

Authority and Right of Disposal in Luke 4.6

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In Jesus' second temptation in Luke 4, he is offered world dominion by the devil in exchange for acceptance of the latter's authority. This article considers the devil's offer in the light of Dan 1–6. Both Daniel and Luke make use of legal terminology, ultimately derived from Aramaic property documents, to illustrate the idea that the Creator has made over the world to the powers of chaos. Satan initiates a new and ironic twist on this theme when he attempts to lure the Creator's servant with the promise of sharing in his own God-given authority.

I. Introduction

In Matt 4.1–11; Mark 1.12–13; Luke 4.1–13, Jesus, following his baptism by John, is described as going out into the wilderness. There he confronts Satan. Mark provides no details of this meeting, but in Matthew and Luke, Jesus is depicted as facing a series of trials. In turn, he is tempted to break his fast (Matt 4.3–4; Luke 4.3–4), to put God to the test by throwing himself from a high place (Matt 4.5–7; Luke 4.9–12), and is offered worldly power in exchange for submission to Satan's authority (Matt 4.8–10; Luke 4.5–8).

The depiction of the scene between the devil and Jesus in Luke 4.5–7 is particularly interesting in that it goes beyond the Matthean version by providing further details concerning the devil's offer.¹ In particular, Luke makes more explicit

¹ This section is often understood to be a Lukan expansion or paraphrase of Matthew (A. Loisy, *L'Évangile selon Luc* [Paris: Nourry, 1924] 150; S. Schulz, *Q – Die Spruchquelle der Evangelisten* [Zürich: Theologischer, 1972] 180–1), though some suggest that Matthew has abbreviated Luke (H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium 1:1–9:50* [HTKNT 3/1; Freiburg: Herder, 1969] 211). Further suggestions are that it derives from Q (C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* [London: SCM, 1990] 256), or, more commonly, that Luke has expanded the material in Q on his own account (B. S. Easton, *The Gospel According to St. Luke: A Critical and Exegetical Commentary* [Edinburgh: Clark, 1926] 49; J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I–IX: Introduction, Translation and Notes* [AB 28; Garden City: Doubleday, 1981] 516). The text of Q 4.1–13 agreed by the International Q Project lacks Luke's reference to 'authority' or to the notion that power has been granted to Satan by the Creator (S. Carruth and J. M. Robinson, *Documenta Q – Reconstructions of Q Through Two Centuries of Gospel Research, Excerpted, Sorted and Evaluated. Q 4:1–13, 16: The Temptations of Jesus, Nazara* [Leuven: Peeters, 1996] 463). 77

the Matthean idea of the devil's proprietorship of the world. The devil claims to have been 'given' the world and to have the right to dispose of the same (Luke 4.6b). Scholarly comment on the text has made little of the difference between the Lukan and Matthean versions of the story at this point. This article will attempt to rectify that oversight by examining the Lukan text in the light of biblical and Aramaic legal texts in which the phraseology of the devil finds echoes. By this means, it is hoped, the world view of the author will be made clearer – in particular, whether he concurred with the idea that the created order was under the control of the devil, and, if so, the way in which the devil's dominion was understood to manifest itself.

Luke 4.5–7

5. καὶ ἀναγαγὼν αὐτὸν ἔδειξεν αὐτῷ
πάσας τὰς βασιλείας τῆς οἰκουμένης
ἐν στιγμῇ χρόνου. 6. καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ
ὁ διάβολος, Σοὶ δώσω τὴν ἐξουσίαν
ταύτην ἅπασαν καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν·
ὅτι ἐμοὶ παραδέδοται, καὶ ᾧ ἐὰν
θέλω δίδωμι αὐτήν. 7. σὺ οὖν ἐὰν
προσκυνήσῃς ἐνώπιόν μου, ἔσται σου
πάντα.

5. Then he led him up, and showed him
in an instant all the kingdoms of the
world. 6. And the devil said to him, 'To
you I will give all this authority and
their glory; for it has been given to me,
and I give it to anyone I please. 7. If you,
then, will worship me, it will all be
yours.'

The proposition made to Jesus in Luke 4.6, that the devil will give him 'all this authority (over the kingdoms of the world) and their glory', is in some senses a startling one. It implies that the devil has absolute sovereignty over God's creation, a state of affairs that by itself provides sufficient reason for many scholars to argue that the devil's words are essentially a falsehood. Fitzmyer, for example, avers that the devil 'poses as the prince or God of this world',² while Nolland states that 'Satan *claims* to see to the disposition of glory in the world' (both my italics).³ Schweizer appears a little more ready to give the devil his due when he remarks that Satan's claim 'seems superficially accurate' in the light of Rev 13.2,⁴ but even this statement betrays a reluctance to countenance the idea that the devil's words might actually reflect the Lukan world view. Such consensus after so little discussion is rare in biblical studies: it is almost as if the thought that the devil might

Whether the appearance of these ideas in Luke be a result of his expansion of Matthew, or of Q, they seem to represent Luke's own outlook and not those of a prior source.

2 Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 516.

3 J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20* (WBC 35A; Dallas: Word, 1989) 180. Cf. I. H. Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids/Exeter: Eerdmans/Paternoster 1978) 172.

4 E. Schweizer, *The Good News According to Luke* (London: SPCK, 1984) 83. Cf. D. L. Bock, *Luke* (Downers Grove/Leicester: IVP, 1994) 84.

have been understood to control the world is so absurd and monstrous as to be unworthy of further consideration.⁵ Even among those few scholars who do delve further into the text, there is a tendency to downplay or limit the import of Satan's claims. Nolland, for example, considers that the devil's 'control' over the world is manifested in the human ambition for power with which he tempts Jesus (as opposed to direct control).⁶ However, for the events of the text to be in any sense believable to a contemporary audience, the devil's power over the world must have been understood in a more fundamental sense: there would have been little point in Satan tempting Jesus with something the latter knew was not in his gift.

II. The devil's offer and Daniel

In Luke 4.6, the devil's precise words to Jesus are: 'To you I will give all this authority and their glory; for it has been given to me, and I may give it to anyone I please. (Σοὶ δώσω τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἅπασαν καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτῶν· ὅτι ἐμοὶ παραδέδοται, καὶ ᾧ ἐὰν θέλω δίδωμι αὐτήν.)'. One of the most striking aspects of this claim to enjoy suzerainty over the world, and one which, hitherto, has gone unnoticed, is the extent to which it mirrors the thought of certain passages in the book of Daniel, especially those that describe the nature and extent of Nebuchadnezzar's power in relation to that of the deity (Dan 2–4), and of Daniel's power in relation to Nebuchadnezzar's successor as world ruler, Belshazzar (Dan 5). Both the Daniel and Luke texts operate against a background of a chaotic world ruler (Nebuchadnezzar/Belshazzar/the devil) whose authority ultimately derives from God. To this general connection may be added more specific parallels between the texts.

In the Aramaic of Dan 2.38, the hero says to Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon: 'Wheresoever humankind dwells (וּבְכָל דֵּי דְאַרְיִן בְּנֵי אַנְשָׁא), [God] has given into your hand (יָהֵב בְּיַדְךָ) the beasts of the field and the birds of the heavens and has given you authority (וְהִשְׁלִיטְךָ) over them all.' This particular passage contains the general idea of God delegating authority over creation to subordinates, that is, to individual world rulers such as Nebuchadnezzar. We may also note specific parallels between וּבְכָל דֵּי דְאַרְיִן בְּנֵי אַנְשָׁא (Dan 2.38; LXX: ἐν πάσῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων) and ἡ οἰκουμένη in Luke 4.5, and between בְּיַדְךָ וְהִשְׁלִיטְךָ (Dan 2.38; LXX: παρέδωκεν ὑπὸ τὰς χεῖράς σου κυριεύειν) and Σοὶ δώσω τὴν ἐξουσίαν/ἐμοὶ παραδέδοται in Luke 4.6.

These apparent parallels are strengthened by the devil's comment that 'I give

⁵ Exceptions to this are J. M. Creed (*The Gospel According to Luke* [London: Macmillan, 1953] 63) and F. B. Craddock (*Luke* [Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox, 1990] 56), both of whom understand Satan to be presented as the *de facto* ruler of the world.

⁶ Nolland, *Luke* 1–9:20, 180.

[authority over the world] to anyone I please' (ὃ ἐὰν θέλω δίδωμι αὐτήν.) This echoes two texts (Dan 4.14, 29 [Eng. 4.17, 32]) in which Nebuchadnezzar is admonished that 'the Most High has authority in the kingdom of men, and he gives it to anyone he pleases' (ד'י שליט עליא במלכות אנשא ולמן די צבא יתננה). The context of Dan 4 is one in which Nebuchadnezzar, as holder of supreme earthly authority (שלטן/שלט – Dan 2,38; 4.19 [Eng. 4.22]) under God, has failed to recognize the latter's ultimate authority (שלטן/שלט/שלט – Dan 4.14, 19, 29 [Eng. 4.17, 22, 32]) over his realm. The consequence of Nebuchadnezzar's pride is the removal of that authority.

Dan LXX reads: 'that the Lord of heaven has authority over everything in heaven and on earth and gives it to anyone he pleases (τὸν κύριον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν πάντων τῶν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τῶν ἐπι τῆς γῆς καὶ ὅσα ἂν θέλη ποιεῖ ἐν αὐτοῖς)'. In Dan 4.29 LXX the idea is expressed differently: 'To you it is said, O King Nebuchadnezzar. The kingdom of Babylon has been taken from you and given to another . . . He will take possession of *your authority and your glory and your chattels* (καὶ τὴν ἐξουσίαν σου καὶ τὴν δόξαν σου καὶ τὴν τρυφήν σου), in order that you may know that the *God of heaven has authority in the kingdom of men and gives it to anyone he pleases* (ἐξουσίαν ἔχει ὁ θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ὃ ἐὰν βούληται δώσει αὐτήν).'

Finally, we may turn to Dan 5.16, 29. Dan 5, in the form in which it has survived, is related to events in the preceding chapter. Belshazzar, the son and successor of Nebuchadnezzar, displays all of his father's old pride not only by using receptacles from the Jerusalem temple as drinking vessels at a party but by praising the pagan gods (Dan 5.1–4, 23). The issues that lead to Belshazzar's downfall are therefore the same as those for which his father was punished: he fails to recognize the supreme authority of God (שליט – Dan 5.21) and 'did not humble [his] heart'. Implicit in this comment is the idea of a chain of שלטן, with the lesser who holds his authority from the greater acknowledging the latter's supremacy. Following Daniel's successful interpretation of Belshazzar's vision, he also climbs the ladder of שלטן, by becoming the 'third ruler in the kingdom' (שליט תלתא במלכותא) – Dan 5.29; cf. 5.16). Again, the LXX of Dan 5.29 translates שליט with the term ἐξουσία found in the Lukan text: ἔδωκεν ἐξουσίαν αὐτῷ τοῦ τρίτου μέρους τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ.

These examples from Dan 2.38; 4.14, 19; 5.16, 29 suggest that Luke was familiar with the court stories of Daniel, and that he used ideas expressed in those stories to provide a theological backdrop to Jesus' confrontation with Satan. To summarize, the most striking parallels between the Daniel stories and Luke are as follows:

(i) The conception in Daniel of global rulership on the part of God and, simultaneously, of his subordinate Nebuchadnezzar. Nebuchadnezzar, as the viceregent of God, is said to rule בני אנשא בני דארין בכל די דארין (Dan 2.38; LXX: ἐν πάσῃ τῇ οἰκουμένῃ ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων). This provides a parallel with ἡ οἰκουμένη (Luke 4.5),

control of which is offered to Jesus by Satan. Superficially, this might be taken to imply that Satan assumes the role of God and offers Jesus the role of Nebuchadnezzar. However, one could also understand the chain of command as beginning with God, Satan as adopting the role of a Nebuchadnezzar or Belshazzar, and Jesus, potentially, as being a further subordinate figure in the manner of Daniel.

(ii) Although the LXX of Dan 2.38 expresses the idea of rulership with the verb κυριεύειν ('to rule'), which does not appear in Luke 4, it does assert that the authority to rule is given to individuals by God, and uses the verb παραδίδωμι to express this idea. The motif of giving control of the world to another is expressed with the same verb or root: the world has been given (παραδέδοται) to Satan. Satan offers to give (δώσω) Jesus authority. Satan claims to give (δίδωμι) such authority to whomever he wishes.

(iii) Despite the use of κυριεύειν in the LXX of Dan 2.38, the underlying Aramaic word, ܘܢܘܠܘܢ, is translated in Dan 4.14, 29 by the Greek phrase ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ('to have authority'). This provides a further parallel to Luke 4.6 in which Satan claims to be able to give Jesus τὴν ἐξουσίαν ταύτην ἅπασαν ('all this authority').

(iv) The strangeness of the positioning of δόξα in Luke 4.6 (where it has no obvious referent), though frequently noted by scholars, has never been adequately explained.⁷ This feature can be accounted for if one understands Luke as operating under the influence of Dan 4.29, in which the terms ἐξουσία ('authority') and δόξα ('glory') are juxtaposed. There, they denote the characteristics of Nebuchadnezzar's kingship. However, these things are ultimately given by God, and are stripped from Nebuchadnezzar as a punishment for his hubris. This suggests that Luke had before him the Matthean text (or the Q text equivalent to it) where both terms are used.⁸ However, Luke wanted to bring his reworking of this text into closer alignment with Daniel in order to make more explicit the theological point he was trying to make. He achieved his aim at the price of disrupting the grammar of the Greek source.

III. The legal background to the devil's offer

Despite the scholarly interest that Jesus' confrontation with the devil has attracted, one important aspect of the scene has been almost entirely overlooked – the legal context of what is taking place. As far as I am aware, Fitzmyer is alone

7 Cf. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 516; Marshall, *Luke*, 172; W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Matthew. Vol. 1, Introduction and Commentary on Matthew I–VII* (ICC; Edinburgh: Clark, 1988) 371.

8 Cf. Carruth and Robinson, *Q 4:1–13, 16: The Temptations of Jesus, Nazara*, 295–6, 463.

in detecting a legal aspect to the devil's offer to Jesus, specifically in the use of the phrase 'I may give it to anyone I please', which he claims links to an old legal formula expressing complete dominion. Although the observation he makes is a very general one, Fitzmyer, I would argue, is correct. However, the legal aspect to the devil's words actually extends well beyond Fitzmyer's observation.

If I am correct in my suggestion that the term ἐξουσία in Luke is ultimately dependent on a translation of the term שלטון/שליט in Daniel, then it may be that the Lukan author was also aware of the legal connotations of this term. The root שלט is attested in a specialized legal/economic sense in Aramaic from the fifth century BCE onwards. In particular, the root occurs in Aramaic legal documents that pertain to property rights. Typical of such documents is the following from Elephantine concerning the ownership of a house:

From there you shall go forth and go in to this house . . . You, Anani, *shall have right of disposal over it* (שליט בה) from now and in perpetuity, and your children *shall have right of disposal* (שליטן) after you, *and you may give it to whoever you please* (ולמן זי רחמת תנתן). (Papyrus Brooklyn 12, ll. 22–24)⁹

The same legal formula could, however, be applied to land sales, as the following text demonstrates:

You have right of disposal over it (אנתי שליטה בה) from this day forever, and your children after you. *You may give it to whoever you please* (תנתן למן זי רחמתי באקרא זך). There is no other son or daughter of mine, brother or sister, or other woman or man *who has right of disposal over this land* (שליט), except you and your children in perpetuity. (Papyrus Cowley 8, ll. 9–11)¹⁰

This technical sense of the root שלט also appears in many other legal and economic documents of the Persian period from Elephantine (fifth century BCE)¹¹ and in the Samaria Papyri (fourth century BCE).¹² Seow has, in addition, made an

9 Cf. E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Papyri: New Documents of the Fifth Century B.C. from the Jewish Colony at Elephantine* (New Haven, CN: Yale University, 1953) 268–9.

10 Cf. A. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1923) 22–3.

11 See D. M. Gropp, 'The Origin and Development of the Aramaic *šallit* Clause', *JNES* 52 (1993), 31 n. 2 for a full bibliography. Among the more recent material cited that I have been able to check is E. Y. Kutscher, 'New Aramaic Texts', *JAOS* 74 (1954) 233–48 (esp. 239); R. Yaron, 'Aramaic Marriage Contracts from Elephantine', *JSS* 3 (1958) 9–10; *idem*, 'Aramaic Deeds of Conveyance', *Bib* 41 (1960) 248–71; Y. Muffs, *Studies in the Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (Leiden: Brill, 1969) 2 nn. 23–4, 39 n. 3, 41 n. 2, 134, 151 n. 3, 152–3, 176–8, 204, 206, 208.

12 F. M. Cross, 'Samaria Papyrus 1: An Aramaic Slave Conveyance of 335 B.C.E. Found in the Wadi ed-Daliyeh', *Nahman Avigad Volume* (ErIsr 18; Jerusalem, 1985) 7–17; *idem*, 'A Report on the Samaria Papyri', *Congress Volume, Jerusalem, 1986* (ed. J. A. Emerton; VTSup 40; Leiden, 1988) 17–26.

excellent case for understanding usages of the root in Ezra–Nehemiah in an economic sense (cf. Ezra 4.20; 7.24; Neh 5.15). The same root also appears in Ecclesiastes in the context of individuals having right of disposal over assets, indicating a further legal usage (Eccl 2.19; 5.18; 6.2; 7.19; 8.9).¹³ In Daniel, the root retains its legal/economic meaning. In Dan 2.38, discussed above, one does not exercise political power over animals, but one may be granted proprietorship. A parallel is made between the world of business and kingship, as if God had signed over to Nebuchadnezzar an estate complete with its livestock, or the hunting and trapping rights over the whole earth.

Rabinowitz has drawn attention to parallels between this legal terminology in Papyrus Brooklyn 12 and the text of Dan 4.14 (Eng. 17), 22 (Eng. 25), 29 (Eng. 32), stating that the formula used in Daniel was ‘adopted from the phraseology of the legal document which was current in his day’.¹⁴ Another example of the legal *šallit* clause may be seen in Sir 9.13 which appears to warn the reader against working with a man who has the legal authority to put people to death (שְׁלִטוֹן לְהַרְגֹת).¹⁵ The usage continues in texts in Hebrew and Aramaic concerning legal matters into the medieval era, including a Syriac bill of sale dated 243 CE¹⁶ and the Jerusalem Talmud (*j. Naz* 4.53b; *j. Ket* 9.33a), in addition to various medieval Jewish deeds of conveyance.¹⁷

If my suggestion that the Hebrew/Aramaic root שְׁלִט underlies Luke’s usage of the term ἐξουσία in Luke 4.6 is correct, then the legal implications of the devil’s offer begin to become apparent. It may be objected that Luke’s primary focus seems to be on the LXX of Daniel and not the Aramaic version in which the legal basis for Nebuchadnezzar’s rule is explored. Nevertheless it is possible that Luke either had access to an Aramaic text or correctly understood the appearances of the term ἐξουσία in LXX Daniel to be translations of a *šallit* clause (or at least, from its context, to reflect legal terminology).¹⁸

As well as its appearances in legal papyri and Daniel, an echo of this terminology appears in Hebrew in Jer 27.5, in which Yahweh states: ‘it is I who . . . have made the earth, with the people and animals that are on the earth, and I give it to whomever is upright in my eyes (וְנָתַתִּיהָ לְאִשֶּׁר יֵשֶׁר בְּעֵינַי)’. In the NT, such

13 C. L. Seow, ‘Linguistic Evidence and the Dating of Qohelet’, *JBL* 115 (1996) 653.

14 J. J. Rabinowitz, *Jewish Law: Its Influence on the Development of Legal Institutions* (New York: Bloch, 1956) 128–9.

15 D. Rudman, *Determinism in the Book of Ecclesiastes* (JSOTSup 316; Sheffield: JSOT, 2001) 147.

16 J. A. Goldstein, ‘The Syriac Bill of Sale from Dura-Europos’, *JNES* 25 (1966) 11–12.

17 Rabinowitz, *Jewish Law*, 132. R. Gordis (*Koheleth: The Man and His World* [New York: Bloch, 1968] 255) cites a Yiddish proverb using the legal–economic sense of the root שְׁלִט current in the modern era: ‘the miser has no right of disposal (שְׁלִיטֶה) over his possessions.’

18 Cf. R. H. Connolly, ‘Syriacisms in St. Luke’, *JTS* 37 (1936) 374–85; H. F. D. Sparks, ‘The Semitisms of St. Luke’s Gospel’, *JTS* 44 (1943) 129–38; Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 116–18.

terminology is reversed. When Jesus commands: ‘Give to everyone who begs from you, and if anyone takes your goods, do not ask for them again’ (Luke 6.30; cf. Matt 5.42; Tob 4.7), all notions of property rights or rights of disposal, on which society hinged, are overthrown. Instead of giving to whoever one pleases, one must give to whoever asks for (or takes) one’s property. A similar play on the notion of property rights appears in Acts 8.19, where Simon Magus asks: ‘Give me also this power, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.’ Here, Simon effectively asks for right of disposal, or proprietorship, over the Spirit itself!

In terms of purpose, the devil’s use of legal terminology in his negotiations with Jesus displays Luke’s ability, already noted by Kurz, to write ‘in character’ (prosopopoeia).¹⁹ More significantly, it characterizes existence against a theological backdrop well known from the OT.

IV. The devil as world ruler

Several scholars have already noted Luke’s use of terms such as ἡ οἰκουμένη to describe the extent of the realm that is to be offered to Jesus. Essentially, this term refers to the inhabited world.²⁰ As Marshall points out, it is regularly used in the LXX to denote the realm and authority of God,²¹ but, in the NT, ἡ οἰκουμένη appears to be coterminous with the extent of the Roman empire.²²

The significance of this lies in the twofold understanding of creation in Hebraic thought. On the one hand, ἡ οἰκουμένη, the inhabited (or, perhaps better, inhabitable) world denotes the sphere of creation as opposed to that of chaos. ἡ οἰκουμένη excludes the sea, but it also excludes areas of land associated with chaos (e.g. desert or wilderness, ruins – areas in which life could not be supported or in which it had been extinguished [Exod 16.35; Isa 14.7; cf. Isa 24.1]). The designation of ἡ οἰκουμένη as the sphere of creation also means that it is the area of the cosmos in which the Creator’s authority is most directly seen. Yahweh is the God who restricts the forces of chaos so that they cannot overwhelm ἡ οἰκουμένη.

In the OT, Israel is seen to some extent as a reflection of the created world in miniature. In the context of the exile and subsequent domination by the nations, this presented a fundamental theological dilemma. How could the Creator who

19 W. S. Kurz, ‘Hellenistic Rhetoric in the Christological Proof of Luke–Acts’, *CBQ* 42 (1980) 171–95, esp. 186.

20 Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 180.

21 Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, 172.

22 *Ibid.*; G. Theißen, *Lokalkolocit und Zeitgeschichte in den Evangelien: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (Göttingen/Freiburg: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Universitätsverlag, 1989) 223; L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Sacra Pagina 3; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1991) 74.

places bounds on chaos be said to remain in control of the world? Two main strands of thought may be detected in the OT on this point. Because Yahweh had, in the past, used the forces of chaos to punish human wickedness (Gen 6–8), the exile could be seen as an equivalent punishment of Israelite sin (e.g. Isa 54.9). Nevertheless, some authors saw the vicissitudes of the exile as going beyond Yahweh's intention (Isa 40.1; Zech 1.15), and hoped that divine intervention would right matters (Isa 45.1–7; Zech 1.18–21). Others argued that the chaotic powers that governed the created order derived their legitimacy from God. The latter position is especially true of the court stories in Dan 1–6.

The devil's offer to Jesus ultimately depends for its validity on subscribing to the view in Dan 1–6 that the world is not just under the control of the forces of chaos, but that this state of affairs is approved by God. However, the devil goes beyond this text by claiming that it is he, the ultimate lord of chaos, who has right of disposal over creation and not God. That the devil might be understood to have *שָׁלַטַן* is not unreasonable bearing in mind that the supreme human ruler might also be understood as a lord of chaos. It is in the nature of *שָׁלַטַן* that it may be delegated to an underling. Yet while the devil expects due recognition from the recipient of the authority that he gives (Jesus or, implicitly, a chaotic human world ruler [Luke 4.7]), he mistakenly assumes that he owes no recognition to the source of his authority: God. Jesus' rejoinder to Satan during their confrontation, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him' (Luke 4.8), operates not just as a statement of where Jesus' own loyalties lie, but also as a rebuke to the chaotic power that refuses to recognize God as the ultimate source of its authority over the world.²³

The subtle irony of the diabolical middleman, who expects fealty on account of the power he gives but does not offer the same fealty to the one who has given him this power in the first place, is accentuated by reference to Daniel. Effectively, the devil appears as a Nebuchadnezzar, the chaotic king who believed his achievements to have been carried out by his own power and who failed to recognize God as the source of that power. Instead of contenting himself with this offence, however, the devil has the temerity to offer God's son this power in exchange for the traditional recognition of authority. Instead of the Creator co-opting the powers of chaos in ruling the world, the powers of chaos attempt to co-opt the Creator, through Jesus, as their junior partner!

V. Conclusions

Although commentators have traditionally seen the devil's offer in Luke 4.6 as resting on a false claim of sovereignty over the earth, reference to the court

²³ Cf. H. Conzelman's comment that the fact that Satan's power (*ἐξουσία*) has been 'delivered' to him indicates his limitations. The devil does not enjoy his power in his own right (*The Theology of St. Luke* [London: Faber & Faber, 1960] 156–7, 181).

stories of Daniel (as well as later apocalypses such as Dan 7–12 and Revelation) demonstrate that the supposition on which the claim is founded, namely that the world is under the control of the forces of chaos, is characteristic of a particular strand of Jewish and Christian thought. The devil's offer to Jesus recalls both Dan 1–6 (identifying him as a chaotic world ruler, a kind of demonic Nebuchadnezzar) and Aramaic legal terminology. The devil claims to have been given 'right of disposal' over creation, and as such is able legally to demand homage from those to whom he delegates his authority.

Jesus counters this offer and its associated demand with reference to the Deuteronomic precept that one should 'worship the Lord . . . and serve only him'. In its immediate context it rejects the devil's demand and rebukes him for not offering homage to the source of his authority. On a wider level, however, Jesus' rejection of the devil's offer serves as an example to the early Christian community not to compromise with chaos in exchange for recognition or power.²⁴ Just as Jesus follows the example of Daniel and his colleagues, so, the text of Luke 4 implies, should his followers.

24 Cf. N. Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951) 160.