

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

December 5, 2016

TEMPTATIONS

Before Jesus ever walked on water, healed a sick person, cast out a devil, or even taught a multitude, God spoke from heaven at the Jordan River saying, *“This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.”* Matthew 3:17 At that time, Jesus had already lived among men for about thirty years and had been thoroughly tested with the same things that are common to all mankind, but no sin was found in him. His Father was indeed *“well pleased.”* Now the tests became even greater as Satan would rage against him with every device and means at his disposal. The results were still the same. Jesus would say the night before his crucifixion *“the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.”* John 14:30 This was not a mere man such as Adam, the one who had failed so miserably when tested. This was the Lord from heaven, the “Word made flesh,” the Son of the living God!

The scripture says that Jesus *“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,”* Hebrews 4:15 The Greek words translated “tempt” and “temptation” in the New Testament scriptures mean *“to test”* and to *“put to proof.”* In other words, these “temptations” are the things that come and let us know if something is *“as it is presented to be.”* Often, when the scripture speaks of “temptations” it is speaking of

hardships and afflictions or persecutions and other attacks of Satan. Peter wrote to believers who were *“in heaviness through manifold temptations.”* | Peter 1:6 Outwardly they were enduring great hardships and the furious attacks of the adversary, but inwardly they were rejoicing *“with joy unspeakable and full of glory.”* | Peter 1:8 These “temptations” were not moral temptations. These were great trials the adversary brought to see if he could destroy those who trusted in Christ. These believers had no reason to fear, because Christ was their habitation. Jesus had foretold of these things saying, *“...in the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”* John 16:33

Was Jesus tested with moral temptations? Yes, but not as many suppose. God does not test with evil, but Satan definitely will seek to. Jesus was *“tempted ...yet without sin.”* Opportunities for sin were set before him such as are common to man, but never once did he have any desire for such things. If he had lusted for immorality, according his own words (*“whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* Matthew 5:28) he would have been immoral in the eyes of God. Jesus was tested in every way, but there was no sin in him for these “temptations” to discover. Just because Satan sets sin in your path does not mean that it is in your heart. A person who is tested with evil in their path will walk on by and sometimes not even know they have been tested, but the person tempted with evil that is in their heart will find no path to escape it.

As a child of God, moral temptations may sometimes be in our path, but they are not in our heart. If they are, something is already not right. James told us that when a person is tempted with evil it is because they are *“drawn away of their own lusts.”* James 1:13-15 Simply put: It is not Christ that works in them, but Sin. This is different than just a test laid in their path, but this is sin that dwells in their heart. James let us know that the end of this will be death.

People struggle with sin, not because it is in their path, but because it is in their heart. This is the reason that Christ came and *“washed us from our sins in his own blood.”* Revelations 1:5 After Cornelius and those with him received Christ and were filled with the Holy Ghost, Peter said *“And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, ...purifying their hearts by faith.”* Acts 15:8-9 It is through faith in Jesus Christ and his shed blood that sin is washed from the heart of a person. When that is the case, the tempter may come and his tests (temptations) may abound, but he finds no place in the children of God.