

Luke 4:5

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time.

Analysis

Satan offers 'all the kingdoms of the world' in exchange for worship, revealing both his temporary dominion over fallen creation and his ultimate aim. The phrase 'delivered unto me' (Greek 'paredotai moi') contains truth—fallen humanity handed authority to Satan through sin (Romans 5:12). Paul calls Satan 'the god of this world' (2 Corinthians 4:4) and 'the prince of the power of the air' (Ephesians 2:2). Yet Satan's claim exceeds his authority; he is a usurper, not rightful owner. The temptation presents a shortcut to Messianic glory—rulership without suffering, crown without cross. This temptation would recur throughout Jesus's ministry as people sought to make Him king by force (John 6:15). Reformed theology recognizes this as the essence of all false religion: worship of created things (including Satan) rather than the Creator.

Historical Context

Ancient Near Eastern kingdoms were often gained through military conquest or political alliance. Satan offers immediate universal dominion without the suffering prophesied in Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22. For a Jewish audience expecting a conquering Messiah who would overthrow Rome, this temptation had powerful appeal. The offer also exposed Satan's motivation—not mere hatred of humanity, but usurpation of worship that belongs to God alone. In showing Jesus 'all the kingdoms' in 'a moment of time,' Satan demonstrated his supernatural ability to transcend normal physical limitations, making the temptation more impressive.

Early church fathers saw here Satan's fundamental sin—the proud demand for worship—and Christ's humble submission to the Father's redemptive plan.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does this temptation expose Satan's ultimate goal in all his schemes?
2. In what ways are Christians tempted to pursue godly ends through ungodly means?
3. Why must Christ's path to glory necessarily pass through suffering and the cross?

Interlinear Text

Καὶ	ἀναγαγὼν	αὐτῷ	ὁ	διάβολος	εἰς	ὄρος	ὑψηλὸν
And	taking	him	G3588	the devil	into	mountain	an high
G2532	G321	G846		G1228	G1519	G3735	G5308
ἔδειξεν	αὐτῷ	πάσας	τὰς	βασιλείας	τῆς	οἰκουμένης	ἐν
shewed	him	all	G3588	the kingdoms	G3588	of the world	in
G1166	G846	G3956		G932		G3625	G1722
στιγμῇ	χρόνου						
a moment	of time						
G4743	G5550						

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 73:19 (Parallel theme): How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.

Job 20:5 (Evil): That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment?

Ephesians 6:12 (Evil): For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

1 Corinthians 15:52 (Parallel theme): In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

Matthew 4:8 (Kingdom): 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;

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