faced with a stretch in their journey where there was no water. They had been delivered miraculously, repeatedly, again and again and again by God, but this was not enough for them, and so they cried out, they complained about the fact that; “Here we are. No water right here where we’re camping. It might be miles to the next point where there is water,” and so they said; “Is the Lord among us or not?” Exodus 17 said; “Is the Lord among us or not? If God is with us, then let him demonstrate himself. How dare he ask us to walk by faith. How dare he put us to the test here in the wilderness. We must have perfect security, or we want no part of him.”

Men still say, “Is the Lord among us or not?” And they try to build churches and societies which will give them what they want, signs of God’s presence, because the God they worship is a God whom they can put to the test. And they are content, therefore, with a society which gives them everything and asks nothing of them. Which says; “We will provide you with cradle-to-grave security. We will give you beautiful churches where you will be lulled into complacency by a beautiful choir, and an organ, and lovely architecture, where you will feel that this is a world without any testing, and nothing will ever trouble you. Nothing.” This is the world they want, and if they cannot find a God or a false god to give it to them, they go to politicians and ask for it, this society of Satan. A world in which they can say; “Is the Lord among us or not.” And the sign that there is a God is cradle-to-grave security. No problems, no testing, no trial for man, God alone can be put to the test. Therefore, let the Lord show himself if he be God in healings, in numbers, in pomp and circumstance, and everything our heart desires! And if there is going to be a true social order, a godly social order, it’s got to provide us with everything also, or we deny that it is Christian. And so it is we live in a world today in which people increasingly are incapable of taking the faintest trial, because it’s not the kind of world they believe in.

Some years ago, I came very near having a serious accident when I was driving down a highway, and the car in front of me, driven by a woman, stopped suddenly, I stopped in time to avoid anything serious. I just barely touched her rear bumper, and the truck driver in back of me barely stopped in time to avoid wiping me out, and there was quite a bit of brakes behind him. What had happened? The woman in front of me had three dogs on the front seat with her, and the one dog was having the sniffles and she was rushing him to the vet and it was a traumatic experience for her, and the dog whimpered suddenly, and; “it was more than she could bear,” she said, and she just had to stop immediately and pick him up. This is not unusual.

Within the past week, I heard of one party, not too far from here, where the guests did not see much of their host or hostess, they were in the back room all evening, their dog was not well. This is the kind of world people want, really, in varying degrees. Some may laugh at this kind of extreme, because that’s not their cup of tea, but they want a world in which there are no problems, in which all the problems have to be on God’s side, bearing with us, and believing in us in the face of all these things, a world in which, if anything goes wrong, they can say; “Is the Lord with us or not?” A world in which they reserve the right to put God to the test at any time so they can say to him; “Prove yourself to us!” But the Lord does not reveal himself to us except through His word, the scripture, and His incarnate word, His Son Jesus Christ, and he declares unto us from of old through the mouth of his prophet Zechariah, Habakkuk, and others, through the mouth of our Lord, St. Paul, and the Apostles; “The just shall live by faith.”

When St. Thomas fell at our Lord’s feet, having seen the nail prints in his hands, and the spear thrust in his side, and said; “My Lord and my God,” our Lord said; “Blessed are they who having not seen, shall believe.” The blessings upon faith.

Thus, we are called upon to walk by faith, to know that because it is we who are the creatures and not God, it is we who shall be tested and tried. But if we stand in the testing and trial, we shall be purified, become sanctified, become increasingly gold in the sight of God, and we shall be blessed, and; “The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow to it.

Therefore, the summons of the Gospel is not; “Come and see this scientific demonstration of the Lord, and accept it,” but; “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. Thou and thine household.” Let us pray.

Our Lord and our God, we give thanks unto thee for thy word, and we thank thee that thy testing of us is not beyond that which we are able to take, that thou art mindful of our frailties, and loving in thy discipline, and unto the end that we may stand before thee, perfected in Christian manhood. Bless us, O Lord, in thy service, and in thy calling. In Jesus name, Amen.

# The Third Temptation: Him Only Shalt Thou Serve

R.J. Rushdoony

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we come to thee with thanksgiving and gratitude, because thou art our God. We come to thee giving thanks for all past and present mercies, asking thee to give us faith and grace, to cast our every care upon thee, knowing thou carest for us. Thou knowest, our Father, how often, as we face the monstrous wickedness around us, we become fretful, and we take ungodly thought concerning the morrow. We trouble ourselves and we fret in vain. Give us grace, therefore, our Father, to trust in thee, to commit our ways unto thee knowing that thou art able, that having given thine only begotten Son to die for us, thou wilt do yet more, and care for us. Teach us to trust in thee. In Jesus name, Amen.

Our scripture lesson is Matthew 4:1-11.

“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”

We have been analyzing the three temptations of our Lord. As Satan confronted him and offered to him, as he had to Adam and Eve, and to the many sons of Adam, the Satanic society as the answer to all man's problems.

In the first temptation; “turn these stones into bread.” His temptation was; “...give people as their salvation, cradle-to-grave security. You have the power, you can turn the stones of the mountainside into bread, you can create food out of nothing, you can minister to all man's problems. How dare you allow people to go hungry when you have this power. If thou art truly the Son of God, the Messiah, turn these stones into bread! Prove yourself! and then cast thyself down from the temple. Perform miracles as needed, make it unnecessary for people to have faith. Make it possible for them to walk by sight, and, moreover, make it your principle that it is wrong ever for God to test man. It is man who has the

right instead, to test God.”

Then came the third temptation, the greatest. We must remember, in the face of all these temptations, that our Lord, though without sin, we are told; “was at all points tempted like as we are.” At no point did he succumb, but these temptations were real. He felt the appeal of them, he felt indeed, the hunger of the people, and how easy it would have been for him to ministered to that hunger. He recognized the trial that faith involves, how easy it would have been for him to provide the sight. Now the temptation came;

“...the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”

Christ had been called to be king, king of all the world; “King of kings and Lord of lords,” and here he was offered all these things by means of a short-cut, the easy way, and when he was taken up to a high mountain and shown in an instant in vision of all the kingdoms of the world, all the kingdoms of his day, the kingdoms and empires that were to follow; the Holy Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the British Empire, the Portuguese, the Spanish Empires, the United States, the USSR, all these things, all his. Quickly, easily, without the cross. All these things will I give thee, and then he felt, too, the intense desire of his own people, Israel, for that kingdom ruled by a son of David. This was their perversion of scripture. This was their hope, and our Lord was the legal heir to the throne of David. As the legal son of Joseph, he was the legal heir to the throne of David. He had a right to it through his legal father and through his mother. No one else could contest or challenge him in that claim.

Thus, although his estate was a very humble one, he was the legal heir. He had been brought up in the common education of his day, in a thorough study of the Old Testament scriptures and of the history of Israel, and he shared all the intense feelings that were naturally those of any son of Israel, of any Hebrew. He shared all the feelings of pride in those who were his ancestors of the line of David. David, Solomon, Jeroboam, Hezekiah, all the great kings whose wealth had been so splendid, whose power so far-reaching. He was the heir to these things, and make no mistake about it, he loved his people, and he wept on Palm Sunday as he went into Jerusalem, because he knew the judgment that was to fall upon them, and he cried out; “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem. How often would I have gathered thee unto myself.”

So this easy answer had its temptation. “All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.” What was involved in this? “If thou wilt fall down and worship me,” Satan said. “If you will recognize, by that act of worship, that I represent the absolute truth, the righteousness, the justice in the universe in my rebellion against God, in my assertion that every man is his own god, his own king, his own moral arbiter, if you recognize that I was right when I said to Eve and to Adam, that they should declare their independence of God and break with him, join with me in a revolution against God, in which “Ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil,” every man his own god, every man determining for himself what is good and evil so that no man can possibly go astray.”

First, you outlaw God. You outlaw God, and declare your independence of him, and therefore, you have outlawed sin, because sin is by definition any want of conformity to or transgression of the law and the word of God. And if you abolish God, or declare your independence of Him, you also abolish sin, because how can there be any sin if there is no God to have a claim on you, since sin is any want of conformity to or transgression of the word and law of God? And if you abolish sin from the universe, you also abolish guilt. There will be no sinners, and there will be no guilty men, and then history will be free, man will be free. Sin, by definition, is gone, therefore, guilt is gone and man is free. “This is my revolution,” Satan says; “Fall down and worship me. Recognize that the revolution I began against

Almighty God is a revolution for the truth, for freedom. By that act affirm that what I have done is just, and righteous, and true. Liberate man, join with me!”

A distinguished historian who, by no means, shared our Christian faith; Ethelbert Stauffer, has written;

“You must first grasp the reality of guilt if you are to know what history is.”

“You must first grasp the reality of guilt if you are to know what history is,” because all of human history has been a struggling of man with guilt. A desire of man to create a paradise, a free world in which he is freed from the burden of guilt. Man faces crime and social disorder, and guilty men who try to pass their guilt onto others, and history gives us the attempt of men to expiate or to nullify guilt, by declaring that some other people, some other race, or some other group is the guilty one, and they are merely victims, or by declaring that there is no such thing as guilt, because there is no such thing as sin. And every one of these attempts, whatever their form, represents a temptation of Satan or a working of Satan. Because whatever other men do, we are ourselves sinners and guilty, until we find our peace with God through Jesus Christ, and our liberation comes first and foremost by making our peace with God.

But today, the essence of what virtually every pulpit in America teaches, let us say conservatively, only ninety-nine out of a hundred pulpits, is precisely this kind of Satanic teaching. Call it modernism, or neo-orthodoxy, or call it existentialism, or call it ‘the Death of God School of Theology,’ or ‘the new morality,’ whatever name you give to it, its purpose is to say; “there is no sin, there is no guilt.” Some take the form of blaming the social structure. Its capitalism, or it’s the environment, or it’s the family, or it’s Christian teaching that gives people a sense of guilt. Something is responsible in the community, or in the heredity, and others simply go all out and say there is no such thing as guilt, because there is no such thing as sin. Man will be free when he realizes that whatever is, is right, and whatever he does is right.

This is modern thought. It is the denial of guilt and a denial of sin, and therefore, it is ultimately a denial of man, because take away responsibility from man, and he ceases to be man. “Free man,” Satan said. “Abolish all these problems. Perform miracles whenever men need them. Give them cradle-to-grave security, and eliminate the problem of history.”

“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” Again, our Lord quoted scripture, from Deuteronomy 6. Moses, in warning the people, that in their prosperity and power, they must not forget the source of their prosperity and power, and thereby cease from serving and exalting God and turn instead to exalting man. Warned them of the consequences and said, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God that thy days may be prolonged.” Your blessing, your hope of any kind of good life, of paradise, rests on obedience. Serve him! Obey him! Worship him with all thy heart, mind, and being! that thy days may be prolonged, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. Beware, lest thou forget the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Him only. The Shorter Catechism declares that; “the chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.” And we are required by scripture to serve only God so that whatever we do, whether it be in our home or in our work, in our church, wherever we are, it must be first and foremost a service to God, and then to our employer, then to our husband, then to those around us, but first, an above all else, to God, him only shalt thou service. So that our every other service must be through and through a service to God.

This is the total obedience that God requires of us, and the sad fact is that this total obedience, or anything resembling it, is so remote now to the churches, that it seems almost absurd to many people

if you suggest it.

I was distressed recently to learn of a little incident which was so revelatory what the life of Christians today has come to be. In one particular congregation, a very fine one, one of the prominent women members was conducting a meeting and spoke at length along certain lines, and because of her lack of training in certain areas, was clearly, although thoroughly well-intentioned, in error at several points. The pastor didn't hear the talk or didn't get a report of it, but in the course of his discussion of a related subject from the pulpit, it was almost as though he was correcting the woman, because he gave the truth about the matter, the clear-cut statement of doctrine that was necessary, and the result was devastating. The woman was outraged, she felt she had been corrected, and she felt it was uncalled for, that her statement was perfectly proper. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve," and if it is the Lord we serve, we cannot declare our independence of His Word and of His truth as they are faithfully declared, and we must place ourselves under the criticism of the Word, under the correction of the word.

Is it any wonder that the communists are succeeding in our day? One of the prime requisites of being a member of a Communist cell is to submit to self-criticism. You stand up and you criticize yourself and your past actions, and your present thinking as you analyze it, and you subject yourself to the criticism of the other members, which is a ruthless thing, and it has one purpose; to break down your self-will, so that you view yourself not in terms of your pride, and your own desires, but in terms of the party disciple and the party faith. And though this discipline be put, as in this case, to an evil cause, it does give them a power that Christians do not have, because they will not heed the word of God. "Him only shalt thou serve." Christians cannot afford the luxury of being thin-skinned and sensitive. "Him only shalt thou serve."

"Then the devil leaveth him..." The kingdom that Satan offered, our Lord rejected. He chose the cross. He chose the way of indeed seeing children die of hunger, and of people having to walk by faith, sometimes when it seems impossible for them to maintain their faith, of being tried and tested, over and over again, but He chose that way which was, first of all, the way of the cross, for himself, because only thereby could paradise be regained. Only thereby could man truly be man under God, and immediately; "...behold, angels came and ministered unto him." And Mark tells us that the wild beasts of the desert were there and harmed him not. He had gone out into the wilderness, into a desert and a waste place, a fitting symbol of what sin had made of this world, and by his resistance of the temptation, by his faithfulness to the Word of God, standing upon the Word of God. "It is written... it is written... it is written..." He said thrice. He made that wilderness, for a moment, paradise restored.

As with the first Adam, so now with the second Adam, the beasts of the wilderness were around him, subject to him, and at peace with him. The angels of God ministered to Him. There was full communion between heaven and earth, paradise restored. And paradise is restored in our hearts when we accept Christ as the Lord and savior. Communion is restored between God and ourselves, between God and this world. And every step of the way as his kingdom is extended in the hearts of men, in homes, in civil government, in businesses, in Christian education, there we see an outpost of paradise regained, of the reconquest of this world, as God's kingdom. "Unto the end the kingdoms of this world might become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ." Let us pray.

Our Lord and our God, we give thee thanks that thou hast called us unto the glorious victory of Jesus Christ, the victory which overcometh the world, and that thou hast called us unto the citizenship, not of a doomed city or a doomed empire, but of a city of a kingdom whose builder and maker thou art, a citizenship unto victory, a citizenship unto peace. Make us mindful, our Father, of our citizenship and of the power and the glory thereof, that we may face all things confident that we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. In Jesus name, Amen.

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**ENDNOTES:**

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1. Ethelbert Stauffer, *Christ and the Caesars* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, [1952] 1955), 20.



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