

Leaving a Trail of Truth

Trial

OR

Temptation

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There is an important distinction in Scripture between that which is a trial and that which is a temptation, and the answer is found in understanding the difference between temptation unto evil and testing unto Revelation. First, the Scripture is clear as we see in James 1:13, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." God never tempts anyone in the sense of enticing them toward sin or evil. That work belongs to the Sin Nature and to Satan. But what we see in the account of Job is not God tempting Job to do evil, God allowing a trial that would reveal something far greater.

In the context of Job which we can see in the opening of the book of Job, Satan appears before God but remember that no one appears before God without being beckoned for a purpose.

Job 1:8

And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?

God initiates the conversation, not to cause Job to sin, but to demonstrate the reality of Faith in a man who feared Him. Satan's accusation is important to recognize as he accuses Job of only serving God because of what he receives from God. So, what unfolds is not temptation from God, but a trial permitted by God in which Satan is the one doing the afflicting.

Testing vs. Temptation

Temptation is an enticement to do evil (never from God), while testing/trying is a proving, revealing and refining of one's Faith (allowed by God).

Job 1:12

And the LORD said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So, Satan went forth from the presence of the LORD.

God sets the boundaries, but Satan performs the destruction. This we see with Job also aligns with what happened to Abraham.

Genesis 22:1

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

Here "tempt" means test, not entice to evil, but to expose his Faith and mostly its source.

What Was God Doing? God was revealing that true Faith is not rooted in blessings, but in Himself, always in Light of His Redeeming work. Yet even deeper, when we view Job through the Cross, we see something even greater, which is Job, being a type and shadow of the Righteous sufferer, as he pointed to Christ. Job was afflicted without cause. He was accused by an adversary, and he suffered though he sought God. All this ultimately finds fulfillment in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was delivered into suffering, not for His own failure, but for our Redemption.

What we can see as we look to and understand this through the lens of Calvary is that what happened to Job shows us something vital. God may allow testing, but never to destroy

Faith, only to bring it into the place where it must rest in His Righteousness alone. This is where the Cross becomes essential. Because the ultimate answer to every accusation of the adversary is not our performance, but what Christ did at Calvary.

Romans 8:33-34

33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

Even in Job's trial, what was being revealed is what we now fully know through the Cross. Righteousness is not proven by circumstances, and Faith is not sustained by blessings. Victory is found only in what God provides through His Son and His Sacrificial work on the Cross.

God did not tempt Job to sin. He allowed a trial within His sovereign control that exposed the accusations of Satan, the frailty of human understanding and ultimately, the need for a Redeemer. And that Redeemer is the One Job would later testify of.

Job 19:25

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

So, the trying of Job was not God leading him into evil, but God allowing a circumstance that would ultimately point to Christ and His Redeeming work, where every test finds its answer. The distinction between the trying of our Faith and temptation to sin is precise in Scripture, and it must be handled carefully and always in the Light of Christ and Him crucified.

1. The difference between “tempting” and “trying”

Tempting is unto evil as its aim is to pull a person into sin. Its source is the Sin Nature and Satan, not God.

James 1:14-15

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Temptation works from within (lust) and is exploited by the enemy while trying/testing is the proving of Faith and its aim is to reveal, refine, and establish what is true. It is allowed and governed by God, though often carried out through circumstances or even satanic attack.

1 Peter 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

A trial does not try to make us sin but exposes what our Faith is resting in. The only Faith that can be tried is the Faith that is already being applied to the Sacrifice of Christ. If that weren't its object, it would have no reason to be tried. Many times, our Lord shows up to reveal to us that what we are calling Faith is not Faith that He will honor and that is why we continue to stay trapped and are found chasing everything under the sun as an answer for our sin.

2. What Job meant when he said God tried him “every moment”

Job 7:17-18

17 What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?

18 And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

Job is not saying God is tempting him to do evil. He is expressing that his entire life feels under constant examination and pressure, as though every moment is being weighed. God's people are continually being brought into a place where what they trust in is being challenged and revealed. There are only two options and there will never be a third. Romans 6:16 reveals the two. Our God tries His people every moment as He always delivers us to the death of Jesus which is the good work He is working in us who Believe (2 Corinthians 4:11-12, Philippians 1:6).

Romans 6:16

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto Righteousness?

3. The deeper issue in Job's experience

Here is where the clarity comes in: God allowed the trial while Satan performed the affliction. Job experienced the pressure, but the struggle within Job exposed something and even though Job did not curse God, the trial revealed that his understanding of Righteousness was not yet complete. This is why Job would later testify of his eye opening Revelation through Faith.

Job 42:5-6

5 I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.

6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

The trial brought Job to a deeper place, not of sinning, but of seeing his true need more clearly.

4. How this connects to the Cross

Every trial ultimately presses the same question, which is, “What is our Faith resting in?” If Faith rests in circumstances, then there can be nothing but instability. If Faith rests in self, then failure is guaranteed. But if Faith rests in God’s Righteousness revealed in Christ and His cross then guaranteed stability will hold us steady as the anchor of our souls.

This is why we see this happening in the life of Peter. Same principle and same result.

Luke 22:31-32

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:
32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

Notice that Satan tempts/sifts but Christ sustains Faith. That is the same framework seen in Job. This in no way means that these men as well as all other men are not required to choose to Believe, but when they do it is only after God’s reach for them and His drawing them through the Truth that He is revealing to them so they can believe.

5. The Key Takeaway

Temptation tries to pull us away from God into sin while trying (testing) brings us into the light of what we truly are trusting in. God does not work evil, but He will allow situations where the enemy attacks, the flesh is exposed and Faith must be anchored in Christ and His Cross alone. And now, through Faith in Christ and His Cross, we understand that which Job could not yet fully see is that God’s purpose in every trial is to bring us into a clearer, more dependent Faith in His Son and what He accomplished at Calvary.

God never tempts anyone to do evil

James 1:13

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

God has no participation in evil, no intention of leading anyone into sin nor does he ever entice, lure, or draw anyone toward wrongdoing. Temptation unto evil always has another source.

God's Word tells us that temptation comes from our own lusts within.

James 1:14

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

So, the framework is, Within = The Sin Nature (lust). Without = Satan exploiting that weakness. God is not in that process at all.

Then why does God allow trials?

God tests (tries), but He does not tempt (entice to evil). Again, in the Book of Job God allowed the situation. Satan brought the affliction while Job experienced the pressure, but at no point did God attempt to make Job sin.

What God is doing in a trial?

1 Peter 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

A trial is not about pulling us into sin, as it is about revealing and refining our Faith. However, in that same trial, the flesh may respond wrongly and the enemy will tempt. Pressure may expose weakness, but those elements are not God's work, they are what the trial reveals.

The Cross of Christ makes this crystal clear. At the Cross, we see the clearest example as God ordained the giving of His Son. Satan entered into Judas (Luke 22:3) to betray Christ. Men, through wicked hands, crucified Christ (Acts 2:23) but God's purpose through it all was Redemption, not evil.

Acts 2:23

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

So even there we see God's will resulting in Salvation for many. Man's action was very sinful in the entire process and Satan's work very deceptive, but God remained completely Righteous in all His ways. God never tempts anyone to do evil.

What He does do is allow situations where Faith is tested, the heart is revealed and ultimately, dependence upon Christ is revealed as deepening or being forfeited. And through Faith in the Cross, we now know that every true work of God is attempting to move us toward one place which is Faith anchored in the Righteousness which He has provided in His Son for us on the Cross (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Why do we pray to our Heavenly Father not to lead us into temptation?

The phrase comes from the Lord's Prayer in the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew 6:13

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

At first glance, it can sound like God might lead someone into sin, but that would contradict James 1:13, which clearly says He does not. So, the meaning must be understood within the full counsel of Scripture.

1. What “lead us not into temptation” does NOT mean

It does not mean that God is trying to tempt us to do evil. Neither does it mean that God needs to be persuaded not to lead us into sin. God never works that way.

2. What it DOES mean?

This is a prayer of dependence and preservation. It is essentially saying, “Father, do not allow me to be brought into a situation where I would be overcome by temptation and keep me, guard me, and deliver me from the evil that seeks to draw me away.” Notice the second half explains the first: “Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.” The focus is protection from being overtaken by what would pull us away from our anchored Faith in Christ and His Cross.

3. How this fits with testing and trials

God may allow testing, but in that testing, there are always temptations present. The trial reveals the need for Faith to work. The temptation tries to pull us toward sin so this prayer is asking for us not to be placed where the flesh would rule, not to be overcome by the pressure of the moment, but to be kept in a place where Faith remains in the Cross of Christ. It is a prayer for our Lord to help us, a

prayer for grace, for we know ultimately and always that it will be a choice of our taking up the Cross or not.

4. Scripture confirms this understanding

1 Corinthians 10:13

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

God doesn't send the temptation, but He is Faithful to limit it and provide escape. That escape is always found through applying the measure of Faith He has dealt us which came out of its very source which is Jesus Christ and His work on the Cross.

Luke 22:40

“Pray that ye enter not into temptation.”

To enter into temptation speaks of stepping into it, yielding to it or allowing ourselves to be drawn into its power through a lack of watchfulness, a failure to depend on our Lord through Faith or allowing our hearts to be drawn into the lure of sin. This would not be being exposed to temptation but moving into agreement with it. When the heart is not yielded to the Truth of the Cross of Christ, which is the same as our Faith not being applied to the Cross, the flesh there gains opportunity and it is there we begin to enter into what is being presented. So, entering into temptation is when temptation conceives when it is embraced instead of being resisted through Faith in the Cross of Christ.

5. Seen through the Cross

The clearest example is in Christ Himself which we see in the Gospel of Luke.

Luke 22:42

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Jesus was not being tempted by God to do evil, but He was in the most intense trial, where the pressure to avoid the Cross was real, yet He remained perfectly humble and yielded in obedience.

6. The Heart of The Prayer

So, when we pray, “Lead us not into temptation”, we are saying, “Keep us dependent on You and do not let us be given over to the weakness of our flesh. Preserve us in the place where our Faith remains anchored in Your provision of Christ and in the light of His Cross, so that provision is clear to us. Christ and what He accomplished at Calvary is the only place where temptation is overcome. This is a prayer just as we find the writer of Hebrews saying, “Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28).

“Lead us not into temptation” is not questioning God’s character but it is acknowledging, our weakness, the reality of temptation and our need for God’s keeping power. This is why He always delivers His people to the death of Jesus for Jesus’ sake so that we can express Jesus instead of our carnal flesh (2 Corinthians 4:11-12). It is a prayer that we would be kept from being overcome and continually delivered from the evil that seeks to draw us away from Faith in Christ, and again He answers that prayer by showing us His Cross and the power thereof.



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