

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 *peira*, “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."