

## THE PURPOSE OF TEMPTATION

"...them that suffer according to the will of God", and "despise not thou the chastening of the Lord."

In the Beginning God made everything perfect. Adam was perfect, the garden was perfect. The fruits of the garden were perfect. The tree of life was perfect, and so was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They had to be, for God made them all and none of them had yet fallen. That much we can easily agree on, but we also know that at some later time the Devil entered the garden and tempted first Eve and then Adam. We need to think of this as a test designed to reveal and make evident something otherwise unknown. So did God need to know something He did not already know? Did God need to show something to Satan? Did Adam and Eve need something more than they already had? They were perfect, so what was the purpose of it? And while we are at it please explain why Jesus needed to be made perfect if He was already perfect, which He was?

A few years ago I read a book with the title The Purpose of Temptation. That title got my attention; I was interested. Temptation has a purpose? Is that what I had been taught? Maybe I need to look into the meaning of the word temptation. what does it mean?

1. It is a different word from testing.
2. What did it mean that Jesus had taught us to pray deliver us from temptation? And then since I did not have that book I wondered if there really was such a book. I looked it up on the world wide web in abebooks.com. Yes, there it was and it was by the right author. A man I had never heard of before or since, but a subject that needed to be talked about
3. In our everyday life we use the word temptation to mean more than one thing. We understand that it may mean an invitation to indulge ourselves, or it may mean a test, or it may mean the affliction and pain that the test brings, or it may mean for judgement. And a test is a good thing providing we have the right answers, for it gives us an opportunity for advancement, maybe to the next grade but certainly to the next lesson. But why do we have to be enticed to do things that are bad for us, and especially now that we are new creatures in Christ? And persecution and sickness are not at all something we want to choose. What is the purpose of temptation--- that evil, sinful meaning of temptation? Does God really see something good in temptation? Why then did Jesus teach us to pray to escape being tempted?

### I The TEMPTER

God does not tempt -- He tries and tests in order to see us overcome. Jas 1:12-16, Satan is the tempter who intends that we should fall.

He takes away the seed (understanding God's will) -- Mtt 13:19

He sows the tares -- (desire to please ourselves) -- Mtt 13:24

He promises selfish independence. Gen 3:15

He denies the veracity of God. Gen 3

He works with fallen human nature. Jas I

The providence of God permits men to cherish and manifest the evil disposition of their own hearts. God's permissive sovereignty is simply the negative withholding of impediments from the path of the sinner, instead of preventing his sin by exercising divine power. It implies no ignorance of nor disinterest in nor indulgence to sin, but it is consistent with His hatred for sin and determination to punish sin. For Him to act otherwise would be a denial of the morally responsible individual that He has created. 2 Chron 32:31, Deut 8:2, Psa 17:13,14,

Psa S i:12,13 , and compare with Psa 19:13, Hos 2:6, 2 Cor 5:17.

### II The AVENUE OF TEMPTATION

James tells us that every man (even Jesus) is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. The appeal is to what we are naturally. To have the things that are good for us in a selfish way apart from the will of God. Since there was no desire on Jesus part to have or be anything independently or apart from the will of God, He could say that the Tempter would find nothing in Him when he came. Heb 4:15, Jno 14:30

The lust of appetites of the flesh -- although these are God-given needs and drives, the temptation is to attempt to satisfy them apart from the will of God. To do so is sin. Adam could eat and satisfy hunger, but only within the will of God.

The desire for approval and 'belonging' -- we were made this way so we would desire the approval and fellowship of God. But it is sin to desire approbation and communion outside of God's will. Even Peter failed to recognize this temptation before the rooster crowed.

The desire for power. Although God created man to have dominion it was to be within God's will. We are tempted to exercise power and authority over others without regard to the will of God.

In 1 John these 3 are listed and together classified as worldliness - perhaps meaning the philosophy of Satan the god of this world. Note that the external circumstances of these temptations is always changing with our age and the society in which we live. There are enough different versions of temptations to test all people of all societies throughout their whole lifespan and regardless of whether they are unsaved or newly saved or mature in Christ.

### III The TESTED

If we acknowledge the broken relationship between the Sovereign God and rebellious man, there is little problem in accepting that God uses the Tempter to chastise and punish sinners in the hope that they will repent. The problem is to see that the same God can use the same means to make the saint more like Himself. Chastisement is from God, no matter what the instrument. Heb 10 & 12.

Eden's curse has not been repealed. Death passed on all, but His grace is sufficient for the test. Tempering -- 1 Peter, James, 1 John

Maturing -- growing old or growing up is painful, it is full of tests, but afterwards yields fruit...

### IV The OBJECTIVE VIEW OF TESTING

We learn that our faith is to be in God -- not in signs and wonders.

That faith and the will of God are far superior to all circumstances.

That unanswered prayers do not disprove God nor His love.

That He can be honored in all circumstances and is Sovereign in (over) them all.

All of creation will finally be fully aware of the manifold wisdom and justice and love of God, for these attributes will have been fully proved and tested.

====Apr 17:08

Objective view

temptation as it is seen

by God, and proves to Him our likeness to His perfection

by Satan and proves that God's creatures can and do choose not to live independently

by the world that God is good

by us confidence and increased faith

There is a purpose, and it is good

Most gladly, therefore will I accept my testing

Consider it all joy

Now no temptation (meaning testing) for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous, nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness. Not the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

James 1:

12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation, for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to those who love him. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God," for God can't be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. 14 But each one is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then the lust, when it has conceived, bears sin; and the sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death. 16 Don't be deceived, my beloved brothers.

#### Matthew 4 1

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

2 When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry afterward.

3 The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread."

4 But he answered, "It is written, `Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.`"

5 Then the devil took him into the holy city. He set him on the pinnacle of the temple,

6 and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, `He will give his angels charge concerning you.` and, `On their hands they will bear you up, So that you don't dash your foot against a stone.`"

7 Jesus said to him, "Again, it is written, `You shall not test the Lord, your God.`"

8 Again, the devil took him to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory.

9 He said to him, "I will give you all of these things, if you will fall down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Get behind me, Satan! For it is written, `You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.`"

11 Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and ministered to him.

#### Luke 22:

31 And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat.

32 "But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren."

#### 1 Cor 10:

12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

15 I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.

1 Peter 4: 19 Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator.

#### Hebrews 2

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?"

7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.

8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.  
10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.  
11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,  
12 saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."  
13 And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."  
14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,  
15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.  
16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.  
17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.  
18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

#### Definition of sin

Sin is the transgression of the law. The law is good, so why would anyone want to bypass it?  
The ctual root of sin is the desire for independence from God. So I can make up my own laws and not have someone telling me what is right. Adam was never made to live independently of God. As long as he was content with this perfect arrangement things went well. We understand the same thing about Satan when we read that he was also perfect until. Until he wanted to be independent, and so was Adam until he wanted to be independent.  
To Eve the temptation was not sin or no sin, it was not fruit or no fruit, not am I hearing a lie or the truth, but it was simply a departure from absolute, dependence upon God. Adam likewise was not tempted with the taste or color of the fruit, and he knew it was a lie, but he deliberately chose independence from God. And so sin, independence from God entered into the world. It had already entered into Heaven when the devil said, "I will be like the Most High and make my own decisions."

Question 1, then is why did God make an angel who could choose for himself?  
Question 2 And what was the reason for God to consider that part of man's perfection should be the ability to choose between dependence on his creator and to choose independence? If we can find the answer to that problem we should be able to find if there is a purpose to temptation.

#### The tempter

##### Matthew 13

1 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.  
2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.  
3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.  
4 "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.  
5 "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.  
6 "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.  
7 "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.  
8 "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.  
9 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"  
10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"  
11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

12 "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.  
13 "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.  
14 "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;  
15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'  
16 "But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear;  
17 "for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.  
18 "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:  
19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

Gen 3: Then the man said, "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate."  
13 And the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."  
14 So the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life.  
15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

#### James 1

1 James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad: Greetings.  
2 My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials,  
3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.  
4 But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.  
5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.  
6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.  
7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord;  
8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.  
9 Let the lowly brother glory in his exaltation,  
10 but the rich in his humiliation, because as a flower of the field he will pass away.  
11 For no sooner has the sun risen with a burning heat than it withers the grass; its flower falls, and its beautiful appearance perishes. So the rich man also will fade away in his pursuits.  
12 Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.  
13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.  
14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.  
15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.  
16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.  
17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.  
18 Of His own will He brought us forth by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.

2 Chron 32:

26 Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

27 Hezekiah had very great riches and honor. And he made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stones, for spices, for shields, and for all kinds of desirable items;

28 storehouses for the harvest of grain, wine, and oil; and stalls for all kinds of livestock, and folds for flocks.

29 Moreover he provided cities for himself, and possessions of flocks and herds in abundance; for God had given him very much property.

30 This same Hezekiah also stopped the water outlet of Upper Gihon, and brought the water by tunnel to the west side of the City of David. Hezekiah prospered in all his works.

31 However, regarding the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, whom they sent to him to inquire about the wonder that was done in the land, God withdrew from him, in order to test him, that He might know all that was in his heart.

Deut 8: 2 "And you shall remember that the Lord your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Psa 19:

12 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults.

13 Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

1 Cor 10

16 Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

18 Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

Hosea 2

Therefore, behold, I will hedge up your way with thorns, And wall her in, So that she cannot find her paths.

### **the avenue of**

Heb 4:

14 Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

John 14:

27 "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

28 "You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I.

29 "And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe.

30 "I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me.

31 "But that the world may know that I love the Father,

## I John 2

1 My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

2 And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

3 Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments.

4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.

6 He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment I write to you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.

9 He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now.

10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

12 I write to you, little children, Because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake.

13 I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father.

14 I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world-the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-is not of the Father but is of the world.

17 And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that He has promised us-eternal life.

26 These things I have written to you concerning those who try to deceive you.

27 But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.

28 And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.

29 If you know that He is righteous, you know that

### **chastisement from God**

Heb 10

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.