TEMPTATION

I. Representative Biblical references to “temptation”

Matt. 4:1,3; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:2,13 - “Jesus...tempted by the devil/Satan”
Matt. 6:13; Mk. 14:38; Lk. 11:4 - “lead us not into temptation, but deliver from evil”
I Cor. 7:5 - “lest Satan tempt you because of lack of control”
I Cor. 10:13 - “no trial/temptation has overtaken you but as is common to man...
   God will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able... with the
   trial/temptation will provide the way of escape...”
Gal. 6:1 - “restore the one caught in a trespass...lest you too be tempted”
I Thess. 3:5 - “for fear that the tempter might have tempted you...”
I Tim. 6:9 - “those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare”
Heb. 2:18 - “He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to
   come to the aid of those who are tempted”
Heb. 4:15 - “tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin”
James 1:13,14 - “Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am being tempted by God’;
   for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt any one.
   But each one is tempted when he is seduced under his own desires.”
II Pet. 2:9 - “the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation”

II. Attempting to define “temptation”

A. Old Testament

1. Hebrew language has no specific word for “temptation”
   
2. Examples of - Gen. 3:1-7; Job 1:12; 2:6

B. New Testament

1. Greek words peirazo (verb) and peirasmos (noun)
   
a. Derived from peiro, “to pierce in order to test, try, examine or
      prove”

b. peirazo can mean “to test, to try, to tempt”

c. peirasmos can mean “trial, testing, temptation”

2. A trial (situation, circumstance) serves to pierce our status-quo and
   expectations (cf. James 1:2)

3. In the midst of such a trial there is spiritual solicitation
   
a. God’s solicitation to derive His character creates a testing in
      the midst of the trial (cf. Jn. 6:6; Heb. 11:17)

b. Satan’s solicitation to derive his character creates a
      tempting in the midst of the trial (cf. Lk. 4:13; James 1:13)

4. Temptation is the devil’s enticement to evil character and action

III. Source of “temptation”

A. Temptation does not come from

1. God. God does not entice to evil - James 1:13,14

2. Situations of life. Trials are but the opportunities of choice

3. World. World of evil is but context and environment in which we
   live. - Jn. 17:15,16; II Cor. 4:4; I Jn. 4:4

4. Desires. These are God-given, amoral needs and drives.
   
a. desire for riches - cf. I Tim. 6:9

b. sexual desires - cf. I Cor. 7:2

c. “tempted under our desires” - James 1:14,15
5. Flesh. This is the patterning within our desires of past responses to temptation. Proclivities, propensities, tendencies, weaknesses.

B. Temptation comes from
1. Satan, the devil, the tempter
   a. seeking to activate his selfish, evil character
   b. seeking to deny glory to God by misuse of humanity
2. Other persons may be used as instruments by the tempter.
   a. Peter was thus used - Matt. 16:23
   b. Jewish religionists used - Matt. 16:8; 19:3; 22:18,35;
      Mk. 8:11; 10:2; 12:15; Lk. 11:16; Jn. 8:6
   c. Manipulators of desires - epithumiologists
      (1) sales-persons, advertisers
      (2) campaign managers
      (3) preachers of religion

IV. Purpose of “temptation”
A. Satan’s purpose
   1. to solicit mankind to manifest his evil character
      a. to thus cause men to be misused humanity
      b. to thus deny glory to God (cf. Isa. 43:7)
   2. to cause men to think that by their self-effort they can become “like God” (cf. Gen. 3:5) or pleasing to God (Rom. 8:8; Heb. 11:6).
   3. to solicit Christians to misrepresent who they are in Christ; doubt their identity in Christ
B. God’s purpose in allowing for Satan’s solicitations of temptation
   1. to preserve God-intended freedom of choice
   2. to allow for freely chosen faith/love relationship of man with God

V. Forms of “temptation”
A. Temptation to act - I Jn. 2:16
   1. “lust of the eyes” - Personal aspiration
   2. “lust of the flesh” - Personal gratification
   3. “boastful pride of life” - Personal reputation
B. Temptation to react
   1. Fight - anger, hostility, wrath, resentment, bitterness
   2. Fright - fear, anxiety, worry
   3. Flight - avoidance, apathy, escape, withdrawal

VI. Some Biblical examples of “temptation”
A. Adam and Eve - Gen. 3
B. David - II Sam. 11,12
C. Jesus Christ - Matt. 4:1; Heb. 4:15

VII. Temptation and sin
A. Temptation is not sin - Heb. 4:15
B. Temptation is an enticement or solicitation to sin - James 1:14,15
   1. Fishing metaphor (14) - attraction, lure, bait
   2. Reproductive metaphor (15) - seed of temptation; egg of intent; gives birth to sin-decision
C. By freedom of choice in will, we choose to make sin-decision
D. Sin-decision may then be
1. Internalized - fantasy, preoccupation (Matt. 5:27,28)
2. Externalized - acting out

VIII. Response to "temptation"

A. Man is responsible to exercise his response-ability in freedom of choice
1. Not divine determinism
2. Not diabolic determinism
3. We derive character in every choice

B. Man may choose to succumb to the solicitation of temptation
1. sin - cf. James 1:15
2. evil - cf. Matt. 6:13; James 1:13
3. ruin and destruction - I Tim. 6:9

C. Man may choose to resist solicitation of temptation
1. Not “fight the devil”
2. Choice of faith, receptivity of God’s activity, counters the solicitation of Satan - cf. James 4:7; Eph. 5:18; Rom. 12:2
3. Christian lives by sufficiency of God’s grace provision - II Cor. 3:5; Phil. 4:13; I Jn. 4:4; II Pet. 1:3
4. Still may require responsible action of Christian
   a. to disregard human agents of solicitation - Matt. 16:21-23
   b. to avoid placing ourselves in situations in the world where temptation might be exercised, and we know the weaknesses of our fleshly desires might be exploited - cf. Prov. 4:14,15; Gen. 39:13; I Cor. 6:18; 10:14
   c. Not trying to avoid or flee all temptation - Henry Drummond - “the greatest of all temptations is to want to be without any.”