

Luke 4:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

Analysis

The third temptation moves to Jerusalem's temple pinnacle, using Scripture itself (Psalm 91:11-12) to tempt Christ to presumptuous faith. Satan's 'if thou be the Son of God' again challenges Christ's identity, but now suggests proving it through spectacular sign. The misuse of Scripture demonstrates Satan's sophistication—he quotes accurately but applies wrongly, omitting 'in all thy ways' which implies walking in God's paths, not testing God. Jesus counters with Deuteronomy 6:16, recalling Israel's testing God at Massah (Exodus 17:2-7). The Greek 'ekpeirazo' (tempt/test) implies testing with hostile intent or demanding proof of God's faithfulness. Reformed theology sees here the difference between faith (trusting God's promises) and presumption (demanding God perform on our terms). True faith rests on God's character and word; presumption demands signs and seeks to manipulate God.

Historical Context

The temple pinnacle (Greek 'pterugion') likely refers to the southeastern corner of the temple complex, towering about 450 feet above the Kidron Valley—a dizzying height. Jewish tradition held that Messiah would reveal himself at the temple. Malachi 3:1 prophesied 'the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple.' A spectacular rescue before witnesses in Jerusalem would provide undeniable messianic credentials. Satan's use of Scripture would have been particularly troubling to a Jewish audience who revered God's word. Yet Jesus

demonstrates proper biblical interpretation—Scripture interprets Scripture, and no text should be used to contradict God's revealed will. The church fathers saw this as warning against spiritual presumption disguised as piety, and proof-texting Scripture to justify sin.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. What is the difference between faith that trusts God and presumption that tests God?
2. How can Scripture be misused even when quoted accurately, and how do we guard against this?
3. Why does Satan tempt Jesus to make a public spectacle rather than serve quietly?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἤγαγεν	αὐτῷ	εἰς	Ἱερουσαλὴμ	καὶ	ἔστησεν	αὐτῷ	
And	he brought	him	to	Jerusalem	And	set	him	
G2532	G71	G846	G1519	G2419	G2532	G2476	G846	
ἐπὶ	τὸ	περύγιον	τοῦ	ἱεροῦ	καὶ	εἶπεν	αὐτῷ	Εἰ
on	G3588	a pinnacle	G3588	of the temple	And	said	him	If
G1909		G4419		G2411	G2532	G2036	G846	G1487
ὁ	υἱὸς	εἶ	τοῦ	θεοῦ	βάλε	σεαυτὸν	ἐντεῦθεν	κάτω·
G3588	the Son	thou be	G3588	of God	cast	thyself	from hence	down
	G5207	G1488		G2316	G906	G4572	G1782	G2736

Additional Cross-References

Luke 4:3 (References God): And the devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

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