

Understanding Temptation *vs* Tribulation

(Day After Unleavened Bread—2019—LIVE)
Making choices in our lives vs having no choice in trials that come upon us
Fred R. Coulter—April 27, 2019

- What is the difference between a temptation and tribulation?
- If there is a difference, how important is the difference?

We're going to see that!

In the past we've been told that when you read Rev. 3 about the Church of Philadelphia, that **the time of temptation**^[transcriber's correction] to come upon the whole world is the Great Tribulation. But is that true?

Remember that Rev. 2 & 3 are written to the Churches. So, you can look upon this as an epistle from Jesus Christ!

Revelation 3:7—Christ speaking: “And to the angel of the Church in Philadelphia... [meaning *brotherly love*] ...write: ‘These things says the Holy One, the One Who *is* true; the One Who has the key of David, Who opens and no one shuts, and Who shuts and no one opens.’”

This is a classic way of introducing what is going to come next. Lots of times in the Bible you think that all the verses follow in chronological order. But many times that is not true. Many times it is that you have a summary of what is coming. Verse 7 is a summary of what is coming.

Verse 8: “I know your works....” *We're going to be judged by our works*, not according to faith (Eph. 2), but if you have faith you will have good works. If you don't have faith you will have evil works.

“...Behold, I have set before you an open door, and no one has the power to shut it because you have a little strength, and have kept My Word, **and have not denied My name**” (v 8)—*all of those who are involved. Look at it today!*

How much can we reach out with all the digital electronics that we have today? We can reach many, many people beyond what will be in any single congregation! So, we can reach out. Look what they're doing with SpaceX and Amazon. They're going to put all kinds of low-level satellites so there will be WiFi around the world, everywhere in the world!

We have proof of why it's going to be, because when you get to Rev. 11 and the two witnesses, when they are killed the whole world is going to see it. How are they going to see it? Think

about that if you lived a thousand years ago. That would be a mystery today. We take those things as every day things.

Yesterday we were sitting here talking and Darlene and Jonathan were their smart phones, and we were going back and forth and they were bringing up facts out of dictionaries and commentaries; things you wouldn't even think of. It was interesting.

“...and have not denied My name”—doing what Jesus says! Remember what Jesus said, ‘Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not practice the things that I say?’ (Luke 6).

Verse 9: “Behold, I will make those of the synagogue of Satan...”—*the assembly of the evil ones who are the super elite of this world!*

They control everything except Donald Trump. That's why they're mad at him. This whole think of collusion with the Russians was hoax to begin with. Why? *Because he is rolling back their plans!* One of the latest things that he's rolling back is the agreement signed by Obama to put the United States under the jurisdiction of the U.N.

That may happen in the future, so this tells us that we have more time in prophecy. How much time? *We don't know!* A woman wrote me and said that the way I was talking sounds like it will be a thousand years. I sent an e-mail back to her and said, ‘No, not a thousand years, but it may be beyond the lifetime of many of us.’ The synagogue of Satan controls the banking, all of the communications.

“...who proclaim themselves to be Jews...” (v 9). Jesus said that ‘salvation is of the Jews.’ That begins with Him, *the Premier Jew!* If you look at Jesus' genealogy and look at the relationship between Elizabeth and Mary, Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron. She was the aunt of Mary. Mary had to be a Jew, but her father was probably a Levite. So, you have king and priest genetically right in the physical body of Jesus, and spiritually that's what it will be when Christ returns: King and High Priest. They say that they have the way to salvation.

“...and are not, but do lie...” (v 9). How many lies are being exposed in the world? *Quite a thing!*

“...Behold, I will cause them to come and

worship before your feet...” (v 9). *That has to be after the Millennium and the second resurrection!*

They’re going to say, ‘How do all of you people get to rule the world. We ruled it before, we should have been there!’ Jesus is going to say, ‘Sorry about that, but I didn’t call any of you, because you were worshipping Satan. Are you ready to repent of this, or do you want to go over here to this bonfire that we have especially dedicated to people like you.’

“...and to know that I have loved you” (v 9). *Always remember that:*

- in spite of any trial
- in spite of any difficulty
- in spite of your greatest weaknesses

God loves you! *Trials, we will see, are necessary!*

Remember what it said when God was **testing** Abraham? **God tested!** It says in the *KJV* that God ‘tempted’ Abraham. **NO!** *That’s a wrong translation!*

Abraham and said to ‘take your only son Isaac and offer him for a burnt offering.’

Here we see the first thing that is a difference between temptation and tribulation. **All trials or temptations have choice!** That’s the main thing! Abraham could have chosen to say, ‘God, what are You doing that for? Why did you give me this son that You promised me, and you want me to go burn him?’ *Abraham didn’t do that!*

Verse 10: “Because you have **kept the Word of My patience**... [or endurance, you have to endure] ...I also will keep you from the **time of temptation**... [entirely different than tribulation] **...which is about to come upon the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.**”

Temptation is a trial! Temptation means there’s also choice. How is it going to be “...to **try those who dwell on the earth**”—*the whole earth!*

That can’t be *the Tribulation*, because **the Tribulation** is not on the whole earth. Before it begins, it’s on one-fourth of the earth (Rev. 6). When you get to Rev. 8 & 9 it’s mostly in the Middle East going all the way back to China. That’s a whole other Biblical story about China. That’s that army of 200-million!

This can’t be **the Tribulation** that would exterminate all life. If they started using the weapons that they now have all in storage, there would be so much toxic radiation that there wouldn’t be anything living.

Verse 11: “Behold, I am coming quickly;

hold fast that which you have **so that no one may take away your crown.**”

- How can someone take away your crown, or the crown that you would receive if you were faithful?
- How would that happen?
- Can someone take it from you if you’re faithful? *No!*
- Can someone take it from you if you’re unfaithful? *Yes!*

Verse 12: “The one who overcomes... [conqueror or winner] ...will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall not go out anymore; and I will write upon him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which will come down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name. **The one who has an ear...**” (vs 12-13).

Jesus says this all the way through the seven churches, because He wants you to listen. Jesus told His disciples in one place, ‘I want this to sink deep into your ear.’ In other words, it better stay there!

Verse 13: “**The one who has an ear let him hear...** [let implies choice] **...what the Spirit says to the churches.**” Right here in Matt. 6 and the model for the daily prayer we find:

Matthew 6:13: “And lead us **not into temptation**, but rescue us from the evil one.... [**Satan is the one who leads you into temptation!**] ...For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

Let’s see how temptations or trials come. In James 1 we’re going to see that what is involved with temptations or trials and testing is *choice!*

- What are you going to do?
- Are you going to keep the commandments of God and love God under all circumstances?

Not some! Not most! But all!

James 1:1: “James, a servant of God and of *the Lord Jesus Christ*, to the twelve tribes, which *are* in the dispersion: Greetings!” *He knew where the letter was going!*

Sidebar on the Epistle of James: This must have been one of the first ones to be written. There were others. I won’t say the first one, because there’s no mention of Gentiles in the whole book of James. We know that Matthew was written early on; Mark had things written early on. John was written later.

But this is way before the conference, so this must have been written, I think, no later than 42_{A.D.} maybe even earlier than that. You look at the chronology in the back of the Faithful Version Bible.

This is one verse that is hard to understand, though it is simple to read; v 2: Consider *it* all joy, my brethren, when you are beset by various trials.” *That’s a tough one!*

There’s a reason why the joy doesn’t come when you’re in the middle of it. The joy comes *afterward* and you have successfully gone through the trial.

Verse 3: “**Knowing that the testing of your faith...** [that’s what trials are for, *or temptations*. What’s always involved in *testing?* *Choice!*] ...produces endurance. But let endurance have *its* perfect work, **so that you may be perfect and complete**, not lacking in anything” (vs 3-4). *There’s a summary of what’s coming again!*

Verse 5: “However, if anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God...” *We need that all the time!* Sometimes you do things and say, ‘Stupid, why did you do that?’ *Because you weren’t paying attention!*

“...Who gives to everyone freely and does not reproach *the one who asks*; and it shall be given to him” (v 5).

That’s how we grow in grace and knowledge! Those things are really important for us!

Verse 6: “But let him ask in faith, not doubting at all because the one who doubts is like a wave of *the sea* that is driven by the wind and tossed *to and fro*.... [Unstable!] ...Do not let that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord. *He is* a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways” (vs 6-8).

How can we describe that in different terms? *It’s like a person who has one foot in the world and one foot in the Church!* Part of his mind is in the Bible, and part of his mind is on other things in the world. When trials come, he gets weak and doesn’t know what to do; he doesn’t know how to handle it. *Hopefully, he’ll learn from that!*

Verse 9: “But let the brother who is in humble circumstances rejoice in his elevation, and *let* the one who is rich *rejoice* in his humble condition, because as *the flower of the field*, he himself will pass away” (vs 9-10). *True!*

Look, we’ve got all these beautiful flowers out here in the springtime. What’s going to happen? *They’ll all wither away!* The petals fall off, and if

you have a tree with blossoms, they’re good for a short period of time, and if it’s a good fruit tree you have the bees all around; later comes the fruit. Likewise with us!

Verse 11: “For the sun rises with *its* burning heat and dries up the grass, and its flower falls off, and its beautiful appearance perishes. In the same way also shall the rich man wither in his pursuits.... [if it’s not all in God] ...**Blessed is the man who endures** trials, because **after he has been proved he shall receive a crown of life**, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (vs 11-12).

Think about this all the way through: Here comes a trial and you have a choice. Notice what James says to back that up:

Verse 12: “**Blessed is the man who endures** trials, because **after he has been proved he shall receive a crown of life**... [Didn’t we read ‘don’t let anyone take it from you’?] ...which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. **Do not let anyone who is tempted say**, ‘I am being tempted by God,’ **because God is not tempted by evil, and He Himself tempts no one with evil!**” (vs 12-13).

Who tempts with evil? *Satan!* God will let us have trials to see what we’re going to do? If we always obey God in these trials, regardless of the circumstances, ***God will bless us***, because we choose what is right. Sometimes it goes counter to 99% of the people whom you know around you. We’ve see that—haven’t we? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 14: “But each one is tempted when he is drawn away... [From what? *The Word of God!* *The Spirit of God!*] ...**and is enticed by his own lust.**”

Think of that with Adam and Eve in the garden. ‘There’s a tree, look at that fruit. That’s so good, I wonder why God said not to eat it? We pass by it and can smell the fruit, it’s so good.’ Here comes the serpent that says, ‘Look! This will even make you better.’

So, many things that come along that may profit you, seemingly, end up in disaster later. It’s going to happen in the financial world. What goes up must come down. When it happens, BOOM! everybody is going to lose a whole lot of money! Everybody is happy now because they’re making money, but remember, every dollar you have is only worth three cents compared to the early 1900s!

“...enticed by his own lust” (v 14), You think this is a good thing. You may think you’re getting something wonderful. But it turns out like it did with Adam and Eve.

Verse 15: “And after lust has conceived...”
Remember that at any point along here you can make the choice to stop! You can make the choice to not go through with it.

Sometimes when you get angry it’s awfully hard to stop in the middle of it. But see if you can stop it before it gets going.

“...after lust has conceived it gives birth to sin...” (v 15). *Look at the process there; choice is involved all the way along!*

“...and sin...” (v 15)—*unless it is repented of!* Jesus said, ‘All sin can be forgiven, except the sin of blaspheme against the Holy Spirit,’ and that’s rejecting God the Father. All sin can be forgiven.

“...when it is completely finished, brings forth death. Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren” (vs 15-16).

A person asked me, ‘I’ve been trying to help one of my Catholic friends, and I don’t know how to do it because he thinks he’s right.’ I said, ‘Why don’t you start out by asking him, *how many things do you believe that are lies?* Then you can get out your Catholic Douay Bible and you Catechism book and look at the Ten Commandments and you will see that they have removed the second commandment. I wonder why they did that.’

If that person really wants to know the Truth, that will be an opening for that person. Even though we deceive ourselves, we don’t like anyone to tell us that we believe lies. I said that from there ‘you can go through other things and start out with the holidays’ and so forth.

Verse 17: “Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning. According to His own will...” (vs 17-18).

Lot’s of times we get so wrapped up with things we forget about how God has operated in our lives. His own will! Why are we here? *Because of God!*

“...He begat us by *the* Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings” (v 18).

Every time there’s a difficulty or trial, it ends up with keeping your mind on the Truth. Let’s see how that worked with Christ when He was tempted.

Matthew 4:1—after Jesus was baptized: “Then Jesus was led up into the wilderness... [probably south of where He was baptized in the

Jordan River] ...by the Spirit in order to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted *for* forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was famished. And when the tempter... [another name of Satan] ...came to Him, he said, ‘If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.’” (vs 1-3).

You’re so thin! Look, Jesus, Your skin is dropping down below your arms. You’re a thin as can be, and Your eyes look like You ought to be dead! Why don’t You just help Yourself. Don’t You think it would be good, nice hot bread. Just command them, I know that You can do it. Just do it! You’ll like it!

Verse 4: “But He answered *and* said, ‘It is written...’” What do you always need to fall back upon with a trial? *The Word of God!*

That’s what God has given to us so that we know how to handle things. That’s why with prayer and study, and over the course of time and years that we’ve been in the Church and so forth, we still learn new things. I learn new things and you learn new things. Why? *Because the Word of God, inspired of God and layered with meaning meaning, meaning!*

“...‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of *the* mouth of God’”—which gets to those three words: ***Obey My voice!***

Someone might say, ‘I can’t hear the voice of God.’ Well, God made it very convenient, ***He has it written down!*** It’s the same everywhere, except where men like to get in and try and change it.

Verse 5: “Then the devil took Him to the Holy city and set Him upon the edge of the temple, and said to Him, ‘If You are the Son of God, cast Yourself down; for ***it is written***...’” (vs 5-6).

Think about the time right close toward the end of the Apostolic Era and they had apostasy. Remember that those Christians who were keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days were the ones who were being persecuted. But those who moved to the first day of the week so they could avoid temptation by the Roman Empire, could probably say to those other brethren:

Look, why should you endure persecution and all these trials, and even some of you get killed? What difference does a day make? Besides, look at the Jews, they’re so hateful that God is just rejecting them. Why should you be killed with them? Why don’t you come over and be with us? We read the Scriptures. We study the Word of God. We’re kind to each other, just come over. Try it, you’ll like it!

I can just imagine that's how they were doing it! So, Satan quotes it:

“...“He shall give His angels charge concerning You, and they shall bear You up in *their* hands, lest You strike Your foot against a stone”” (v 6).

How did Jesus answer? *You misquoted that Scripture!* Here's the answer:

Verse 7: “Jesus said to him, ‘Again, it is written, “You shall not tempt *the* Lord your God.”’” *You* in all these cases means not only Satan, but it means every single man and woman.

Verse 8: “After that, the devil took Him...” Here's the greatest one. How many people have sold their soul to the devil to gain money, wealth, power and all of that?

“...to an exceedingly high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory... [that must have been something] ...and said to Him, ‘All these things will I give You...’” (vs 8-9).

- Did Jesus know that He was going to inherit the world?
- Did He know that He was going to be King of the world?
- *Yes!*

Here, in His weakest time, He could have had it right there, but He would have lost it for all eternity!

“...**if** You will fall down and worship me.” (v 9). *If that would have happened, that would have been the coup de gras par excellence!* Getting one of the Godhead to worship the rebel and tempter Satan the devil!

Verse 10: “Then Jesus said to him, ‘**Be gone, Satan!**....’” There are certain things that you just have to say, ‘*Be gone!*’ What did Paul write regarding sexual immorality? *Flee!* Why? *Because if you don't you're going to get in trouble!* You just have to walk away from it! Run away from it!

“...For it is written, “**You...**”” (v 10). What is the first commandment to all human beings? *‘I am the Lord God that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’* Egypt is *symbolic of the sins and Satan's world completely!* ‘You shall have no other God's before Me.’ *So, if Jesus would have worshipped Satan, just to escape because He was weak in the flesh, He would have lost it!*

““...You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him alone shall you serve.” Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and ministered to

Him” (vs 10-11). *I think it took Him quite a while to recover from that!*

Let's see why all of this was necessary. Of course, Christ knew what was going to happen, and He knew how it was going to be, because **He was slain from the foundation of the world!** This all ties in with our calling of God, and why Jesus went through what He did.

Tie Heb. 2:6 with Psa. 8, ‘Behold what is man that You have made him a little lower than God?’ That is a fantastic statement. That one whole statement tells you about the whole plan of God.

Hebrews 2:6: “But in a certain place one fully testified, saying, ‘What is man, that You are mindful of him, or *the* son of man, that You visit him? You did make him a little lower than *the* angels...” (vs 6-7).

Look at all the things that men can do; fantastic and tremendous things that men can do. ***But they're missing God!***

“...You did crown him with glory and honor, and You did set him over the works of Your hands... [Gen. 1—replenish the earth and multiply and have dominion over everything] ...You did put all things in subjection under his feet.’ For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing *that was* not subjected to him. **But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him**” (vs 6-8). Why? *Because Christ had to do it first!*

Verse 9: “But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering **the death...**”—*to pay for the sin of all mankind!* God in the flesh could do that; nothing else could do it.

“...in order that by *the* grace of God He Himself might taste death for **everyone**” (v 9). *When you understand that, that helps you understand the importance of baptism!*

Verse 10: “Because it was fitting for Him, for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory, **to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**” Why must that suffering take place? *Because:*

- we learn to love God at all times
- we learn to serve God at all times
- we learn to keep His commandments at all times

Jesus said, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God!’

Verse 11: “For both He Who is sanctifying and those who are sanctified *are* all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren... [of Christ] ...saying, ‘I will declare Your name to My brethren; **in the midst of the Church I will sing praise to You**” (vs 11-12).

- When is that going to happen? *At the resurrection!*
- “...in the midst of the Church...”
- Why at the resurrection? *Because the whole Church of everyone who is in the first resurrection will be there!*

Quite a thing!

Verse 13: “And again, ‘I will be trusting in Him.’ And again, ‘Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.’” *Think of that!*

Think of all of us on the Sea of Glass and there’s Christ. Remember, the temple of God in heaven is visible up there. There’s the Father. Will we see the Father when we’re resurrected? *Why not! We’re His children! What does He say?*

“...‘Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me.’” *We’re presented to the Father! How about that! That’s going to be a fantastic time!*

Verse 14: “Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, in like manner He also took part in the same, in order that through death He might annul him who has the power of death—that is, the devil.” ***Everything that Satan has done is going to be absolutely destroyed!***

Verse 15: “And *that* He might deliver those who were subject to bondage all through their lives by *their* fear of death. For surely, He is not taking upon Himself to help *the* angels...” (vs 15-16).

Think about that! Even righteous angels or sinning angels. Remember that Rev. 12 says that Satan and his angels fought.

“...but He is taking upon Himself to help the seed of Abraham” (v 16). *That’s not the physical nation alone!* The main part of that is the ***spiritual*** nation, because it says, ‘If you are Christ’s then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise’ (Gal. 3).

What was that promise? *That your seed shall shine like the stars in heaven!* That’s what it’s all about.

Verse 17: “For this reason, it was obligatory... [in order for there to be pure, true justice] ...for *Him* to be made like *His* brethren in everything that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest *in* things pertaining to God, in order to

make propitiation for the sins of the people. For **because He Himself has suffered, having been tempted in like manner, He is able to help those who are being tempted**” (vs 17-18).

Hebrews 4:15: “For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot **empathize**...” *Not sympathize!* With sympathy you can say, ‘I’m sorry.’ Empathize is *you’re sorry and you feel it!*

“...**empathize** with our weaknesses, but *One Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations*; yet, *He was without sin*” (v 15). *I would say that His temptations were greater!* His tests were far beyond anything any other man would go through.

Verse 16: “Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

All the temptations that Jesus went through. He was tried *and tried and tried and tried!* What did He tell the Church? *You overcome as I have overcome!* He can say that with full assuredness!

(go to the next track)

Commercial time: **New:** *What is the Holy Spirit of God?* CD and Transcript Book

That will help you. We have a lot of things, and we sent out the catalog with many things in it.

We have so much more than Ambassador College/Worldwide Church of God and all their booklets and things, we have so much more and in greater detail. We’re not having a standard where we have to please the world. One of the biggest mistakes they made was trying to get the college accredited with the world. Then you have to have curriculum that pleases the world, otherwise they take away the accreditation.

They should have said, ‘Look, you want to come here, this is a Bible college and you may not be able to get a job in the world that you may think, but if you do well here, you’ll probably be able to get a good job and better.’

When you’re in the world and you don’t have the Holy Spirit of God, you never are able to fight against sin the way that you need to. You may be able to resist certain things: smoking and different things like that. You may have good willpower, resolute, tenacious and do certain things.

But you can’t change the mind to become spiritually in accordance with God; *never happen!*

You need the sacrifice of Christ *first*, then you get the Spirit of God.

After the battle against the inner sin (Rom 7); Romans 8:1: “Consequently, *there is* now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who are not walking according to *the* flesh, but according to *the* Spirit.”

IF you’re walking according to the flesh, you’re not going to repent. ***IF*** you’re walking according to the Spirit you will repent and that removes the condemnation!

Verse 2: “Because the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus...” What is that law?

- repentance
- baptism
- keeping the commandments of God
- receiving the Holy Spirit of God
- growing in grace and knowledge

That is “...the law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus...”

“...has delivered me from the law of sin and death” (v 2). Didn’t take it out, but delivered. He gives us the tools to overcome! With His Spirit:

- we get forgiveness of sin
- we grow in grace and knowledge
- we grow in Truth and understanding

That’s all through Christ and His sacrifice!

Verse 3: “For what *was* impossible for the Law to do...” *Laws are good! Especially the Laws of God!* The laws of men may be totally evil. Some are good. But the good law ***cannot make you*** do good. You have to know the Law and *choose* to obey it. If you choose to disobey it, *you sin!* *If you don’t repent, then you’re in real trouble!*

“...in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent His own Son in *the* likeness of sinful flesh... [the same flesh of sin] ...and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (v 3). *That’s why He had to go through what He did!*

How do you condemn sin? *By never sinning!* *By showing that with the Spirit of God, even God in the flesh had to really completely dedicate Himself to God in order to make this possible!* What does that do for us?

Verse 4: “In order that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us...” **How is that done?** *Writing them in hour heart and inscribing them in our mind* (Heb. 10). Our mind actual inscribes, writes it in there. That’s how you have memory. You’ve got the greatest computer of all

right between your eyes. Greater than any computer that you work with.

A computer cannot make choices, *human beings can make choices!* With the Spirit of God, He will lead us to overcome sin, and that’s how we are delivered from the law of sin and death. People in the world—though they are good people—look at all of them:

- How many keep Sunday?
- How many keep no day?
- How many people—a new category—are ‘noners’?

I want *none* of any ‘religion.’ I will have to do some Church at Home: *Are you a ‘noner’?* Well, I don’t blame you for all the religions in the world. But ***you need to be a ‘oner’ with God, which is a winner!***

“...who are not walking according to *the* flesh... [the way of this society around us] ...but according to *the* Spirit” (v 4).

Let’s see how it is in the world. There are a lot of people who try and do things and think that they’re ‘saved.’ This fits right in with the ‘noners.’

Luke 8:11: “Now this is the parable: The seed is the Word of God.” A lot of people hear the Word of God. You can turn on TBN and watch that, and all of those preachers read from the Bible. But you need to be careful and listen to what they leave out. Even the Jewish rabbis that they allow on there, they’re restricted in what they can say.

- What is TBN? *Trinity Broadcasting Network!*
- What is one of the principles you need to be doing, in order to get on that channel? *You must believe in the trinity!*
- What is the Holy Spirit of God? *It’s not a trinity!*

If you want to look at it this way, we know that there’s *The Most High and The Lord God* in the Old Testament Who in the New Testament are *the Father and Jesus Christ!* The Holy Spirit is ***the power*** of God! But what has Satan done in counterfeit? *Acknowledge the Father and the Son, but make the Holy Spirit a person!* That is Satan trying to force himself into the Godhead!

Many people haven’t thought of it that way, but he’s ‘the god of this world,’ and he’s telling the Father and the Son, ‘Hey, I deserve to be right there!’ He knows he can’t so he deceives the Christianity of this world into believing that.

Verse 12: “And those... [the seed] ...*that fell* by the road are the ones who hear, but the devil

comes and takes away the Word from their heart... [Amazing, isn't it? That's quite a battle right there if you look at it.] ...lest they should believe *and* be saved." *So, they're never converted!*

I wonder what people like that are going think at the second resurrection. 'Oh, I should have taken advantage of it but didn't!'

Verse 13: "And those *that fell* upon the rock *are* the ones who, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; but these do not have any root, who believe *only* for a while, and in time of trial fall away."

Why do they fall away? *Things happened that they don't like!* You have to keep the Sabbath! *I got such a good job, I can't afford to do that!* Or whatever it may be.

Verse 14: "And those that fell into the thorns are the ones who have heard, but are choked *while* pursuing *the* cares and riches and pleasures of life, and do not bring *any fruit* to maturity. And those that *fell* on the good ground... [*that's us*] ...are the ones who, in a right and good heart..." (vs 14-15). How do you have a right and good heart? *By repentance, baptism and having Christ in you!*

"...hear the Word *and* keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with endurance" (v 15).

Peter makes it really clear, because this happens; 2-Peter 2:1: "But there were also false prophets among the people, as indeed there will be false teachers among you, who will stealthily introduce destructive heresies, personally denying *the* Lord who bought them, and bringing swift destruction upon themselves."

We find in 2-Tim. 4 that people would come to the point where they would just want to hear myths and fairytales.

Verse 2: "And many people will follow *as authoritative* their destructive ways; *and* because of them, the way of the Truth will be blasphemed."

Now, talking about Lot, Sodom must have been quite a city to live in. I don't understand how he stayed there for so long. Maybe it was the pressure from his wife, because they were told not to look back, but she looked back. Maybe it was that, I don't know.

Verse 8: "(For that righteous man, dwelling among them, through seeing and hearing *their* lawless activities, *was* tormented day-by-day *in his* righteous soul) **the Lord knows how to rescue the Godly out of temptation**, and to reserve *the* unrighteous to *the* day of judgment to be punished; but particularly those who walk after *the* flesh in corrupting lust, and hold in utter contempt *the*

lordship of God..." (vs 8-10).

That's a good way of showing that no man can come along and add to the Word of God. If you believe in the Lordship of God, you believe in everything that God has said.

"...*They are* audacious and self-willed. They are not afraid to blaspheme *the* Divine powers" (v 10). *That's how a lot of people don't follow through the way that they should!*

Let's see about the temptations that come along here in 1-Corinthians 10:1: Now, I do not wish you to be ignorant *of this*, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea. And all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea. And *they* all ate the same spiritual meat. And *they* all drank *of* the same spiritual drink..." (vs 1-4)—*but it didn't take with them because they were carnal!*

"...for they drank from *the* spiritual Rock that followed *them*. And that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not pleased, for their dead bodies were strewn in the wilderness. Now these things became examples for us, so that we might not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (vs 4-6).

See where Paul is going with this and what it comes to later in a few verses.

Verse 7: "Neither be idolaters..." What do you suppose were the first idols that people thought of, to separate themselves from the pagans and from the Jews.

"...as *were* some of them; as it is written, 'The people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.' Neither should we commit sexual immorality, as some of them committed, and twenty-three thousand were destroyed in one day. Neither should we tempt Christ..." (vs 7-9).

People read v 8 and say that that's terrible that God killed 23,000. Remember the circumstances. God was there in the cloud and pillar of fire all the time. It wasn't somewhere where God is not. They knew better. It was tempting!

The Moabites came over and they followed the advice of Baalim who told Balak to go out and have a nice sacrifice right up close to where they are and let the smell of all of those cooking animals waft over into the camp of the Israelites and tell them to come over.

All you've been eating all this time is manna, wouldn't you like a little flesh? We've got some wine and some of the best looking women possible.

Who were the ones who led the rebellion? *The leaders!* That was quite a thing killing 23,000 in one day. "...Neither should we tempt Christ..." What is Christ going to do to all incorrigible sinners? *Cast them into the Lake of Fire!* That is the permanent death. These 23,000 will be resurrected because they didn't have a chance for salvation. God never gave it to them.

"...as some of them also tempted *Him*, and were killed by serpents. Neither *should* we complain against *God*, as some of them also complained, and were killed by the destroyer" (vs 9-10).

What do you think would be the time that Paul could have complained the most? Think about all he wrote, all the things that he went through (2-Cor. 8 & 11). What would be the one that he could have complained against God the most? *The one I think of is the one where Paul was a day and a night in the deep holding onto a piece of wood!*

God, didn't You call me to go to the Gentiles?
God, didn't You let this boat be sunk while I was on it? Why did you allow this?

He was rescued! It's like Jeremiah said, 'Look, Lord, all I've been doing is preaching doom and gloom to these people. They hate and despise me; they are against me.' God told him to 'do what I tell you and you will have your life for a prize.' What do you think he felt when he was in that sewer?

So, there are times that you might want to complain against God. But God can rescue, and God can change circumstances.

Why did Paul bring these things up.; v 11: "Now all these things happened to them as examples... [or types] ...and were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are coming." *This is over 1900 years ago!*

Verse 12: "Therefore, let the one who thinks he stands take heed, lest he fall. **No temptation** has come upon you except what is common to mankind. For God, Who *is* faithful, **will not permit you to be tempted beyond what you are able to bear; but with the temptation, He will make a way of escape, so that you may be able to bear it.** Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry" (vs 12-14).

So, Paul starts out with idolatry and ends up with idolatry. God can help us and deliver us from it.

Acts 20—this is when Paul called all of these elders from Ephesus down to Miletus and he was telling them how it was when he was with them teaching and preaching. Read Acts 19 about all the

things that went on for three years, great miracles. Those who were converted were getting rid of their idols and throwing away all of their occult books and everything. All of the silversmiths were going broke. It caused a depression in the idol-making industry. So, they went out to get Paul and he barely escaped with his life. He didn't want to go back there so he called them down to Miletus.

Acts 20:18: "And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You know how, from the first day I came to Asia, *and* all the time I was with you, I served the Lord with all humility and *with* many tears and temptations, which came upon me through the plots of the Jews" (vs 18-19).

How did the Jews after WWII do? *They captured many of the leading Germans and brought them to trial!* Who was the famous one that they caught? *Adolf Eichmann!*

Because Paul was a great betrayer of Judaism, some rabbis have said, 'Jesus we understand, but Paul we'll never forgive!' They wanted to kill Paul!

Verse 20: "*And* how I did not keep back anything that was profitable, *but* preached to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, earnestly testifying, both to *the* Jews and *the* Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.... [that's where it all starts] ...And now behold, I am bound in the spirit, *and* am going to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall happen to me there" (vs 20-22)

Every place Paul went, the prophecy was: *don't go!* But he went, and you read what happened to him.

Verse 23: "Except that the Holy Spirit fully testifies in every city, saying that bonds and tribulations await me. But I myself do not take any *of these* things into account, nor do I hold my life dear to myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to fully testify the Gospel of the grace of God" (vs 23-24). *There are two things to preaching:*

1. the grace of God
2. the Kingdom of God

Verse 25: "And now behold, I know that you all, among whom I have gone about proclaiming the Kingdom of God, will see my face no more; wherefore, I testify to you on this day..." (vs 25-26).

This is important, because when you do not turn everyone toward God and make them wholly responsible for following God, then problems develop. Here's what happened:

“...that I am pure from the blood of all, for I have not held back from preaching to you all the counsel of God” (v 27).

Here is the admonition; all of us can take this, but especially for ministers, elders and teachers:

Verse 28: “**Take heed, therefore, to yourselves...**” What happens when those who are teaching and preaching get led astray?

“...and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God...” (v 28)

That’s the whole purpose of it. Why? *Because God has set it up that way so that those who preach and teach are not lords, kinds and princes!* They are servants, and a servant is called a deacon in the Greek. To serve is ‘deaconing.’ That’s what Christ said that He was doing. He was deaconing or serving. Keep that in mind as we’re reading this.

“...to feed the Church of God, which He purchased with His own blood” (v 28).

The brethren do not belong to a corporate church. They do not belong to any minister. *They belong to the Lord Jesus Christ!* All who are teachers are to be stewards or shepherds of the flock.

Verse 29: “For I know this: that after my departure grievous wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock.” *That’s what happened!* We have lived through that, too!

Verse 30: “And from among your own selves men will rise up speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after themselves. Watch, therefore, remembering that *for three years I ceased not to admonish each one night and day with tears*” (vs 30-31).

Let’s see something important for teachers; here’s what Paul says talking to the Jews:

Romans 2:17: “Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God, and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth contained in the Law. **You, then, who are teaching another...** [this is to all teachers, ministers wherever you are] ...**do you not teach yourself also?...**” (vs 17-21).

That is true! If we’re studying, we’re learning. I’m still learning, and you’re still learning.

“...You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you

stealing? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law?” (vs 21-23).

Quite a statement! This can be applied to every minister in every Church of God everywhere in the world! All the brethren belong to God. We’re to be stewards, to serve and teach and to help them be perfected so that they can have spiritual lives and understanding before God.

Did this not happen to the WCG? Verse 24: “For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written.”

Let’s see how it comes about in 1-Thess.; we’ll see that where there is tribulation that comes you don’t have a choice over.

1-Thessalonians 3:1: “Accordingly, when we could not bear to wait any longer, we thought *it* best *for us* to be left in Athens alone; and we sent our brother Timothy, a servant of God and our fellow worker in the Gospel of Christ, in order to establish you and to encourage you concerning your faith, so that no one might be unduly shaken by these persecutions. (For you yourselves know that we are appointed to this very thing)” (vs 1-3).

Persecution is a tribulation, because it comes upon you and you have no choice. You may have to choose to run away or whatever, but you have no choice about it.

Verse 4: “And also, when we were with you, we told you beforehand *that* we would suffer persecutions, exactly as it also came to pass; and you are aware of *this*.) For this reason, when I could not wait any longer, I sent *Timothy*, in order to know your faith, lest perhaps the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain” (vs 4-5). *Then they found everything was fine, and Paul was happy about that!*

Now, here is where Paul defines that all of these things work together for good. That always ***IF*** you love God.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... [and we want to maintain that] ...Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace... [direct connection with God the Father and Jesus Christ] ...in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance” (vs 1-3). **How long are you going to endure?** *We have to endure to the end!*

Verse 4: “And endurance *brings forth* character...” *That’s the whole purpose of our calling and learning, and knowing about the Word of God!*

“...and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (vs 4-5).

So, could it be that when you have persecution, God will give you more of His Holy Spirit to resist? to be able to stand? to be able to endure? *Yes, indeed!*

2-Cor. 1—here we see that in tribulation, God not only helps us, but He also comforts us. That’s a tremendous thing!

2-Corinthians 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and *the* God of all comfort.”

Sometimes that comfort is not going to be in the physical realm. We may be under duress physically, but we can have comfort in our mind knowing that God is for us with us.

Verse 4: “Who comforts us in all our **tribulation**...”—because persecution is a tribulation. When *the* Tribulation comes on the whole world there’s no choice involved. The only choice they have is either flee to the mountains or be killed. **“Who comforts us in all our tribulation...”**

When you think about that think about the martyrdom Stephen. What did he say? *Father, don’t lay this to their charge* when they were hatefully killing him.

“...in order that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trial, through the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God” (v 4). *That’s how it comes to us, and that is a good thing!*

2-Corinthians 8:1: “Now, brethren, we *wish* to make known to you the grace of God that has been given to the churches in Macedonia, **that in a great trial of affliction**, their abundant joy and their deep poverty has overflowed unto the wealth of their liberality” (vs 1-2).

So, in spite of all the odds, they were able to grow and harvest food to send famine relief to the brethren down in Judea. Quite a thing! They were able to do it in spite of everything!

Let’s see what the **‘great temptation to come upon the whole world’** is. You will see that the whole world will have a choice. All the brethren will have a greater choice. This is going to be Satan’s final coup de gras; the final thrust.

2-Thessalonians 2:1: “Now, we beseech you, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, that you not be quickly shaken in mind, nor be troubled—neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by epistle, as if from us, *saying* that the day of Christ is present. Do not let anyone deceive you by any means...” (vs 1-3). *That’s quite a statement when you think about it!*

“...because *that day will not* come unless the apostasy shall come first, and the man of sin shall be revealed—the son of perdition... [the greatest evil in our time] ...the one who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God... [this is the temptation right here] ...or that is an object of worship; so that he comes into the temple of God... [the one to be built] ...and sits down as God, proclaiming that he himself is God. Do you not remember that when I was still with you, I told you these things?” (vs 3-5).

Verse 7: “For the mystery of lawlessness is already working; only *there is* One Who is restraining at the present *time* until it arises out of *the* midst.”

Then he’ll be destroyed by the coming of Christ! We can see the effect of this in Rev. 13. This is going to be quite a thing! The whole world is going to fall for it! ***This is the temptation that’s going to come upon the whole world!*** They’re going to have a choice: Are they going to go along with the system? All the brethren will have the choice: Are they going to go along with the system or stay faithful with God?

Revelation 13:2: “And the beast that I saw was like a leopard, and his feet like *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth like *the* mouth of a lion; and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne and great authority. And I saw one of his heads as *if it were* slain to death, but his deadly wound was healed; and **the whole earth was amazed and followed the beast.** And they worshiped the dragon...” (vs 2-4)—*because when that man comes the power behind him is Satan the devil, so they’re all going to be worshipping Satan!*

“...who gave *his* authority to the beast. And they worshiped the beast, saying, ‘Who *is* like the beast? Who has the power to make war against him?’” (v 4).

That’s the great temptation that’s coming on all the earth. It is not a tribulation, ***it is a temptation: Who will you worship? God? or Satan?***

Let’s make sure that we’re all faithful all the time!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Revelation 3:7-13
- 2) Matthew 6:13
- 3) James 1:1-18
- 4) Matthew 4:1-11
- 5) Hebrews 2:6-18
- 6) Hebrews 4:15-16
- 7) Romans 8:1-4
- 8) Luke 8:11-15
- 9) 2 Peter 2:1-2, 8-10
- 10) 1 Corinthians 10:1-14
- 11) Acts 20:18-31
- 12) Romans 2:17-24
- 13) 1-Thessalonians 3:1-5
- 14) Romans 5:1-5
- 15) 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- 16) 2 Corinthians 8:1-2
- 17) 2 Thessalonians 2:3-5, 7
- 18) Revelation 13:2-4

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 2
- Ephesians 2
- Luke 6
- Revelation 6; 8; 9
- Psalm 8
- Genesis 1
- Revelation 12
- Galatians 3
- Romans 7
- Hebrews 10
- 2 Timothy 4
- 2 Corinthians 11
- Acts 19

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