

Luke 4:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

Analysis

Satan's first temptation appeals to legitimate physical need, yet seeks to undermine trust in divine providence. The command 'if thou be the Son of God' challenges Christ's identity and invites presumptuous use of divine power. The Greek 'ei' introduces a conditional that Satan knows to be true, making this a test of whether Christ will act independently of the Father's will. Reformed theology sees here Christ's active obedience—His perfect submission where Adam failed. Romans 5:19 contrasts Adam's disobedience with Christ's obedience. Where Israel failed in wilderness testing (Deuteronomy 8:3), Christ succeeds as the true Israel. The temptation to turn stones to bread represents the broader temptation to pursue God's gifts apart from God Himself, to use divine power for self-preservation rather than self-denial.

Historical Context

This temptation occurs after 40 days of fasting in the Judean wilderness, deliberately echoing Israel's 40 years of wilderness testing. The wilderness (Greek 'eremos') was considered the dwelling place of demons in Jewish thought. Jesus's hunger was real—the incarnation meant genuine human limitation and vulnerability. Satan's approach mirrors his strategy in Eden: questioning God's word and goodness, suggesting God is withholding something necessary. First-century Judaism expected Messiah to provide miraculous bread like Moses provided manna, so this temptation had messianic implications. Jesus later

performs bread miracles (feeding 5,000 and 4,000), but only in accordance with the Father's timing and purpose, not Satan's prompting.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Christ's refusal to act independently of the Father model proper Christian decision-making?
2. In what ways are we tempted to use God's gifts or provisions in ways that bypass trust in God Himself?
3. Why is it significant that Christ met temptation with Scripture rather than divine power?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	εἰπὲ	αὐτῷ	ό	διάβολος	Εἰ	νιὸς	εἰ	τοῦ
And	command	unto him	G3588	the devil	If	the Son	thou be	G3588
G2532	G2036	G846		G1228	G1487	G5207	G1488	
θεοῦ	εἰπὲ	τῷ	λίθῳ	τούτῳ	ἴνα	γένηται	ἄρτος	
of God	command	G3588	stone	this	that	it be made	bread	
G2316	G2036		G3037	G5129	G2443	G1096	G740	

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 4:3 (Creation): And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.