

# Hebrews 2:18 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission  
[Swindoll's Chart](#), [Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews](#), [Another Chart](#)

The Epistle to the Hebrews				
INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18			EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25	
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE			DUTY	
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD				

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)  
 (See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 2:18: For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** [en o gar peponthen](#) (3SRAI) [autos peirastheis.](#) (APPMSN) [dunatai](#) (3SPPI) [tois peirazomenois](#) (PPPMPD) [boethesai.](#) (AAN)

**Amplified:** For because He Himself [in His humanity] has suffered in being tempted (tested and tried), He is able [immediately] to run to the cry of (assist, relieve) those who are being tempted and tested and tried [and who therefore are being exposed to suffering] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Centenary Translation:** For inasmuch as he himself has suffered, being tempted, he is also able instantly to succor those who are tempted, he is also able instantly to succor those who are tempted.

**ESV:** For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

**Jewish Bible:** For since he himself suffered death when he was put to the test, he is able to help those who are being tested now.

**KJV:** For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

**Mace NT:** for having himself stood the test of sufferings, he is capable of being moved to relieve those who undergo such tryals.

**Modern Language:** For because He Himself suffered in being tempted, He is able to bring aid to those who are tempted.

**NLT:** Since He Himself has gone through suffering and testing, He is able to help us when we are being tested.

**Phillips:** For by virtue of his own suffering under temptation he is able to help those who are exposed to temptation. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**TLB:** For since he himself has now been through suffering and temptation, he knows what it is like when we suffer and are tempted, and he is wonderfully able to help us.

**Wuest:** For in that which He suffered, having Himself been tempted, He is able to run to the cry of those who are being tempted and bring them aid.

**Weymouth:** For inasmuch as He has Himself felt the pain of temptation and trial, He is also able instantly to help those who are tempted and tried.

**FOR SINCE HE HIMSELF WAS TEMPTED:** [en ho gar peponthen](#) (3SRAI) [autos peirastheis](#) (APPMSN):

- [Hebrews 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS WAS TEMPTED LIKE WE ARE TEMPTED

**For since He Himself was tempted** ([peirazo](#)) **in that which He has has suffered** ([pascho](#)) - The Greek reads more literally (specifically the literal word order) "for in that He suffered, Himself being tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted." (Young's literal translation) When Jesus suffered as a perfect Man, He was tempted with real temptations. He did it for you and for me!

**For (gar)** is a **term of explanation**. Wherever you encounter a **"for"** used as a term of explanation, **pause** a moment to **ponder** the text - a practice which counters our tendency toward **"passive"** reading! As you query the text with the **5W/H'S**, you will be amazed at how wonderfully the Holy Spirit comes alongside to give you insights that you had never seen before in passages you may have read a hundred times! As you engage in **"active"** reading, you are actually in a sense beginning to **meditate** on the passage, a lost discipline in our fast paced, hi tech society, but a discipline that our Father promises to richly reward (cp Joshua 1:8-note, Ps 1:1-note, Ps 1:2-note, Ps 1:3-note).

Most of the times when we encounter a **for** as a term of explanation, we will be forced to the preceding context, usually the immediately preceding passage. However, in the present context, the **"for"** indicates that what follows can explain how Jesus' being

made like His brethren in all things has made Him a merciful and faithful High Priest for us.

**Spurgeon** - I must not omit to mention the particular use here made by the Spirit of that word **himself**. It is not only in that He suffered being tempted, but you see that He Himself has suffered being tempted. That word is sometimes used to make passages emphatic: "Who himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Pet 2:24+). We read again and again of Jesus Christ Himself, as if to show that the matters referred to were really, truly, personally, actually His. He Himself has suffered. All that there was in Him, that made up Himself, suffered being tempted.

In his sermon [A Tempted Saviour—Our Best Succour](#) **Spurgeon** said "Our first point this morning is this—MANY SOULS ARE TEMPTED—CHRIST WAS TEMPTED. All the heirs of heaven pass under the yoke; all true gold must feel the fire; all wheat must be threshed; all diamonds must be cut; all saints must endure temptation.....The temptation which comes from God is altogether that of trial; trial, not with an ill-design as are the temptations of Satan, but trial meant to prove and strengthen our graces, and so at once to illustrate the power of divine grace, to test the genuineness of our virtues, and to add to their energy.....We know that nothing can occur to us save as it is written in the secret roll of providential predestination; consequently all the trials resulting from circumstances are traceable at once to the great First Cause. Out of the golden gate of God's ordinance the armies of trial march forth in array. No shower falls unpermitted from the threatening cloud; every drop has its order ere it hastens to the earth. Consider poverty for instance. How many are made to feel its pinching necessities. They shiver in the cold for want of raiment; they are hungry and athirst; they are houseless, friendless, despised. This is a temptation from God, but all this Christ knew—"Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but I, the Son of Man, have not where to lay my head." When he had fasted forty days and forty nights he was an hungered, and then it was that he was tempted of the devil. Nor does the scant table and the ragged garment alone invite temptation, for all Providences are doors to trial. Even our mercies, like roses, have their thorns. Men may be drowned in seas of prosperity as well as in rivers of affliction. Our mountains are not too high, and our valleys are not too low for temptation to travel. Whither shall we flee from their presence? What wings of wind can carry us? What beams of light can bear us? Everywhere, above and beneath, we are beset and surrounded with dangers. Now, since all these are under the superintendence and direction of the great Lord of Providence, we may look upon them all as temptations which come from him. But in every one of these Christ had his part.....But still more do temptations arise from men. God doth try us now and then, but our fellow-men every day. Our foes are found in our own household, among our friends. Out of a mistaken kindness, it often happeneth that they would lead us to prefer our own ease to the service of God. Links of love have made iron chains for saints. It is hard to ride to heaven over our own flesh and blood. Kinsfolk and acquaintance may much hinder young disciples.....The first grand temptation of Satan is usually made against our faith. Being an hungered, Satan came to our Lord and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."

**He Himself was tempted** - Notice that the very fact that Jesus COULD be tempted serves to authenticate His Humanity! Why can we say this with such assurance? Because of James clear statement regarding temptation of Deity...

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for **God cannot be tempted by evil**, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. (James 1:13+)

**Hendriksen** sums up some of the major temptations of Jesus - Jesus experienced hunger when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, thirst when he asked the woman at Jacob's well for water, weariness when he slept while the storm raged on the Sea of Galilee, and sorrow when he wept at the grave of Lazarus. ([NT Commentary Set. Baker Book](#))

**Tempted** ([3985](#)) (**peirazo** from the noun **peira** = test from **peiro** = perforate, pierce through to test durability of things) is a morally neutral word simply meaning to test. It carries with it the idea of being "pierced through." (John Phillips) Temptations and trials are two sides of the same coin -- whether the testing is for a good (Heb 11:17) or evil (Mt 4:1, James 1:14-note) purpose depends on the intent of the one giving the test. When the scriptural context clearly indicates the testing is an enticement to evil, **peirazo** is most frequently translated by a form of the English *tempt*, which carries that negative connotation. Trials may come from God or under His permissive will from Satan (Job 1:8, 12), or may be the result of our own wrong doing. Solicitations to do evil come from the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**.

**Peirazo in Hebrews** - Heb. 2:18; Heb. 3:9; Heb. 4:15; Heb. 11:17; Heb. 11:37

**Wuest** comments that **peirazo** "referred first to the action of putting someone to the test to see what good or evil is in the one tested, and second, because so many broke down under the test and committed sin, the word came to mean a "solicitation to do evil." Both meanings are in view here. Our Lord in His incarnation as the Last Adam, was put to the test and was also solicited to do evil (Mt 4:1-11 "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.")" ([Hebrews](#))

The **orist tense** points to the fact that Jesus "having been tempted" is a past completed action and represents a historical event.

**THOUGHT** - As an aside, we do well to study and meditate on the wilderness temptation of Jesus to discern how He defeated the devil's temptations which were surely as intense as a temptation could be. We know from

Php 2:5-8+ that Jesus had previously "emptied" Himself of His divine prerogatives. Matthew and Luke teach that Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit (Mt 4:1, Lk 4:1+) into the wilderness where He was tempted, so clearly Jesus was in the **will of the Father** (Jn 4:34, 5:19, 30, 6:40, 8:28, 49, 14:10, Mt 26:39, Heb 10:7-9). Luke adds that Jesus was **full of the Holy Spirit** (Lk 4:1+, cf Luke 4:14+). And both Matthew and Luke's account record that Jesus refuted Satan's temptations with the "sword" of the **Word of God** (Eph 6:17+), specifically quoting from Deuteronomy. **So what pattern does Jesus give us regarding how we too can experience victory over temptation?** (1) He was in the will of His Father. (2) He was filled with the Spirit, controlled by the Spirit and as Luke 4:14+ adds empowered by (dunamis = enabled by) the Spirit (see Peter's "summary" of Jesus' life in Acts 10:38+). **HERE IS THE VITAL POINT TO GRASP** - Jesus depended **NOT** His divine power, but on the will of His Father, the Word of Truth and the Spirit of Truth to defeat the strong temptations of the devil, giving us His pattern from victory over temptation. We do well to imitate His pattern for victory over temptation! (See discussion of association of filled with the Spirit and filled with the Word - Ephesians 5:18+)

#### Related Resources:

- [The Holy Spirit-Walking Like Jesus Walked!](#)
- Word Study on "Temptation" = peirasmos
- James 1:14 - exposition on temptation
- [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)
- Chart Comparing [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#)

**Jesus** was tempted or "put to the test" so to speak, but He did not give in to the temptation and fall into sin. Jesus "passed the test!"

For we do not have a **high priest** who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted **in all things** as we are, yet without sin. (Heb 4:15+)

**Paul** explains some of Jesus' present work on our behalf as our **Great High Priest**...

Christ Jesus is He Who died, yes, rather Who was raised, Who is at the right hand of God, Who also intercedes for us (present tense = He is constantly interceding on our behalf and so is always ready to come to the aid upon hearing our cry for help!). (Ro 8:34+)

Christ did not have each temptation we have but experienced every kind of temptation a person can have. He has met our sorrows. He has faced our temptations. He knows exactly what help we need; and He can come to our aid immediately when we cry out for help!

Tests come into the life of every believer. Whether the tests becomes a proof of righteousness (not that passing the test in any way *earns* righteousness) or an inducement to evil depends on our response. If we resist in dependence on the power of the Spirit (cp walk by the Spirit - Gal 5:16-note), the test proves our faithfulness. If we do not resist in His power (or try to resist by relying on our own "power"), the test becomes a solicitation to sin. The Bible uses **peirazo** in both ways. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert!

**John MacArthur** - The genuineness of Christ's humanity is demonstrated by the fact that He was subject to **temptation**. By experiencing **temptation**, Jesus became fully capable of understanding and sympathizing with His human brethren (cf. He 4:15+). He felt the full force of **temptation**. Though we often yield to **temptation** before we feel its full force, Jesus resisted **temptation** even when the greatest enticement for yielding had become evident (cf. Lk 4:1-13+). Jesus felt everything we will ever feel—and more. For example, He felt **temptation** to a degree that we could not possibly experience. Most of us never know the full. degree of resistible **temptation**, simply because we usually succumb long before that degree is reached. But since Jesus never sinned, He took the full measure of every **temptation** that came to Him. And He was victorious in every trial. (See context in [Hebrews Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** clarifies several basic truths regarding **temptation**...

- (1) Temptation to sin is no sin.
- (2) Temptation does not show any displeasure on God's part:
- (3) Temptation really implies no doubt of your being a son of God.
- (4) Temptation need not lead to any evil consequences in any case.
- (5) Do not make it any cause of complaint that you are tempted.
- (6) Far from your hearts be the idea that any temptation should lead you to despair. Jesus triumphed, and so shall you.

**Philip Hughes** addresses an objection to Hebrews 2:18 - Some have objected that only by the experience of sin could Christ have evinced full fellow feeling with fallen mankind; but for the incarnate Son to have succumbed to temptation, while it would certainly have meant his becoming a fellow sinner, would also have meant his failure and defeat, with the consequence that he would have been disqualified for the fulfilment of his high-priestly office (cf. Heb 5:8-10) and unable to come to our aid and lead us in the way of victory. It is a fallacy also to imagine that the fact that he did not fall into sin means that he knows less about temptation than those who have given in to it; for his conquest of temptation, while ensuring his sinlessness, in fact increased rather than diminished his fellow feeling, since he knows the full force of temptation in a manner that we who have not withstood it to the end cannot know it. What good would another who has failed be to us? It is precisely because we have been defeated that we need the assistance of him who is the victor. "Sympathy with the sinner in his trial," writes Westcott, "does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity. He who falls yields before the last strain." The help, moreover, which Christ offers to him who is struggling in the midst of temptation is offered not merely as man to man, but as Redeemer to sinner. (See context in [A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews](#))

**Henry Morris** - In His humanity, Jesus was tested in all points like as we are, except for sin. This does not mean He was tempted to commit all kinds of sins, but rather that He was tested and proved in every way. He could not actually have sinned because: (1) He is God, and "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13); (2) He is "the same, yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Hebrews 13:8) so that, even in His humanity, He did not cease to be God; (3) because of His miraculous conception, He had no innate sin, so that "in Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5); (4) He did not need, as other men, to be converted, telling Nicodemus: "ye must be born again" (John 3:7)—not "we," or "they;" (5) God cannot fail in His creative purpose, because He is both omniscient and omnipotent; if Jesus had sinned, salvation would have been impossible, and the Creator would have been defeated by Satan, a mere creature; this could not have been possible. Nevertheless, even though He knew (as did His Father) that He could not sin, men and angels did not know this until it had been demonstrated to them. That is why He had to be tested as proof positive.

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**Illustration - Testing the Bridge** - As the Union Pacific Railroad was being constructed, an elaborate trestle bridge was built across a large canyon in the West. Wanting to test the bridge, the builder loaded a train with enough extra cars and equipment to double its normal payload. The train was then driven to the middle of the bridge, where it stayed an entire day. One worker asked, "Are you trying to break this bridge?" "No," the builder replied, "I'm trying to prove that the bridge won't break." In the same way, the temptations Jesus faced weren't designed to see if He would sin, but to prove that He couldn't.

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### **Vance Havner - Tempted Like As We Luke 4:1-13**

THE threefold temptation of our Lord corresponds to the temptation of the first Adam in Genesis. John tells us (1 John 2:16) that the threefold appeal is by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. This appeal was used with Eve: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6).

Luke, in his account of the Son of Man, follows the Genesis order; but Matthew puts the third appeal second, making the order that which would appeal most to a king, with its offers of a quick way to the throne.

Jesus meets the appeal to the flesh with the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. He could have readily provided Himself with a meal, for God can set a table in the wilderness whenever He likes; but our Lord was willing to trust His Father to supply His need without resorting to the suggestion of the devil. He will not selfishly use His power.

Then the devil undertook to pervert the Word of God and lead Jesus to resort to the spectacular to prove God's care. He quotes a messianic psalm in which God promises to protect the Messiah because He is obedient and trustful. Had Jesus listened to Satan, He would have broken the condition. To ever ask for signs and wonders of God—to demand some sensational proof of His love and care—is to follow this same suggestion of the devil.

Then the adversary offered the Lord the kingdoms of this world. They really were his to offer, for this present world-system is under him. In John 12:31 and 14:30 our Lord speaks of Satan as the "prince of this world," and in 2 Corinthians 4:4 calls him the "god of this world." God owns the world, but the devil possesses it in the present age. But Jesus defeated the tempter again with a sword-thrust from Deuteronomy. No wonder the devil has fought Deuteronomy so and has sought to destroy it with higher criticism! The Lord defeated him each time with a verse from that book. If the Lord used only three verses from Deuteronomy to whip the devil, we ought to put up a good fight with the whole Bible!

Mark adds that our Lord was with the wild beasts. The first Adam was tempted in a lovely garden with all creation at peace. The second Adam was tempted in a wilderness typical of the earth spoiled by sin. But one day, by reason of His victory, He shall reign over the earth... redeemed from the curse and with creation at peace (Isa. 11:6-8; Rom. 8:18-25).

After the devil left Him, angels ministered to Jesus. After each victory over evil, we are visited by His strengthening Presence in fresh power, in joy, and in confidence. Luke adds significantly that the devil departed "for a season." Again and again through His life, our Lord suffered being tempted, and He is even now able to succor them that are tempted (Heb. 2:18).

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## Hebrews 2:18 Irresistible Lures

For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:18).

We had everything set for the first bass fishing expedition of the year. We had exotic new lures that we knew would be irresistible to those big six-pounders lurking beneath the surface of our favorite fishing lake. We would tempt them with Sassy Shads, brightly colored new Hula Poppers, buzz baits, a "killer" red flatfish with a black stripe, and a white double spinner with long bright streamers. And, if all else failed, we had some fresh Canadian crawlers. Out at dawn, we hit all the best spots with our assortment of delectable temptations. But nothing happened. We worked the shore. We cast along the weeds. We tried every lure in the tackle box—even the crawlers. Finally we gave up. Heading back to the cabin, we concluded, "The fish just aren't hungry."

Satan has a whole "tacklebox" of alluring devices he uses to tempt us. Some are gaudy and exotic, easy to spot—yet oh, so tempting. Others whet our appetites in quiet and subtle ways, appearing harm-less until the hook is set. Whatever the temptation, we can best resist if we do not let our thoughts dwell on evil but on things that are true, noble, just, pure, and lovely (Phil. 4:8). With mental discipline and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can keep our hearts full of goodness. Then, in frustration, Satan will have to say, "They just aren't hungry."—D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Every step away from the devil leads us one step closer to God.

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## IN THAT WHICH HE HAS SUFFERED: en ho gar autos peponthen (3SRAI):

- He 4:15+; He 4:16+; He 5:2+, He 5:7,8,9+; **By the Devil** = Mt 4:1-10+; **In the Garden of Gethsemane** = Mt 26:37-39; Lk 22:53+
- [Hebrews 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS SUFFERED FOR US BELOVED

**He** (Himself) is emphatic. Contrary to what might have been expected, He suffered.

O Saviour Christ, Thou too art man;  
Thou hast been troubled, tempted, tried;  
Thy kind but searching glance can scan  
The very wounds that shame would hide.  
- Henry Twells

**In that which He has suffered** ([pascho](#)) - Christ's **suffering** included temptation. He experienced the lure of sin, but He never surrendered Himself to it. He knows what it is like to be tempted, so He knows how to assist those who are being tempted. **Suffered** is in the perfect tense which emphasizes that although the temptation Christ suffered in the flesh is a thing of the past, its effect is permanent, in the sense that the effect of His compassion and understanding remains to aid us in our own temptations. That should makes us all shout "Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus!"

**A T Robertson** summarizes Jesus' **suffering** noting that "The **temptation** to escape the shame of the Cross was early and repeatedly presented to Christ, **by Satan** in the wilderness (Mt 4:1-11), **by Peter** in the spirit of Satan (Mt 16:22, 23.), **in Gethsemane** (Mt 26:36-39) and caused **intense suffering to Jesus** ("And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground." Lk 22:44; Heb 5:8)." ([Hebrews 2 Word Pictures](#))

**Spurgeon** - Many persons are **tempted**, but do not **suffer** in being tempted. When ungodly men are tempted, the bait is to their taste, and they swallow it greedily. Temptation is a pleasure to them; indeed, they sometimes tempt the devil to tempt them. They are drawn aside of their own lusts and enticed; so that temptation, instead of being suffering to them, becomes a horrible source of pleasure (Jas 1:14-15+). But good men suffer when they are tempted, and the better they are the more they suffer. Our Lord Jesus Christ enters into this trying experience very fully. His suffering through being tempted must have been much greater than any suffering that the purest-hearted believer can know, seeing that He is more pure than any one of us. He could not yield to temptation,

but He did suffer from it. He did not suffer from it morally; He was too pure for that. But He did suffer from it mentally because of His purity. His mind was grieved, and vexed, and troubled by the temptation that He had to bear. We especially see this when we find Him in the garden. There He showed His grief when He sweat as it were great drops of blood falling to the ground. In many other ways He endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, such multiplied temptations, that it is said, and truly said, by the Holy Ghost in this verse, that He "suffered" being tempted. (Sermon [The Suffering Saviour's Sympathy](#))

**Suffered** ([3958](#)) (**pascho**) means to feel or bear what is painful, disagreeable or distressing, either to the body or mind. We suffer pain of body; we suffer grief of mind. It means to be affected by something from without. It means to undergo an experience, usually difficult, and normally with the implication of physical or psychological suffering.

**Pascho in Hebrews** - Heb. 2:18; Heb. 5:8; Heb. 9:26; Heb. 13:12

## HOW DID JESUS OVERCOME SATAN'S TEMPTATIONS?

**Warren Wiersbe** reminds us of a truth we often overlook about how Jesus suffered temptations ([See related idea above](#)) - It is important to note that Jesus faced the enemy as **Man**, not as the **Son of God**. His first word was, "**Man** shall not live by bread alone." **We must not think that Jesus used His divine powers to overcome the enemy, because that is just what the enemy wanted Him to do!** Jesus used the spiritual resources that are available to us today: the power of the Holy Spirit of God (Matt. 4:1, **Ed**: Jesus had emptied Himself of His divine "prerogatives" and as man was fully dependent on the Spirit - Lk 4:1 = led by and filled with the Spirit, **cp our experience** > Gal 5:18, Ro 8:14, Eph 5:18, and began ministry in the power of the Spirit = Luke 4:14 - **compare our experience** > Acts 1:8, Col 1:29 where "His power" = power of the Holy Spirit Who indwells all believers!, etc), and the power of the Word of God ("It is written"). Jesus had nothing in His nature that would give Satan a foothold (John 14:30), but His temptations were real just the same. Temptation involves the will, and Jesus came to do the Father's will (Heb. 10:1-9) (See context in [The Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

The first Adam was tempted in a beautiful Garden and failed. The Last Adam was tempted in a dangerous wilderness (Mark 1:13) and succeeded. (Ibid)

We have the **Spirit within us**, the Saviour above us, and the Word before us! What tremendous resources for peace! (Ibid)

**Alexander Whyte** notes that "We shall never understand anything of our Lord's preaching and ministry unless we continually keep in mind what exactly and exclusively His errand was in this world."

**Constable** - "As our priest Jesus Christ can help us because He has undergone the same trials we experience (in body, mind, and emotions) and has emerged victorious. The **testing** in view is **temptation** to depart from God's will, specifically apostasy. The picture is of an older brother helping his younger brothers navigate the pitfalls of growing up successfully. That is the role a priest plays. ([Hebrews 2 Commentary](#))

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**Illustration** of the great truth that **Jesus Who Suffered as a Man is thus "Able to come to our aid"**- Bob Weber, past president of Kiwanis International, told this story. He had spoken to a club in a small town and was spending the night with a farmer on the outskirts of the community. He had just relaxed on the front porch when a newsboy delivered the evening paper. The boy noted the sign Puppies for Sale. The boy got off his bike and said to the farmer, "How much do you want for the pups, mister?" "Twenty-five dollars, son." The boy's face dropped. "Well, sir, could I at least see them anyway?" The farmer whistled, and in a moment the mother dog came bounding around the corner of the house tagged by four of the cute puppies, wagging their tails and yipping happily. At last, another pup came straggling around the house, dragging one hind leg. "What's the matter with that puppy, mister?" the boy asked. "Well, Son, that puppy is crippled. We took her to the vet and the doctor took an X ray. The pup doesn't have a hip joint and that leg will never be right." To the amazement of both men, the boy dropped the bike, reached for his collection bag and took out a fifty-cent piece. "Please, mister," the boy pleaded, "I want to buy that pup. I'll pay you fifty cents every week until the twenty-five dollars is paid. Honest I will, mister." The farmer replied, "But, Son, you don't seem to understand. That pup will never, never be able to run or jump. That pup is going to be a cripple forever. Why in the world would you want such a useless pup as that?" The boy paused for a moment, then reached down and pulled up his pant leg, exposing that all too familiar iron brace and leather knee-strap holding a poor twisted leg. The boy answered,

"Mister, that pup is going to need someone  
who understands him to help him in life!"

Crippled and disfigured by sin, the risen, living Christ has given us hope. He understands us--our temptations, our discouragements, and even our thoughts concerning death. By His resurrection we have help in this life and hope for the life to come. (Brian Bell,

The moral of this illustration is that Jesus is able to help because He understands. He is like the young lad, who was able to sympathize with the crippled pup because he had been crippled.

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**C H Spurgeon writes** - It is a common-place thought, and yet it tastes like nectar to the weary heart—Jesus was tempted as I am. You have heard that truth many times: have you grasped it? He was tempted to the very same sins into which we fall. Do not dissociate Jesus from our common manhood. It is a dark room which you are going through, but Jesus went through it before. It is a sharp fight which you are waging, but Jesus has stood foot to foot with the same enemy. Let us be of good cheer, Christ has borne the load before us, and the blood-stained footsteps of the King of glory may be seen along the road which we traverse at this hour. There is something sweeter yet—Jesus was tempted, but Jesus never sinned. Then, my soul, it is not needful for thee to sin, for Jesus was a man, and if one man endured these temptations and sinned not, then in His power (The indwelling Spirit of Christ's power!) his members may also cease from sin.

Some beginners in the divine life think that they cannot be tempted without sinning, but they mistake; there is no sin in being tempted, but there is sin in yielding to temptation. Herein is comfort for the sorely tempted ones. There is still more to encourage them if they reflect that the Lord Jesus, though tempted, gloriously triumphed, and as He overcame, so surely shall His followers also, for Jesus is the representative Man for His people; the Head has triumphed, and the members share in the victory. Fears are needless, for Christ is with us, armed for our defense. Our place of safety is the bosom of the Saviour. Perhaps we are tempted just now, in order to drive us nearer to Him.

Blessed be any wind that blows us into the port of our Saviour's love!  
Happy wounds, which make us seek the beloved Physician.

Ye tempted ones, come to your tempted Saviour, for He can be touched with a feeling of your infirmities, and will succor every tried and tempted one. (Morning and Evening)

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**SATIATED FISH** - We had everything set for the first bass fishing expedition of the year. We had exotic new lures that we knew would be irresistible to those big six-pounders lurking beneath the surface of our favorite fishing lake. We would tempt them with Sassy Shads, brightly colored new Hula Poppers, buzz baits, a "killer" red flatfish with a black stripe, and a white double spinner with long bright streamers. And, if all else failed, we had some fresh Canadian crawlers. Out at dawn, we hit all the best spots with our assortment of delectable temptations. But nothing happened. We worked the shore. We cast along the weeds. We tried every lure in the tackle box—even the crawlers. Finally we gave up. Heading back to the cabin, we concluded,

**"The fish just aren't hungry."**

Satan has a whole "tackle box" of alluring devices he uses to tempt us. Some are gaudy and exotic, easy to spot—yet oh, so tempting. Others whet our appetites in quiet and subtle ways, appearing harm-less until the hook is set. Whatever the temptation, we can best resist if we do not let our thoughts dwell on evil but on things that are true, noble, just, pure, and lovely (Php 4:8-note). With mental discipline and the help of the Holy Spirit (Ed: I would place the emphasis of the power of the Spirit over "mental discipline!"), we can keep our hearts full of goodness. Then, in frustration, Satan will have to say, "They just aren't hungry."—D. C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)) (Ed: While reading the Word of God is not a talisman against temptation, the Word alone satisfies the deepest needs of our soul and thereby with the Spirit's enablement can fend off devilish temptations to gratify our greeds.)

Every step away from the devil  
leads us one step closer to God.

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**Sympathy the Fruit of Suffering** - Leopold, Grand Duke of Baden, in the midst of the suffering caused by his complaint, said to his physician, "Tell me, doctor, are there any who suffer as much as I do?" "Yes, your highness," replied the doctor; "I have a patient afflicted with the same disease, and lying on a bed of straw." "On straw!" cried Leopold. With a trembling hand he rang the bell, and ordered his servants to have the best bed in the castle taken to the sick man, as well as all other necessaries.

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### **Homeless by Choice**

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18



Keith Wasserman has chosen to be homeless for a few days every year since 1989 in order to grow in love and compassion. “I go to live on the streets to expand my perspective and understanding” of people who have no homes to live in, says Keith, executive director of Good Works, Inc.

I’m wondering whether Keith’s approach to become one with those he’s serving might be a small picture of what Jesus did for us. God Himself, the Creator of the universe, chose to confine Himself to the vulnerable state of a baby, to live as a human, to experience what we all experience, and to ultimately die at the hand of humans so that we can experience a relationship with God.

The writer of the book of Hebrews stated that Jesus “shared in [our] humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil” (2:14). Jesus was made lower than the angels, even though He’s their Creator (v. 9). He became human and died, even though He’s immortal. And He suffered for us, even though He’s the all-powerful God. Why would He do this? So that He could help us when we go through temptations and bring reconciliation between us and God (vv. 17–18).

May we experience His love today, knowing He understands our humanity and has already provided the way for us to be cleansed from our sins. By: Estera Piroasca Escobar ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Have you come to Jesus and experienced His love and forgiveness? If yes, how does this reality affect your life today? If not, will you receive Him today?

Jesus, thank You for Your sacrifice.

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## One of Us

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18

Today’s Scripture & Insight: Hebrews 2:9–18

At the memorial service for Charles Schulz (1922–2000), creator of the beloved Peanuts comic strip, friend and fellow cartoonist Cathy Guisewite spoke of his humanity and compassion. “He gave everyone in the world characters who knew exactly how all of us felt, who made us feel we were never alone. And then he gave the cartoonist himself, and he made us feel that we were never alone. . . . He encouraged us. He commiserated with us. He made us feel he was exactly like us.”

When we feel that no one understands or can help us, we are reminded that Jesus gave us Himself, and He knows exactly who we are and what we are facing today.

Hebrews 2:9–18 presents the remarkable truth that Jesus fully shared our humanity during His life on earth (v. 14). He “taste[d] death for everyone” (v. 9), broke the power of Satan (v. 14), and freed “those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death” (v. 15). Jesus was made like us, “fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God” (v. 17). Thank You, Lord, for sharing our humanity so that we might know Your help today and live in Your presence forever. By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What fears and concerns do you have? What should you do with those fears? (1 Peter 5:6–7). What does the Lord promise to do for you? (Heb. 13:5).

For further study read *Is Jesus God?* at [discoveryseries.org/q0205](http://discoveryseries.org/q0205).

No one understands like Jesus.

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## He Walked in Our Shoes

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18

Today’s Scripture & Insight: Hebrews 2:10-18

To help his staff of young architects understand the needs of those for whom they design housing, David Dillard sends them on “sleepovers.” They put on pajamas and spend 24 hours in a senior living center in the same conditions as people in their 80s and 90s. They wear earplugs to simulate hearing loss, tape their fingers together to limit manual dexterity, and exchange eyeglasses to replicate vision problems. Dillard says, “The biggest benefit is [that] when I send 27-year-olds out, they come back with a heart 10

times as big. They meet people and understand their plights" (Rodney Brooks, USA Today).

Jesus lived on this earth for 33 years and shared in our humanity. He was made like us, "fully human in every way" (Heb. 2:17), so He knows what it's like to live in a human body on this earth. He understands the struggles we face and comes alongside with understanding and encouragement.

"Because [Jesus] himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (v. 18). The Lord could have avoided the cross. Instead, He obeyed His Father. Through His death, He broke the power of Satan and freed us from our fear of death (vv. 14-15).

In every temptation, Jesus walks beside us to give us courage, strength, and hope along the way. By: David C. McCasland [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord Jesus, thank You for "walking in our shoes" on this earth and for being with us. May we experience Your presence today.

Jesus understands.

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### Jesus Himself Suffered Being Tempted

Joseph Mallord Turner, English painter, invited Charles Kingsley to his studio to see a picture of a storm at sea. In rapt admiration, Kingsley exclaimed, "It's wonderful! It's so realistic! How did you do it?"

The artist replied, "I went to the coast of Holland and engaged a fisherman to take me out to sea in the next storm. Entering his boat as a storm was brewing, I asked him to bind me to the mast. Then he steered his boat into the teeth of the storm.

"The storm raged with such fury that at times I longed to be in the bottom of the boat where the waves would blow over me. I could not, however. I was bound to the mast. Not only did I see the storm in its raging fury, I felt it! It blew into me, as it were, until I became a part of it. After this terrible ordeal, I returned to my studio and painted the picture."

It is written of the Savior, "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18).

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**ILLUSTRATION** - [George Grey Barnard](#) was one of America's great sculptors. Much of his work is on display in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, including his most famous work. It is a colossal piece entitled "[The Struggle of the Two Natures in Man](#)" ([SEE PIX](#)) Paul would have liked to see such a statue. He wrote of such a struggle of the two natures of man in Romans 7:18-25. We all experience the struggle. Hopefully, we all experience the resolution of it, as Paul did, "through Jesus Christ our Lord."

### Related Resource on temptation:

- [James 1:13-15 Commentary](#)
- 

A reproduction of a very old and famous clock carried this line: "Lord, through this hour be thou our guide; so by thy power no foot shall slide."

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[The Gorgons were three sisters in mythology](#). They were hideously ugly, with glaring eyes and serpents entwined in their hair. If anyone looked them directly in the eye, that person was turned to stone. Temptation is not ugly like the Gorgons, but we need to turn away from it and not even look at it, lest our hearts be turned to stone.

I will set no worthless thing before my eyes;  
I hate the work of those who fall away;  
It shall not fasten its grip ([dabaq](#)) on me.  
-- Psalm 101:3

**HE IS ABLE TO COME TO THE AID: dunatai (3SPPI) toiz peirazomenois (PPPMPD) boethesai (AAN):**

- **He is able** - Heb 7:25,26 Joh 10:29 Php 3:21 2Ti 1:12 Jude 1:24
- [Hebrews 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages:

Matthew 9:28 When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus \*said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They \*said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

Matthew 26:53 "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

Matthew 26:61 and said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'"

John 5:30 "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

Matthew 20:22 But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They \*said to Him, "We are able."

Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

## JESUS HE IS ABLE!

**He is able** ([dunamai](#)) **to come to the aid** ([boetheo](#)) **of those who are** (present passive - continually being) **tempted** ([peirazo](#)) - These are some of the greatest words in Scripture to helpless sinners desperately continually in need of the aid of a great Savior. This verse says He has the power and the desire to come running when we cry out for His help in the midst of trouble, trial, affliction, temptation, etc. [Oh what a Savior is He!](#) And notice that **able** is in the present tense indicating that Jesus is **continually able** to help the tempted because he has perfect sympathy with them. Stated another way, present tense speaks of the fact that "being able" is always true of Jesus.

Because God cares about us,  
we can leave our cares with Him

**He is able** - **A W Pink** writes that this phrase "implies both a fitness and willingness to do a thing. Christ is both competent and ready to undertake for His people" **William Barclay** adds "Because he sympathizes Jesus can really help. He has met our sorrows; he has faced our temptations. As a result he knows exactly what help we need; and he can give it."

The God who made the firmament,  
Who made the deepest sea,  
The God who put the stars in place  
Is the God who cares for me.  
—Berg

**Robertson** notes that **He is able** "strikes the heart of it all. Christ's power to help is due not merely to his deity as God's Son, but also to His humanity without which He could not sympathize with us (He 4:15+)." ([Hebrews 2 Word Pictures](#))

**Expositor's Bible Commentary** writes that "The words **he is able**" are important and mean more than "he helps." Only he who suffers can help in this way. Jesus went all the way for us. He was not only ready to suffer, but he actually did suffer." ([Gaebelein, F. Editor: Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - He lays Himself out to help those that are tempted, and therefore He does not hide Himself from them, nor pass them by on the other side. What an example is this for us! He devotes Himself to this divine business of comforting all who mourn. He is Lord of all, yet makes Himself the servant of the weakest. Whatever He may do with the strongest, He helps "those who are tempted." He does not throw up the business in disgust. He does not grow cross or angry with them because they are so foolish as to give way to idle fears. He does not tell them that it is all their nerves, and that they are stupid and silly, and ought to shake themselves out of such nonsense. I have often heard people talk in that fashion, and I have half wished that they had felt a little twinge of depression themselves, just to put them into a more tender humor. The Lord Jesus never overdrives a lame sheep, but He sets the bone, and carries the sheep on His shoulders, so tenderly compassionate is He.

Read the **He is able** statements (See also [GOD IS ABLE](#)) -

Hebrews 7:25+ Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

Romans 16:25+ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

Ephesians 3:20+ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,

2 Timothy 1:12+ For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.

Jude 1:24+ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

Indeed, **He is Able!** Hallelujah! (Study these other passages on divine enablement and be encouraged that you serve a mighty God Who is able! Acts 20:32+ Mt 3:9+, Mt 9:28+, Mt 10:28+, Ro 4:21+, Ro 11:23+, Ro 14:4+, 2Co 9:8+, He 11:19+, Jas 1:21+, Jas 4:12+). In short, Jesus is able, because He understands temptation, having been tempted with an intensity we cannot even imagine and yet not once caving in to the easy, deceptively gratifying way out! And so Jesus is able to come to our aid, because He understands what we are experiencing when we are being tempted.

**Boice** comments that the words **He is able** are..

especially important, for they are a way of talking about God's sovereignty. Some years ago I prepared a special series of Sunday evening messages for Tenth Presbyterian Church titled "The God Who Is Able." They were based on seven Bible verses in which the words God is able (or their close equivalents) occurred. The titles were:

- "Able to Save" (Heb. 7:25),
- "Able to Keep" (2 Tim. 1:12),
- "Grace Abounding" (2 Cor. 9:8),
- "Able to Help in Temptation" (Heb. 2:18),
- "How to Grow Spiritually" (Eph. 3:20),
- "God Is No Quitter" (Jude 24), and
- "Able to Raise Our Bodies" (Phil. 3:21).

There were so many relevant verses that I didn't even use this text from Romans. My point was that God "is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us," as Paul told the Ephesians (Eph. 3:20). For that is where it all begins and ends. We saw that when we studied the doxology at the end of Romans 11: "For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen" (Ro 11:36). ([Romans 4 Volumes - James Montgomery Boice](#))

**Alexander Maclaren** explains Christ's ability to feel compassion when His brethren suffer temptations...

Comfort drops but coldly from lips that have never uttered a sigh or a groan; and for our poor human hearts it is not enough to have a merciful God far off in the heavens. We need a Christ who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities ere we can come boldly to the Throne of Grace, assured of there finding grace in time of need. (What Behooved Christ)

Touched with a sympathy within,  
He knows our feeble frame;  
He knows what sore temptations mean,  
For he has felt the same.

**Isaac Watts**

(Play [With Joy We Meditate the Grace](#))

**Kent Hughes** helps us see how Jesus can really know how difficult temptation can be - Think of it this way—which bridge has undergone the greatest stress, the one that collapses under its first load of traffic, or the one that bears the same traffic morning and evening, year after year? (See context in [Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul](#))

Jesus is a "bridge"  
Who is continuously **able**.

**Jamieson** - Not only as God He knows our trials, but also as man He knows them by experimental feeling. [Hebrews 2 Commentary](#)

**KJV Study Bible** - How much easier it is to help someone when we ourselves have gone through similar trials! Christ as Man has fully suffered the greatest of trials and so can ably comfort (cf. 2 Cor. 1:3–5). These suffering Jews needed to hear that Christ had suffered as they were suffering. (See context in [KJV Study Bible](#))

**Albert Barnes** - This does not mean that he would not have had "power" to assist others if he had not gone through these sufferings, but that he is now qualified to sympathize with them from the fact that he has endured like trials. The idea is, that one who has himself been called to suffer is able to sympathize with those who suffer; one who has been tempted, is able to sympathize with those who are tempted in like manner. One who has been sick is qualified to sympathize with the sick; one who has lost a child, can sympathize with him who follows his beloved son or daughter to the grave; one who has had some strong temptation to sin urged upon himself can sympathize with those who are now tempted; one who has never been sick, or who has never buried a friend, or been tempted, is poorly qualified to impart consolation in such scenes. Hence, it is that ministers of the gospel are often - like their Master - much persecuted and afflicted, that they may be able to assist others. Hence, they are called to part with the children of their love; or to endure long and painful sicknesses, or to pass through scenes of poverty and want, that they may sympathize with the most humble and afflicted of their flock. ([Hebrews 2 Commentary](#))

**C H Spurgeon** commenting on "**He is able**" notes that Jesus

"(1) has the right, acquired by His suffering, to enter in among sufferers, and deal with them.

(2) He has also the disposition to succor them. He obtained that tender temper through suffering, by being Himself tempted.

(3) And then He has the special ability. Our Blessed Master, having lived a life of suffering, understands the condition of a sufferer so well that He knows how to make a bed for him."....

In this we note His pity, that He should give Himself up to this business of succoring them that are tempted. He lays Himself out to succor them that are tempted, and therefore He does not hide Himself from them, nor pass them by on the other side. What an example is this for us! He devotes Himself to this Divine business of comforting all such as mourn. He is Lord of all, yet makes Himself the servant of the weakest. Whatever He may do with the strongest, He succors " them that are tempted." He does not throw up the business in disgust; He does not grow cross or angry with them because they are so foolish as to give way to idle fears. (The Biblical Illustrator)

The fact that God is "**able**" is illustrated in God's rhetorical question in the face of Sarah's failure to bear Abraham a son, Jehovah stating

"Is anything too difficult for the Lord? (the expected answer of course is "no") At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son." (Ge 18:14)

Later in Hebrews the writer in reference to Jesus reminds his tested readers that

"Hence, also, **He is able** (priests were never able to save even temporarily) to save (present tense = continually save = see following note) **forever** (KJV is more accurate = "**uttermost**" - to final perfection or completeness) those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." (Heb 7:25+)

Here "**salvation**" appears to be referring primarily to **sanctification** (present tense salvation) rather than **justification** (past tense salvation). To state it another way "**save forever**" refers to Jesus' saving work in the sense that He is bringing about God's desired end, conformity to the image of His Son and ultimately **glorification** (future tense salvation).

Paul writes Timothy that as a preacher, an apostle and a teacher he had suffered and yet his firm declaration remained

"I am not ashamed; for I **know** (knowing with certainty) Whom I have **believed** (perfect tense = began in the past and has continuing effect or result, speaks of permanence) and I am **convinced** (perfect tense = a settled persuasion regarding the matter, a fixed and immovable position) that **He is able** (literally = is powerful enough) to **guard** (military term = soldier on watch accountable with his life to protect that entrusted to his care) what I have **entrusted** ("my deposit" as in a bank, the bank of heaven which no burglar can break) to Him until that day." (2Ti 1:12+)

Jude emphasizes God's inherent ability to act on our behalf writing the great benediction

"Now to **Him Who is able** (present tense = continually able) to **keep** (guard = soldier on watch accountable with his life to protect that entrusted to his care) you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty,

dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 1:24, 25+)

Paul states that God's enablement working for and in and through believers is unlimited and beyond our comprehension writing

Now to **Him Who is able** to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen. (Eph 3:20-21+)

**Spurgeon** writes that...

this is the reason why he suffered, and why he became a man capable of suffering, that he might be able to succor the tempted. It was for this that Christ left heaven, for this he was born of the virgin, for this he lived for this he died, that he might be "able to succor them that are tempted."

Glory be to his holy name for ever and ever! Amen.

Jesus, Who pass'd the angels by,  
Assumed our flesh to bleed and die;  
And still He makes it His abode;  
As man, He fills the throne of God.

Our next of Kin, our Brother now,  
Is He to Whom the angels bow;  
They join with us to praise His Name,  
But we the nearest interest claim.

## HELP IS ON THE WAY!

**Jesus** comes running to the cry of His brethren which is beautifully pictured by a parent who responds without hesitation to the cry of their child crying out in distress!

**Able** (1410) (**dunamai**- see related word **dunamis**) means to have power, whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources through a state of mind or favorable circumstances. To be capable, to have the ability. **Dunamai** implies both a fitness and willingness to do a thing. Christ is both competent and ready to undertake for His people. If we have not, it is because we ask not.

**Come to the aid** (997) (**boetheo** from **boe** = at a shout or cry as for aid or help [only NT use = Jas 5:4="outcry", the cry of the oppressed] + **theo** = to run) means literally to run on hearing a cry from one (in need or danger) to give help, relief, aid and/or assistance to someone. To hurry or hasten to the help of someone who is oppressed or in need of assistance. To bring or furnish aid. To assist by supplying what is needed.

**TDNT - Boetheo** "is often used of the physician...and cf. also the healings of Jesus (Mk. 9:22, 24; Mt. 15:25). Similarly in Ac. 16:9; Rev. 12:16. Of God as the One who helps it is used only at 2 Cor. 6:2, quoting Isa. 49:8. It is used of help in religious need at Mk. 9:24; Heb. 2:18. (Borrow [Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](#))

**Gary Hill's** discussion gives us a good feeling for the meaning of this great Greek verb - **boēthēō** (from 995 **boē**, "intense exclamation" and **thēō**, "run") – properly, **run to meet an urgent distress-call** (cry for help); deliver help by quickly responding to an urgent need (intense distress). **boēthēō** ("supply urgently needed help") means to give immediate aid – in time for a pressing need, i.e. "to run, on a call to help" (TDNT, 1:628). **Boēthēō** was originally a military word, responding to a critical, urgent need (MM). **Boēthēō** is also used in Homeric Greek (800-900 BC) for responding to a war-cry. **ED: A GREAT DESCRIPTION FOR BELOVED WE ARE DAILY IN AN ONGOING SPIRITUAL WAR WHETHER WE KNOW IT OR NOT!** ([The Discovery Bible](#)) (Bold added)

**THOUGHT** - Dr Hill's description begs the question - What is my response when I am tempted (and we are always being tempted to one degree or another - cf 1Peter 2:11+ where "wage war" is present tense = continuously, cf James 1:14+) Which direction do I go when I tempted? Do I run toward the temptation? Do I flee from the temptation (cf 1 Cor 6:18+)? Do I cry out for urgent help from Jesus Who was tempted in the same way and yet did not sin and Who is ever able to run to my aid when I am tempted? May God grant us the desire and the power to cry out to Jesus when we are sorely tempted to sin against our Father (cf Ge 39:9). Amen. But remember even though we "cry out" our part is not just passive and to "let go, let God," but more like "Let God and let's go (flee from the temptation)!" And remember that with the temptation comes the way of escape, but we must (energized by the Spirit) choose to run through the way of escape.

**Hendriksen** - The word "**help**" is very meaningful and touching. In the original it consists of two smaller words: **acry** and **run**. In any

context in which this word is used it is an earnest and moving request that the Lord, or whoever the potential helper happens to be, may rush toward the person who is in need, and may help him. ([New Testament Commentary Exposition of the Gospel According to Mark](#))

**Barclay** - And because He sympathises Jesus can really help. He knows our need; He has met our sorrows; He has faced our temptations. And because of that He knows exactly what help we need and He can give it. The supreme truth of Jesus is that because He went through things Himself He can help others who are going through them. ([Hebrews 2 Commentary](#))

**Mills** writes that **boethéo** "denotes a loud, ringing cry for help, thus emphasizing the desperate, helpless state of the supplicant." (The Acts of the Apostles. 3E Ministries)

**Moulton and Milligan** have identified the noun **help** (boetheia) and the verb to **help** (boetheo) repeatedly recurring at the end of petitions in Greek secular writings (papyri)

**Warren Wiersbe** - The word translated "succour" in the King James Version (Heb 2:18KJV) (or "help" in the New International Version) in Hebrews 2:18 literally means "to run to the cry of a child." It means "to bring help when it is needed." Angels are able to serve us (1:14), but they are not able to succour us in our times of temptation. Only Jesus Christ can do that, and He can do it because He became a man and suffered and died. (See context in [Pause for Power: A 365-Day Journey through the Scriptures](#))

## SPIRITUAL HELP FROM THE GREAT PHYSICIAN!

Secular Greek often used **boetheo** in the description of a **physician** according to Kittel (TDNT). It is interesting that the Gospels uses of **boetheo** in situations where individuals address Jesus (the Great Physician) in a sense "*interceding*" with Him to come to the aid of loved ones who are demon possessed. Thus the sense in those passages is to provide **spiritual help and healing**. In Paul's vision of the man of Macedonia, the man appealed to him "Come over to Macedonia and **help** (aorist imperative) us" (Acts 16:9+) clearly a call to bring the soul healing/saving Gospel to Europe! Jesus sent help in this case in the form of a His man on the scene, the Apostle Paul! Paul also alludes to the saving help of the Gospel in 2Cor 6:2+. In short, we see that most of the NT uses **boetheo** are in the context of individuals in need of **spiritual help**, even as is true of Hebrews 2:18.

**Boethéo** means to **relieve** - the verb **relieve** in English means to free, wholly or partially, from pain, grief, want, anxiety, care, toil, trouble, burden, oppression or any thing that is considered to be an evil; to ease of any thing that pains the body or distresses the mind.

## JESUS THE SAVIOR SUCCORS SUFFERING SAINTS

Jesus became a Man of SORROW  
that He might become  
The One Who able to SUCCOR

**Boetheo** means to **succor** (KJV reads "He is able to **succor** them that are tempted") which is a word you may not be too familiar with, but which means literally to run to or run to support hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to **succor** a besieged city; to **succor** prisoners. (**succor** is derived from Latin *succurrere* = to run up, run to help, from **sub-** = up + **curre** to run). ([See below for more discussion of this aspect of Jesus' help to the helpless](#))

**Boetheo** - 8x in 8v and rendered (**NAS**) as - come to the aid, 1; come to...aid, 1; help, 4; helped, 2. **Boetheo** is used 78 times in the Septuagint translation - e.g., in Ps 121:1 "where does my help come from?" and Ps 124:8 "Our help is in the Name of the LORD." See also 1Sa 7:12, Ps 28:7, 37:40, 40:13, 44:26, 46:5, 54:4, 70:5, 79:9, 86:17, 94:17, 109:26, 119:86, 175.

**Matthew 15:25+** But she came and began to **bow down** (**proskuneo** = verb translated "worship" in Mt 15:25KJV!) before (Jesus), saying, "**Lord, help** (present imperative in context signifying a petition not a demand) me!"

**Wuest:** And having come, she fell upon her knees and **touched her forehead to the ground in profound reverence** before Him, saying, Sir, **be helping** (**Ed:** picking up on the present tense) me.

**Comment:** The Canaanite woman pleaded with Jesus to **help** her demon-possessed daughter, and in so doing we see her **desperation**, her **persistence** and **faith** (**Read context = Mt 15:21-28, especially Mt 15:28**), her **humility**, her **submission** (her posture of worship), her **dependence** and her **bold confidence** (**help** is in the imperative mood - where the imperative expresses a **petition**, not a command)

in Jesus.

**THOUGHT** - Would it be that more of God's children had this Gentile woman's desperate, dependent attitude and like her we would not hesitate to cry out for Jesus to come to our aid when we find ourselves drowning in the dire straits of temptation and in great need of His assistance! Do you really believe Jesus will come running to your aid and has the power to overcome your temptations? Do you cry out when you are being tempted ( Caveat : I am assuming you have not gone somewhere, done something or looked at something that has aroused the flesh and the fires of temptation and that is the pathogenesis of your current strong temptation!)

**Mark 9:22+** "It (the demon) has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, take pity (verb form *splagchnizomai* derived from *splagchnon*) on us and **help** (aorist imperative) us!"

**Comment:** Do not miss the association - His great pity for us precedes His matchless help for us! The aorist imperative is a petition that seeks instant help! "Now not later please" is the idea!

**Mark 9:24+** Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; **help** (present imperative) my unbelief."

**Hendriksen comments on "help" in present imperative:** "Continue moment by moment and day by day to come to my aid, so that I may overcome my unbelief."

**Acts 16:9+** A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and **help** (aorist imperative) us."

**Comment:** The man of Macedonia in using the plural for himself speaks for Europe, and his cry for **help** Europe's need of Christ. Paul recognized a divine summons in the vision.

**Kent Hughes** helps us understand the picture of the verb **boethéo** remarking that: This was one of the great turning points of history, and we should thank God for it, for as a result the gospel has come to us in the West. **Nothing makes a person strong like hearing someone cry for help!** You can be walking down the street completely fatigued so that you would like to lie down on the curb and go to sleep, but then you hear a **cry—someone is in trouble!—and you completely forget your weariness**. Paul and his associates moved forward in the power of Christ's strength. (See context in [Acts: The Church Afire](#)) (Bolding added)

**Acts 21:28+** (Context = Acts 21:27-29) Unbelieving Jews from Asia who were in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost "upon seeing (Paul) in the temple (of Herod), began to stir up all the multitude and laid hands on him, (then they began continually) crying out, "Men of Israel, **come to our aid** (see *boethéo* below)(present imperative)!"

**Comment - (boethéo** - Acting as though Paul had committed an act of blasphemy, they called for help in dealing with it - a vivid picture of the meaning of running to the aid of one who cries out for aid!). This is the man who preaches to all men everywhere against our people, and the Law, and this place; and besides he has even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place. For they had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they supposed that Paul had brought him into the temple. -29)

**2 Corinthians 6:2+** for He says, "AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I **HELPED** YOU." ("I ran to your cry and brought you aid" = Wuest) Behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME (now is a propitious, favorably disposed, epochal season)," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION "--

**Comment:** Paul is addressing the Corinthians, saved (who were not living in grace) and/or unsaved (who had never received grace) warning them not to receive the grace of God in vain. He quotes the Septuagint (Greek of the Hebrew OT) of Isa 49:8.

**Revelation 12:16+** But the earth **helped** the woman (Metaphor for Israel), and the earth opened its mouth and drank up the river which the dragon poured out of his mouth.

The cognate (related) noun **boetheia** is used in Hebrews in the exhortation

Let us therefore (based on the truth of Heb 4:14-note, Heb 4:15-note) draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to **help** in time of need. (**Hebrews 4:16**-note)



**Comment on "time of need":** Greek adjective **eukairos** (eu = well, good + kairos = opportunity) = seasonable, timely, opportune, at the right time, well-timed, in season, timely. Mk 6:21 = only other NT use. **BDAG** = "in our lit. only pert. to time that is considered a favorable occasion for some event or circumstance, well-timed, suitable." **A T Robertson** = well-timed help, help in the nick of time, before too late.

**Vincent on "time of need":** Lit. for seasonable help, or help in good time; before it is too late; while there is still time to seek God's rest. Others, however, explain, when it is needed; or, before temptation leads to sin.

**Ryrie comments:** His grace comes when we come in **our time of need**, and not until. (Ryrie Study Bible)

The cognate adjective **boethos** is used in **Hebrews 13:6**-note where we read

The Lord is my **Helper** [**boethos** - the One Who responds to my call for help], I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?

**Comment:** This is the only NT uses of **Boëthós** which is common (45 uses) in the Septuagint (Lxx), the first use describing the wife as a man's helper (Ge 2:18). The writer of Hebrews uses boethos to describe the Lord as poised and ready to run to the relief of His tempted/afflicted children. When? When they cry out for His assistance. **Crying out** reflects humility, a sense of dependence, a laying aside of self-reliance, that dangerous tendency we all "run to". One has to make a choice to cry out to Jesus! Are you too proud or too self sufficient to cry out?

## HELP FROM ANGELS VERSUS HELP FROM JESUS

**Warren Wiersbe** makes a distinction between the **help** angels give and the help given by our merciful and faithful High Priest, Who "stands ready to help us! He was tempted when He was on earth, but no temptation ever conquered Him. Because He has defeated every enemy, **He is able** to give us the grace that we need to overcome temptation. The word **succour**" (**boethéo "Come to the aid"**) literally means "to run to the cry of a child." It means "to bring help when it is needed." Angels are able to serve us (Heb 1:14-note), but they are not able to **succor** us in our times of temptation. Only Jesus Christ can do that, and He can do it because He became a man and suffered and died. (See context in [Be Confident - Hebrews](#)) (Bolding added)

**Kenneth Wuest** commenting on Hebrews 2:18 says "How precious to know that when we are being tempted, the Lord Jesus always stands ready, eager to run to our cry and bring us aid!" ([Hebrews](#))

**F B Meyer** - This is one of the most precious words in the New Testament. If you have never tried it, I entreat you to begin to test it in daily experience. "Walk in the Spirit," hour by hour, by watchful obedience to His slightest promptings, and you will find that "you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh." As soon as you are aware of temptation, look instantly to Jesus. Flee to Him quicker than a chicken runs beneath the shelter of its mother's wing when the falcon is in the air. In the morning, before you leave your room, put yourself definitely into His hands, persuaded He is able to keep that which you commit unto Him. Go from your home with the assurance that He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust. And when the tempter comes, look instantly up and say, "Jesus, I am trusting Thee to keep me." ([Steps Into the Blessed Life](#))

**Philip Hughes** - The **help** that he brings is twofold: in the first place, forgiveness of sins, the annulment of past defeats, and, in the second place, the power (his power) to fight and overcome temptation. His own conquest of temptation means for the Christian that the dominion of sin over him has been broken (Ro 6:14-note). These two realities, forgiveness and power, are present in the passage before us. (See context in [A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews](#))

**A W Pink** adds that we need to "Remember Who He is, the God-man. Remember the experiences through which He passed! He, too, has been in the place of trial: He, too, was tempted—to distrust, to despondency, to destroy Himself. Yes, He was tempted "in all points like as we are, sin excepted." Remember His present position, sitting at the right hand of the Majesty on high! How blessed then to know that He is "**able**" both to enter, sympathetically, into our sufferings and sorrows, and that He has power to "succor." ....Oh, what a Saviour is ours! The all-mighty God; yet the all-tender Man. One who is as far above us in His original nature and present glory as the heavens are above the earth: yet One who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." One who is the Creator of the universe; yet One who became Man, lived His life on the same plane ours is lived, passed through the same trials we experience, and suffered not only as we do, but far more acutely. How well-fitted is such a One to be our great High Priest! How self-sufficient He is to supply our every need! And how completely is the wisdom and grace of God vindicated for having appointed His blessed Son, to be made, for a season, lower than the angels! May our love for Him be strengthened and our worship deepened by the contemplation of what has been before us in these first two chapters of Hebrews. ([Hebrews 2](#))

**As Man, a man of sorrows,**

**Thou hast suffered every woe,  
And though enthroned in glory now,  
Canst pity all Thy saints below.**

**KJV Study Bible** - How much easier it is to help someone when we ourselves have gone through similar trials! Christ as Man has fully suffered the greatest of trials and so **can ably comfort**. These suffering Jews needed to hear that Christ had suffered as they were suffering." (Bolding added. See context in [KJV Study Bible](#))

As **Paul** reminds us

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; Who comforts us in all our affliction so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ." (2 Co 1:3-5+)

**John MacArthur** - Ours is not a cosmic God, powerful and holy, but indifferent. He knows where we hurt, where we are weak, and where we are tempted. He is the God we can go to not only for salvation but for sympathy." (See context in [Hebrews Commentary](#))

We may face situations beyond our reserves but never beyond God's resources.

**Warren Wiersbe** - Now He is a merciful and faithful High Priest; we can depend on Him! He is able to succor us when we come to Him for aid. The word succor means "to run when called for" and was used of physicians. Christ runs to our aid when we call Him! (Borrow a copy of [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament](#) )

**Matthew Poole** - This is the most powerful preservative against despair, and the firmest ground of hope and comfort, that ever believing, penitent sinners could desire or have." ([Hebrews 2 Commentary](#))

**Adam Clarke** - "There are three things," says Dr. Owen, "of which tempted believers do stand in need: 1. Strength to withstand their temptations; 2. Consolations to support their spirits under them; 3. Seasonable deliverance from them. Unto these is the succour afforded by our High Priest suited; and it is variously administered to them: 1. By his word or promises; 2. By his Spirit; (and, that, 1. By communicating to them supplies of grace or spiritual strength; 2. Strong consolation; 3. By rebuking their tempters and temptations; ) and 3. By his providence disposing of all things to their good and advantage in the issue." Those who are peculiarly tempted and severely tried, have an especial interest in, and claim upon Christ. They, particularly, may go with boldness to the throne of grace, where they shall assuredly obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Were the rest of the Scripture silent on this subject, this verse might be an ample support for every tempted soul." ([Hebrews 2 Commentary](#))

His love in times past  
Forbids me to think,  
He will leave me at last  
In trouble to sink.  
-- Ron Dunn

Although the word **boetheo** is not used, Matthew gives us a blessed illustration of Jesus' succoring or coming to the aid of one in need recording the story of Peter walking on the water

"but seeing the wind, he became afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Mt 14:30, 31)

**Comment:** Jesus' response is a vivid picture of what He will do for us beloved. And what was the condition? He cried out and so too must we. It is a humbling thing to cry out in need to another but God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. If a man or woman is willing to humble themselves in the presence of the Lord, he will lift them up!

## **JESUS IS ABLE TO SUCCOR THOSE WHO ARE BEING TEMPTED**

**E. A. Thomson** has this quote in regarding the **succor** provided by our Savior Who has suffered slings similar to His saints...

If ever I fall into a surgeon's hands with broken bones, give me one whose own bones have been broken." How can those who have never known what illness is, enter with the tenderness of a perfect fellowship into the chambers of the sick? or how can those who have never known a want understand with a matter-of-fact experience the anxieties of the poor and needy? (The Biblical Illustrator)

The writer's point is this - Jesus is the Great Physician Who **knows!** He is **able**. He is **ready** to come to your cry for aid. **Cry out beloved**. His is the same One today Who yesterday said...

Is My hand so short that it cannot ransom? Or have I no power to deliver? Behold, I dry up the sea with My rebuke, I make the rivers a wilderness... (Isa 50:2)

Later in **Isaiah** He answers declaring

Behold, the LORD'S hand is not so short that it cannot save. Neither is His ear so dull That it cannot hear. (Isa 59:1)

In a similar statement **W. Gouge** writes that

It is found by experience that childbearing women are more pitiful (**Ed**: mercy filled) to others in their travails than such women as are barren. The like may be said of such as are afflicted with any painful malady. (**Ed**: **Point?** Jesus is mercy filled [Heb 2:17-note, Heb 4:16-note], because His cup of trials and temptations suffered was filled to the brim beloved!) (The Biblical Illustrator)

**Charles Haddon Spurgeon** writes concerning "**JESUS SUCCORING**."

**He is able to succor them that are tempted.** In this we note His pity (mercy), that He should give Himself up to this business of succoring them that are tempted. He lays Himself out to succor them that are tempted, and therefore He does not hide Himself from them, nor pass them by on the other side. What an example is this for us! He devotes Himself to this Divine business of comforting all such as mourn. He is Lord of all, yet makes Himself the servant of the weakest. Whatever He may do with the strongest, He succors "them that are tempted." He does not throw up the business in disgust; He does not grow cross or angry with them because they are so foolish as to give way to idle fears." (The Biblical Illustrator)

**Spurgeon** goes on to discuss Jesus' "**methods of succoring them that are tempted**" listing out four areas as follows

(1) Usually by giving a sense of His sympathy.

(2) Sometimes by suggesting precious truths, which are the sweet antidote for the poison of sorrow.

(3) Sometimes He succors His people by inwardly strengthening them. (**Ed**: Cp Eph 3:16 where the Spirit of Christ is the One through Whom Christ strengthens.)

(4) I have known the Lord bless His people by making them very weak. The next best thing to being strong in the Lord is to be extremely weak in yourself. They go together, but sometimes they are divided in experience. It is grand to feel, "I will not struggle any more; I will give all up, and lie passive in the Lord's hand." Spurgeon then draws his discussion to a conclusion asking two questions "Where else can you go?. Where better can you go?" (The Biblical Illustrator)

**Jeremy Irons** asks

Now shall I tell you how our Lord "is able to succor" you? It is just simply by revealing Himself. "I am thy salvation"; "It is I; be not afraid." It comforts, it cheers, it upholds. Just observe what encouragement here is for faith to the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Having Himself "suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted." He has the fulness of grace; "all power is given to Him in heaven and in earth" (Mt 28:18); it is in His own hands, and He is "full of grace and truth." (Jn 1:14) "He is able to succor them that are tempted." "Well," say you, "is He willing?" Suppose I reverse the question: Are you willing that He should? or are you looking somewhere else for succor? Are you willing that He should do it in His own way?" (The Biblical Illustrator)

**G. Lawson** writes regarding our **Savior's ability to succor His brethren** that

The saying is, "None so merciful as those who have been miserable"; and they who have not only known misery, but felt it, are most powerfully inclined, not only to inward compassion, but to the real relieving of others miserable. And this was a contrivance of the profound wisdom of that God, who is infinitely knowing and merciful, to find a way how to feel misery and be merciful another way. This was by His Word assuming flesh, that in that flesh He might be tempted violently and suffer most grievously; and all this that He might be more merciful and effectually succor sinful man." (The Biblical Illustrator)

**W. F. Adeney** writes that Christ is able to succor

By His knowledge and sympathy He can give just such grace as is needed. Pathology must precede therapeutics. The diagnosis of disease is the first duty of the physician, and it is the most difficult; when that is successfully accomplished, the prescription follows almost as a matter of course. (The Biblical Illustrator)

**W. A. Bridge** asks

**"HOW DOTHE HE SUCCOR** those that are tempted in the day and time of their temptation?

1. Christ succors tempted souls before the temptation comes sometimes, by a special manifestation of Himself, His love and fulness, to them. Again, He succors before the temptation by filling the heart with the Holy Ghost. When the vessel is filled with one liquor, it keeps out another.

2. He succors also under temptation by opening the eyes of him that is tempted to see that it is but a temptation. A temptation is half-cured when a man knows that it is but a temptation: when a man's eyes are open to see the tempter and the temptation. Therefore men are so hardly cured, because they are hardly persuaded that it is a temptation. When they see that, then they say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." Christ opens their eyes. Again, He succors under temptation, by letting fall some glimpse of His love, some love-look upon a tempted soul. And so, when Peter was in the high priest's hall, Christ looks upon him, and he went out and wept bitterly.

3. After temptation He succors: by filling the heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory; by sending the angels to minister: as when the devil left Christ, had tempted Him and left Him, then came the angels and ministered to Him. Every way — before temptation, and in temptation, and after temptation — the Lord Jesus Christ is a succoring Christ to tempted souls. He was a Man of Sorrows that He might be a God of succors; His heart is full of succors." (The Biblical Illustrator)

## **DOES YOUR FRAME NEED FRAPPING?**

**Unger** has an interesting note on ancient ships...

The imperfection of the build, and the tendency to strain the seams, led to taking on board "helps" (Gk. **boetheia**), cables or chains (apparatus for securing a leaking vessel), that in case of necessity could be passed around the hull, at right angles to its length and made tight—a process called **frapping** in the English navy.

**Luke** uses the noun **boetheia** in his description of the storm tossed ship in (Acts 27:17+), writing that

after they had hoisted (the lifeboat) up, they used **supporting cables (boetheia)** in undergirding the ship and fearing that they might run aground on the shallows of Syrtis, they let down the sea anchor, and so let themselves be driven along."

**Comment:** In Acts 27:17 "**boetheia**" refers specifically a rope or chain for **frapping** a vessel to keep the beams from separating. Frapping (derived from Mid French [fraper] to draw tight as with ropes or cables) means a lashing binding a thing tightly or binding things together.

In nautical terms, this procedure of passing ropes under the ship to hold it together is termed **frapping**. **Frap** is a nautical term that means to draw tight, to lash down or together. So in the midst of the storm in Acts 27 the sailors wrapped cables around the ship's hull and winched them tight. Thus supported, the ship would be better able to withstand the severe pounding of wind and sea.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, do you see the word picture inherent in the Biblical use of (verb - boethéo, noun - boetheia) in other verses? From time to time all saints encounter unexpected storms with potentially destructive wind and waves and find themselves in desperate need of our great Captain, Jesus, to batten down the hatches, sending His help that we might be able to endure the stormy trial or temptation, emerging on the other side of the "storm" intact, even unscathed! That's supernatural! That's what happens when we cry out for the Savior's succoring!

**Beloved Jesus is able to run to your aid  
when He hears your cry for His help.**

Perhaps right now you need to take a moment and like the Canaanite woman above ([click](#)), bow down in worship (even singing the hymn below), reminding yourself that your **Helper Jesus** is truly ready, able and willing to run to your assistance no matter the "size or shape" of your test or temptation.

## WHAT A FRIEND WE HAVE IN JESUS

(Another version)

What a Friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear!  
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!  
O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear,  
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer.

Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?  
We should never be discouraged; take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness; take it to the Lord in prayer.

Are we weak and heavy laden, cumbered with a load of care?  
Precious Savior, still our refuge, take it to the Lord in prayer.  
Do your friends despise, forsake you? Take it to the Lord in prayer!  
In His arms He'll take and shield you; you will find a solace there.

Blessed Savior, Thou hast promised Thou wilt all our burdens bear  
May we ever, Lord, be bringing all to Thee in earnest prayer.  
Soon in glory bright unclouded there will be no need for prayer  
Rapture, praise and endless worship will be our sweet portion there

### OF THOSE WHO ARE TEMPTED: toiz peirazomenois (PPPMPD):

- 1Cor 10:13; 2Cor 12:7, 8, 9, 10; 2Pet 2:9; Revelation 3:10
- [Hebrews 2 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### A "DEVILISH PASSIVE"

You say what does that mean? Well, first let me mention that the Bible is full of what I would call [divine passives](#) which means the effect on the subject comes from an external source, and in the case of the [divine passive](#), the effect is from God, usually His Spirit. For example, Acts 16:6+ says that Paul, Silas and Timothy "passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, **having been forbidden** by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia." The words "**having been forbidden**" are in the [passive voice](#) and clearly the Source of this effect (forbidding the missionaries) is the Holy Spirit. Now, in the present passage, **are tempted** is [present tense](#), [passive voice](#) and so more literally (and more realistically - because temptation is ever present) it says *we are being continually tempted!* Who cannot identify with that truth? So from where does the temptation [emanate](#)? While it could be our fallen flesh (James 1:14+), alternatively (or additionally) it could be from our fallen foe, a fallen angel (the devil's minions of "being tempted by the devil" in Lk 4:2+). In either case, the sense of the [passive voice](#) is the [antithesis](#) of the [divine passive](#) and hence my designation as a "devilish passive." Make sense?

**A T Robertson** rightly taking note of the context of the entire letter says "These Jewish Christians were daily tempted to give up Christ, to apostatize from Christianity. Jesus understands himself ([autos]) their predicament and is able to help them to be faithful. ([Hebrews 2 Word Pictures](#))

**F B Meyer** comments on those who **are (continuously being) tempted** rightly noting that...

Within that circle we all stand. Each is tempted in subtler, if not in grosser, forms; in extraordinary, if not in ordinary, ways. You have been trying, oh, so hard, to be good; but have met with some sudden gust, and been overcome. Tempted to despair! Tempted to yield to Potiphar's wife! Tempted to become a brute! No lawn without the fowler's snare! No day without its sorrow! No night without its noisome pestilence! No rose without its thorn! Do we not need succor? Certainly; and he is able to succor the tempted, because he has suffered the very worst that temptation can do. Not that there was ever one symptom or thought of yielding; yet suffering to the point of extreme anguish, beneath the test. O sufferers, tempted ones, desolate and not comforted, lean your heads against the breast of the God-Man, whose feet have trodden each inch of your thorny path; and whose experiences of the power of evil well qualify him to strengthen you to stand, to lift you

up if you have fallen, to speak such words as will heal the ache of the freshly gaping wound. If he were impassive, and had never wept or fought in the Garden shadows, or cried out forsaken on the cross, we had not felt him so near as we can do now in all hours of bitter grief. O matchless Saviour, on whom God our Father has laid our help, we can dispense with human sympathy, with priestly help, with the solace and stay of many a holy service; but thou art indispensable to us, in thy life, and death, and resurrection, and brotherhood, and sympathizing intercession at the throne of God! (**Click** F B Meyer's note from The Way into the Holiest)

**Are tempted** (3985) (**peirazo** from the noun **peira** = test from **peiro** = perforate, pierce through to test durability of things) is a morally neutral word simply meaning "to test" or to try.

Whether the **test** is for a good (as it proved to be in Heb 11:17) or evil (Mt 4:1 "Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be **tempted** by the devil") depends on the intent of the one giving the test and also on the response of the one tested. (See study of similar word dokimazo)

**Peirazo** is a morally neutral word that means try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, and so to tempt or test by soliciting to sin. Note that "**tempted**" is in the **present tense** (continuous activity or action) and **passive voice** (exerted on subject from an outside source or force = the [world](#), the [flesh](#) and the [devil](#) - but in the case of believers actually includes an "inside force" in a sense - his or her own lusts that have base camp in the old nature inherited from Adam and still resident in our physical bodies) and is therefore more accurately translated "**are continuously being tempted**". The fact that this is the reality in all of our lives is another reason believers should not get up each morning and leave home without putting on their "work clothes", the full armor of God (e.g., Eph 6:11ff, Ro 13:12-14, 2Cor 10:3-5) and without the proper mindset that they are living sacrifices, who must constantly choose not to be conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewal of their mind. (Ro 12:1-2, Ro 6:11-13, 16, 19)

God gives a blessed promise to all who are being tempted that

"No temptation (or test - this Gk word has no negative connotation) has overtaken you but such as is common to man (characteristic of mankind, i.e., no one is superhuman and immune to temptations - they are part of every person's experience) and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able (i.e., we sin because we want to, not because the devil made us for no temptation is stronger than our spiritual resources), but with **the** temptation will provide **the** way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it." (1 Co 10:13+)

Take comfort in the fact that God is faithful and trustworthy. Note that "**the way out**" is always presented right along with **the temptation**. The definite article ("**the**" in English and in Greek) with both "**temptation**" and "**way of escape**" points to a specific way of escape (i.e., there is only one way) available in each temptation. Note also that we escape temptation not by getting out of it but by passing through it, God seeing us through by enabling us to endure or bear up under.

Believers can trust Christ to help us survive suffering and overcome temptation.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, what trial or temptation are you facing right now that you need Christ to face with you? When you are suffering, facing seemingly insurmountable trials and temptations, run to the Lord for His strength and His patience. He understands your needs and is ever able to come to your aid upon hearing your cry of distress.

"His heart is made of tenderness,  
His soul is fill'd with love.  
"Touched with a sympathy within,  
He knows our feeble frame;  
He knows what sore temptations mean,  
For he has felt the same.

"Then let our humble faith address  
His mercy and his power;  
We shall obtain delivering grace,  
In every trying hour."

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**Dwight Pentecost** lists several reasons for the incarnation of Christ in Hebrews 2:5-18. The following list is extracted from his commentary [Faith That Endures: A Practical Commentary on the Book of Hebrews](#)

(1) To fulfill God's purpose for man Hebrews 2:5-9 - The first reason for the Incarnation is so that God's purpose for man might be finally realized by the One who would take the title, "The Son of Man."

- (2) To taste death for all Hebrews 2:9 The second reason for the Incarnation is given in the latter part of verse 9. Jesus Christ became incarnate that He "might taste death for everyone."
- (3) To bring many sons to glory Hebrews 2:10-13 The third reason for the Incarnation is stated in verses 10–13. He came that He might bring many sons to glory.
- (4) To destroy the devil Hebrews 2:14 The fourth reason for the Incarnation is given in verse 14. Jesus Christ partook of flesh and blood; that is, He took to Himself a true and complete humanity so that on man's behalf "He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."
- (5) To deliver those in bondage Hebrews 2:15 The fifth reason for the Incarnation is found in verse 15. Through the Incarnation, which included the death of Christ, people could be delivered from bondage to the fear of death.
- (6) To become a priest for men Hebrews 2:16-17a - The sixth reason for the Incarnation is found in verses 16–17a, namely, that He might become a merciful and faithful High Priest on man's behalf.
- (7) To make propitiation for sins Hebrews 2:17b The seventh reason for the Incarnation is stated at the end of verse 17. The Son became man "to make propitiation for the sins of the people."
- (8) To provide help for those tested Hebrews 2:18 The eighth reason for the Incarnation is given in verse 18. Since God Himself cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:13), nor can He be put to a test (Deut. 6:16; Matt. 4:7), it was necessary for Jesus Christ by incarnation to identify Himself with people to faithfully represent those who are tempted and tested.

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### **Christmas Evans - He is able to succor them that are tempted.**

I see the unclean spirit rising like a winged dragon, circling in the air, and seeking for a resting-place. Casting his fiery glances toward a certain neighborhood, he spies a young man in the bloom of life, and rejoicing in his strength, seated on the front of his cart, going for lime. "There he is!" said the old dragon: "his veins are full of blood, and his bones of marrow; I will throw into his bosom sparks from hell; I will set all his passions on fire; I will lead him from bad to worse, until he shall perpetrate every sin; I will make him a murderer, and his soul shall sink, never again to rise, in the lake of fire." By this time, I see it descend, with a fell swoop, toward the earth; but, nearing the youth, the dragon heard him sing,

**["Guide me, O thou great Jehovah!"](#)**

Pilgrim through this barren land:  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
Hold me with Thy powerful hand.  
Strong Deliverer,  
Be Thou still my strength and shield."

"A dry, dry place, this," says the dragon; and away he goes. But I see him again hovering about in the air, and casting about for a suitable resting-place. Beneath his eye there is a flowery meadow, watered by a crystal stream; and he descries among the kine a maiden, about eighteen years of age, picking up here and there a beautiful flower. "There she is!" says Apollyon, intent upon her soul: "I will poison her thoughts; she shall stray from the paths of virtue; she shall think evil thoughts, and become impure; she shall become a lost creature in the great city, and, at last, I will cast her down from the precipice into everlasting burnings." Again he took his downward flight; but he no sooner came near the maiden, than he heard her sing the following words, with a voice that might have melted the rocks:

"Other refuge have I none;  
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:  
Leave, ah! leave me not alone;  
Still support and comfort me."

**[\(Jesus Lover of My Soul\)](#)**

"This place is too dry for me," says the dragon; and off he flies. Now he ascends from the meadow, like some great balloon, but very much enraged, and breathing forth "smoke and fire," and threatening ruin and damnation to all created things. "I will have a place to dwell in," he says, "in spite of decree, covenant, or grace." As he was thus speaking, he beheld a woman, "stricken in years," busy with her spinning-wheel at her cottage-door. "Ah, I see!" says the dragon: "she is ripe for destruction; she shall know the bitterness of the wail which ascends from the burning marl of hell!" He forthwith alights on the roof of her cot; when he hears the old woman repeat with trembling voice, but with heavenly feeling, the words. "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My

kindness shall not depart from thee.” “This place is too dry for me,” says the dragon; and away he goes again.... “In yonder cottage lies old William, slowly wasting away. He has borne the heat and the burden, and altogether has had a hard life of it. He has very little reason to be thankful for the mercies he has received, and has not found serving God a very profitable business: I know I can get him to ‘curse God and die.’ ” Thus musing, away he flew to the sick man’s bedside; but, as he listened, he heard the words, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.” Mortified and enraged, the dragon took his flight, saying, “I will return to the place from whence I came.”

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## Hebrews 2:18 A Tender And Mighty God

[God] heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds. He counts the number of the stars; He calls them all by name. —Psalm 147:3-4

God knows and numbers the stars, yet He is concerned about you and me, even though we’re broken by sin. He binds our shattered hearts with sensitivity and kindness, and He brings healing into the depths of our souls. The greatness of God’s power is the greatness of His heart. His strength is the measure of His love. He is a tender and mighty God.

The psalmist tells us that God “counts the number of the stars,” and even “calls them all by name” (147:4). Would He care for the stars that are mere matter and not care for us, who bear His image? Of course not. He knows about our lonely struggles, and He cares. It is His business to care.

God, in the form of His Son Jesus, was subject to all our passions (Hebrews 2:18). He understands and does not scold or condemn when we fall short and fail. He leans down and listens to our cries for help. He gently corrects us. He heals through time and with great skill.

The stars will fall from the sky someday. They are not God’s major concern—you are! He “is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24). And He will do it! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## Able to Help

Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Hebrews 2:18

Today’s Scripture & Insight: Hebrews 2:14–18

Joe’s eight-week “break” from his job as a crisis care worker at a New York City church was not a vacation. In his words, it was “to live again among the homeless, to become one of them, to remember what hungry, tired, and forgotten feel like.” Joe’s first stint on the streets had come nine years earlier when he arrived from Pittsburgh without a job or a place to stay. For thirteen days he lived on the streets with little food or sleep. That’s how God had prepared him for decades of ministry to needy people.

When Jesus came to earth, He also chose to share the experiences of those He came to save. “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). From birth to death, nothing was missing from Christ’s human experience—except sin (4:15). Because He conquered sin, He can help us when we’re tempted to sin.

And Jesus doesn’t need to reacquaint Himself with our earthly cares. The One who saves us remains connected to us and is deeply interested in us. Whatever life brings, we can be assured that the One who rescued us from our greatest foe, the devil (2:14), stands ready to help us in our times of greatest need. By: Arthur Jackson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How does it encourage you to know that Jesus became one of us to identify with us and help us?

What difference does knowing that He “walked in our shoes” make during this season in your life?

Father, help me to remember that You’re ready to help me in all areas of my life.

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## Vance Havner - The Three "Thats"

"For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." 2 Tim. 1:12

I am persuaded that he is able to keep..." There is the ability of the keeper. My assurance is what it is because of who he is. Christ is able to save (Heb. 7:25), able to keep (Jude 24), able to succor (Heb. 2:18), able to subdue (Phil. 3:21).



"He is able to keep that which I have committed." As much as faith commits he will keep. How can we commit our souls to him and yet dare not trust him with the smaller issues of our daily lives? If he keeps the greater, will he not keep the less? It is up to you to say how much will he keep. "According to your faith be it unto you." The measure of your daily peace and assurance depends on how much you commit into his hands and leave with him. How much is "that" which you have committed? The only thing to worry about is what you have not committed and the way to quit worrying about that is to commit everything to him.

"He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." There is my eternal certainty. If he keeps it until the day of my glorification, I know I am safe from there on so that settles it for here and hereafter. All the justified are glorified so "I cannot get beyond the circle of his love."

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## Stand Fast

For in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted. Hebrews 2:18

God's temptations, and Satan's, and the flesh's agree in this: that all temptations are of one color, viz., white, and seeming good. Even when the skin of temptation is black as hell, yet there is white in it; as "curse God and die" that you may be hidden in the grave from misery. The reason is, temptation were not temptation if it had not a taking power to break in upon reason. This is clear in Satan's temptations: he knows man is a fallen and broken creature like himself; yet that there is reason left, and that must have a fair object. The first black apple must be good to the eye, so the devil suits a wife ever in his whites; though, if you should wash the devil and the lie, the bones are always black. Often, are we not tempted to doubt the goodness of the Lord? Is this the Lord, the hearer of prayers? Is this He who bids us to pray and promises to hear? Is this the Lamb of God of whom it is said He shall carry lambs in His bosom? Then why does He not hear me when I call? Why does He not answer me when I pray? But we cannot take His silences for denials; even in the face of our affliction, we must press on and pray. We must storm heaven with our prayers and stand fast to that which is good. (The Puritan Daily Readings)

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## Why Did He Leave?

Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.

—Acts 1:11

As a young boy, I loved the story of Jesus ascending into heaven. I visualized Him slowly rising above the earth with hands outstretched in blessing. I remember wondering why He went up visibly instead of instantly disappearing as He had done at other times after His resurrection. I also wondered where heaven is located and what Jesus is doing there now.

Why did Jesus ascend visibly? Perhaps to show that His earthly ministry was completed and that He would no longer be seen by His disciples. He had paid the price for sin (Romans 5:8), defeated Satan (Hebrews 2:14), and broken the power of death (Revelation 1:18). He had given His followers all the evidence and instruction they needed to live for Him (Acts 1:1-3).

What did He ascend to do? To give "gifts to men" (Ephesians 4:8), to send the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:33), to be our Intercessor (Romans 8:34) and Advocate (1 John 2:1), and to take up His role as Head of the church (Ephesians 1:20-23).

Where is heaven? I once thought of it as a place millions of miles away in outer space. Now I think of it as a realm near at hand but undetectable. I know Jesus is there, and someday I'll be there too. This fills my heart with gratitude and praise. How wonderful that we have an ascended Savior! ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

To the Father Christ ascended,  
For His work on earth had ended;  
Now in heaven interceding  
By His Spirit He is leading.  
—Sper

The work Jesus accomplished for us the Spirit now accomplishes in us.

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## Hebrews 2:18 - Tunnels And Bridges

In that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted. —Hebrews 2:18

A little girl was taking her first train ride. Wide-eyed with fascination, she watched as telephone poles, cars, and farms whizzed by. When the train approached a river, she became frightened and cried out, "Mommy! The train is going into the river!" But a bridge

carried it across to the other side.

Later, as the train sped toward a mountain, the child again called out in fear, "Mommy, we are going to run into that mountain!" But a tunnel at its base let the speeding train pass through. "Oh," said the youngster, "someone must have gone ahead and made a way for us."

That's what Jesus has done for all who trust Him as Savior and Lord. The writer of Hebrews portrayed Him as the "captain" of our salvation (2:10). Jesus has not only faced the dangers of sin's destructive force, but He also forged a way through death itself and emerged victorious. He defeated Satan, delivered us from sin's condemning power, and He will carry us through the terrors of death.

When fears loom before us and we feel threatened by the power of sin and Satan, let's remember our captain. He is the one who reassures us along life's path. He has gone before and prepared the way for us. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For Further Study

What fears and concerns do you have?

What should you do with those fears? (1 Pet. 5:6-7).

What does the Lord promise to do for you? (Heb. 13:5).

We can go through anything because Jesus goes before us.

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**September 17 [Is There Good in Temptation?](#)** (read original devotional)

**Yielding to temptation makes yielding a habit.**

### **Background**

Today we begin a three-day series on temptation. The source material for this topic comes from the book *The Philosophy of Sin*. Although the lectures in this book were mainly from the Bible Training College, Oswald Chambers had spoken on this topic three years before he started the college. Learning about sin had long been his focus.

Do you understand temptation? Is it "a suggested short cut to the realisation of the highest at which I aim," (Classic Edition) or something else? Listen to Chambers about temptation so you can resist it!

### **Scriptural Context**

1 Corinthians 10:13 is a favorite temptation verse. We like that our temptations won't get any worse than what other people face, that God won't let us be tempted more than we can bear, and that He will give us a way out. But what do these three things really mean? Think how they apply to the temptations you face now.

Chambers points us to Hebrews 2:18 (4:15 is also good). What is encouraging about this verse? If Jesus hadn't been tempted, couldn't He still have helped us?

### **What's the Devotional Saying?**

Each paragraph today teaches us new things about temptation. First, being tempted is far better than not being tempted, and the kind of temptation we face tells us how mature we are in our faith. Second, we are tempted by what matches our disposition (see July 1, Utmost). Third, temptation is a shortcut to something good. Finally, God doesn't keep us from temptations. He saves us when we go through them.

What temptation did you yield to most recently? What did you learn from it? Did it teach you that all the times you resisted temptations in the past were only because you were afraid of doing something difficult? Did you see how, as soon as a temptation gave you an easy way to yield to it, you yielded? The most important lesson to learn today is that we are weak and need God so badly!

### **Application**

- What things tempt you? Are they low- or high-level things? How are we lifted to a higher level of temptation?
- What are your big goals and big confusions? What shortcuts are you in danger of taking?
- Finish this prayer: "Father, you have sustained me through so many temptations. Right now I'm prone to . . ."

**September 18**

**[His Temptation and Ours](#)** (read original devotional)

What's inside?

Temptation makes your insides public!

## Background

What else is there to learn about being tempted? Today we learn that Christians are mainly tempted to be wrong, not to do wrong. Nonbelievers don't have God in their hearts, so Satan can't tempt them to push God out. But for us, Satan's tricks do come along these lines. Getting us to do wrong might be part of the way he tempts us, but the main result is wrong being.

Think back on your last temptation. How were you tempted to be something other than what God re-created you to be? Today's lesson will help you be on your guard for the next time you are tempted.

## Scriptural Context

After you look at today's theme verse, read about Jesus' temptation in Matthew 4. Are we ever tempted the way Jesus was? That's what the theme verse says! Do you think Oswald Chambers has it right? Are we tempted as Jesus was only after we become Christians?

What was Jesus' mission (see John 1:29)? What is yours? Will you take a shortcut to accomplish your goals?

## What's the Devotional Saying?

Look at James 1:14. Does this apply only to unbelievers? Chambers says it's the only kind of temptation that unbelievers face—not that it only applies to them. We can face both this kind and the kind Jesus experienced. What is the difference? Did Jesus have "evil desire" or "lust"?

A confusing word today is "possessions." What are the possessions of Jesus' "personality" ("nature" in the Updated Edition)? In the original sermon, we read, "A man's disposition on the inside, i.e. what he possesses in his personality, determines by what he is tempted on the outside." So "possessions of His personality" is the same as "His disposition."

That same sermon says, "Temptation is also a severe test to fulfill the possessions of personality by a short cut." Comparing this with what yesterday's lesson said ("Temptation is a suggested short cut to the realisation of the highest at which I aim," Classic Edition), we see that our disposition, besides being our nature, can also be thought of as our highest aim.

Linking disposition to our aim adds new meaning to the phrase, "my utmost for His highest." Have you asked God to swap your disposition (see July 24, Utmost) for Christ's disposition? If you have, and haven't taken your surrender back (see September 13, Utmost), then your highest aim will be the same as Christ's: giving His utmost to God's highest purposes for His life!

## Application

- What ungodly desires have enticed you? Are you tempted to an ungodly point of view?
- How do you understand Jesus' temptation? Does this help you in your temptation?
- Finish this prayer: "Jesus, you were tempted and learned obedience. Please help me . . ."

## September 19

[Do You Continue To Go With Jesus?](#) (read original devotional)

We stay close to Jesus by sharing in His trials.

## Background

Today we end our three-day series on temptation with source material that comes from a different book (Now Is It Possible). The three talks found in this book were given to Oswald Chambers' students at the Bible Training College. Chambers knew that some of his students would turn back and no longer follow Jesus. So today's message is a plea to remain loyal to Jesus no matter what temptations arise.

## Scriptural Context

If you read Luke 22, verse 28 can slip right by. Why might the disciples have paid special attention to this verse and to verses 29 and 30? Chambers contrasts Luke 22:28 with John 6:66. Which of these two verses fits you right now?

The final paragraph paints a vivid picture of what it means to continue with Jesus in His trials. Read Hebrews 13:13. The first-century Hebrew readers would have been shocked! "Outside the camp" was only for the sin offerings on the Day of Atonement. But since Jesus became sin for us, let us become little sin offerings for those around us, bearing up under shame and abuse and pouring

ourselves out for their salvation.

### What's the Devotional Saying?

What does "the moment we have an experience of what He can do" mean? Thankfully, Chambers uses this expression elsewhere in his Complete Works, where he says, "Do not profane the holiness of God by refusing to abandon yourself away from your experience of what He has done for you to God Himself." In other words, don't put what God can do for us in place of God himself.

Have you stopped going with Jesus because you have experienced enough of His blessings that you didn't think to keep seeking Jesus himself? As Chambers said in Egypt on February 25, 1917, "We may have had an experience of what Jesus Christ can do and yet not have known Him. . . . It takes all time and eternity to know God." Take time to get to know Jesus and His trials today!

### Application

- Does Satan tempt your life or the life of Jesus in you? Is this always true? How do you know?
- When you yield to temptation, with whom are you siding? How does Jesus feel? Why?
- Finish this prayer: "Jesus, I've been trying to face temptations alone, but your life in me is what is really being tempted . . ."

[\(A Daily Companion to My Utmost for His Highest\)](#)

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### Norman Geisler - HEBREWS 2:17-18—Was it possible for Christ to have sinned?

**PROBLEM:** The writer of Hebrews says that Christ "had to be made like His brethren in all things... For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" (2:17-18, NASB). Does this mean that Christ could have sinned?

**SOLUTION:** Some argue that Christ could not have sinned. They believe that our Lord was tempted like we are and that He can sympathize with our weaknesses, but that He was incapable of sinning. In support of this view they argue, first, that since Christ was God, and since God cannot sin (Heb. 6:17; James 1:13), it follows that Christ could not sin either. Second, since Christ had no fallen human nature, as we do, He had no propensity to sin. Finally, they observe that His temptation was only from without, not from within. Hence, He could be tempted without having the real possibility of sinning.

Other orthodox scholars believe that Christ had the ability to sin (since He had the power of free choice), but did not sin. In short, sin was possible, but not actual in Jesus' life. To deny this possibility, they believe, would deny His full humanity, His ability to "sympathize with our weaknesses" (Heb. 4:15), and would make His temptation into a charade. They note that while Jesus could not sin as God, nonetheless, He could have sinned (but didn't) as man. Since Jesus had two natures, one divine and one human, a distinction must be made in what He could do in each nature. For example, He could not get tired, hungry, or sleepy as God. But He did all of these as man. His divine nature could not die. Yet He died as man. Likewise, they argue, Christ could not have sinned as God but could have sinned as man. ([Hebrews 2:17-18—Was it possible for Christ to have sinned?](#))

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### Oswald Chambers - His Temptation and Ours Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 4:15-16

The Isolation of Mastership (Matthew 4:1-2).

His Watch in Faith (Matthew 4:3-4).

His Wait in Hope (Matthew 4:5-7).

His Way of Love (Matthew 4:8-10).

The Limit to the Devil (Matthew 4:11).

The Inner Martyrdom (1 Peter 4:12-13).

Our Lure of Wits (Matthew 9:6).

Our Light of Wisdom (John 12:16).

Our Liberty of Wonders (Luke 17:21).

The Limit to Temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Temptation is not sin; we are bound to meet it if we are men. Not to be tempted would be to be beneath contempt. Temptation is a suggested short cut to the realisation of the highest at which we aim. The way steel is tested is a good illustration of temptation. Steel can be 'tired' in the process of testing, and in this way its strength is measured. Temptation is the testing by an alien power of the possessions held by a personality in order that a higher and nobler character may come out of the test.

This makes the temptation of our Lord explainable. He held in His own Person His unspotted sanctity and the fact that He was to be

the King of men and the Saviour of the world; and Satan was the alien power that came to test Him on these lines. The period of temptation came immediately after one of spiritual exaltation (Matthew iii. 16–17; iv. 1). It was a period of estimating forces, and the records reveal how our Lord faced and rejected the visions of a swift fulfilment of His vocation presented to Him by Satan. Jesus Christ in His baptism had accepted His vocation of bearing away the sin of the world, and immediately He was put by God's Spirit into the testing machine of the devil. But He did not 'tire'; He retained the possessions of His personality intact. He was tempted, "yet without sin."

The temptations of our Lord have no home at all in our human nature; they do not appeal to us because they are removed from any affinity with the natural. Our Lord's temptations and ours move in different spheres until we become His brethren, by being born again (Hebrews ii. 11). The temptations of Jesus are not those of Man as man, but the temptations of God as Man. The statement that our Lord was tempted as ordinary men are is readily accepted, but the Bible does not say that He was so tempted. Jesus Christ was not born with a heredity of sin; He was not tempted in all points as ordinary men are, but tempted like His brethren, those who have been born from above by the Spirit of God and placed in the Kingdom of God by supernatural regeneration.

The records of our Lord's temptations are given not that we might fathom Him, but that we might know what to expect when we are regenerated. When we are born again of the Spirit of God and enter into fellowship with Jesus Christ, then the temptations of our Lord are applicable to us. We are apt to imagine that when we are saved and sanctified we are delivered from temptation; we are not, we are loosened into it. Before we are born again, we are not free enough to be tempted, neither morally nor spiritually. Immediately we are born into the Kingdom of God, we get our first introduction into what God calls temptation, viz., the temptations of His Son. God does not shield any man or woman from the requirements of a full-grown man or woman. The Son of God is submitted to temptations in our individual lives, and He expects us to remain loyal to Him (Luke xxii. 28). The honour of Jesus Christ is at stake in our bodily life. Are we remaining loyal to the Son of God in the things, which beset His life in us? The personality of a saint holds all that God intends a man or woman to be, and the temptation to him comes along the line it came to our Lord—to fulfil what his personality holds on a line other than God intends. (Making All Things New)

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#### **QUESTION - [Could Jesus have sinned \(peccability or impeccability\)?](#)**

**ANSWER** - There are two sides to this interesting question. It is important to remember that this is not a question of whether Jesus sinned. Both sides agree, as the Bible clearly says, that Jesus did not sin (2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:22). The question is whether Jesus could have sinned. Those who hold to "impeccability" believe that Jesus could not have sinned. Those who hold to "peccability" believe that Jesus could have sinned, but did not. Which view is correct? The clear teaching of Scripture is that Jesus was impeccable—Jesus could not have sinned. If He could have sinned, He would still be able to sin today because He retains the same essence He did while living on earth. He is the God-Man and will forever remain so, having full deity and full humanity so united in one person as to be indivisible. To believe that Jesus could sin is to believe that God could sin. "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him" (Colossians 1:19). Colossians 2:9 adds, "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form."

Although Jesus is fully human, He was not born with the sinful nature that we are born with. He certainly was tempted in the same way we are, in that temptations were put before Him by Satan, yet He remained sinless because God is incapable of sinning. It is against His very nature (Matthew 4:1; Hebrews 2:18, 4:15; James 1:13). Sin is by definition a trespass of the Law. God created the Law, and the Law is by nature what God would or would not do; therefore, sin is anything that God would not do by His very nature.

To be tempted is not, in and of itself, sinful. A person could tempt you with something you have no desire to do, such as committing murder or participating in sexual perversions. You probably have no desire whatsoever to take part in these actions, but you were still tempted because someone placed the possibility before you. There are at least two definitions for the word "tempted":

- 1) To have a sinful proposition suggested to you by someone or something outside yourself or by your own sin nature.
- 2) To consider actually participating in a sinful act and the possible pleasures and consequences of such an act to the degree that the act is already taking place in your mind.

The first definition does not describe a sinful act/thought; the second does. When you dwell upon a sinful act and consider how you might be able to bring it to pass, you have crossed the line of sin. Jesus was tempted in the fashion of definition one except that He was never tempted by a sin nature because it did not exist within Him. Satan proposed certain sinful acts to Jesus, but He had no inner desire to participate in the sin. Therefore, He was tempted like we are but remained sinless.

Those who hold to peccability believe that, if Jesus could not have sinned, He could not have truly experienced temptation, and therefore could not truly empathize with our struggles and temptations against sin. We have to remember that one does not have to experience something in order to understand it. God knows everything about everything. While God has never had the desire to sin,

and has most definitely never sinned, God knows and understands what sin is. God knows and understands what it is like to be tempted. Jesus can empathize with our temptations because He knows, not because He has “experienced” all the same things we have.

Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted, but He does not know what it is like to sin. This does not prevent Him from assisting us. We are tempted with sins that are common to man (1 Corinthians 10:13). These sins generally can be boiled down to three different types: “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life” (1 John 2:16 NKJV). Examine the temptation and sin of Eve, as well as the temptation of Jesus, and you will find that the temptations for each came from these three categories. Jesus was tempted in every way and in every area that we are, but remained perfectly holy. Although our corrupt natures will have the inner desire to participate in some sins, we have the ability, through Christ, to overcome sin because we are no longer slaves to sin but rather slaves of God (Romans 6, especially verses 2 and 16-22). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [What was the meaning and purpose of Jesus' temptations? | GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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**Wayne Grudem** - article below is found on page 464 in his recommended resource [Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Bible Doctrine](#).

#### **Could Jesus Have Sinned?**

The question is sometimes raised, “Was it possible for Christ to have sinned?” Some people argue for the impeccability of Christ, in which the word impeccable means “not able to sin.” Others object that if Jesus were not able to sin, his temptations could not have been real, for how can a temptation be real if the person being tempted is not able to sin anyway?

In order to answer this question we must distinguish what Scripture clearly affirms, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, what is more in the nature of possible inference on our part. (1) Scripture clearly affirms that Christ never actually sinned (see above). There should be no question in our minds at all on this fact. (2) It also clearly affirms that Jesus was tempted, and that these were real temptations (Luke 4:2). If we believe Scripture, then we must insist that Christ “in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). If our speculation on the question of whether Christ could have sinned ever leads us to say that he was not truly tempted, then we have reached a wrong conclusion, one that contradicts the clear statements of Scripture.

(3) We also must affirm with Scripture that “God cannot be tempted with evil” (James 1:13). But here the question becomes difficult: if Jesus was fully God as well as fully man (and we shall argue below that Scripture clearly and repeatedly teaches this), then must we not also affirm that (in some sense) Jesus also “could not be tempted with evil”?

This is as far as we can go in terms of clear and explicit affirmations of Scripture. At this point we are faced with a dilemma similar to a number of other doctrinal dilemmas where Scripture seems to be teaching things that are, if not directly contradictory, at least very difficult to combine together in our understanding. For example, with respect to the doctrine of the Trinity, we affirmed that God exists in three persons, and each is fully God, and there is one God. Although those statements are not contradictory, they are, nonetheless, difficult to understand in connection with each other, and although we can make some progress in understanding how they fit together, in this life, at least, we have to admit that there can be no final understanding on our part. Here the situation is somewhat similar. We do not have an actual contradiction. Scripture does not tell us that “Jesus was tempted” and that “Jesus was not tempted” (a contradiction if “Jesus” and “tempted” are used exactly in the same sense in both sentences). The Bible tells us that “Jesus was tempted” and “Jesus was fully man” and “Jesus was fully God” and “God cannot be tempted.” This combination of teachings from Scripture leaves open the possibility that as we understand the way in which Jesus’ human nature and divine nature work together, we might understand more of the way in which he could be tempted in one sense and yet, in another sense, not be tempted. (This possibility will be discussed further below.)

At this point, then, we pass beyond the clear affirmations of Scripture and attempt to suggest a solution to the problem of whether Christ could have sinned. But it is important to recognize that the following solution is more in the nature of a suggested means of combining various biblical teachings and is not directly supported by explicit statements of Scripture. With this in mind, it is appropriate for us to say: (1) If Jesus’ human nature had existed by itself, independent of his divine nature, then it would have been a human nature just like that which God gave Adam and Eve. It would have been free from sin but nonetheless able to sin. Therefore, if Jesus’ human nature had existed by itself, there was the abstract or theoretical possibility that Jesus could have sinned, just as Adam and Eve’s human natures were able to sin. (2) But Jesus’ human nature never existed apart from union with his divine nature. From the moment of his conception, he existed as truly God and truly man as well. Both his human nature and his divine nature existed united in one person. (3) Although there were some things (such as being hungry or thirsty or weak) that Jesus experienced in his human nature alone and were not experienced in his divine nature (see below), nonetheless, an act of sin would have been a moral act that would apparently have involved the whole person of Christ. Therefore, if he had sinned, it would have

involved both his human and divine natures. (4) But if Jesus as a person had sinned, involving both his human and divine natures in sin, then God himself would have sinned, and he would have ceased to be God. Yet that is clearly impossible because of the infinite holiness of God's nature. (5) Therefore, if we are asking if it was actually possible for Jesus to have sinned, it seems that we must conclude that it was not possible. The union of his human and divine natures in one person prevented it.

But the question remains, "How then could Jesus' temptations be real?" The example of the temptation to change the stones into bread is helpful in this regard. Jesus had the ability, by virtue of his divine nature, to perform this miracle, but if he had done it, he would no longer have been obeying in the strength of his human nature alone, he would have failed the test that Adam also failed, and he would not have earned our salvation for us. Therefore, Jesus refused to rely on his divine nature to make obedience easier for him. In like manner, it seems appropriate to conclude that Jesus met every temptation to sin, not by his divine power, but on the strength of his human nature alone (though, of course, it was not "alone" because Jesus, in exercising the kind of faith that humans should exercise, was perfectly depending on God the Father and the Holy Spirit at every moment). The moral strength of his divine nature was there as a sort of "backstop" that would have prevented him from sinning in any case (and therefore we can say that it was not possible for him to sin), but he did not rely on the strength of his divine nature to make it easier for him to face temptations, and his refusal to turn the stones into bread at the beginning of his ministry is a clear indication of this.

Were the temptations real then? Many theologians have pointed out that only he who successfully resists a temptation to the end most fully feels the force of that temptation. Just as a champion weightlifter who successfully lifts and holds over head the heaviest weight in the contest feels the force of it more fully than one who attempts to lift it and drops it, so any Christian who has successfully faced a temptation to the end knows that that is far more difficult than giving in to it at once. So it was with Jesus: every temptation he faced, he faced to the end, and triumphed over it. The temptations were real, even though he did not give in to them. In fact, they were most real because he did not give in to them.

What then do we say about the fact that "God cannot be tempted with evil" (James 1:13)? It seems that this is one of a number of things that we must affirm to be true of Jesus' divine nature but not of his human nature. His divine nature could not be tempted with evil, but his human nature could be tempted and was clearly tempted. How these two natures united in one person in facing temptations, Scripture does not clearly explain to us. But this distinction between what is true of one nature and what is true of another nature is an example of a number of similar statements that Scripture requires us to make (see more on this distinction, below, when we discuss how Jesus could be God and man in one person).

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### **Gleason Archer - Could Jesus have yielded to temptation to sin?**

Hebrews 2:17–18 reads concerning Jesus: "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way [kata panta], in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (NIV). This passage indicates that Jesus really came under temptation in the way that any child of Adam is confronted with temptation, for "he was made like his brothers in every way." He would not have been made like His fellow men if He had not been made capable of yielding to the temptation—any more than a hippopotamus can be said to be tempted to fly through the air.

Apart from ability to yield to the temptation to sin, there is no temptation at all. There has to be a deliberate decision to reject what has attractiveness and appeal of some sort to the person attacked by temptation. When man is tempted, he must be confronted by something that requires him to choose between compliance or refusal. Therefore we must conclude that unless Hebrews 2:18 is in error, Jesus Christ had the ability to give in to the temptations that Satan directed against Him. Otherwise He would not have been tempted "like his brothers in every way."

A little further on we read in Hebrews 4:15: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin" (NIV). The last phrase inserts "was" in order to clarify the obvious intention of the Greek phrase *chōris hamartiās* ("without sin"). KJV omits the "was" and renders the phrase "yet without sin." But even if the "was" is omitted, the basic meaning remains the same; it is no sin to be tempted, but it is sin if we yield to temptation. The consideration added by this last verse is the element of "sympathy," i.e., the ability to understand the feelings of the one tempted and feel compassion toward him during his crisis. If Christ had been utterly incapable of sin, even as the Son of Man, then it is hard to see how He could have felt sympathy for sinners.

On the other hand, there is another sense in which we may say that Christ was incapable of sin, and that is in the psychological sense. When the patriot says, "I could never betray my country to its foes," or "I could never be unfaithful to my dear wife," he is speaking not of a physical inability but of a psychological inability. He has no personal desire to commit the evil he is being solicited to do; in fact, he finds it repellant and distasteful, not so much the act in itself, but the evil consequences that would ensue from that act. Because Jesus was completely in love with His heavenly Father, He could never have brought Himself to grieve Him or go counter to His know will. (Go to page 422 in Pdf of [New International Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties](#))

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**John MacDuff** (in Palms of Elim) has these devotional thoughts...

### THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS

"This is the resting place, let the weary rest; and this is the place of repose"—"Because He Himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted." Hebrews 2:18

There can be no more gracious whisper from the leaves of the Heavenly Palm than this. What a magnitude of comfort to every sorrowing one, the simple declaration, "He Himself suffered when He was tempted!" Jesus the Incarnate God, "the Living Kinsman" (Job 19:25), had a mysterious identity of experience with His suffering, and with His tempted people; so that nothing can happen to the members but what has happened to the Head. They can feel that no sorrow shades their souls but the same darkened His. "As He is," so are they "in this world" (1 John 4:17). He Himself—the thorn-crowned King—knows every thorn which pierces them, every pang of spirit and pang of body. The loss of beloved friends, the treachery of false ones, temptation to distrust God's providence, to pervert and misapply His Word, to question the wisdom and reason of His dealings, the forecastings of a dark and troubled future; yes, the saddest and most intolerable woe that can crush and overbear the soul—the sense of Divine desertion—the withdrawal of the countenance of His Heavenly Father. Oh, the unutterable solace in the darkest hour of earthly suffering, to look up to the Brother in our nature—the "prevailing Prince" who has "power with God," and to say, "He Himself suffered when He was tempted!"

When we first contemplate this amazing theme, the identity of experience seems to be partial and incomplete. Jesus, we are led to say, was never 'tempted' as we have been. Temptations might assail, but they could never overcome His sinless, spotless, uncontaminated humanity. He never could know, therefore, the sorest part of these our struggles, when through its own weakness the soul has at last to succumb to the hurricane, and is haunted with the terrors of remorse!

Yes! but let us remember it was the very fact of the Infinite purity of the tempted One which imparted, in His case, the saddest element to temptation. How inconceivable the recoil of the refined and exquisite sensibilities of His holy nature from the presence of sin. And, with these unchanged human sensibilities in His glorified state, how deeply must He still sympathize with the case of His assaulted people! How tenderly must He feel for every wound of His soldiers, seeing that He, the Captain of their salvation, was Himself "made perfect through sufferings."

Afflicted believer! rejoice that sorrow and suffering have (if the expression dare be used) assimilated Christ with you, and you with Christ, in this your trial-hour. With what a divine significance, augmented and intensified by subsequent experience, can He say, "I know your sorrows." If you are bleeding under some peculiarly heavy infliction of the rod, ready to say in the bitterness of your grief, "No one knows, no one can gauge the depth of my anguish," THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS can—He does! "He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust." With reverence we say it, God—the Omnipotent, Omniscient God—cannot, with all infinitude of His nature, sympathize. He can compassionate; but He cannot sympathize in the way of feeling with us. Sympathy requires, as its two conditions, identity of nature and identity of experience. "We have such a High Priest;" One who is said to be (not touched with our infirmities), but "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

Our beautiful motto-verse gives more comfort still. The words affirm not merely that Christ has identity of experience—a passive sympathy with His tried people—He is also the helper of the tempted, "He is able to support those who are tempted."

If He is summoning any of us to difficult and perplexing duty, or exacting from us some heavy sacrifice, or even apparently placing us in the way of peril and temptation, He will not allow the burden to crush, or the temptation to overcome, or the fiery trial to consume. He will keep us in the crucible as long, but no longer than He sees to be absolutely needful to test our faith and purify Christian graces. All that concerns us and ours is in His hands.

Oh, as we see the Angels of Tribulation with their sevenfold vials issuing forth from the gate of heaven (see note [Revelation 15:7](#))—how blessed to know that they are marshaled, commissioned by the great Lord of Angels, the once suffering but now exalted Redeemer! In Zechariah's vision (Zech 1:8) of "the man on the red horse"—behind Him were angels and providences—the "black and speckled white horses." But He is between them, ordering, regulating, appointing, all that befalls His people, trusting their persons and fortunes not even to an angel's care, without His own guidance, sanction, and direction.

And when the last hour arrives (which, however varied be our other experiences, we must all encounter), is it not here that His sympathy—the sympathy of fellow-feeling—is most of all valued? He can endorse even this closing experience with the words, "I know it." To the living Christian in his season of affliction, He can say, "I am He who lives." But to the dying Christian He can add, "I am He who was dead." "I know well, through the memories of My cross and passion, the conflict of that final struggle-hour! I know, what it is, O Believer, to die! And because I know this, I can make Palms of comfort to spring up and overshadow you on the brink of Jordan as well as in the wilderness! Fear not to pass what I have passed! Feel amid these buffeting billows that they have swept over Me. And with the thought of Me as your Precursor, and of My deathless exalted sympathy, sing, as you plunge into the stream,



"Behold, the Ark of the covenant of the Lord of the whole earth passes over before me into Jordan!" (Joshua 3:11).

"As often, with worn and weary feet,  
We tread earth's rugged valley o'er,  
The thought, how comforting and sweet!  
Christ walked this toilsome path before!  
Our needs and weaknesses He knows,  
From life's first dawning to its close.

"Just such as I, this earth He trod,  
With every human ill but sin;  
And though indeed the very God,  
As I am now, so He has been.  
My God, my Savior, look on me  
With pity, love, and sympathy!"

"Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart."

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**Adrian Rogers** - Don't get the idea that when you get saved, you won't be susceptible to temptation any longer. You will be tempted. Being saved does not make you immune to temptation, and being tempted is not a sin.

But the person who is in the greatest danger is the one who is trying to fight temptation in his own strength. He thinks, "I don't need to read a book on temptation. I can overcome it." But without Christ you cannot. God has to make your way of escape for you. His plan is not to remove all temptation from you or to give you immunity, but to give you victory.

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**John MacDuff** in **The Pillar in the Night** has these devotional thoughts on Jesus...

#### THE GREAT SYMPATHIZER

"The Lord went before them by night in a pillar of... fire." - Ex 13:21

"For in that He Himself has suffered being tempted, He is able to support those who are tempted."—Heb. 2:18.

"I know their sorrows."—Ex 3: 7.

"In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33.

**He suffered!** Sorrowing one, what a gleam of the Pillar-cloud is this!

**He suffered!** What are all your most agonizing afflictions compared with what He endured for You!

**He suffered**—poverty, weariness, privation, hunger, thirst, grief, and the minor other ills that flesh is heir to. These, however, were but the surface-heavings of the deeper depths of woe—the assaults of men and the malignity of devils, cruel innuendoes, savage indignities; the loss or desertion of beloved friends; the treachery of trusted associates: that, also, in the case of a nature sensitively strung alike physically and spiritually. "Reproach," said He, "has broken My heart."

**He suffered more profoundly still.** There was a mystery of anguish in Gethsemane which mortal tongue cannot tell, or imagination conceive. No wonder it is described with an emphasis belonging to no other—"THE Agony." Its undefined dreadfulness is worded in the Greek Litany by "Your sufferings known and unknown." What mean these drops of blood oozing from His brow? What means the thrice-uttered prayer, in a paroxysm of woe, "Let this cup pass from Me"? (Matt. 26:39). What means the climax and consummation of all, when the very sun, in the words of Jeremy Taylor, "put on sackcloth, as if ashamed to confront the spectacle of its expiring Creator": when the wail was evoked from parched and dying lips—the bitterest cry that ever rose from earth to heaven—"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me"?

**He suffered.** Of Him alone could the words be said—"All Your waves and Your billows have gone over me." Well may He have addressed the question, first to His disciples and then to His suffering children of all ages—"Can you drink of the cup which I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" With an intense pathos of which the afflicted patriarch knew nothing, He could make the appeal to a whole world of weepers, "Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O you, my friends, for the hand of God has touched me!" (Job 19:21).

**He suffered.** But the lesson from these sufferings for you and for me is to watch how, in this melancholy gloom, shone the Pillar of Fire! See His perfect and profound resignation! He takes the cup, whatever that mystic emblem may mean, with trembling hand.

Humanity in its weakness, rather humanity in its very strength, utters an "If it be possible"—the prayer of His suffering children still—"let it pass." But it is only for the moment. The bitter chalice is drained to the dregs. Three times He recedes from the edge of the abyss and its "horror of great darkness." But it is a momentary recoil—no more. He plunges in! Self-surrender, heroic obedience, un murmuring submission can go no farther. His own will is now, as ever, submerged in the Divine—"Not as I will, but as You will." He ceases not in the prolonged conflict until He could utter the cry waited for by all time, and which sends its prolonged echoes through eternity—"It is finished!"

Though we have selected the closing hour of all, He was, during the entire period of His earthly life, "the Faithful and True Martyr" (see note [Revelation 1:5](#)). Well may a writer speak of "the fascination of that mournful life-story, so infinite in its pathos and so profound in its wisdom, the most touching of scenes, and the most impressive of tragedies...the loving and gracious Man of Sorrows, listening to every plaint of weakness, and helping every troubled heart to bear its burden, even while on His own there rested the burden of a world's salvation" (Present Day Religion).

Reader, I know not what the circumstances of your suffering are. More than probable they may be identical in kind, though not in degree, with those of your suffering Lord.

**(1) They may be physical.** As was noted at greater length in a previous chapter, it is only those conversant with a couch of lingering pain who can testify to the reality. The sudden close of the windows, long open to the cheering light of day; the drawn blinds; the tossing from side to side in the hopeless battle with wakefulness—opiates giving, at the best, transient moments of relief—only to renew the pitiless struggle: "Saying in the morning, 'Would God it were evening!' and in the evening, 'Would God it were morning!'"

That pain—that physical pain—on the Cross, He suffered! There were, as I have just said, other reasons of infinitely more tremendous significance which convulsed His soul. But one reason for His being subjected to the pangs of an agonized body, undoubtedly was, that He might impart to every child of anguish His own experimental exalted sympathy. In our hours of prostration, weakness, and weariness—when in their prolonged vigils we may be tempted at times "to faint when we are rebuked of Him," the whisper trembling on parched lips—"Why all this discipline of pain? Why this cruel cross to bear? Where is the wisdom? Where is the love?"—we may think of a Divine fellow-sufferer subjected without any mitigation—for the very anodyne offered was refused—to the intensest bodily torture. "Consider Him that endured...lest you be weary and faint in your minds" (see note Hebrews 12:3).

**(2) Your sufferings may be mental.** Harassment, unkindness, ingratitude, the barbed shafts of malice and slander, all the more grievous to bear if sent winged from the quiver of a friend. It may be anxiety about a beloved relative, the subject of slow disease, around whose couch the too ominous shadows are gathering—"life balanced in a breath." It may be the agony of bereavement, when the long alternations of hope and fear have ended—the vacant niche in your heart—the vacant chair in your home—the cherished name on the gravestone. Or, it may be, in your own case, wasting disease too surely pointing to the fatal termination—this involving the severance of holiest ties, and leaving dear ones solitary and alone to do battle with adversity. These and many such, though varying in their outer form and complexion, your great suffering Master knew in their fullest measure. Yes, inclusive of the last-mentioned; when, Himself racked in agony, He had that agony intensified by the sight of a fond mother jostled amid the crowd that surged around, and made sport of His dying moments; the sword too truly piercing her own heart, as the nails were lacerating the Body at whose feet she crouched.

The refrain of the present meditation is, He suffered; and because He suffered, says the Apostle in our motto-verse, "He is able to support." We have quoted more than once, as suggested by the name of this book, the words which emanated from the Jehovah of the Pillar-cloud, the opening syllables in that drama of the Exodus and the desert; let them be repeated in their most appropriate form here: "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of My people, for I know their sorrows." His whole life, from Bethlehem's manger to Calvary's cross, formed an empathetic commentary and fulfillment. He knew—He knows, every heart-throb of His suffering Israel in every age. He is no god or demi-god of Pagan mythology, who lives in unsympathetic isolation amid the clouds of Olympus, all in ignorance of the travail of a sin-stricken, woe-worn world. From deepest experience He is cognizant of every pang that rends the soul. If one of earth's kingdoms is the Kingdom of Sorrow, He is its King. The crown on His head was a crown of thorns, and, being so, the scepter in His hand is the scepter of kingly sympathy.

It is recorded of Alexander the Great, that he touched with his crown a wounded soldier in the ranks, and that at the touch there were the tinglings of new life. It is so in a diviner, heavenly sense. Christ touches our wounds with His double crown—the crown of thorns as the Human Sympathizer, and the crown of glory as Head over all. It is the thorn-crown which forms the special theme of our present meditation. I always like the conjunction of the two clauses in the familiar Litany—"Pitifully behold the sorrows of our hearts...O Son of David, have mercy upon us!" It was the Lord of the Pillar-cloud, the God-Man, of whom it is touchingly said, "So He was their Savior. In all their afflictions He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them, and He bore them, and carried them all the days of old" (Isaiah 63:8, 9). "It is Christ alone," beautifully says Pere Didon, in his Life of Jesus, "who teaches the joy of suffering, because it is He alone who pours into the soul a Divine life which no

pain can overwhelm; which trial only strengthens, and which can despise death, because it permits us to face it with the fullness of immortal hope."

My brother, trust this Great Sympathizer, "who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross." Conquer as He conquered, by a noble submission and self-surrender to the will of your Father in heaven. While you take trial for granted as a part of His appointed discipline, hear the Lord of sorrow encouraging you from His own example and victory—"In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

We read of Him that "being in an agony He prayed the more earnestly." "Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard (as it has been rendered) because of His reverent submission" (Heb. 5:7). Is not that saying impressive—"He became obedient unto death"? It was a gradual effort requiring Divine self-sacrifice. But it was given, and the triumph was assured. Let this, also, afflicted one, be the sanctified result, in your case, of the Cup which the same Father has put into your hands. "Be more courageous," are the words of Francis de Sales, "in your trials, cherish them carefully, and thank God for vouchsafing to give you ever so small a share in His dear Son's cross."

"Rejoice inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy."

## A Tempted Savior From Spurgeon's "Power in the Blood"

**Our Best Help:** For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.—Hebrews 2:18

One important area in which God helps us from the beginning of the year to the end of the year is that of temptation. Recently, a friend of mine, who is a clergyman of the Church of England, wrote to me and included this verse about temptation, Hebrews 2:18. This man is a venerable clergyman, who has always shown me the most constant and affectionate regard. This text is dear to this aged servant of the Lord because of his deep experience of both affliction and deliverance. Through these experiences he has learned his need of solid, substantial food, fit for the veteran warriors of the cross. Having been tempted these many years, my friend finds that as his natural strength decays, he needs to cast himself more and more upon the tenderness of the Redeemer's love. And he is led to look more fully to Him who is his only help in the day of trouble, finding consolation alone in the person of Christ Jesus the Lord. Hebrews 2:18 is a staff for old age to lean on in the rough places of the way. It is a sword with which the strong man may fight in all hours of conflict. It is a shield with which youth may cover itself in the time of peril. And it is a royal chariot in which spiritual babes may ride in safety. There is something here for every one of us, as Solomon put it: "A portion to seven, and also to eight" (Eccl. 11:2). If we consider the Great Prophet and High Priest of our profession—Jesus Christ—as being tempted in all points (Heb. 4:15), we will not grow weary or faint in our minds. No, we will prepare to run in our future journey, and like Elijah we will go in the strength of this meat for many days to come (1 Kings 19:8).

You that are tempted—and I suppose most readers would fall into this category—read what I have tried to explain about your temptations and the temptations of Jesus. For Jesus, having known your trials, is able to help you at all times.

### CHRIST WAS TEMPTED

Our first point is this: many souls are tempted—even Christ was tempted. All the heirs of heaven have carried this burden. All true gold must feel the fire. All wheat must be threshed. All diamonds must be cut. All saints must endure temptation.

Saints are tempted from every direction. It is like Christ's parable about the house built on the rock. The Bible says,

The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. (Matt. 7:25)

The descending rain may represent temptations from above. The floods pouring their devastating torrents over the land may denote the trials that spring from the world. And the howling winds may typify those mysterious influences of evil that issue from the "prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2).

Now, whether we shudder at the descending rain, fear the uprising flood, or are amazed at the mysterious energy of the winds, we should remember that our blessed Lord "was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. 4:15). This is to be our consolation: nothing has happened to the members of Christ's body that has not happened to Christ, the Head.

## **Tempted by God**

Beloved friends, it is possible that we may be tempted by God. I know it is written that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man" (James 1:13). Yet, I read in Scripture, "It came to pass...that God did tempt Abraham" (Gen. 22:1). Also, part of the prayer that we are taught to offer before God is, "Lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13). This verse clearly implies that God does lead into temptation, or why else would we be taught to entreat Him not to do so?

In one sense of the term tempt, a pure and holy God can have no share, but in another sense He does tempt His people. The temptation that comes from God is altogether that of trial. God's trials are not meant for evil like Satan's temptations, but they are trials meant to prove and strengthen our graces. All at once, God's trials illustrate the power of divine grace, test the genuineness of our virtues, and strengthen our character.

You remember that Abraham was tried and tested by God when he was bidden to go to a mountain that God would show him, there to offer up his son Isaac. (See Genesis 22:1-2.) You and I may have a similar experience. God may call us in the path of obedience to a great and singular sacrifice. The desire of our eyes may be demanded of us in an hour. Or, He may summon us to a duty far surpassing all our strength; and we may be tempted by the weight of the responsibility, like Jonah, to flee from the presence of the Lord (Jonah 1:3).

We do not know which temptations we will face until we come to them; but, beloved, whatever they may be, our Great High Priest has felt them all. His Father called Him to a work of the most terrific kind. He "laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). He ordained Him as the second Adam, the bearer of the curse, the destroyer of death, and the conqueror of hell. Jesus was the seed of the woman, doomed to be wounded in the heel but elected to bruise the Serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). Our Lord was appointed to toil at the loom, and there, with ever-flying shuttle, to weave a perfect garment of righteousness for all His people (Isa. 61:10).

Now, beloved, this was a strong and mighty testing of Jesus' character. It is impossible that we could ever be thrust into a refiner's fire as hot as the one that tried this purest gold. No one else could be in the crucible so long or subjected to a heat so hot as that which was endured by Christ Jesus. If, then, the trial is sent directly from our heavenly Father, we may solace ourselves with this reflection: "In that [Christ] himself hath suffered being tempted [of God], he is able to succour them that are [likewise] tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

But, dear friends, our God tries us not only directly, but indirectly. Everything is under the Lord's control of providence. Everything that happens to us is meted out by His decree and settled by His purpose. We know that nothing can happen to us unless it is written in the secret book of providential predestination. Consequently, all the trials resulting from circumstances can be traced at once to the great First Cause. Out of the golden gate of God's ordinance, the armies of trial march forth in array. No shower falls from the threatening cloud unless God permits it; every drop has its orders before it hastens to the earth.

Consider poverty, for instance. So many people are made to feel its pinching necessities. They shiver in the cold for lack of clothes. They are hungry and thirsty. They are homeless, friendless, despised. This is a temptation from God, but Christ suffered the same: "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20). When He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was hungry, and it was then that He was tempted of the Devil. (See Matthew 4:2-3.)

It is not only the scant table and the ragged garment that invite temptation, for all providences are doors to trial. Even our mercies, like roses, have their thorns. Men may be drowned in seas of prosperity as well as in rivers of affliction. Our mountains are not too high, and our valleys are not too low, for temptation to travel. Where can we go to get away from temptations? What wind is strong enough to carry us away from them? Everywhere, above and beneath, we are troubled and surrounded by dangers. Now, since all these trials are overseen and directed by the great Lord of providence, we may look at them all as temptations that come from Him.

Christ suffered every kind of temptation. Let us choose the special one of sickness. Sickness is a strong temptation to impatience, rebellion, and murmuring, but He "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses" (Matt. 8:17). His appearance was marred more than that of any man (Isa. 52:14) because His soul was sorely vexed and, consequently, His body was greatly tormented.

Bereavement, too, is such a trial to the tender heart! You arrows of death, you kill, but you wound with wounds worse than death. "Jesus wept" (John 11:35) because His friend Lazarus slept in the tomb. That great loss taught Jesus to sympathize with the widow in her loss, with the orphan in his fatherless estate, and with the friend whose acquaintance has been thrust into darkness. Nothing can come from God to the sons of men unless the same thing or a similar thing also happened to the Lord Jesus Christ. Herein let us wrap the warm cloak of consolation around ourselves, since Christ was tempted like we are.

## **Tempted by Men**

We are tempted more often by men than by God. God tries us now and then, but our fellowmen every day. Our foes are in our own household and among our own friends. Out of mistaken kindness, they would often lead us to prefer our own ease to the service of

God. Links of love have made chains of iron for saints. It is hard to ride to heaven over our own flesh and blood. Relatives and acquaintances may greatly hinder the young disciple.

This, however, is no novelty to our Lord. You know how He had to say to Peter, well-beloved disciple though he was, "Get thee behind me, Satan...thou savourest not the things that be of God" (Matt. 16:23). Poor, ignorant human friendship tried to keep Jesus back from the cross. It would have made Him miss His great purpose for being fashioned as a man, and it would have robbed Him of all the honor that only shame and death could win Him.

Not only true friends, but also false friends attempt our ruin. Treason creeps like a snake in the grass; and falsehood, like an adder, bites the horse's heels (Gen. 49:17). If treachery assaults us, let us remember how Jesus was betrayed: "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me" (John 13:18). "Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me" (Ps. 41:9). What should be done to you, false tongue? Eternal silence rest on you! And yet, you have spent your venom on my Lord; why should I marvel if you try your worst on me?

We are tempted by friends, and we are often assailed by enemies. Enemies will waylay us with subtle questions, seeking to trap us by our words. Oh, cunning devices of a generation of vipers! They did the same to Christ. The Sadducee, the Pharisee, the lawyer—each one had his riddle. And each one was answered—answered gloriously—by the Great Teacher, who cannot be trapped.

You and I are sometimes asked strange questions. Doctrines are set in controversy with other doctrines. Texts of Scripture are made to clash with other texts of Scripture. We hardly know how to reply to these things. Let us retire into the secret chamber of this great fact: in this point, also, Christ was tempted.

When Jesus' foes could not prevail against Him with questions, they slandered His character. They called Him "a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners" (Matt. 11:19). He became the song of the drunkard, and their reproach broke His heart.

This may happen to us. People may accuse us of the very thing of which we are the most innocent. Our good deeds may be misrepresented, our motives misinterpreted, our words misreported, and our actions misconstrued. In this, also, we may shelter ourselves beneath the eagle wings of this great truth: our glorious Head has suffered, and, having been tempted, He can give us aid.

However, His foes did even more than this. When they found Him in an agony of pain, they taunted Him to his face (Matt. 27:39–40). Pointing with the finger, they mocked His nakedness. Thrusting out the tongue, they jeered at His claims. They hissed out that diabolical temptation: "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him" (Matt. 27:42).

How often the sons of men have mocked us and then accused us in like manner. They have caught us in some unhappy moment—when our spirits were broken, when our circumstances were unhappy—and then they have said, "Now where is your God? If you are what you profess to be, prove it." They ask us to prove our faith by a sinful action, which they know would destroy our characters—some rash deed that would be contrary to our profession of faith. Here, too, we may remember that, having been tempted, our High Priest is able to help those who are tempted.

Moreover, remember that there are temptations that come from neither friends nor foes, but from those with whom we are compelled to mix in ordinary society. Jesus ate at a Pharisee's table, even though most Pharisees reeked with infectious pride. He sat with the publicans, even though their characters were contagious with impurity. But, whether it was in one difficult place or another, the Great Physician walked through the midst of moral plagues and leprosies unharmed. He associated with sinners but was not a sinner. He touched disease but was not diseased Himself. He could enter into the chambers of evil, but evil could not find a chamber in Him.

You and I are thrown by our daily duties into constant contact with evil. It is impossible, I suppose, to walk among men without being tempted by them. Men who have no preconceived plan to betray us, entice us to evil and corrupt our good manners simply by the force of their ordinary behavior. We may cry, "Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!" (Ps. 120:5). However, we may remember that our great Leader sojourned here, too; and being here, He was tempted even as we are (Heb. 4:15).

### **Tempted by Satan**

Dear friends, we will not complete the list of temptations if we forget that a vast host, and those of a most violent nature, can only be ascribed to satanic influence. Satan's temptations are usually threefold, for Christ's threefold temptation in the wilderness, if I read it right, was a true picture of all the temptations that Satan uses against God's people. The first temptation of Satan is usually made against our faith. When our Lord was hungry, Satan came to Him and said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. 4:3). Here it was, that devilish "if," that cunning suggestion that He was not God's Son, coupled with the enticement to commit a selfish act to prove that He was the Son.

Ah, how often Satan tempts us to unbelief! "God has forsaken you," he says. "God has no love for you. Your experience has been a

delusion. Your profession of faith is a falsehood. All your hopes will fail you. You are only a poor, miserable fool. There is no truth in religion. If there is, why are you in this trouble? Why not do as you like, live as you want, and enjoy yourself?" Ah, foul fiend, how craftily you spread your net, but it is all in vain, for Jesus has passed through and broken the snare.

Dear reader, beware of intermeddling with divine providence. Satan tempts many believers to run before the guiding cloud, to carve their own fortunes, to build their own houses, to steer their own ships. Trouble will surely befall all who yield to this temptation. Beware of becoming the keepers of your own souls, for evil will soon overtake you. Ah, when you are thus tempted by Satan and your adoption seems to be in jeopardy and your experience appears to melt, fly at once to the Good Shepherd. Remember this: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

The next foul temptation of Satan with Christ was not to unbelief, but to the very opposite—presumption. "Cast thyself down" (Matt. 4:6), he said, as he poised the Savior on the pinnacle of the temple. Even so, he whispers to some of us, "You are a child of God; you know that. Therefore, you are safe to live as you like. 'Cast thyself down from hence: For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee' (Luke 4:9–10)."

Oh, that foul temptation! It leads many an antinomian by the nose, and he is like "an ox [going] to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks" (Prov. 7:22). For many an antinomian will say, "I am safe; therefore, I may indulge my lusts with impunity."

You see, the Devil tries to use the doctrine of election or the great truth of the final perseverance of the saints to tempt you to soil your purity. He tries to use the mercy and love of God to tempt you to stain your innocency. However, you who know better, when you are thus tempted, console yourselves with the fact that Christ was tempted in this way, too, and He is able to help you even here.

The final temptation of Christ in the wilderness was that of idolatry. Actually, ambition was the temptation, but idolatry was the end at which the tempter aimed. "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matt. 4:9). The old Serpent will suggest to us, "I will make you rich if you will only venture upon that one dishonest transaction. You will be famous; only tell that one lie. You will be perfectly at ease; only wink at one small evil. All these things will I give you if you will make me lord of your heart." Ah, then it will be a noble thing if you can look up to Him who endured this temptation and bid the fiend depart with, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4:10). Then, Satan will leave you, and angels will minister to you as they did to the tempted One of old.

### **Tempted in All Positions**

Not only are we tempted from all directions, but we are tempted in all positions. No man is too lowly for the arrows of hell; no man is too elevated for the arrows of hell. Poverty has its dangers: "Lest I be poor, and steal" (Prov. 30:9). Christ knew these dangers. Contempt has its aggravated temptations. To be despised often makes men bitter; it often exasperates them into savage selfishness and wolfish revenge. Our Great Prophet knew from experience the temptations of contempt.

It is no small trial to be filled with pain. When all the strings of our personhood are strained and twisted, it is little wonder if they make a sour note. Christ endured the greatest amount of physical pain, especially upon the cross. And on the cross, where all the rivers of human agony met in one deep lake within His heart, He bore all that it was possible for the human frame to bear. Here, then, without limit, He learned the ills of pain.

Turn the picture around: Christ knew the temptations of riches. You may say, "How?" He had opportunities to be rich. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus would have been glad to give Him their substance. The honorable women who ministered to Him would have grudged Him nothing. There were many opportunities to make Himself a king. He could have become famous and great like other teachers and earned a high salary. However, knowing the temptations of wealth, He also overcame them.

The temptations of ease—and these are not small—Christ readily escaped. There always would have been a comfortable home for Him at Bethany. There were many disciples who would have felt highly honored to find for Him the softest couch ever made. But, He who came not to enjoy but to endure spurned all, but not without knowing the temptation.

He learned, too, the trials of honor, popularity, and applause. "Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna," said the multitudes in the streets of Jerusalem, as palm branches were strewn in the way and He rode in triumph over the garments of His disciples. (See Matthew 21:6–9.) But, experiencing all this, He was still meek and lowly, and in Him was no sin (1 Pet. 2:21–22). When you are cast down or lifted up, when you are put into the strangest of positions, remember that Christ has made a pilgrimage over the least trodden of our paths and is therefore able to help them that are tempted.

### **Tempted at All Ages**

Further, let me remark that every age has its temptations. Even children, if believers, will discover that there are peculiar snares for them. Christ knew these. It was no small temptation to a twelve-year-old boy to be found sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing

them and answering their questions. It would have caused pride in most boys, and yet Jesus went down to Nazareth and was subject to His parents (Luke 2:51).

It says in Luke 2:52 that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” It would be dangerous to grow in favor with God and man if the word God were not included. To grow in favor constantly with men would be too much of a temptation for most teenagers. It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth; for youth, when honored and esteemed, is too apt to grow self-conceited, vain, and disobedient.

When a young man knows that he will become something great someday, it is not easy to keep him balanced. Suppose that he is born to an estate and knows that when he grows up he will be lord and master and will be popular with everybody. Why, he is apt to be very wayward and self-willed. Now, there were prophecies that went before concerning Mary’s son. They pointed Him out as King of the Jews (Matt. 2:1–2) and a mighty one in Israel. Yet, I do not find that the holy child Jesus was ever lured by His coming greatness into any evil actions. So, teenage believers, you who are like Samuels and Timothys, you can look to Christ and know that He can help you.

It is unnecessary for me to repeat the various afflictions that beat upon Jesus in His full manhood. You who today bear the burden and heat of the day will find an example here. Old age, also, does not need to look elsewhere, for we may view our Redeemer with admiration as He went up to Jerusalem to die. His last moments were obviously near at hand; He knew the temptations of an expected death. He saw death more clearly than any of you, even if your temples are covered with white hair. Yet, whether in life or in death, on Tabor’s summit or on the banks of the river of death, He is still the same—tempted ever, but never sinning; tried always, but never found failing. O Lord, You are able to help those who are tempted. Help us!

I do not need to write more about this. Perhaps I have not mentioned your particular trial, but it may be included in one of the general descriptions. Whatever your trial may be, it cannot be so rare that it is not included somewhere in the temptations of our Lord Jesus Christ. I, therefore, now turn to the second topic of this chapter.

## **CHRIST SUFFERED**

My second point is that as the tempted often suffer, Christ also suffered. Notice, our text does not say, “In that He Himself has also been tempted, He is able to help them that are tempted.” It is better than that. The text tells us that Christ suffered: “In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb. 2:18). Temptation, even when overcome, brings to the true child of God a great deal of suffering.

### **The Shock of Sin**

This suffering consists of two or three things. It lies, mainly, in the shock that sin gives to the sensitive, regenerate nature. A man who is clothed in armor may walk through tearing thorns and brambles without being hurt; but if he takes off his armor and attempts the same journey, how sadly he will be cut and torn. Sin, to the man who is used to it, is no suffering. Being tempted causes him no pain. In fact, temptation frequently yields pleasure to the sinner. To look at the bait is sweet to the fish that plans to swallow it before long. But the child of God, who is spiritually new and alive, shudders at the very thought of sin. He cannot look at sin without abhorrence and without being alarmed at the possibility of falling into an abominable crime.

Now, dear friends, in this case Christ indeed has experience, and it far surpasses ours. His hatred of sin must have been much deeper than ours. A word of blasphemy, a sinful deed, must have cut Him to His very heart. We cannot even comprehend the wretchedness that Jesus must have endured in merely being on earth among the ungodly. For infinite purity to dwell among sinners must be something like the best educated, the most pure, the most amiable person being condemned to live in a den of burglars, blasphemers, and filthy wretches. That man’s life would be misery. No whip or chain would be needed. Merely associating with such people would be pain and torment enough. So, the Lord Jesus must have suffered a vast amount of woe just by being near to sin.

### **The Dread of Temptation**

Suffering, too, comes to the people of God from the dread of a temptation. Dread arises in our hearts as the shadow of the temptation falls upon us, announcing its soon arrival. At times there is more dread in the prospect of a trial than there is in the trial itself. We feel a thousand temptations in fearing one.

Christ knew this. What an awful dread came over Him in the black night of Gethsemane! It was not the cup—it was the fear of drinking it. He cried, “Let this cup pass from me” (Matt. 26:39). He knew how black, how foul, how fiery its contents were; and it was the dread of drinking it that bowed Him to the ground until He sweat, as it were, great drops of blood (Luke 22:44). When you have a similar overwhelming pressure on your spirit in the prospect of a trial, fly to the loving heart of your sympathizing Lord, for He has suffered all this.

### **The Source of Temptation**

Temptation also causes suffering because of its source. Have you ever felt that you would not have minded the temptation if it had not come from where it did? "Oh," you say, "to think that my own friend, my dearly beloved friend, should tempt me!" Perhaps you are a teenager, and you have said, "I think I could bear anything but my father's frown or my mother's sneer." Perhaps you are a husband, and you have said, "My thorn in the flesh is too sharp, for it is an ungodly wife." Or, you are a wife (and this is more frequently the case), and you think there is no temptation like yours, because it is your husband who assaults your religion and who speaks evil of your good.

It makes all the difference where the temptation comes from. If some scoundrel mocks us, we think it honor; but when it is an honored companion, we feel his taunt. A friend can cut under our armor and stab us the more dangerously.

Ah, but the Man of Sorrows knew all this, since it was one of the chosen twelve who betrayed Him. Moreover, "it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief" (Isa. 53:10). To find God to be in arms against us is a huge affliction. "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34) is the very emphasis of woe. Jesus surely has suffered your griefs, regardless of their source.

### **The Fear of Dishonoring God**

I have no doubt, too, that a portion of the suffering of temptation lies in the fact that God's name and honor are often involved in our temptation. Those of us who are in the public eye are sometimes slandered. When the slander is merely against our own personal character, against our modes of speech or habit, we can receive it gratefully and thankfully, blessing God that He has counted us worthy to suffer for His name's sake (Acts 5:41). However, sometimes the attack is very plainly not against us, but against God. People say things that make us cry with the psalmist David, "Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law" (Ps. 119:53).

When direct blasphemies are uttered against the person of Christ, or against the doctrine of His holy Gospel, my heart has been very heavy because I have thought, "If I have opened this dog's mouth against myself, it does not matter; but if I have made him roar against God, then how will I answer, and what will I say?" This has often been the bitterness of it: "If I fall, God's cause is stained. If I slip through the vehemence of this assault, then one of the gates of the church will be carried off by storm. Harm comes not just to me, but to many of the Israel of God." David says this about grieving the saints: "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me" (Ps. 73:16).

Jesus had to suffer for God, for it is written, "The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me" (Rom. 15:3). He was made the target for those arrows that were really shot at God, and so He felt this bitterness of sympathy with His ill-used God.

I cannot, of course, be specific enough to hit on the precise sorrow that you, beloved believer in Christ, are enduring as the result of temptation. But, whatever phase your sorrow may have assumed, this should always be your comfort: Jesus suffered in temptation. He did not merely know temptation as you sometimes have known it, when it has hit you and fallen harmless to the ground, but it festered in His flesh. It did not make Him sin, but it made Him suffer. It did not make Him err, but it caused Him to mourn. Oh, child of God, I do not know a deeper well of purer consolation than this: "He himself hath suffered being tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

## **CHRIST HELPS THE TEMPTED**

Now for the third and last point. Those who are tempted have great need of help; and Christ, having been tempted Himself, is able to help them. Of course, Christ is able to help the tempted because Christ is God. Even if He had never endured any temptation, He would still be able to help the tempted because He is God. However, we are now speaking in our text of Christ as a high priest; we are to regard Him in His complex character as God-man. For Christ is not only God, but man, and not only man, but God. The Christos, the Anointed One, the High Priest of our profession, is, in His complex character, able to help them that are tempted.

### **Because He Was Tempted**

How can He help us? Why, first, the very fact that He was tempted has help in it for us. If we had to walk through the darkness alone, we would know the very extremity of misery. But, having a companion, we have comfort; having such a companion, we have joy.

Darkness surrounds me, and the path is miry, and I sink in it and can find no foothold. But, I plunge onward, desperately set on reaching my journey's end. It worries me that I am alone. I can see nothing, but suddenly I hear a voice that says, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil" (Ps. 23:4). I cry out, "Who is there?" and an answer comes back to me: "I, 'the faithful and true witness' (Rev. 3:14), the 'Alpha and Omega' (Rev. 1:8), the sufferer who was 'despised and rejected of men' (Isa. 53:3), I lead the way." Then, at once, light surrounds me, and there is a rock beneath my feet. If Christ my Lord has been here, then the way must be safe and must lead to the desired end. The very fact that He has suffered, then, consoles His people.

### **Because He Was Not Destroyed**



But, further, the fact that He has suffered without being destroyed is inestimably comforting to us. Think about a block of ore just ready to be put into the furnace. Suppose that block of ore could look into the flames and could see the blast as it blows the coals to a vehement heat. If that ore could speak, it would say, "Ah, how awful that I should ever be put into such a blazing furnace as that! I will be burnt up! I will be melted with the slag! I will be utterly consumed!" But, suppose another lump all bright and glistening could lie by its side and say, "No, no, you are just like I was, but I went through the fire and lost nothing. See how bright I am! See how I have survived all the flames!" Why, that piece of ore would anticipate, rather than dread, being exposed to the purifying heat. It would anticipate coming out all bright and lustrous like its companion.

I see You, Son of Mary, bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh (Gen. 2:23). You have felt the flames, but You are not destroyed. There is no smell of fire on You. Your heel has been bruised, but You have broken the Serpent's head (Gen. 3:15). There is no scar, nor spot, nor injury in You. You have survived the conflict. Therefore, I, bearing Your name, purchased with Your blood (Acts 20:28), and as dear to God as You are dear to Him, I will survive the conflict, too. I will tread the coals with confidence and bear the heat with patience. Christ's conquest gives me comfort, for I will conquer, too.

### **Because He Was a Great Gainer**

Please remember, too, that Christ, in going through the suffering of temptation, not only did not lose anything, but He gained much. Through suffering, He was a great gainer. It is written that it pleased God "to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Heb. 2:10). It was through His suffering that He obtained the mediatory glory that now crowns His head. If He had never carried the cross, He would have never worn that crown. (It is a transcendently bright and glorious crown that He now wears as King in Zion and as leader of His people, whom He has redeemed by blood.) Had He not carried the cross, He would still have been God over all and blessed forever; however, He could never have been extolled as the God-man Mediator unless He had been obedient even unto death (Phil. 2:8). Therefore, He was a gainer by His suffering.

Glory be to His name, we get comfort from this, too! For we also will be gainers by our temptations. We will come up out of Egypt enriched, as it is written, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold" (Ps. 105:37). We will come forth out of our trials with great treasures. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life" (James 1:12). The deeper our sorrows, the louder our song. The more terrible our toil, the sweeter our rest. The more bitter the wormwood, the more delightful the wine of consolation. We will have glory for our shame; we will have honor for our contempt; we will have songs for our sufferings; and we will have thrones for our tribulations.

### **Because He Sends His Grace to Help Us**

Moreover, because Christ has suffered temptation, He is able to help us who are tempted by sending His grace to help us. He was always able to send grace; but now as God and man, He is able to send just the right grace at the right time and in the right place. A doctor may have all the drugs that can be gathered, but an abundance of medicine does not make him a qualified practitioner. If, however, he has gone himself and seen the case, then he knows just at what crisis of the disease a certain medicine is needed. The medications are good, but the wisdom to use the medications—this is even more precious.

Now, "it pleased the Father that in [Christ] should all fulness dwell" (Col. 1:19). But, where would the Son of Man earn His diploma and gain the skills to use the fullness correctly? Beloved, He won it by experience. He knows what sore temptations mean, for He has felt the same. You know, if we had comforting grace given to us at the wrong point in our temptation, it would tempt us more than help us. It is just like certain medicines: given to the patient at one period of the disease, they would worsen the malady, though the same medicine would cure him if administered a little later.

Now, Christ knows how to send His comfort in the nick of time. He gives His help exactly when it will not be a superfluity. He sends His joy when we will not spend it upon our own lusts. How does He do this? Why, He recalls His own experience; He has passed through it all. "There appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him" (Luke 22:43). That angel came just when he was needed. Jesus knows when to send His angelic messenger to strengthen you, when to use the correcting rod, and when to refrain and say, "I have forgiven you. Go in peace."

### **Because He Prays for Us**

I will not write much more on this subject. Having suffered Himself, having been tempted, Christ knows how to help us by His prayers for us. There are some people whose prayers are of no use to us because they do not know what to ask for. Christ is the intercessor for His people; He has success in His intercession; but how does He know what to ask for? How can He know this better than by His own trials? He has suffered temptation.

You hear some believers pray with such power, such unction, such fervor. Why? Part of the reason is that they pray from experience—they pray out of their own lives; they just tell the great deep waters over which they themselves sail. Now, the prayer of our Great High Priest in heaven is wonderfully comprehensive. It is drawn from His own life, and it takes in every sorrow and every pang that

ever rent a human heart, because He Himself has suffered temptation. I know you feel safe in committing your case into the hand of such an intercessor, for He knows the precise mercy for which to ask. And, when He asks for it, He knows how to word it so that the mercy will surely come at the right time.

Ah, dear friends, it is not in my power to bring out the depth that lies in my text. However, I am certain of this: when He causes you to go through the deep waters, when you are made to pass through furnace after furnace, you will never need a better support or provision than my text: "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). Hang this text up in your house; read it every day; take it before God in prayer every time you bend your knee. You will find it to be like the widow's cruse of oil, which did not go dry, and like her handful of meal, which did not run out (1 Kings 17:16). It will sustain you as much a year from now as it does when you begin to feed on it today.

Will my text not suit the awakened sinner as well as the saint? Perhaps you are a timid soul that cannot say that you are saved. Yet, here is a loophole of comfort for you, you poor troubled one who is not yet able to get a hold of Jesus: "He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18). Go and tell Him you are tempted—tempted, perhaps, to despair, tempted to self-destruction, tempted to go back to your old sins, tempted to think that Christ cannot save you. Go and tell Him that He Himself has suffered temptation and that He is able to help you. Believe that He will, and He will, for you can never believe in the love and goodness of my Lord too much. He will be better than your faith to you. If you can trust Him with all your heart to save you, He will do it. If you believe He is able to put away your sin, He will do it. Only honor Him by attributing to Him a good character of grace; you cannot give Him too good a name.

**Trust Him, He will not deceive you,  
Though you hardly on Him lean;  
He will never, never leave you,  
Nor will let you quite leave Him.**

Receive, then, the blessing. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God our Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you forever. Amen and Amen. **Spurgeon, C. H. Power in the Blood**

## **The Helper of the Tempted Johnson Barker**

In promise (Ge 3:15) and in fact (Mt. 4:1) the Saviour's work from the very first is associated with the tempted ; and put His mission in any words you will, you cannot hide the link which unites Christ unto the tempted, and the tempted unto Christ. Wherefore did we need a Saviour, if not because we were overborne with evil, and of ourselves had not strength enough to cope with it ? A Christ who could not help me in my temptations would be no Saviour to me. He might startle me with revelations, astonish me by works, amaze me with power, awe with holiness, instruct me by teaching ; but if in the infirmity of my moral weakness He could not stand by my side, put His shoulder to my shoulder, and help me to fight the daily battle of my daily life, whatever else He might be to me, He could never be my Saviour; for it is only as we are made strong to resist and overcome temptation that we can be saved (**Ed**: I interpret this as a reference to "present tense salvation" - progressive sanctification - see Three Tenses of Salvation).

This relation of Christianity to the tempted is, in fact, one of the secrets of its hold upon the human heart. To be a Christian at all we must start from the consciousness of weakness (**Ed**: Amen! To experience victory in times of hot temptation, we must jettison all hopes of help from self, consciously, volitionally casting off all vestiges of "self-reliance" which is the "*antagonistic antithesis*" of faith/trust/belief! cp 2Cor 5:7-note); and the religion of Christ is the religion of the strong, only by being first the religion of the weak. Christ is the Helper of the

tempted, by sympathy learned in the endurance of the same temptations from which He came to save. Some things can only be learned by experience (cp Heb 5:8-note). Sympathy is one. There were some things which were not Christ's to know, until like us, by bitter human experience. He had learned them for Himself. He shared our experience of temptation in its full completeness. Wherever we are tempted, so was He (Heb 4:15-note)— through the senses, the appetite, the reason, the imagination, the affection, the ambition, the will — tempted wherever there seemed a point of vantage for the tempter.

**The three temptations on the threshold  
of His public work were representative.**

They were representative of temptations in His unrecorded history, of the number and intensity of which we can form no idea. **We cannot too fully accept the great doctrine of the completeness of our Lord's humanity.** By sympathy, learned through the

temptations of a common human experience, Christ is the Helper of the tempted.

But sympathy does not seem enough ; we want strength. Will this sympathy of Christ bring us strength? It will. The sphere of sympathy is spiritual, and within that sphere there is nowhere to be found such strength as that which comes from sympathy. Its power is electric. Men, naturally cowards, by sympathy have been made brave, and there is no trial of human suffering which sympathy has not enabled men and women courageously to bear. Amongst the world's regenerating influences there is none for a moment comparable to the sympathy of Christ. For the sympathy of the strong helps always to strengthen the weak. If I wanted to strengthen a morally weak man, I would link him with a man as strong as he was weak, quite sure that the companionship would act on him like a tonic (cp Pr 27:17), or be to him like the sweet, fresh breath of mountain air'. And thus it is that Christ, in His great sinless strength, is the Helper of the tempted. Let this be no empty doctrine to you, no mere point of theology, or article in a creed, void of all reality and force (**Ed: Doctrine** always precedes **Duty! Belief** in truth about Jesus' Humanity, will undergird and enable **Behavior** in accord with that truth!). Let it be a living truth, as vital as your own heart's blood. It will nerve you (**Ed: innervate, energize you**) for mastery over the infirmities of your nature. It will inspire you to resist the evils of an evil world. And it will help you to victories of faith and love, to conquests of conscience, and of character like unto your Lord's (**Ed: Cp 1Cor 11:1, 1Peter 2:21, 1John 2:6**). — Johnson Barker LL.B.

## Experience the Secret of Moral Power " He himself hath suffered being tempted."

The reality of our Lord's human experiences is constantly enforced by the apostles. In the early days of the Church there was a tendency to present the Divinity of Christ in such a way as to imperil the truth of His real, flesh and blood, humanity. It was thought derogatory to a Divine Saviour to represent Him as sharing the common woes of the human lot. But unless we see worthily our Lord's veritable humanity, it must be impossible for us to understand how

He can be a power of redemption to us.

**He is our Saviour  
only through His manhood.**

**I. Moral beings can only learn through experience.** — A moral being is not intellectual only. He has a further sphere of feeling and emotion. He is a being with a will, which can be influenced by his mind, but is much more influenced by principles and feelings. And experience alone affects the feelings. See how a moral being is made, and is developed. Life does it ; experience does it : learning can do but a little of it. Christ could not have taken rank with us as a moral being if He had not shared the experience which makes us moral beings. "In all points tempted like as we are."

**II. Moral beings get power to help one another only through a common experience** — It is somewhat strikingly said of Tennyson that he had no experience of vice, and so all the sins in his poetry are human frailties. It is constantly observed that the best religious workers in any class of society are persons belonging to the class who have full experience of the class. If Christ was to gain moral power to help man, He must have the experience of man, of all that is essential to man, not of all that is accidental to sin. The experience of man's conflicts was essential, but not the experience of man's defeats. It is not essential to man to fail in the moral struggle. Illustrate from man's moral power to (1) sympathize with ; (2) to strengthen; (3) to advise; (4) to deliver, his brother. He can only do it out of experience. This must be true of Christ as the typical moral Helper of humanity. ([The Preacher's complete homiletical commentary](#))

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John MacDuff...

### FIRMNESS IN TEMPTATION

**"Let this mind** (present tense) be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." —Php 2:5

Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan!"—Mt 4:10.

There is an dreadful intensity of meaning in the words, as applied to Jesus, "He suffered, being tempted!" (Heb 2:18) Though incapable of sin, there was, in the refined sensibilities of His holy nature, that which made temptation unspeakably fearful. What must it have been to confront the Arch-traitor?—to stand face to face with the foe of His throne, and His universe? But the "prince of this world" came, and found "nothing in Him." Billow after billow of Satanic violence spent their fury, in vain, on the Living Rock!

Reader! you have still the same malignant enemy to contend with; assailing you in a thousand insidious forms; astonishingly adapting his assaults to your circumstances, your temperament, your mental bias, your master passion! There is no place, where "Satan's seat" is not; The whole world lies in the Wicked one.—(1John 5:19) He has his whispers for the ear of childhood; hoary age is not inaccessible to his wiles. "All this will I give you"—is still his bribe to deny Jesus and to "mind earthly things." He will meet you in the crowd; he will follow you to the solitude; his is a sleepless vigilance!

Are you bold in repelling him as your Master was? Are you ready with the retort to every foul suggestion, "Away from me, Satan!" Cultivate a tender sensitiveness about sin. The finest barometers are the most sensitive. Whatever be your besetting frailty—whatever bitter or baleful passion you are conscious aspires to the mastery—watch it, crucify it, "Nail it to your Lord's cross." You may despise "the day of small things"—the Great Adversary does not. He knows the power of littles—that little by little consumes and eats out the vigor of the soul. And once the downwards movement in the spiritual life begins, who can predict where it may end?—the going on "from weakness to weakness," instead of "from strength to strength." Make no compromises; never join in the ungodly amusement, or venture on the questionable path, with the plea, "It does me no harm." The Israelites, on entering Canaan, instead of obeying the Divine injunction of extirpating their enemies, made a hollow truce with them.—What was the result? Years upon years of tedious warfare. "They were scourges in their sides and thorns in their eyes!" It is quaintly, but truthfully said by an old writer, "Sin indulged, in the conscience, is like Jonah in the ship, which causes such a tempest, that the conscience is like a troubled sea, whose waters cannot rest."—(Thomas Brooks.)

"Keep," then, "your heart with all diligence," (or as it is in the forcible original Hebrew, "keep your heart above all keeping,") "for out of it are the issues of life" (Pr 4:23-note). Let this ever be our preservative against temptation,

"How would Jesus have acted here? Would He not have recoiled, like the sensitive plant, from the remotest contact with sin? Can I think of dishonoring Him by tampering with His enemy—incurring from His own lips the bitter reflection of injured love, 'I am wounded in the house of my friends'?"

He tells us the secret of our preservation and safety,

"Simon! Simon! Satan has desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not!" (Luke 22:31,32)

"Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." (1Peter 4:1)

**(FIRMNESS IN TEMPTATION)**