

Testing and the Way of Escape

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I. Doubletalk

It sometimes is the case that a verse or passage of Scripture is familiar and often-quoted, yet generally misconstrued. Typically, the cause of the misconception is poor translation, or translation which has become archaic. A case in point is I Corinthians 10:13. Indeed, as translated in the King James version, the verse appears to contradict itself. Paul says:

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

This appears to be nonsense and double-talk. How is it possible for one to bear a temptation (i.e., endure a trial or testing), and yet escape it? or how does the existence of a way of escape enable one to endure testing? Moreover, if it is the purpose of God that a trial be endured, then the existence of a way of escape would itself present a temptation or test.

Though obvious, the incongruities of this passage seem to have gone unnoticed by most—a fact which, though easily explained, nevertheless is quite disturbing. The explanation is simply that, in this day and age, the typical Christian is lacking in discernment and in the ability to think critically. But how can it be otherwise in a people who have ceased to read, and particularly, in a people who have ceased to read and study and memorize the Scriptures? We all are paying dearly for the untold hours we have squandered, staring mindlessly into the glowing screen of a television set or sitting spellbound in the darkness of a movie theater—time we should have spent in reading, study, thinking, and conversation.

One interpretation which has been advanced regarding I Corinthians 10:13 is that the verse portrays testing or temptation as a test chamber which is equipped with an escape hatch. Supposedly, once the individual being subjected to testing has reached his limit of endurance, he may exit through the escape hatch, and thus avoid exposure to testing he is not able to withstand. Another interpretation which has been suggested is that mere awareness of the fact that there exists a ready means of escape enables the individual to endure testing which otherwise would be beyond his capability. Inspection of the passage in the Greek, however, quickly shows such interpretations to be erroneous, and readily establishes the correct interpretation.

II. What Saith the Greek?

The noun translated 'temptation' is the Greek word peirasmos; the verb translated 'tempt' is the cognate, peirazo. The meaning of peirazo is to try, attempt, assay, test, or prove. The verb translated 'bear' is hupophero, meaning literally, to bear up under, in the sense of endurance. The phrase translated 'a way to escape' is ekbasis, meaning literally, a way out, but also meaning an issue, result, or outcome. As just noted, to adopt the literal meaning of ekbasis in this passage leads to a contradiction; however, with the alternative meaning, the contradiction disappears. It thus becomes clear that the context demands ekbasis be translated in the sense of result or outcome.

The Concordant Literal translation is one of the few English translations which has captured the true sense of the passage:

No trial has taken you except what is human. Now, faithful is God, who will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are able, but, together with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable you to undergo it.

The English word sequel means consequence, result, subsequent development, or outcome. Seen in this light—that of endurance in order to achieve a desired outcome—the passage not only makes perfect sense, but immediately brings to mind another passage, in which the concept is illustrated. Consider Hebrews 12:1–2; in the Concordant Literal translation, the passage reads as follows:

Surely, in consequence, then, we also, having so vast a cloud of witnesses encompassing us, putting off every impediment and the popular sin, may be racing with endurance the contest lying before us, looking off to the Inaugurator and perfecter of faith, Jesus, who, for the joy lying before him, endures a cross, despising the shame, besides is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

What enabled Christ Jesus to endure the cross? The joy lying before him—the joy God the Father held forth as the sequel for endurance! What enables the follower of Christ Jesus to endure testing? The sequel which God makes when he devises the testing! The testing to which God subjects his elect has an outcome or sequel which is a reward designed by God to motivate endurance.

And the declaration of Paul—that God will not allow the Christian to be subjected to a test he is incapable of passing—has a simple yet seldom-appreciated implication: the testing to which one is subjected is a telltale of his maturity in the spiritual realm. In other words, the spiritual mettle of the Christian is manifest by the severity of the tests he faces. And those who endure such suffering are rewarded:

For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

– I Peter 2:19

III. A False Assertion by a False Apostle

In the book of James, we find the following assertion:

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

– James 1:13–15

The verb which the King James version translates ‘tempt’ is *peirazo*, and the verb ‘cannot be tempted’ is *apeirastos*, a cognate. *peirazo* is the same verb used by Paul in I Corinthians 10:13.

In making this assertion, the author of James contradicts the account of the temptation of Adam in the Garden, as well as the account of the temptation of the last Adam, Christ Jesus. Moreover, the author of James contradicts the Scriptural account of the testing of Job, and multiple assertions found throughout the Scripture.

16 And the Lord God gave a charge to Adam, saying, Of every tree which is in the garden thou mayest freely

eat, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—of it ye shall not eat, but in whatsoever day ye eat of it, ye shall surely die.

– Genesis 2:16–17 (LXX)¹

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

– Matthew 4:1

1 And these are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel with them, all that had not known the wars of Chanaan. 2 Only for the sake of the generations of Israel, to teach them war, only the men before them knew them not. 3 The five lordships of the Phylistines, and every Chananite, and the Sidonian, and the Evite who dwelt in Libanus from the mount of Aermont to Laboemath. 4 And this was done in order to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commands of the Lord, which he charged their fathers by the hand of Moses.

– Judges 3:1–4 (LXX)

4 And the Lord said to Moses, Behold, I will rain bread upon you out of heaven: and the people shall go forth, and they shall gather their daily portion for the day, that

¹Unless otherwise noted, all citations of Old Covenant scripture are taken from the Septuagint (typically, from the A. D. 1851 English translation of Brenton), which is a translation into the Greek dialect called ‘Koine’ of the ancient Hebrew canon of Old Covenant scripture. The Septuagint commonly is designated by the Roman numeral ‘LXX’, which corresponds to the number seventy, this supposedly being the number of men who laboured on the translation.

The translation was made a century or more prior to the Incarnation, and copies of the Septuagint circulated throughout the ancient world. By the time of the birth of Christ, the Septuagint had become accepted as the authentic and official Canon of Old Covenant scripture. Popular acceptance of the Septuagint was due largely to the fact that the Hebrew language had fallen into disuse; this, in turn, being largely a consequence of the dispersion of Israel by the Assyrian invasion, together with the subsequent seventy years of captivity in Babylon of the remnant which Assyria did not carry away. By the time of the return from Babylon, Greek had become established as the common language of the world, as a result of the conquests of Alexander the Great. Thus, it is the Septuagint, rather than the ancient Hebrew Canon, which was in common use throughout Judea during the era of the Incarnation and the apostolic age, and there is little, if any, evidence that the ancient Hebrew canon was still in use by anyone during this period. Jesus and the apostles quoted from the Septuagint rather than the ancient Hebrew, thus authenticating the Septuagint as the official and authentic canon of Old Covenant scripture. Consequently, it is the Septuagint, rather than the ancient Hebrew text, which the early Church preserved and revered as genuine.

Veneration of the Septuagint—on the part of both the Christian and the Christ-rejecting, unregenerate Jew—persisted for a period of roughly a century after the Resurrection. However, the Jew, having nothing but an adversarial relationship with the Christian, began maintaining his own editions of the Septuagint. Sometime after the final destruction of the city of Jerusalem and the temple in A. D. 70, the Jew attempted to revive the defunct Hebrew language and to re-create the abandoned ancient Hebrew text—a text which, like the ark of the covenant, has disappeared without a trace. It appears that neither a copy nor even so much as a fragment of the ancient Hebrew canon survived to the modern era; at least, Christian scholars know of none to be extant. These efforts of the Jew culminated in creation of the so-called ‘Masoretic Text’, which was not published until the 15th century A. D. It is vital to understand that the Masoretic Text is the product of unregenerate men, working entirely in the Christian era—an era in which no man rightly can claim to possess covenantal relationship with God under the terms of the Old Covenant, for the Old Covenant came to a permanent and irreversible end upon the death of Christ Jesus. Being the creation of unregenerate men, the Masoretic Text by no stretch of the imagination may be considered canonical.

Popular notion perceives the Masoretic Text as simply the ancient Hebrew text to which ‘vowel points’ have been added; but, in actuality, the Masoretic Text is a new Bible, written in a language considerably more complex than the language of the ancient Hebrews. Regrettably, William Tyndale translated his English Bible from the Masoretic Text, rather than from the Septuagint; thus were Christians originally introduced to the Jewish counterfeit of the ancient Hebrew Canon. And despite the fact that, soon after its publication, the Masoretic Text was demonstrated by Christian scholars to be but a counterfeit of the ancient Hebrew Canon and marred by numerous serious flaws, Tyndale’s use of the Masoretic Text set a precedent which has been followed by virtually every subsequent translator of the English Bible. Demonstration of the corrupt and spurious nature of the Masoretic Text is not difficult, for New Covenant scripture contains numerous quotations of Old Covenant scripture, and inspection of the quoted passages reveals all manner of corruption, including truncation, augmentation, and selective editing.

Thus, despite its historical role as the basis for English Bible, the Masoretic Text is nothing more than a poorly-crafted modern Jewish counterfeit of the ancient Hebrew Bible which long ago had been abandoned, even by the Jew; as such, the Masoretic Text is unreliable, utterly worthless, and offers nothing whatsoever of value to the Christian. The oldest extant copies of the Septuagint predate the oldest extant copies of the Masoretic Text by more than a thousand years. Moreover, there is no *demonstrated* continuity between the ancient Hebrew Canon and the Masoretic Text. Without question, the Septuagint is the only reliable link to the ancient Hebrew Canon. Indeed, the Masoretic Text gives the appearance of being a heavily-edited translation of the Septuagint into the Masoretic Hebrew language. But whatever the pedigree of the Masoretic Text, it is the Septuagint alone which is the authentic canon of Old Covenant scripture, simply because it is from the Septuagint alone that Jesus and the apostles cited the Scripture.

For a more comprehensive discussion of this matter, see the journal article, “Rightful Succession & Imposture: The Case of the Septuagint vs. the Masoretic Text”, *Salt & Light*, Vol. 2, No. 6.

I may try them whether they will walk in my law or not.

– Exodus 16:4 (LXX)

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

– I Peter 1:6–7

In this passage, the King James version uses ‘temptations’ to translate *peirazo*, and ‘trial’ to translate *dokimazo*, which means a test or a proving.

While there is question as to the authorship of the book of James, the general (if not overwhelming) consensus is that the book is the work of James of Jerusalem. But there are multiple indications within the Scripture which point toward the conclusion that James of Jerusalem is a false apostle. Moreover, there are multiple indications within the book of James (including contradictions with respect to the teaching of Moses, Paul, and Peter) which point toward the conclusion that the book is non-canonical, having no rightful place in the Canon of New Covenant scripture. But these matters are outside the scope of the present article; they are the subject for a future article.

IV. Conclusion

The concept of ‘a way to escape’ fostered by the translation of I Corinthians 10:13 found in the King James version not only is absent in the Greek text of that passage, but is seen to be incompatible with the Biblical concept of testing. The purpose of testing is to ascertain the nature and quality of the character and faith of the individual. Approval is given only to the one who endures to the end. God does not provide a ‘way of escape’, for to do so is inconsistent with the purpose of testing. What God does, however, is provide a sequel or reward which motivates the individual to endure testing to the end.

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*These, having put the world in commotion,
are also here present...and these all do contrary
to the decree of Caesar, saying another
to be king—Jesus.*

– Acts 17:6–7

We ought obey God rather than men.

– Acts 5:29