



Does God Ever Tempt Us? Contradictions Series

James 1:12: (KJV) *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.*



God is all-powerful and all-knowing. The problem is we often do not think about what this really means. Not only has knowledge of God diminished in our day, respect and reverence for Him are now a scarce commodity. Humanity in this technology-driven age is prone to judge without understanding, and our benevolent Creator is an easy target for this. We have discussed many supposed contradictions about God in our Bible Contradictions Series, and we will bring up a few more today. Primarily, we want to look at the relationship between God, us and our difficult experiences in life. Does God purposely place temptations in front of us as a way to teach or punish? Some say the Bible says yes, and others say the Bible absolutely says no. Who is right? Let's look at the Bible and find out!

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CONTRADICTION -
or needing a
clear explanation?



Does God EVER tempt us
for any reason?

Some Old Testament
scriptures seem to say yes.

Genesis 22:1: (KJV) *And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt <5254> Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.*

Judges 2:22: (KJV) *That through them I may prove <5254> Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.*

Let's begin with examples from the Old Testament.



PUSHING OR TEMPTING GOD: <5254> the LORD?

Exodus 17:1-2: (KJV) *¹And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. ²Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt*

Think about it - they were worried. There was no water in sight, and they were thirsty and desperate. But didn't God bring them out of Egypt by miracle after miracle?

The people pushed, pressed and demanded of the LORD! The word for *tempt* has a broad basis for its meaning.

Tempt: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5254 *nacah*; to test; by implication, to attempt:
— adventure, assay, prove, tempt, try

Hebrew-English Lexicon: to test, try, prove, tempt, assay, put to the proof or test



To “assay” means to determine the quality of metal. In other words, what are we really made of?

Here are further examples of humanity pushing, proving or testing God, things or another person:



Judges 6:39: (KJV) *And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me **prove** <5254>, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew.*

Gideon was afraid and wanted God to show him again. He asked God with humility to assure him once more. It was such a great example because God had already assured him once, but Gideon said: “I have never done this before. I know You showed me once, but could You show me again?” He is humbly asking God again, **putting God’s answer to the test**.



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WHO WAS GIDEON?

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1 Samuel 17:39: (KJV) *And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not **proved** <5254> it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not **proved** <5254> them. And David put them off him.*

Saul gave David his armor, but Saul was a big man - *from the shoulders up Saul was taller than other Israelites* - and David was smaller. How could that work? David had never worn this armor; he was heading into battle with Goliath and could not wear untried armor. He had not “**proved**” or “**tested**” this armor. We can see that this word does not only mean tempt; it has the meaning of testing or proving something as well.



1 Kings 10:1: (KJV) *And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the LORD, she came to **prove** <5254> him with hard questions.*

The queen of Sheba came to test Solomon’s “so-called” wisdom. She had heard about Solomon’s wisdom, but she had to see it for herself. This is a very different circumstance than Gideon proving God’s answer, or David not being able to test Saul’s armor before using it in battle. The queen of Sheba was **testing** or **proving** Solomon *with hard questions*.

This Old Testament word shows us that its meaning of “test” can be used in both negative and positive ways.



Positively, it is to **TEST** someone or something for the sake of proving value or strength.

We saw the humility of Gideon, the practicality of David and the cockiness of the queen of Sheba.



They all showed us this word has a broad-based meaning. The context tells us what the word means. This is an important aspect when looking at our question, "Does God ever tempt us for any reason?" The word has many shades of meaning.

C, O, N, T, E, X, T,

Satan, on the other hand, tests as well, but with an entirely different purpose in mind. His testing is to find and exploit weakness:

1 Chronicles 21:1: (NASB) *Then Satan stood up against Israel and **moved <5496>** David to number Israel.*

Moved: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5496 *suth*; to incite, allure, instigate

David was the king of Israel. He was very popular, and Israel won many battles. As a result, David's personal pride welled up in him and Satan took advantage and pushed him. God told David earlier not to number the people by taking a census (the count was of how many men could draw a sword) because He wanted David to rely on the power of God rather than the strength of Israel's army.

Satan stood up against Israel and moved David - Satan knew what God had decreed, but he wanted David and Israel to go against God, so he tested David. David failed that particular test. Satan was out to destroy with his testing.



God does "test," but He does not "tempt":

Genesis 22:1: (NLT) *Sometime later, God **tested <5254>** Abraham's faith. Abraham! God called. Yes, he replied. Here I am.*

The King James Version translated this word as *tempt* which makes God sound evil. It does not even make sense, but testing Abraham's faith does make sense. The context defines the meaning. In Episode 1246, we went into this event in great detail. God did not intend for Abraham to kill his son, but the event was a test of his faith for the purpose of great blessings.



Clarifying Abraham sacrificing Isaac, and if we should make oaths or not

God's motivation was to **positively prove** Abraham's faith as a solid

foundation upon which to build a nation that would bless all the families of the earth through the deliverer of all humanity. This is why that "test" was there.



God often put the nation of Israel to periods of testing to show them the standard they needed to strive for and to correct them when they fell short. That is what a good parent does:

Judges 2:20-23: (NASB) *²⁰So the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and He said, Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers and has not listened to My voice, ²¹I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died, ²²in order to **test <5254>** Israel by them, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk in it as their fathers did, or not. ²³So the LORD allowed those nations to remain, not driving them out quickly; and He did not give them into the hand of Joshua.*

God left some enemy nations around them as a testing ground. He detected a variance in Israel's faithfulness, so He tested them to see if they would adhere to His standards or not. God had a right to do this if He was going to bless



them, deliver them, take them out of Egypt with the plagues and bring them through the Red Sea. If He was going to do all those things, He had a right to say: "You, Israel, need to stand up higher." God definitely tested in the Old Testament! He did not tempt.

The Old Testament paints a clear picture of the pitfalls and value of testing. When anyone tests or proves someone or something out of their own egotistical perspective, it can easily result in a temptation or trap. When God tests, it is always for the sake of revealing sin or pointing to righteousness. He never tests to trap, tempt or embarrass.

We need to examine our own motivations. God's motivation is clearly for a higher purpose, but some of the human motivations we looked at were not so good. Satan's motivation was pure evil! This same testing can come in all different packages, and we must be clear on what comes from God, what comes from others, and we also have to be sure of our own motivation if the testing comes from us.



It is comforting to see the Old Testament standard that God has set for the proving of His people and their faithfulness!

What about the New Testament? Doesn't God put temptation before us as a learning tool?

As we now look into the teachings of the gospel and the development of true Christian disciples, we will see a powerful consistency between the Old and New Testaments. Once again, we want to be clear on exactly what God does and does not do. We will find that the words used - combined with the context they are used in - will tell the whole story.

C O N T E X T

CONTRADICTION -
or needing a
clear explanation?



Does God EVER tempt us
for any reason?

Some New Testament scriptures
seem to say He had a direct
hand in our being tempted:

Matthew 6:13: (NASB) *And do not lead us into **temptation** <3986>, but deliver us from evil...*

1 Corinthians 10:13: (NASB) *No **temptation** <3986> has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be **tempted** <3985> beyond what you are able, but with the **temptation** <3986> will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.*



Is this saying God IS tempting us and giving us a way to escape? Is He tempting us and telling us how to get out of it?

Two specific words are used in these scriptures - the noun form (person, place or thing) and the verb form (an action) of the same word. Let's start with the noun.

Temptation: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3986 *peirasmos*; a putting to proof (by experiment [of good], experience [of evil], solicitation, discipline or provocation); by implication, adversity

Tempted: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3985 *peirazo*; to test (objectively), i.e., endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline

The New Testament word seems similar to the Old Testament word with the meaning of testing and proving and tempting. Even though the New Testament is a different language (Greek) as opposed to the Old Testament (Hebrew), sometimes the words translated the same are pretty close to the same meaning. That is what is happening here.

Now we are getting specific with the noun form and the verb form of this word. It is an important word used in a variety of ways, and bears on our question, "Does God ever tempt us?"

N, O, U, N, vs, V, E, R, B,

Let's continue in Matthew by looking at more of the Lord's Prayer:

Matthew 6:12-13: (NASB) ¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³And do not lead us into **temptation** <3986>, but deliver us from evil...

This verse is not talking about physical debts, like those who owe us money. The meaning is, *forgive us for those things we have done amiss as we forgive those that have done something amiss against us.* This shows equity.

Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil -

(Source: Biblical commentary by Albert Barnes) Verse 13. *And lead us not into temptation.* A petition similar to this is offered by David, Psalm 141:4, "Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men that work iniquity." God tempts no man, see James 1:13. This phrase, then, must be used in the sense of permitting. Do not suffer us, or permit us, to be tempted to sin. In this it is implied that God has such control over us and the tempter, as to save us from it if we call upon Him.

The meaning of the word is captured accurately here in the commentary by Albert Barnes with the sense of permission. God is not going to drag us into sin, but the Lord's prayer asks that He not permit us to be tempted to sin if we call upon Him in prayer.

Jesus is teaching us here to always look to our heavenly Father for guidance as we navigate through the hard testing experiences of life. He is telling us to always look up and to be led through these testing experiences by being delivered from evil - more aptly translated "the evil" - Satan. We will be delivered from temptation by being delivered from Satan. We see this strength of God's capacity to deliver. It is not that we will not have hard experiences, but God can deliver us from them.



There is a similar sentiment in the 23rd Psalm as we rely on Jesus our shepherd:

Psalm 23:4: (NASB) *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

Jesus is bringing us through the valley, not to the valley.

In Episode 1242, we learned that when the sun is up and everything is light, the shepherd leads his sheep from out in front. But as the sun goes down and things get dark, the shepherd drops back to be amongst his sheep. It is the same with the Lord. He leads us, but when we go through a dark valley, that is when the Lord comes beside us and comforts us.



The amazing, little-known details of shepherding that show us God's love

The 23rd Psalm echoes the Lord's prayer in Matthew 6:13. *Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Lead us through the valley of the shadow of death. We will have hard experiences, but deliverance will come from God. He will not abandon us. He will lead us through those hard experiences by delivering us from the evil one.*

Jesus was tested or tempted (it could be either one here) in a very serious way by Satan. The objective was to make Jesus fall:

Matthew 4:1-4: (NASB) *¹Then Jesus was led up by the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted <3985> by the devil. ²And after he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he then became hungry. ³And the tempter <3985> came and said to him, If you are the son of God, command that these stones become bread. ⁴But he answered and said, It is written, man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.*



Jesus was in the wilderness *to be tempted* (verb form) *by the devil*. The first temptation was to turn stones into bread. Why? Jesus was REALLY hungry. His body would have been screaming for food. Now it is the noun, the "tempter," that is used to describe Satan. He is given the name, "the tempter" or "the tester." This is not a good name to have! Satan's goal was to trip Jesus up - but Jesus handled it by quoting Scripture and staying 100 percent faithful to his heavenly Father by just doing His will.

Even though the tempter tried, Jesus proved faithful throughout his entire life:

Hebrews 4:15-16: (NASB) *¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted <3985> in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*



How can Satan tempt us today? How about through social media and television where the moral standard is being destroyed and makes immorality seem acceptable!



Satan also distracts our Christian walk by tempting our use of time such as with politics, sports or hobbies, which are not necessarily wrong, but they take our focus off the most important thing - developing Christlikeness.

We can find *grace to help in time of need* because Jesus overcame the testing he was faced with. We pray because we know that Jesus is with us - he knows our experiences.

As in the Old Testament, the understanding of whether one is being TESTED or TEMPTED comes through in the CONTEXT of the experience. To "test" can easily be taken several different ways. Let's look at some examples from positive and negative perspectives:



- s I have studied hard, and I am ready for the test.
- X They think they know so much - they won't get by MY test!
- s I think this contraption is going to work - let's test it!
- X You think you're tougher than me? Don't test me!

The newly converted Apostle Paul had been killing Christians before his conversion, so many Christians were wary of him:

Acts 9:26: (NASB) *When he came to Jerusalem, he was **trying** <3985> to associate with the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.*

The Apostle Paul was seeking fellowship in a positive, humble way. He was *trying*, but he did not get anywhere because of their fear. The problem was that he was too "trying" before he was "trying"! The word has a variety of meanings, and the context means everything.

Let's look at our Christian testings and temptations:

James 1:2-4: (NASB) *²Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various **trials** <3986>, ³knowing that the testing (trustworthiness) of your faith produces endurance. ⁴And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

These scriptures use the same word for *test* or *tempt* to mean trials, various testings or various difficulties.

What is the source of these trials and testing experiences?

James 1:12-15: (NASB) *¹²Blessed is a man who perseveres under **trial** <3986>; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. ¹³Let no one say when he is **tempted** <3985>, I am being **tempted** <3985> by God; for God cannot be tempted (This is a different word meaning God is not temptable) by evil, and He Himself does not **tempt** <3985> anyone.*

The Scriptures say: Do not say when you are tempted, when you are going through trials, that this is from God. *God is not temptable by evil* - this is one of the greatest subtle promises in Scripture. No matter what Satan tries, it will not work. And God will *not tempt anyone* - that is not the way God operates.



Here is where our temptations come from:

¹⁴But each one is **tempted <3985>** when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust (or desires). ¹⁵Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Satan knows our weaknesses, and we need to protect ourselves from his assaults. We need to put up barriers to prevent us from the traps of our weaknesses. It is a battle to overcome the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. It helps to find a support team to be accountable to, such as our spouse or a brother or sister in Christ. We are not in this alone. Romans 12:21 tells us not to be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Proverbs 24:16 says, a righteous man falls seven times, and rises up again.



We are tempted when we are carried away by our own desires. We must realize this, understand it and arm ourselves. The reason for our testing and temptation is our own imperfect selves. We need to learn how to truly be overcoming disciples of Jesus!

God works with and through our imperfect and temptation-prone selves and DOES provide the deliverance Jesus taught us to pray for in the Lord's Prayer:

1 Corinthians 10:12-13: (NASB) ¹²Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall (do not be self-assured; be assured in God through Christ). ¹³No **temptation <3986>** has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be **tempted <3985>** beyond what you are able, but with the **temptation <3986>** will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

God provides us the way to handle these things. Rather than God tempting us, He protects us when we fall into our own temptations! This is a beautiful way to look at this and understand the power of God and how much He cares for us.

Clarifying Contradictions:

Both the Old and New Testaments verify that God does NOT tempt anyone. He does, however, test us for the sake of our growth in Christ. In the Bible, tempting and testing are determined by the motivation behind them.

SATAN TEMPTS! WHAT IS SATAN KNOWN AS? THE DECEIVER, THE TEMPTER, THE FATHER OF LIES.

GOD TESTS! What is God known as? The Almighty, The Self-Existing One, Our Heavenly Father. Therefore, who tempts and who tests?



There is a big difference between the two. We want to hold onto these differences and honor God in understanding what He does and why He does it for us. Defining tempting and testing according to Scripture really sheds light on what to be wary of and what to be thankful for.

We know that God does not ever tempt us.
Next question! Does God ever give us permission to steal?

The simple answer to this would be, of course not! However, we need to be aware that there may be a few scriptures that people read and interpret as God giving permission for such behavior. As usual, we need to critically look at these verses to understand their immediate context, as well as the larger context of the Bible itself.

**CONTRADICTION -
or needing a
clear explanation?**



**Does God ever, under any
circumstances, give us permission
to take that which is not ours?**

Some Scriptures seem to say He does.

Exodus 20:15,17: (NASB) ¹⁵You shall not steal. ¹⁷You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.



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WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO COVET?
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Simple enough, and yet we have these scriptures:

Exodus 3:22: (NASB) *But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians.*

Deuteronomy 20:14: (NLT) *But you may keep for yourselves all the women, children, livestock, and other plunder. You may enjoy the plunder from your enemies that the LORD your God has given you.*



The commandments say, *do not steal, do not covet*, and yet God is instructing the Israelites to take valuables from the Egyptians and the Israelite enemies.

Is God saying we can steal?

We are going to focus on the idea of plundering and acts of war because this is the context of these scriptures.

Let's establish the broader context of what God WAS saying.

C O N T E X T

Remember, these words were spoken before any of the plagues on Egypt occurred:

Exodus 3:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. ²¹I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. ²²But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians.





The piece people lock onto is, “Thus you will take their stuff.”

But let’s fast-forward to the brief time between the first nine plagues and the last plague. Notice the details revealed by the words of Moses:

Exodus 11:1-3: (NASB) ¹Now the LORD said to Moses, One more plague I will bring on Pharaoh and on Egypt; after that he will let you go from here. When he lets you go, he will surely drive you out from here completely. ²Speak now in the hearing of the people that each man ask from his neighbor and each woman from her neighbor for articles of silver and articles of gold. ³The LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. Furthermore, the man Moses himself was greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt, both in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.

(Source: Biblical commentary by Albert Barnes) “*Shall borrow - shall ask*” The Egyptians had made the people serve “with rigor,” and the Israelites when about to leave the country forever were to ask or claim the jewels as a just, though very inadequate, payment for services rendered.

It is interesting that verse 3 says, *Moses himself was greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt, both in the sight of Pharaoh’s servants and in the sight of the people.* Previously, Exodus 3:21 said, *I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians.* Why? Because God was on their side and the Egyptians saw this. There was a reverential fear after they saw God’s miracles on the Hebrews’ behalf. They saw Moses as incredibly powerful; therefore, those who followed him were treated with respect. The Egyptians respected Moses and the people, knowing God was with them, and Pharaoh, their king, was the cause for all the trouble.



Moving on to the actual event:

Exodus 12:35-36: (NASB) ³⁵Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; ³⁶and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians.

(Source: Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties by Gleason Archer) The verb for ‘plundered’ in verse 36... means ‘strip off, spoil, deliver someone from [danger].’ It is not the usual term for plundering the enemy after he has been killed on the battlefield... (Plundered) is used here in a figurative sense, for the narrative plainly states that the Israelites simply made an oral request for a parting gift; and they received what they asked for. To be sure, there was a compelling factor of fear that moved the Egyptians to be so generous in parting with their treasures.

We know that the terrible fear factor was the death of their firstborn in the last plague.

This was not the usual word for “plunder” as used in wartime. It means to **deliver someone from danger**. We might even say the Egyptians were delivered from the danger of not obeying the God of Israel. There was the request for silver, gold and clothing and the Egyptians complied; that is how they were plundered. They wanted the Hebrews out of there - the Hebrew God had brought terrible trouble on Egypt, even if it was due to the Egyptian Pharaoh’s actions.



There was no stealing here; instead, there was a realization and recognition by all of the mighty power of God and the utter folly of Pharaoh. The Egyptian people compared the two and saw that God was more powerful. They said: "We have to get these people out of here or else we are all going to die." Pharaoh was so obstinate and stubborn - he stood in the way over and over! The Egyptian people said: "Just go." There was no taking without permission. It was more, "Yes, take it and please leave; we do not want to ever see you again."

Let's talk about plundering in the "normal" sense as an act of war, and look at the actual taking of spoils by Israel:

Deuteronomy 20:10-14: (NLT) ¹⁰As you approach a town to attack it, you must first offer its people terms for peace. ¹¹If they accept your terms and open the gates to you, then all the people inside will serve you in forced labor.

Before engaging in war, the Israelites were to offer peace, a settlement. The nations around Israel knew that when God fought with Israel, there was no chance of winning. Israel did not have to wipe them all out if the people accepted the terms.

However:

¹²But if they refuse to make peace and prepare to fight, you must attack the town. ¹³When the LORD your God hands the town over to you, use your swords to kill every man in the town. ¹⁴But you may keep for yourselves all the women, children, livestock, and other plunder. You may enjoy the plunder from your enemies that the LORD your God has given you.

(Source: Bridgeway Bible Commentary) Israel was not to act with the brutality that characterized other nations. Though they were to destroy the people of Canaan and their cities (for this was God's judgment on the wicked Canaanites), Israel's soldiers were not to destroy non-Canaanite cities unless the people refused Israel's terms of peace. They were to attack only when all else failed; but even then they were to attack only the soldiers, not the women and children.

Yes, this is plundering and the ancient way of war (unfortunately these practices even carry over into modern war), but this is not stealing. It IS abiding by rules of war and conquering in ancient times. While still harsh beyond our present-day standards, it is to be emphasized that the nation of Israel had far more compassion in victory than the surrounding nations (think of God's provisions in verses 10-11 above). But the way of war was - they went to war, they won the war, and they received the spoils or profits. We cannot look at this as God giving them permission to steal. This was the reality of war in this world ruled by sin.



Jesus using the colt of a donkey to ride into Jerusalem is one example of a New Testament text that some construe as stealing.

Simply reading the account straightens out this misconception:

Luke 19:29-34: (NASB) ²⁹...He sent two of the disciples, ³⁰saying, Go into the village ahead of you; there, as you enter, you will find a colt tied on which no one yet has ever sat; untie it and bring it here. ³¹If anyone asks you, Why are you untying it? you shall say, The Lord has need of it. ³²So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, why are you untying the colt? ³⁴They said, The Lord has need of it.





The mere fact that the owners spoke to the disciples and did not decline the use of the colt shows their cooperation. The owners did not say: "Do not touch that colt!" They did not say: "We want to make sure that we are going to get the colt back in a timely fashion," or "This is going to cost you X amount of money." Why? This is when Jesus was going to be riding into Jerusalem. Everyone knew who he was and what he stood for. Everyone knew about the raising of Lazarus from the dead not long before this. If we, as average people, had the followers of Jesus come to our house to ask for a colt that we owned because the Lord had need of it, how would we react? It was not a problem; it was a privilege they had to supply this animal for service! The account does not indicate that it was anything but a privilege. There was no stealing here.

Clarifying Contradictions:

The very idea of God giving permission to steal is completely out of harmony with His character and the Scriptures.

What we do see is how God works in a just way when necessary, adds compassion where appropriate and is always true to principle.

Rather than accuse Him of immoral direction, we should follow His lead!



In God's eyes, stealing is never appropriate. What a surprise! What an example of having integrity in each and every experience.

We should NEVER steal, ever!

Next question, does God really see everything everywhere in the world?

We have several scriptures that help us understand God as an all-seeing Creator. As with the other contradictions we covered, there are a few texts that seem to challenge this. These seeming contradictions can be clearly explained through simple logic that is backed by other scriptures.

We have done several episodes on Bible contradictions and the answers are always the same:

- Look at the immediate context
- Look at the word
- Look at the larger biblical context

When we do these things, very clear-cut answers emerge.

Search for more episodes in our Contradictions Series:



CONTRADICTION -
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Is God able to see and know
ALL things about ALL
events on earth?
Some Scriptures seem to say
HE DOES NOT.

PROBLEM:

God does not seem to know where Abel is, and Cain eventually leaves God's presence:

Genesis 4:9-10,16: (NASB) ⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, Where is Abel your brother? And he said, I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper? ¹⁰He said, What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.

God then talks to Cain about his sin, proclaims the sentence and at the same time offers protection for him.

¹⁶Then Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

SOLUTION

God obviously knew the whereabouts of Abel as He saw the tragedy of his murder. He said to Cain, *The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground.* Of course He knew where Abel was! Cain leaving the presence of the LORD is simply saying their communication had ended, not that God could not see him anymore. He asked where Abel was because He is a good Father and wanted Cain to tell Him about the incident. God still saw, heard and knew.

These things are answerable when you look at the Scriptures with reason:

Hebrews 4:13: (NASB) *And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

PROBLEM:

God seems to need messengers to come to earth and verify the evil of Sodom and Gomorrah:

Genesis 18:1-3: (NASB) ¹Now the LORD appeared to (Abraham)... ²When he lifted up his eyes and looked, behold, three men were standing opposite him; and when he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth, ³and said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by.

The three men were angels, one of which was God's spokesman. They told Abraham and Sarah they would have a son within the next year. Abraham was 99-years old, and Sarah was 89.

The messengers were preparing to go down to the wicked city of Sodom when God's spokesman stayed back and revealed Sodom's imminent destruction:

Genesis 18:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰And the LORD said, The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. ²¹I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely



according to its outcry, which has come to Me; and if not, I will know. ²²Then the men turned away from there and went toward Sodom, while Abraham was still standing before the LORD.

Notice God's spokesman stayed with Abraham. This was obviously the plan, all for the good of Abraham and the good of his nephew Lot, who was living just inside Sodom.

The problem some people have is that it seems like God had to send messengers down to verify that, yes, Sodom is evil. It is true that the two messengers did go down to Sodom. But the messenger who says, *I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry*, is not one of the two who actually go down. He stayed with Abraham, and Abraham said to him at this point, if there are 50 righteous will God destroy the city, or if there are 45, 40, 30, et cetera. The other two went down to the city and saw the evil, but their purpose there was to deliver Lot. They were there to execute God's plan. They knew the city was evil; they were going down to take Lot out and give him an opportunity to save his family from the coming destruction.

SOLUTION

God saw and heard what was happening all along. These messengers would verify His presence with both Abraham and Lot. They were sent specifically to these two righteous men. Then the angels would also carry out God's will.

Here is another Scripture that shows what God sees, hears and knows:

Jeremiah 23:23-24: (NASB) ²³Am I a God who is near, declares the LORD, and not a God far off? ²⁴Can a man hide himself in hiding places so I do not see him? declares the LORD. Do I not fill the heavens and the earth? declares the LORD.

The old saying, "You can run, but you can't hide" fits here. This reminds us of Jonah with the great fish. He is told to go to Nineveh, but he does not want to, so he goes in exactly the opposite direction. He tries to hide from God!

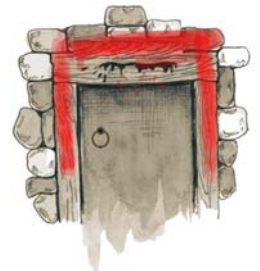


This story with Abraham and Lot does not show that God did not know whether Sodom was evil or not - it shows that He sent His angels - His messengers - to execute His plan, and to warn Abraham and Lot about what He was going to do. It is very clear God does see, hear and understand all!

PROBLEM:

God seems to need directions during the 10th plague smiting of the firstborn of Egypt:

Exodus 12:12-13: (NASB) ¹²For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt... I am the LORD. ¹³The blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.



Is this verse saying God does not seem to know where to go, whom to destroy or pass over?



We often receive questions like these on our website. Sometimes people are looking for ways to say that God is not all we say He is. They say, God needs to have the blood on the doorposts to know what to do. Does God really not know what to do without our helping Him out? This is the idea behind many of these questions, but the reality behind them is very different.



Exodus 12:23: (NASB) *For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to come in to your houses to smite you.*

SOLUTION

God sent a destroyer to do this work. The blood was the outward sign of sacrifice and obedience from each household. The instructions were to:

- Sacrifice the lamb
- Put the blood on the lintels and doorposts
- Stay inside and live

This is a reiteration of what they were commanded to do. If the angel saw the blood, it knew this was a faithful household. The angel did not get lost at the last corner and wonder where it was. This was the verification to show the needed compliance of the Hebrews to the instructions of God. They needed to literally show they would be faithful to what God gave them for deliverance.

Here is another Scripture to show us all that God sees:

Proverbs 15:3: (NASB) *The eyes of the LORD are in every place, watching the evil and the good.*

Nothing escapes His view.

PROBLEM:

This next event involving Samuel sure seems to indicate that God needed “eyes and ears” to know what was happening.

The people of Israel wanted a king and complained to Samuel. He brought their request before God and was given instruction to tell the people the consequences of having a human king and rejecting God as their king.



Samuel delivered the message in detail and the people responded:

1 Samuel 8:19-22: (NASB) *¹⁹Nevertheless, the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel, and they said, No, but there shall be a king over us, ²⁰that we also may be like all the nations, that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles. ²¹Now after Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the LORD'S hearing. ²²The LORD said to Samuel, Listen to their voice and appoint them a king. So Samuel said to the men of Israel, Go every man to his city.*

Does God really need Samuel to tell Him what the people were requesting? Was He unaware? This is what some people are saying. It is a sad picture to think that God had to wait on Samuel to ask: “What did the people say? I cannot wait until I hear what you have to say!” God always knows, but He

always makes us say it because this is how He works. As we said earlier, this is what a good parent does. A good parent wants to teach their children, not by lecturing but by asking questions - by engaging them and letting them tell you what is happening and hearing their observations. God is the ultimate parent.

SOLUTION

God knew. Though He heard the people, He did not deal directly with the people. Remember, Moses had to mediate for all of Israel. God would speak to Moses and Moses would speak to the people. God never spoke directly to them.



And God had Samuel do all the communicating so the people would be continually reminded that God was not to be sought after in a common way.

This shows us the sovereignty of God and how we must go through the right channels to get to the privilege of communication with Him. We have Jesus - we go through his name (*In Jesus' name, Amen*) to the Father in prayer. God hears our experiences, He sees what we do, He knows our thoughts, but He expects us to communicate them to Him. Again, this is what a parent does.

Jeremiah 16:17: (NASB) *For My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from My face, nor is their iniquity concealed from My eyes.*

Clarifying Contradictions:

God obviously sees and knows all that is happening.

What is not obvious to many is that He hides His sight and knowledge from most, as now is not the time for His plans to be revealed to all.

Let us find comfort and courage in all that God sees, knowing we are all **ULTIMATELY IN HIS POWERFUL, JUST AND LOVING HANDS.**



Isaiah 66:1-2: (NASB) ¹Thus says the LORD, Heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool. Where then is a house you could build for Me? And where is a place that I may rest?²For My hand made all these things, thus all these things came into being, declares the LORD. But to this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.

God does not purposefully make Himself readily available because now is not the time for that.



When we look at these contradictions we can summarize:

Does God tempt us? No, but He tests us so He can lift us up to find maturity. He does not put us into bad situations; He helps us through those bad situations we find ourselves in through our own actions, or random happenstance.

Does God give us permission to steal? No, *Thou shalt not steal!* The plundering of war is the plundering of war which still goes on today.

Is God all-knowing? Yes, but His system and His process can be mysterious to many of us.

When we look at all these seeming contradictions, we need to accept that God is above us and read the word of God with honor and reverence to Him. Then these questions begin to melt away and we will see Him as He truly is.

*So, does God ever tempt us?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

All quoted scriptures are from the 1995 version of NASB unless otherwise indicated.



Join us next week for our podcast on September 26, 2022

Ep. 1248: What Will We be Doing When We
Get to Heaven? (Part I)

Bonus Material and Study Questions

Full definitions of the words for *tempt* in the New Testament:

Tempt: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3986 *peirasmos*; a putting to proof (by experiment [of good], experience [of evil], solicitation, discipline or provocation); by implication, adversity

The King James Version translates this word as "temptation" 19 times, "temptations" once, and "try" once

- 1) an experiment, attempt, trial, proving
 - 1a) trial, proving: the trial made of you by my bodily condition, the condition served as to test the love of the Galatians toward Paul (Galatians 4:14)
 - 1b) the trial of man's fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy
 - 1b1) an enticement to sin, temptation, whether arising from the desires or from the outward circumstances



1b2) an internal temptation to sin

1b2a) of the temptation by which the devil sought to divert Jesus the Messiah from his divine errand

1b3) of the condition of things, or a mental state, by which we are enticed to sin, or to a lapse from the faith and holiness

1b4) adversity, affliction, trouble: sent by God and serving to test or prove one's character, faith, holiness

1c) temptation (i.e., trial) of God by men

1c1) rebellion against God, by which his power and justice are, as it were, put to the proof and challenged to show themselves

Tempted: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3985 *peirazo*; to test (objectively), i.e., endeavor, scrutinize, entice, discipline: assay, examine, go about, prove, tempt(-er), try

1) to try whether a thing can be done

1a) to attempt, endeavour

2) to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself

2a) in a good sense

2b) in a bad sense, to test one maliciously, craftily to put to the proof his feelings or judgments

2c) to try or test one's faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin

2c1) to solicit to sin, to tempt

2c1a) of the temptations of the devil

2d) after the Old Testament usage

2d1) of God: to inflict evils upon one in order to prove his character and the steadfastness of his faith

2d2) men are said to tempt God by exhibitions of distrust, as though they wished to try whether He is not justly distrusted

2d3) by impious or wicked conduct to test God's justice and patience, and to challenge Him, as it were to give proof of His perfections.

More comprehensive notes on Israel taking spoils from the Egyptians:

Exodus 3:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. ²¹I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. ²²But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians.



(Source: Eclectic Notes on the Bible) *"ye shall not go empty"* To understand this phrase and the promise it contains, we must recall: Deuteronomy 15.12-15 which ordains that when a faithful servant leaves his master after many years' service, he is to be liberally equipped from his owner's property: "in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. 13 And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty: 14 Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy winepress: [of that] wherewith the LORD thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God redeemed thee: therefore I command thee this thing to day."

(Source: Biblical commentary by Albert Barnes) *"Shall borrow - shall ask"* The Egyptians had made the people serve "with rigor," and the Israelites when about to leave the country for ever were to ask or claim the jewels as a just, though very inadequate, remuneration for services which had made "their lives bitter." The Egyptians would doubtless have refused had not their feelings toward Moses {see Exodus 11:3} and the people been changed, under God's influence, by calamities in which they recognized a divine interposition, which also they rightly attributed to the obstinacy of their own king. {See Exodus 10:7} The Hebrew women were to make the demand, and were to make it of women, who would of course be especially moved to compliance by the loss of their children, the fear of a recurrence of calamity, perhaps also by a sense of the fitness of the request in connection with a religious festival.

(Source: Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties by Gleason Archer) The verb for 'plundered' in Exodus 12:36 is wayyenasselu, coming from nasal, which in the piel stem means 'strip off, spoil, deliver someone from [danger].' It is not the usual term for plundering the enemy after he has been killed on the battlefield; that would be salal. But nissel clearly is used here in a figurative sense, for the narrative plainly states that the Israelites simply made an oral request for a parting gift; and they received what they asked for. To be sure, there was a compelling factor of fear that moved the Egyptians to be so generous in parting with their treasures; so there was a certain sense in which they were despoiled by the departing Hebrews. They trembled with dread at the awesome power of Israel's God and the stroke of His destroying angel who had wrought such havoc on the night of the Passover.



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Ep. 1247: Does God Ever Tempt Us? Contradiction Series

See:  CQRewind
SHOW NOTES

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1. What are the meanings for the word often translated "tempt," Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #5254 in the Old Testament? What does "assay" mean? How can we tempt, prove, push or test God? (See Exodus 17:1-2, Judges 6:39)
2. How was this word used in the story about David and Saul?
3. Why did the Queen of Sheba come to see Solomon?
4. What is the negative aspect of this word? What is the positive? (See 1 Samuel 17:39, 1 Kings 10:1)
5. For what reason does Satan "test" people? What did he do to test David? Did God "tempt" Abraham? Explain. Why would God test Israel? Describe the motivation behind God's testing and Satan's testing. What about our motivation if the testing comes from us? (See 1 Chronicles 21:1, Genesis 22:1, Judges 2:20-23)
6. In the New Testament, does God tempt us but then provide a way of escape? Explain. What is Jesus telling us in the Lord's Prayer? How does Psalm 23:4 support this part of the Lord's Prayer? How did Jesus handle Satan during his temptations? How might Satan tempt us today, and how do you handle this type of temptation? (See Matthew 4:1-4, 6:12-13, 1 Corinthians 10:13, Hebrews 4:15-16)
7. How does James 1:2 translate Strong's Exhaustive Concordance #3985? How do we know that God does not tempt us? From where do temptations come? What is the "subtle promise" about God in these scriptures? How is this a comfort to us? How can we arm ourselves against our own weaknesses and Satan's manipulation? (See James 1:2-4, 12-15, Romans 12:21, Proverbs 24:16, 1 Corinthians 10:12-13)
8. How do we explain God's commands in Exodus 3:20-22 and Deuteronomy 20:10-14, in light of Exodus 20:15-17? Does Luke 19:29-34 sound like stealing to you? Explain. (See Exodus 11:1-3, 12:35-36)
9. What is the best procedure to follow if we run into seemingly biblical contradictions?
10. Why did God ask for Cain about Abel's whereabouts? Did He not know where Abel was? What was Cain's answer? What was the object of God's question? Explain Cain "leaving the presence of the LORD." (See Genesis 4:9-16, Hebrews 4:13)
11. Who were the three men who came to visit Abraham and Sarah? What were the purposes of their visit? What did they accomplish? (See Genesis 18:1-3, 20-22, Jeremiah 23:23-24)
12. Did God need directions during the tenth plague (smiting of the firstborn)? What did the blood on the doorposts indicate about those sheltering inside? (See Exodus 12:12-13, 23, Proverbs 15:3)
13. How did God negotiate with Israel over establishing a king in Israel? How did God speak to Israel in the wilderness? How do we speak to God now? Does this indicate that God needs someone to tell Him what is going on in the world and in our lives? Explain. (See 1 Samuel 8:19-22, Jeremiah 16:17, Isaiah 66:1-2)