

TESTING AND TEMPTATION IN JAMES 1
IN LIGHT OF A WORD STUDY

by

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Because testing and temptation are a constant part of a believer's life, a better understanding of them should enable him to deal more effectively with them. James 1:2-14 is often regarded as a key passage in demonstrating how these situations affect a person. Opinions concerning exactly what is being dealt with in this passage is by no means unanimous. For this reason, a word study of the noun and the verb used by James was undertaken. That word study attempted to survey the usages of *πειράζω* and *πειρασμός* in both the Septuagint and the New Testament.

It would appear that this word group primarily is descriptive of a testing situation, with the main emphasis on exposing or revealing the constitution of the object tested. However, the outcome of that test remains uncertain. Also included, due to usage within the Septuagint, is a stress on affliction and pressure. Such expansion of the meaning was due to those means often being used to test someone. That a hostile element is easily attached to the word is acknowledged. But that fact does not necessarily imply that the negative concept of entice to sin need be considered as intrinsic to the word within either the Septuagint or New Testament. There would appear to be some degree of expanding these words in usage to more specifically imply enticement to sin within the New Testament. But such usage is shown not to have become predominant.

Within James the Septuagint meanings of testing and trial appear to explain best what James is dealing with. He begins by presenting the proper response of joy in the face of trials. He desires all to show themselves approved. Yet he acknowledges that some will fail. But those who do fail are not to accuse God of testing them beyond their limit. God is not to be challenged by evil men in this manner. Nor does God test to the point that failure becomes inevitable with responsibility for failure, at least in part, due to God. Rather each man fails because of his own inner weaknesses. It is in the latter part of 1:13 or 14 that the emphasis shifts from testing to temptation. This shift in meaning is a gradual one, rather than a sharp break between the usage of the noun and the verb.

James is concerned with a man's response to testing circumstances. He desires each one to be called blessed. But he allows no man to evade total responsibility for failure.

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INTRODUCTION

When this project was first begun, it was hoped that a definitive study could be made of James 1:2-14 as it relates to testing and temptation. It was this writer's conviction that there was a sharp break in meaning between the usage of the noun and the usage of the verb. This was felt to be due to a play on words in which James indicated the shift in meaning by a change from the noun to the cognate verb form.

As a brief survey of the commentators will show, not all would hold to the above interpretation. Some would view temptation as being present, even prominent, throughout the passage. One of their major arguments concerns the need for unity within the passage.

To gain a clearer perspective on the meaning of *πειράζω* and *πειρασμός* a survey of their usages in the LXX and the New Testament was undertaken. The results of that survey comprises the bulk of this paper. It is the conclusion of this paper that the usage within the LXX deals essentially with the concept of testing to expose or that of experimentation. Both God and man can be the object of this action. Beside this demotative meaning, the connotative meaning stressing the often used means to test came into use. Generally expressed that meaning is to be afflicted or under

pressure. It is this writer's opinion based on this study that temptation (meaning enticement to sin) is almost absent from the LXX usages. Within the New Testament, there appears to be at times a greater emphasis on hostility in testing, often being able to be translated assault. There also are certain passages where enticement to sin is clearly present. However, the meaning of temptation is neither the central nor even the prominent meaning. For comparative purposes a brief study of δοκιμάζω will also be done. Although there is a great degree of overlap in meaning, it would appear that δοκιμάζω carries a more positive emphasis in that the desired outcome is one of approval or demonstration of genuineness. On the other hand, πειράζω remains uncertain as to outcome, retaining more the idea of exposure or experimentation. This allows for its usage to describe circumstances which try a person.

Having come to these conclusions, the writer proceeded to apply them to an interpretation of James 1:2-14. Because of the apparent familiarity of James with the LXX, such an approach seemed reasonable. Due primarily to the source of these testings being unspecified and the exhortation to account them joy, this writer has concluded that the noun usages (vs.2 &12) should be translated "test" or "trial." The essential thrust of the passage is that the believer is to respond with joy in the face of pressure afflictive circumstances. Facing the question of the verb, the writer

asked if it is necessary to see a sharp shift in meaning or if a more gradual shift is permissible. An attempt has been made to support the belief that rather than dealing with temptation throughout these verses (vs. 13-14), James is dealing with the excuse of a believer that God has tested him to the brink of breaking. The question of who is responsible when a man sins under apparently extreme circumstances is under consideration. The shift to being enticed to sin does not really surface until the latter part of verse thirteen or in fourteen. James says that any inducement to failure is from within the man and not from without. Therefore all responsibility for sin is the individual's.

This interpretation does not radically alter the passage's meaning. Rather it is an attempt to clarify what James was dealing with. He was not so much concerned with a man blaming God for temptation as with a man attempting to excuse himself in part for his failure.¹

¹Unless otherwise noted all Biblical quotes are from the New American Standard Bible.

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED INTERPRETATIONS

In the first chapter of James the noun *πειρασμός* is used once in verse two and once in verse twelve. The verb *πειράζω* is used three times in verse thirteen and once in verse fourteen. In the standard English translations available there is a slight variance of approach to the translation of these terms. The King James and Douay versions use the English words "temptation" and "tempt" throughout. The Revised Standard, New Scofield, New American Standard, New English, and New International versions render the noun of verse two as "trials." In verse twelve only the New Scofield translates the noun as "temptation," the rest retain "trials." In verses thirteen and fourteen all but the New English version translate the verbs "tempt." The New English in verse thirteen reads, "No one under trial or temptation . . ." and then translates the remaining verbs by "tempt."

When the interpretations of the commentators are consulted the question concerning the exact content of the noun is debated. Does it refer to trials alone or does it also include temptations? The importance of determining this content rests mainly on James's exhortation to consider what the noun includes as joy;

that is, what is the believer to consider joy? Just the basically morally neutral circumstances that test a man's character? Or is he also to account as joy the tendency within him to respond to temptations? Providentially all situations come from God. But what is His relation to temptations?

To resolve what exactly James intended to emphasize by using these words may give insight into his thinking of a believer's relationship to the world system in which he lives.

Suggestions Which Include Temptation

Within The Noun

Some authors include with varying degree of emphases both the concepts of temptation and testing in the noun.

Oesterly sees throughout this context enticement as being prominent.

Πειρασμός obviously means allurement to wrong doing, and this would appear to be the most natural meaning here on account of the way in which temptation is analyzed, though the sense of external trials in the shape of calamity would of course not be excluded.¹

For him, external pressures are included with temptation of the internal nature. Later in his explanation of the thought he restricts the meaning of temptation specifically

¹W. E. Oesterley, "The General Epistle of James," in Vol. V of Expositor's Greek Testament, ed. by W. Robertson Nicoll, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 421.

to lust in verse thirteen as opposed to this more general temptation meant by the noun usages.² He notes that such an interpretation of the noun does appear contradictory to the message of Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:4 as well as Matthew 26:41 (and parallels) when the exhortation of rejoicing in them is considered. This is due, he says, to the writer's Judaism being stronger than his Christianity. Judaism with its doctrine of free-will and works allowed the Jews to regard temptation in a less serious light than a Christian who believed in his own helplessness facing such things.³

Alford also sees both temptation and trial throughout the context. For him the noun of verse two denotes temptations as well as "any kind of distresses which

²Ibid., p. 428.

³Ibid., p. 421. This is based on his view that St. James did not write all of this book. Rather reflected here is the Jewish doctrine of "Yetser hara" in which in the intertestamental period the belief grew that within man were two tendencies, one towards good "Yetser ha-tob" (יֵצֶר טוֹב), the other towards evil "Yetser Hara" (יֵצֶר רָע). Most would not ascribe the creation of the evil tendency in man directly to God, but others come close in suggestion to it. In verse 13 James will refute this latter implication (p. 408-11). Oesterley's point seems to be that though Christians normally had a far more cautious attitude about temptation than Jewish theology would have fostered, verses two through twelve reflect the latter freer attitude. Then in verses thirteen and following the stricter attitude is stated. For further discussion of "Yetser hara" see also Louis Jacobs, "Sin," Encyclopaedia Judaica, ed. by Cecil Roth (16 vols.: New York: MacMillan Company, 1971), XIV, pp. 1587-93. It is a brief discussion of Jewish views with a bibliography.

happen to us, from without or from within, which in God's purpose serve as trials of us."⁴ In commenting on verse thirteen he states:

There is no warrant for changing in the slightest degree the reference of the word. The tentatio is a trying of a man by the solicitation of evil: whether that evil be the terror of external danger or whatever it be, all πειράζεσθαι by means of it arises not from God, but from ourselves--our own ἐπιθυμία. God ordains the temptation, overrules the temptation, but does not tempt, is not the spring of the solicitation to sin.⁵

Parry states that under consideration in verses two through eighteen is "temptation solely as temptation to sin."⁶ He views such an interpretation as necessitated by the unity of this section of 1:2-18. If James had considered allurement to evil in verses twelve and following, it would appear that the same would be under consideration in verse two.⁷

It is of course possible that in v. 2 πειρασμός may be used in a more comprehensive sense than in vv. 12ff., and may include both the trials of external conditions and the allurement to evil. It is indeed always difficult to define the exact suggestion of any word which is used in diverse associations; and it is peculiarly difficult with this word because of moral terms and notions. It may be that the effect of external conditions upon character should be included in the term. At the same time the dominant

⁴Henry Alford, The Greek Testament, Vol. IV. Revised by E. F. Harrison, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), p. 275.

⁵Ibid., p. 280.

⁶John Parry, A Discussion of the General Epistle of St. James (London: C. J. Clay and Sons: 1903), p. 13.

⁷Ibid., p. 32.

idea, as determined by the context, is that of "allurement to evil," and that as lying within the complexities of a man's personal nature.⁸

Parry does recognize the difficulty of understanding temptation as an occasion of joy for a believer. Yet, he counters that the joy desired is that comparable to the feeling of a warrior who has faced an enemy or to that of a servant when asked to do a hard task by his master.⁹

The Christian is told to rejoice when he finds himself face to face with temptation, because his faith, if genuine, has its proper effect in endurance. The additional assurance which temptation thus brings with it is a proper ground for joy.¹⁰

That such a restriction of the meaning of *πειρασμός* is unusual is acknowledged. But Parry views as proof of it the direct antithesis between verse thirteen and Exodus 16:4, Judges 2:22, Deut. 7:19 where a "trying" of Israel is attributed to God.¹¹

More recently Adamson has defended the view that both temptation and painful bodily affliction are in view here. Again this is based on a recognition of the unity of the passage. Support is also found in the use of *ποικίλος* (diverse) which allows for both pleasant allurements of

⁸Ibid., pp. 32-33.

⁹Ibid., pp. 33-34.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹Ibid., p. 35.

the flesh as well as painful afflictions.¹²

Suggestions Which Exclude

Temptation From the Noun

The majority of commentators would make a differentiation between the noun and the verb as to content.¹³

Generally the basis for the distinction of usage between the noun (vs. 2, 12) and the verb (vs. 13-14) is that of a distinction between external circumstances which are essentially pressures from without and internal desires which are basically enticements to sin. The actual explanation of such a distinction is not made easy due to the recognition that what is often an external trial

¹²James B. Adamson, The Epistle of James in The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. by F. F. Bruce, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 28. Arthur Carr, The General Epistle of St. James in Cambridge Greek Testament for Schools and Colleges, ed. by J. A. Robinson (Cambridge: University Press, 1896), pp. 11, 17-18. Carr probably should be considered under this view, but his comments are so brief that it is hard to be certain.

¹³This survey in no way intends to be complete or to exhaustively represent all the distinctions made in the interpretive approaches to this passage. Such a survey is beyond the scope of this paper. There would appear to be a justification however for suggesting that the two major approaches are the two presented in this paper. Some authors are less precise in their restrictions of meanings than others. But most of those surveyed generally fit into one of these two approaches. One exception is A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol. VI, (Nashville, Tenn. Broadman Press, 1933), p. 11. He sees trials in verse two only, while stating that "the evil sense appears in verse 12 (clearly in peirazo in verse 13)."

because of man's sin nature becomes a temptation. Barnes suggests that the noun:

. . . is used in the sense of trials, to wit, by persecution, poverty, calamity of any kind. These cannot be said to be direct inducements or allurements to sin, but they try the faith, and they show whether he who is tried is disposed to adhere to his faith in God, or whether he will apostatize. They so far coincide with temptation, properly so called, as to test the religion of men. They differ from temptations, properly so called, in that they are not brought before the mind for the express purpose of inducing men to sin. In this sense it is true that God never tempts men, vs. 13, 14.¹⁴

Others who hold to this view include Ross,¹⁵ Moffatt,¹⁶ Mayor,¹⁷ Ropes,¹⁸ Seesemann,¹⁹ Lenski,²⁰

¹⁴Albert Barnes, Notes, Explanatory and Practical, On the New Testament, (11 vols.: London: Blackie & Son, 1872), vol. 10, p. 17.

¹⁵Alexander Ross, The Epistles of James and John, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, ed. by F. F. Bruce, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954), pp. 26-36.

¹⁶James Moffatt, The General Epistles of James, Peter, and Judas, (New York: Harper & Brothers, n.d.), p. 8.

¹⁷Joseph B. Mayor, The Epistle of St. James, 3d ed., (Macmillan and Company, 1913; reprinted, Minneapolis, Minn.: Klock & Klock Christian Publishers, 1977), pp. 33-4, 192-3.

¹⁸James Hardy Ropes, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle of St. James, The International Critical Commentary, ed. by F. Brown, et al., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 133.

¹⁹Heinrich Seesemann, "πειρα," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VI, ed. by G. Friedrich, trans. and ed. by G. W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 29.

²⁰R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and of the Epistle of James, (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Publishing House, 1966), pp. 523-26, 536-43.

Huther,²¹ and Dibelius.²²

A variety of justifications are presented for such an approach. The majority rest upon the sense of the text shifting from what can be rejoiced in toward that which is man's responsibility for arousing within himself. "The substantive *πειρασμός* denotes the objective trial, the verb *πειράζομαι* subjective temptation."²³ "That both meanings can be employed by the same writer in neighboring contexts may be illustrated by the use of the English trial in its several senses."²⁴ Certain pertinent arguments from various men will be considered in the last chapter when the implications based on the word study for the interpretation of this passage will be presented.²⁵

²¹J. E. Huther, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John and Jude, third German ed., trans. by P. Gloag, D. B. Croom, & C. Irwin (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1887), pp. 35, 49-50.

²²Martin Dibelius, A Commentary on the Epistle of James, trans. from eleventh revised German ed. by M. A. Williams, Hermeneia--A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, ed. by Helmut Koester (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), p. 71

²³Mayor, James, p. 50.

²⁴Ropes, James, p. 133.

²⁵It should be recognized that some men, (such as Dibelius, James, pp. 1-11, 69-74), support the distinction of meaning between the noun and the verb on the basis that the sayings contained in James are really disconnected sayings of general admonition strung together. James is considered as paraenesis similar to Greek and Jewish paraenetical traditions. There is thus no problem in seeing a sharp distinction in meaning between the noun and the verb. Each saying is totally unrelated to the others except for the

forced connection of similar words which are merely external catch words rather than integrated parts of a whole treatise. But more conservative men disagree with such an approach. D. Edmond Hiebert, "The unifying theme of the Epistle of James," Bibliotheca Sacra, 135:539 (July-September, 1978), pp. 221-31, suggests that there is unity. A majority of the above commentators would not go so far as Dibelius in separating the parts of the book of James. They would view the shift as a play on words by James. This writer views Dibelius's assertions as damaging to the authenticity of the book, and therefore to be rejected. That James is difficult to unify is acknowledged. Also consult Euan Fry, "The Testing of Faith, A Study of the Structure of the Book of James," Practical Papers for the Bible Translator, 29:4 (October 1978), pp. 427-35, whose study into the major themes of the book reveals a surprising amount of unity.

CHAPTER II

WORD STUDIES TO GIVE PERSPECTIVE

Although each author is free to use words in personally defined meanings, the general practice is to use words in normally accepted meanings derived from preceeding usage with which he is familiar. This is not to say that meanings do not shift or expand. Rather, the history of words is the realization that meanings change due to associational changes and emphases. When an author does use a word to suggest a new connotative meaning, generally he is not free to greatly alter the usage unless he explicitly defines the word within the text if he desires to communicate clearly with his readers.

It seems reasonable that the above principle would apply to the study of James. Therefore, after it has been established that a study of the LXX meanings of these words is a legitimate approach to understanding their usage in James, these words will be studied within the LXX. Admittedly, there is a degree of subjectivity in any attempt to classify word usage. It is hoped, however, that the reader will be led to the following conclusions.

First, these words are basically neutral concerning moral intentions in secular Greek. They convey the idea of testing or experimentation to reveal, usually with an uncertain outcome. The association of assault or hostility can also be seen in certain related words.

Second, these words as used in the LXX, due to the context, gain an expanded usage in that religious context. That is not equal to suggesting that these words gain a moral overtone, such as enticement to sin. As will be seen, these words retain the idea of testing when used of both God and man. The emphasis that is gained is upon the circumstances within which this test takes place. By usage the means of testing, i.e. the matrix of the test, will also come to be connoted by these words. But the original denotative meaning of testing will not be obscured.

When the transition is made from the LXX to the New Testament, it appears that the LXX influenced the word usage. This writer will suggest that several passages where these words are usually translated as tempt (meaning entice to sin) instead deal with the circumstances of pressure which test a man and may or may not become enticement to sin. Again a degree to subjectivity in classification is admitted. In some usages, the hostility of the initiator will convey the meaning of tempt. These however appear to be far less

than would be assumed from the English translations. This meaning of tempt would appear to be derived in large part from the context. The major point to be considered is that while temptation may be one of the meanings of this word group, it is not the primary one.

For comparative purposes to define more clearly the emphasis, a limited word study of *δοκιμάζω* will also be considered. This will help limit the definition of the *πειράζω* group by contrasting them with a synonym.

Justification for a Study of the LXX Meanings

The legitimacy of an appeal to the LXX usage of these words must be considered due to the controversy over the authorship of the book. If the author of the book is accepted as being James the brother of Christ, how much Greek could he have been familiar with? Was he fluent enough in the language not only to understand basic meanings, but also connotative ones which would differentiate one synonym from another? If James could not have known Greek then a dilemma needs to be faced. By his not knowing Greek he could not have chosen one Greek word out of several synonyms with any great degree of feel for the meaning of that word as apart from the group. This would render a LXX word study fruitless. Or, if he did write in his own language, then the Greek before us is the work of a translator who may not be any more inspired than were the LXX translators or Jerome. This would make a LXX word

study profitable only to give us an understanding of the translator's meaning.

This very issue of James's incapability to compose the level of Greek seen in the book has been used by several as a strong argument against his authorship. Similar arguments are advanced against Peter authoring I Peter. Both books show a fluent Greek style and familiarity with the LXX. Some wishing to retain James as author have suggested the help of a secretary who edited James's poor Greek.¹ As Sevenster notes, where does the editing cease to be that and become authorship when essential meanings hinge upon word plays, alliterations, and connectives.² Ropes's approach is typical of this

¹For an excellent extended discussion of this very issue see Sevenster who cites both authors who argue against and for the authorship on the basis of the Greek as well as those who support the theory of a secretary. J. N. Sevenster, Do You Know Greek? How Much Greek Could the First Jewish Christians Have Known? Supplements to Novum Testamentum, Vol. XIX, ed. by W. C. van Unnik (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1968), pp. 2-5, 9-14.

²"If one considers this more cultivated Greek impossible in the mouth of James, the Lord's Brother, one must then ascribe it to the Hellenistic member of the congregation on whom James called for assistance. But in that case how far did his instructions go? It is unlikely that he gave him all those often very short pericopes as subjects. And did the Hellenistic scholar of Greek arrange them in such a way that they were linked together by key-word combinations? Sometimes the word-plays and alliterations are also of great significance for the context of the short pericopes. Did James give him instructions on this point? It is very difficult to imagine all this unless James only provided him with a very few summary indications and for the rest left him completely at liberty to work them out himself. But then the epistle would practically be the work of the secretary." Ibid. pp. 13-14.

rejection of James's authorship.

Not only is the epistle written in a Greek style better than that of most writers of the N.T., but the writer shows a contact with Greek modes of public preaching and with Greek ideas and illustrations which would not be expected in a Galilean peasant whose experience of the world, even in the period of his broadest activity, came through his leadership of the Christians at Jerusalem.³

This has led some to seek an underlying Aramaic original as this book's basis.⁴ Yet the originality of the Greek text can be maintained by lack of definite proof to the contrary as well as the intrinsic part in meaning played by such rhetorical styles as play on words and onomato-poetic elements. Dibelius, after considering many of the Semitisms often cited, concludes that they reflect a Hellenistic tendency which is not actually contrary to Greek usage due to the influence of the LXX. They are not individual influences on the author's part, but reflections of culture.⁵

Opposed to a rejection of James's authorship and for the legitimacy of his capability to be selective of

³Ropes, James, p. 50.

⁴John Wordsworth, "The Corbey St. James, and its Relation to Other Latin Versions, and to the Original Language of the Epistle," vol. I of Studia Biblica (Oxford: Clarendon, 1885), p. 142ff. and F. C. Burkitt, Christian Beginnings (London: University Press, 1924), p. 69-70, cited in Dibelius, p. 37, fn. 128.

⁵Dibelius, James, p. 36-7. Theodor Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, trans. from the third German Publications, 1953), I, pp. 118-19.

his Greek words is the evidence which shows that within Palestine during the first century A.D. Greek was in as general use as Hebrew and Aramaic. Arguments as to which of the three predominated may no longer be valid, as it appears all three were used in common by the Jews.⁶

Archeological evidence in support includes the finds of ossuaries⁷ on Mt. Olivet predating the Jewish war (A.D. 66-73) with all three languages being nearly equal in representation.⁸ Yadin's find near the Dead Sea of fifteen letters as well as contracts and receipts from the Bar-Kokhba revolt show equal familiarity with all three languages.⁹ This is in Southern Palestine near the center of Judaism. In comparison, Galilee has usually been considered to have been more hellenized due to its proximity near Decapolis and its relation to trade routes.¹⁰

⁶Robert H. Gundry, "The Language Milieu of First Century Palestine: Its Bearing on the Authenticity of the Gospel Tradition," Journal of Biblical Literature, 83:4 (December 1964), p. 405.

⁷An ossuary is a box or chest into which the bones of the dead were gathered up after decomposition had taken place in the family tomb. Usually there was an inscription to identify the bones, often with a patronymic, occasionally a statement of status or occupation. cf. J. P. Kane, "The Ossuary Inscriptions of Jerusalem", Journal of Semitic Studies 23:2 (Autumn 1978) pp. 268-82.

⁸Gundry, "Language Milieu of Palestine", p. 405.

⁹Ibid., p. 406.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 406-7. Meyer's article on Galilee also substantiates the hellenistic tendencies present in this region during this time. He suggests that Galilee should be divided between Upper and Lower regions when the cultural patterns

Argyle cites Krauss's word list of terms which appear to be Hebrew and Aramaic transcriptions of Greek words in use in Palestine during this time. Especially significant are such terms as could relate to carpentry. To suggest that a boy growing up in Galilee where the majority of the population was Gentile and Greek-speaking would not be familiar with Greek is to be unrealistic. Certainly Jesus and his brothers would have done business with Gentiles as well as with Jews.¹¹

It is now becoming apparent that first century Palestine was not divided into sharply segmented language groups. That James should be capable of using good

are considered. Jesus' career was to a large degree spent in Lower Galilee (Nazareth, Nain, Cana, Capernaum, etc.). "Jesus, then, would have been at home in the more cosmopolitan atmosphere of the great southern Galilean urban centers situated along the major trade routes, like Sepphoris. One would expect the linguistic profile of southern Galilee to have a substantial Greek component, and this proves to be the case. The isolation that one often associates with the Galilean personality, then, can hardly be supported by the evidence from Lower Galilee." (p. 95). He cites the find by James Strange near Lake Tiberias of Greek inscriptions which are virtually all Jewish as well as other statistical evidences as support. "On the basis of epigraphy alone, therefore, Upper Galilee and western Gaulinitis comprise an area of linguistic regionalism in which Hebrew and Aramaic clearly predominate. . . . The fact that the data offer a contrast with the linguistic profile of Lower Galilee where there is also a strong Jewish population suggests that the effects of Hellenization, to the degree that it is reflected in language distribution, is greater in the south than in the north." (p. 97). Eric M. Meyers. "Galilean Regionalism as a Factor in Historical Reconstruction". Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research, no. 221 (February 1976), pp. 93-101.

¹¹A. W. Argyle. "Greek Among the Jews of Palestine in New Testament Times," New Testament Studies, 20:1 (October 1973), pp. 87-9.

Greek is no more difficult to accept than that of Peter or Jude (his brother) being able to use it. The argument of the style of Greek should no longer weigh against James, the brother of Christ, being the book's author. And for this study, it appears that a word study of the Greek words should provide a good indication for James's intended meanings.¹²

James's Style Summarized

A brief summary of the style of Greek in use is in order to demonstrate James's capabilities.

The style of James is marked by a correct, rather simple Greek in which there are practically no Hebraisms. The author employs the Greek O.T. He is so much at home in Greek that he can provide plays on Greek words (apeirostos--peirazei 1:13; aneleos--eleos 2:13) and can indulge in alliteration (peirasmos peripesete poikilois 1:3) and in rhyme (1:6, 4; 4:8). These features do not suggest that he was a master of style; They do show that he probably knew Greek well. His vocabulary is close to that employed by Philo and Josephus and in the Greek version of the testaments of the twelve patriarchs. It consists

¹²The judgment of the Jewish leaders in Acts 4:13 in calling Peter and John unlearned and ignorant men is not against this. That condemnation refers to their inability to show evidence that they had been educated in the rabbinical schools rather than an evidence of lack of Greek knowledge. Josephus indicates (in Ant. XX.12) that knowledge of a foreign language was considered common among the Jews of his day because even slaves knew them. Only knowledge of the Law and its explanations were prized. cf. Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, I, p. 62-3. For the extent of Greek knowledge even in the Rabbinic circles cf. Saul Lieberman, Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission, Beliefs, and Manners of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E.--IV Century C.E., Second Edition, Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, Vol. XVIII, (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962).

of 560 words out of a total of 1,740.¹³

Robertson is cautious not to overstate the excellence of the rhetoric in James, but he views it as good Greek.¹⁴ As evidence of this are certain words which appear as hapax legomena within the New Testament vocabulary, but really are evidences of good and even at times literary Koine Greek; eg. *δεδεάζομαι* (1:14), *ἀποκυέω* (1:15, 18), *τὰ ἐπιτήδεια τοῦ σώματος* (4:9), *κατῆφεια* (4:9), *χρή* (3:10); the use of the gnomic aorist in 1:11 and 24 which apparently was unfamiliar to the Hellenistic vernacular; the strong use of the genitive with adjectives in 2:10 *πάντων ἑνόχος* and 1:13 *ἀπείρατος κακῶν*.¹⁵

James's Use of the LXX

James shows a great deal of familiarity with the LXX. In his quote of Genesis 15:6 (cited in James 2:23) he follows the LXX with the passive *ἐλογίσθη* rather than the active construction of the Hebrew text. Also he follows the LXX in Proverbs 3:34 (cited in James 4:6) which deviates considerably from the Hebrew text indicating usage of the

¹³Robert M. Grant, A Historical Introduction to the New Testament, (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 220.

¹⁴A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), p. 123. Cf. also James H. Moulton, Accidence and Word-Formation Vol. II of A Grammar of New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1920), p. 26-7.

¹⁵Sevenster, How Much Greek?, p. 13, and Dibelius, James, p. 34.

LXX. Only in James 5:20 does he deviate from the LXX (Proverbs 10:12) by giving either his own translation or that of another text of the LXX that is not now available to us. But this is not a word for word translation of the Hebrew.¹⁶ Of the sixty-three words found only here in the New Testament literature, forty-five are found in the LXX.¹⁷ In regard to his use of the Apocrypha, opinions vary. Some view any similarities as only coincidental.¹⁸ However, Metzger presents several probable allusions to such literature. He cites James 1:19 as indicating Sirach 15:11; James chapter 3 pointing towards Sirach 19:6-12, 20:5-7, 17-19, 25:5-10, 28:13-26; James 1:13 indicating Sirach 15:11. James 1:5 is better understood in light of Sirach 18:15. The verb in James 5:3 rendered "will be rusted" occurs only here and in Sirach 12:11 (where it refers to tarnishing a metal mirror), in the entire Greek Bible. He concludes "In view of all this it is hard to doubt that both the simile and the verbal expressions of

¹⁶If it is his own translation, it is not a word for word translation of the Hebrew text. Dibelius, James, p. 27. cf. also Zahn, Introduction to the New Testament, I, p. 119, note 8.

¹⁷Ralph P. Martin, New Testament Foundations: A Guide for Christian Students (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), II, 361. For a general discussion of the relation of the LXX and general N.T. development, cf. H. A. A. Kennedy, Sources of New Testament Greek, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895).

¹⁸George Salmon, A Historical Introduction to the Study of the Books of the New Testament, Seventh ed., (London: John Murray, 1894), p. 465.

it[referring to the idea of rust in James 5:3]in the Epistle of James were derived from Ecclesiasticus."¹⁹

Summary on James's Use of the LXX

It not only appears reasonable, but from the above information it appears necessary to study these words in the LXX to ascertain the possible ways in which James could have used them. Yet his usage must not be totally restricted by this study of the LXX. For in the course of these word studies it will be shown that other New Testament writers also expand upon the LXX theological meaning. The importance of the LXX is in its forming the basis for a connection of otherwise apparently divergent usages within the New Testament.

The Usage of *περᾶζω* and *πειρασμός*

Usage in Secular Greek Summarized

The verb *περᾶζω* and its related noun *πειρασμός* are poetic late prose forms of *περάω*.²⁰ The verb has an active meaning of "to attempt, endeavor, try."²¹ With the genitive of persons it may mean "to make a trial of one" either for the purpose of persuading or in a

¹⁹Bruce Metzger, An Introduction to the Apocrypha, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), pp. 164-5.

²⁰G. Abbott-Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, third ed. (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, n.d.), p. 351.

²¹Henry Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, newly revised edition by Henry S. Jones. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940), p. 1355.

hostile sense of making an attempt on.²² With the accusative of persons it was used by Aristophanes (5th-4th century B.C.) of "to make an attempt on" a woman's honor. In the middle and passive voices it possesses similar meanings of "to try or put to the test, make proof of, have experience of, try one's fortune, try the chances of war, make an attempt on (with the accusative of persons)."²³ It appears that the element of hostility naturally attached itself to this word as often the idea of assaulting or pressuring to break was accompanied with the desire to see failure on the part of the object of the action. Some usages in Aristophanes and Xenophon, both writing in the fifth or fourth century B.C., show the word is used of propositioning a woman. This is perhaps the closest to the religious meaning of temptation that the word comes.²⁴ However, this word is rarely used with any sort of religious meaning that *πειράζω* gains within the LXX.²⁵

The verb *πειράζω* was seldom used by early authors, and then only in the present and imperfect tenses, with other tenses

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid., p. 1355.

²⁵Heinrich Seesemann, "*πειράω*," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VI, ed. by Gerhard Friedrich, trans. and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 23.

being supplied by *πειράω*, -άσθαι.²⁶ The general meaning is "to make an attempt, a proof or trial of."²⁷ Only in Apollonius Rhodius outside of Biblical references does Liddell and Scott list the definition as being in the bad sense of seeking "to seduce, tempt".²⁸

The difference between *πειράζω* and *πειράω* apparently is predominantly linguistic rather than a distinction of meaning; the -άω ending being Attic while the -άζω ending is Ionic and Koine.²⁹ In the LXX and New Testament, Moulton sees the Ionic element coming to predominate in the Koine being first imported from the literary Ionic into poetry and later from the vernacular Ionic directly into the Koine.³⁰ In light of the above it is interesting to note that while Moulton and Milligan cite several usages from the papyri for *πειράω*, they cite

²⁶Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, p. 1354.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid. Apollonius Rhodius is a third century B.C. work. The occurrence in Book 3, line 10 concerns the testing of the goddess Athena by the goddess Hera concerning Athena's thoughts about Jason's endeavor to return the fleece to Iolcus. This occurrence appears to this writer to have more the emphasis of examining or attempting to discern her ideas. However Kennedy also lists it as tempt. Kennedy, Sources, p. 106. Kennedy also notes that *πειράζω* is not often used in "good authors, who prefer *πειράω* ." p. 106.

²⁹Seesemann, "*πείρα*," p. 23, fn. 3.

³⁰Moulton, Accidence and Word-formation, vol. II of Grammar, p. 387.

only a few for περάζω.³¹

The noun πειρασμός has about three or four known occurrences in secular Greek.³² One in Dioscurides refers to medical experiments.³³ A second reference treats it as synonymous with κίνδυνοι (dangers, risks).³⁴ A third occurrence in Syntipas states "these being confined by the

³¹James Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated From the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1930), p. 501. The exact reason for this at present is not totally understood by this writer. Turner's article in which he reassesses the importance of papyri for New Testament study may suggest an explanation. He views the vernacular Jewish Greek spoken in bilingual settings as being a distinctive type of Koine which was somewhat removed from the uncultured dialect of the market place due to the influence of the LXX and synagogue worship. If his view is correct then the use of the papyri for New Testament interpretation may need to be limited. However Barclay cautions against his view being used in extreme. This does not, however, explain why the LXX translators generally preferred περάζω over πειράω in their translation. Nigel Turner, "Second Thoughts VII. Papyrus Finds," The Expository Times, 75:2 (November 1964), pp. 44-48. William Barclay, "The New Testament and the Papyri" In The New Testament In Historical And Contemporary Perspective--Essays in Memory of G. H. C. Macgregor. ed. by Hugh Anderson and William Barclay. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), pp. 73-5.

³²Adamson, James, p. 28 states four, but does not cite texts.

³³Dioscurides, Materia Medica; a Greek physician in the Roman Army under the reign of Nero describes some 600 plants and their medical properties. Paul Harvey, The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p. 149.

³⁴In Cyraniden (also spelled Cyrenides), first or second century A.D. κίνδυνοι καὶ πειρασμοὶ ἐν τῇ γῇ καὶ θαλάσῃ. Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, p. 1355.

trials of the world".³⁵ It appears that the noun conveys the morally neutral idea of trouble or trial in secular usage.³⁶

Liddell and Scott list the noun as being related to several words with similar meanings.³⁷ Among them are several words which convey a hostile meaning in that they are used of pirates, a pirates' nest, robbery or attack. Ropes notes that the inclusion of temptation which he considers as primarily an assault, is at the same time a test and accords with the hostility which is easily included in word meanings of similar derivative words.³⁸

From the preceeding it appears that the basic meaning of this word group is that of attempting or endeavoring, often with uncertainty as to outcome. This very easily shifts toward assault or pressure, especially if the intention on the part of the doer is thought to be negative or hostile to the object. However, the intention may also be neutral or good if these words convey the concept of proving, demonstrating. Also closely related, especially in the noun, is the idea of affliction

³⁵cited in Seesemann, "πείρα," p. 24 with no date given. ὑπὸ πειραγμῶν τοῦ κόσμου στενοχωρούμενοι .

³⁶Why the noun which is so frequently used in the LXX is not more apparent in secular usage is not answerable by this writer. Two of the three occurrences are about the time of the New Testament writing. Moulton and Milligan, Vocabulary, p. 501 cite no Papyri usages.

³⁷Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, p. 1355.

³⁸Ropes, James, p. 133.

or pressure from a non-personal source.

Usage in the LXX

The Hebrew Basis

The Greek words *πειράζω* / *πειραζμός* or one of their related compounds were chosen by the LXX translators to render the Hebrew verb *נִסָּה* and its noun *נִסְיָא*.³⁹ Brown, Driver, and Briggs define the Hebrew word with the following meanings. The verb in the Piel means "to test or try" with the synonym being *יָנַח* (1 Sam. 17:39); "to attempt, essay, try to do a thing" (with the infinitive, Deut. 4:34, 28:56, Job 4:2); "to test, try, prove, tempt" (a. God tests or proves: Gen. 21:1, Ex. 15:25, 20:20, 16:4, Deut. 8:2&16, 3:4, Judges 2:22, 3:1&4, Deut. 33:8, 2 Chron. 32:31, Ps. 26:2. b. Israel tests, tries God: Ex. 17:2&7, Num. 14:22, Deut. 6:16, Ps. 78:16&41&56, 95:9, 106:14, Is. 7:12). The noun is defined as "test, trial, proving"; also as the proper name of a place where Israel tried the LORD in the wilderness.⁴⁰

Driver makes the following observation concerning

³⁹Only in Ecclesiastes does the noun translate the Hebrew *נִסְיָא*, and that is not a consistent translation as other Greek words are used among Codices Alexandrinus, Vaticanus, and Sinaiticus. Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint, (2 vols.: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897), II, pp. 1115-6.

⁴⁰William Gesenius, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, trans. by E. Robinson, ed. and revised by F. Brown, S. Driver, and C. Briggs, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 650.

the Hebrew verb in Deuteronomy 6:16:

Tempt is a misleading rendering; for to tempt has, in modern English, acquired the sense of provoking or enticing a person in order that he may act in a particular way (Heb. נִסָּה); נִסָּה is a neutral word, and means to test or prove a person to whether he will act in a particular way (Ex. 16:4, Judges 2:22, 3:4), or whether the character he bears is well established (1 Kings 10:1). God thus proves a person, or puts him to the test, to see if his fidelity or affections are sincere, Gen. 22:1, Ex. 20:20, Dt. 8:2 (q.v.), 13:4 (3), cf. Ps. 26:2; and men test or prove, Jehovah when they act as if doubting whether His promise be true, or whether He is faithful to His revealed character, Ex. 17:2, 7, Num. 14:22, Ps. 78:18 (see v. 19), 44:56, 95:9, 106:4, cf. Is. 7:12. So massoth 4:34, 7:19, 29:2(3) are not "temptations" but trials, provings.⁴¹

The translators of the LXX chose *πειράζω* and *πειρασμός* to translate this Hebrew word group because they evidently felt that these Greek words were capable of accurately conveying the Hebrew word meanings.

Secular usages noted

The LXX does use these words in a purely secular or non-moral sense. In 1 Kings 17:39 David protests against using the weapons of Saul because he has not yet proved or gained experience with them. Also representative of this meaning would be the testing of Solomon by the Queen of Sheba (1 Kings 10:1, 2 Chron. 9:1) and Solomon's statements concerning testing all with wisdom (Eccl. 2:1,

⁴¹Samual R. Driver, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy, in the International Critical Commentary, ed. by C. A. Briggs, et. al., (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), p. 95.

7:23).⁴² Likewise in the Apocrypha usages which suggest to attempt, endeavor, or experience also reflect a non-moral meaning (2 Macc. 10:12, 11:19, Wis. 17:26, 19:5). But such secular usage is not the predominate usage of the word.

Religious usages explored

Seesemann observes that the Greek words picked up from the Hebrew words the frequent religious tinge and thereby took on a wider range of meaning as well as receiving a greater usage than in secular Greek because the concept of testing was such a key concept in the Old Testament.⁴³ But to what extent did the meaning change? That is, was the change merely an inclusion of a special sort of testing, i.e. religious, involving God and man, or was it an expansion of the meaning to include the moral overtones of the intention of the tester? Such moral overtones are usually lacking in secular usages, even though hostility may underlie some.

It is the definition of the English words that appear to cause part of the problem. As will be seen when these words are considered in the New Testament, translators often use the word temptation when the passage may or may not imply what today is considered temptation. It needs to be recognized that the meanings of the words test

⁴²Seesemann, "πειρα," p. 24.

⁴³Ibid.

and tempt have changed even within English.⁴⁴

Before proceeding any further it would be prudent to attempt to clearly distinguish between the term testing and that of tempting.

Kahler⁴⁵ in his article on temptation defines "tempt" as simply to make an attempt on something with the application of power. Where there is reference to a person the collateral concept of enmity is present. As an example he cites the Queen of Sheba asking questions of Solomon

⁴⁴"About 1611 the Eng. words 'tempt' and 'temptation' were used almost as widely as those Heb. and Gr. words, the only difference being that the verb had ceased to mean 'to attempt.' Examples (outside AV) of 'tempt' in the sense of 'test,' 'put to the proof,' without evil intent, are Jn.6:6 Wyc. 'But he said this thing, temptyng hym; for he wiste what he was to do'; Dt.13:3 Tind. 'For the Lorde thy God tempteth you, to wete whether ye love the Lord youre God with all youre hertes and with al youre soules'; Dt.8:2, in Wilson's Christian Dictionary (1611), 'tempting thee that hee might know what is in thy heart.' In the same sense is 'temptation' used in 1 Pt.4:12 Rhem. 'My deerest, thinke it not strange in the fervour which is to you for a tentation, as though some new thing happened to you.' And in the allied sense of trial, affliction, we find 'temptation' employed by Tymme in Calvin's Genesis, p. 717, 'But this also was a moste greevous temptation, to be banished from the promised lande, even unto death'; and p.815, 'This was a verie sore temptation, that holie Jacob, of whome the Lorde had taken care, shoulde almoste he and his perish with hunger.' " James Hastings, "Tempt, temptation," A Dictionary of the Bible Dealing with its Language, Literature, and Contents, ed. by James Hastings (4 vols.: New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), IV, p. 716.

⁴⁵Martin Kahler, "Temptation," The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia, ed. by Samuel M. Jackson (12 vols.: New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1911), XI, pp. 297-8.

(1 Kings 10:1). He continues on to distinguish temptation from enticement by saying that enticement takes place only when the results are actualized. He then appears to distinguish between testing which deals with faith being under attack and tempting when the susceptible will of man is under attack. The point in citing this is to show the extreme difficulty in defining these abstract concepts. For example, is it temptation when a man looks at a woman who in herself is not even aware that she may be arousing his desire? Her intention must at least be considered neutral. Yet temptation is often used to describe what she is to that man. To say that she tempted him may be true from his standpoint, but not from hers. To say that she offered opportunity of temptation is true from either standpoint.

A reconsideration of Kahler's definition shows that for him tempt may or may not have moral implications. He uses the example of 1 Kings 10:1 consistently with his definition. The Queen asked questions of Solomon to attempt to discover whether or not he knew the answers. But does such a definition adequately define temptation as it has come to be used within the context of religious thought today? The perusal of several dictionaries seemed to indicate that the word has lost much of its previous neutral meaning while retaining its moral overtones of

enticement.⁴⁶ To a modern reader the classifying of the Queen's questioning of Solomon as tempting him does not as clearly convey what was in the writer's mind as does testing.

Driver's distinction⁴⁷ of tempting from testing recognizes this need of clarity. Before an attempt is made to classify the LXX usages of the Greek terms a more detailed presentation of such distinction would appear to be in order.

Key to understanding the distinction between testing and temptation is the understanding of perceptive. Testing carries with it a more neutral moral intention. The outcome is uncertain. The test is a process, act, or situation used to reveal inherent qualities of character. The situation is clearly an opportunity within which one

⁴⁶For example Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged, ed. by Philip B. Gove, (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1969), p. 2354 under "tempt" states: "to entice to do wrong by promise of pleasure or gain: seduce; to make presumptuous trial of: provoke," while the definition "to put to the test; make trial of: prove" is listed as obsolete. (Also listed are usages which while not having moral overtones, e.g. "to venture on; risk the dangers of," would not typically be applied in a clearly religious setting. The tendency when people read the Bible is to view an especially significant theological word as having one meaning. For example the word salvation is usually defined as religious escape from eternal judgment by initial belief, even though in certain passages it is used of escape from physical harm or in reference to future total redemption. That such an approach is incorrect is recognized. But as translators of the Word, to ignore that tendency is to add to confusion which could be avoided if the attempt is made to choose the best English word to convey the meaning of the original.)

⁴⁷Driver, Deuteronomy, p. 95.

of two or more responses may be expressed. When the intention of the initiator of the test is clearly positive, either due to context or presuppositional knowledge, the test is usually considered to be given for approval; i.e. to demonstrate genuineness. The term refinement usually has a morally positive connotation when applied to persons. Prominent in testing are the circumstances in which the action takes place.

Temptation does not have the idea of uncertainty or experimentation as prominent. When viewed from the initiator's aspect, the intention is to entice or seduce the person into a specific action. Viewed from the recipient's or responder's perspective, being tempted is to be drawn toward a sinful response either by personal or non-personal means. But with either means, to be tempted is to be drawn to respond.

Remembering the illustration of the man and the woman, it will be seen that in either case (i.e. if she intentionally tempts him or unintentionally is a temptation to him), he is tempted by his own desires. He is responsible for his reaction to outward circumstances. From God's perspective both situations are a test of that man. God is providentially responsible for each set of circumstances. Yet each person, being a responsible moral agent, retains responsibility for his own response.

The question must now be asked, how does the LXX

use πειράζω and πειρασμός ? Are these words more concerned with the circumstances which form the matrix of testing or do the moral overtones of enticement to sin and being enticed to sin predominate?

Ropes, after citing Driver, states that this generally neutral meaning of testing with the outcome uncertain holds true for the πειράζω group within the Apocrypha with the exception of Ecclesiasticus 2:1 and 33:1.⁴⁸ Moule commenting on the translation of the noun comments:

The Vulgate temptatio [sic.] and the English temptation suggest, to most modern readers, some kind of enticement to sin. But peirasmos (like tentamentum in Latin) strictly means testing rather than enticement; and many scholars have urged that the word refers to external circumstance -- Testing times which need not, in themselves, to be viewed as designed to entice -- rather than to such inward, psychological allurements as is normally implied by temptation.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ropes, James, p. 132. This writer is not convinced that temptation is prominent even in these. Ecclus. 2:2 speaks of a time of calamity (επαγωγή). R. H. Charles, gen. ed., The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English, (2 vols.: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913), I, p. 321 has this note on verse 2. "This is one form of temptation, or 'trying', for which a man must prepare his soul."

⁴⁹C. F. D. Moule, "An Unsolved Problem in the Temptation Clause in the Lord's Prayer," The Reformed Theological Review 33:3 (September-December 1974), p. 66. "The three Latin equivalents of πειρασμός are 1) periculum, a) a trial, action, suit at law (quite classical), b) a writ of judgment, a sentence; 2) experimentum; and 3) tentatio, a trial, proof, an effort, process, or operation intended to establish or discover a fact or truth. God indeed does not need such a process, either at law or of fact-finding, but he deals with man in a manner best suited to instruct human nature, so that his judgments be justified ad extra: 'Where art thou?' etc., he said to Adam: . . . that tentatio has the meaning also of seducing to sin is

Perhaps the clearest analysis of the LXX usage is given by Hatch.⁵⁰ After stating that the meaning for these words generally is that of trying or proving, and noting that they are more commonly used of God testing man than man testing God, he suggests that this accounts for the observable shift in usage due to a combination of these two factors. It was observed that generally when God tested man, it was via the mode of afflictions or disasters. On this basis trial came to connote affliction and disaster as well as retaining its denotative meaning of testing. In the Apocryphal books, this connotative meaning stressing the circumstances becomes predominate and also is linked with the concept of chastisement by suffering. To clarify Hatch's definition a summary of the texts is in order.

In various passages God is said to test or prove man. Abraham is tested when he is asked to offer up Isaac, who is God's promised means of future blessing (Gen. 22:1). God tests Israel as a nation at various times in their history (Ex. 15:25). Often very prominent in the passages will be the declaration of God that the situation

granted; but that is not its principle meaning." Albert Kleber, "The Lord's Prayer and the Decalog," Catholic Bible Quarterly, vol. 3 (1941), p. 319.

⁵⁰Edwin Hatch, Essays in Biblical Greek, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889), pp. 71-2. Although not all would agree with his analysis. "Dr. Hatch seems to me to restrict the sense too much to one kind of trial, viz. affliction." Mayor, James, p. 34.

was given to expose how the people would react. Exodus 16:4 states concerning the gathering of manna "that I may try them whether [εἰ] they will walk in my law or not [ὃ οὐ]". Uncertainty as to outcome is also evident in Deuteronomy 8:2 concerning keeping God's commands; also Ex. 15:25-6, Judges 2:21[22], 3:1, 4.⁵¹ God tested them to determine (or expose) their love for him (Deut. 13:3[4], Ex. 20:20). God also tested to determine Hezekiah's heart attitude (2 Chron. 32:31). There are even requests by men to be tested by God (Ps. 25[26]:2). This sort of testing is clearly a testing of uncertainty to expose. The positive moral overtone of the situation is assumed because God is the initiator. Yet, especially in Israel's case, the results were not in themselves positive. Israel often failed the test, yet temptation is not attributed to God. What happened was that through the test a weakness was exposed. Yet there is not on God's part an inducement to act one specific way (unless the expression of His desire to see a positive moral response is considered inducement). God's responsibility extended to the circumstances being present. The LXX translators felt that in this situation the Greek words best expressed the either-or option in which God placed men.

⁵¹Due to the difference at times between the references in the original texts and that of the English texts, the appearance of a number between [] will indicate that it is the reference number for the English text as opposed to the preceding number referring to the original text.

As Hatch has noted,⁵² due to the association of God's testing via the mode of affliction, the usage of these Greek words to indicate affliction arose. The plagues which God sent on Egypt are represented this way (Deut. 4:34, 9:22, 29:2[3]). This same emphasis appears to be in Daniel 12:10, Sirach 36:1, 1 Maccabees 2:52.⁵³

Hatch's assertion of a shift within the Apocrypha away from the denotative usage stressing the intention of exposing toward the connotative usage stressing the mode of affliction appears in these texts: Wisdom of Solomon 3:5, 11:9, Judith 8:24-27, Sirach 2:1. His observation that it here becomes linked with the concept of discipline due to this shift in the Apocrypha must be qualified since such a connection also clearly appears in Deuteronomy 8:2-5 (possibly also Deut. 4:34-36).

Other contexts where these words are used also do not convey a temptation idea. Wisdom is said to prove a man (Sir. 13:11); a person tests what his soul can endure and then avoids that which he finds is not pleasant to his soul (Sir. 37:27). In all these usages the idea of experimentation is foremost.

It is the usages of these words where man tests

⁵²Hatch, Essays, p. 71.

⁵³The reader is reminded that Ecclesiasticus is the same book as Sirach whose full title is the Wisdom of Jeshua, son of Sirach. These titles will be used interchangeably to refer to the same book.

God that it appears to lose the neutral meaning. Israel often is said to test God. Because of this usage the noun Massah came to be used as a proper noun and was translated by the noun *πειρασμός* in the LXX (Ex. 17:7, Deut. 6:16, Ps. 94[95]:8). However did the people attempt to entice God to sin? Was their intention to draw Him into a definite evil action? Their action could better be described as presumption rather than enticement. They questioned his intentions of love and holiness in their regard. Exodus 17:7 reads "they tested the LORD, saying, 'Is the Lord among us or not?'" (*εἰ ἔστι Κύριος ἐν ἡμῖν, ἢ οὐ*). Likewise Gideon tested the LORD with the fleece (Judges 6:39). (Also see Num. 14:22, Judith 8:12, Sir. 18:23, Ps. 77[78]:41, 56, 94[95]:9, 105[106]:14, Is. 7:12) They questioned God's character, power and holiness. Will God really do this or not? Is He faithful or not? Does He really hate sin or will we escape judgment? In effect they challenged God. That their action was sin is not denied. But it was the sin of unbelief.⁵⁴ In Deut. 6:16 the commandment is given "You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah." It is

⁵⁴Marsh states that while God has cause to test man, man "has no ground whatever to test God, whose purposes are ineluctable gracious and loving." To do so is tantamount to an assertion of unbelief and is condemned in Ps. 95, Acts 5:9, 15:10, I Cor. 10:9. It was the core of the temptation which Jesus resisted in the wilderness. John Marsh, "Tempt," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by G. A. Buttrick (5 vols.: New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 568.

informative to consider this verse in light of the situation Jesus was in when he quoted it during his confrontation with Satan in the wilderness. It was the temptation to leap from the pinnacle because God had promised to protect His own. The action would not have been an enticement to cause God to commit an evil act. Rather it would have been a presumptuous action on the part of Jesus. Would God really save him? The action of testing God reveals unbelief in man's heart. But the thought of actually causing God to sin does not appear to be present.

Moule has an excellent section on the retention of a basically neutral meaning in these words prior to the New Testament:

The words for testing do not seem often or commonly to be used in ancient literature for temptation--possibly not at all until the New Testament. It is easy to think of countless temptation stories before the New Testament, such as (to take a few, at random) Odysseus and his men tempted by the Sirens (Od. 12:39ff--Thelgein); Hippolytus resisting the approaches of his step-mother Phaedra, and suffering for it; Joseph, comparably, resisting Potiphar's wife, and paying the price (Gen. 39); Regulus nobly resisting the temptation to escape torture at the expense of his nation's honour (Horace Odes 3.5. 45ff). So, too, the moralists and philosophers know well enough what it is to resist temptation. Xenophon (Mem. 2.5.5) says that it is tempting (epagogon) to sell a bad friend for gain; Plato (Philebus 44c) says that pleasure's lure (epagogon again) is enchantment (goeteuma) and not real pleasure. Seneca speaks of the true philosopher as having an unconquerable power of mind (V.B. 4.3 animum. . . extra cupiditatem positum). But Tentare, peirazein, are, in the main, not so used: They are neutral and fall more naturally into (ii) (a) [experiment] or (b) [refining process] of our categories than (ii) (c) [attempt to pervert]. The metaphors

for tempting in literature before the New Testament tend to be such as those used in James 1:14 and 1 Tim. 6:9--the unambiguously sinister metaphors of the bait and the lure and the trap. This applies not only to secular literature, but also to the Old Testament, where mwkš and mkš(w)¹ (bait and occasion for stumbling, cause of downfall) play a considerable part, and are both largely rendered in the LXX by those important words skandalon and skandalizein. By contrast, the peirazein-group of words, like the tentamentum-group in Latin, seems to be kept for the neutral meaning of test or testing. Even in a passage like Deut. 13:1-3 (M.T. 2-4), where the loyalty of the people is tested by the evil proposal of a false prophet saying 'Let us go after other gods', so that testing and tempting are constituted by one and the same event, it is still God who is said to do the testing (mnsš, peirazein), and what the false prophet himself does--namely, what in English would be called tempting--is not so described. And this holds for the use of peirazein in the LXX generally.⁵⁵

Based on the above considerations the basic meaning of these Greek words appears to be testing with a connotative emphasis on the situation usually being adverse or afflictive. Nothing in the words themselves require seeing the intention of enticement to sin as intrinsic to the meaning.⁵⁶ With this as background the usages in the New Testament can now be better understood.

Occurrences in the Pseudepigrapha

On the basis of this writer's research only two

⁵⁵ Moule, "Unsolved Problem in Lord's Prayer," p.69. "Πειρασμός means primarily a testing, and not enticement to sin." C. W. F. Smith, "Lord's Prayer," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, ed. by B. A. Buttrick (5 vols.: New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, p. 157.

⁵⁶ Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament, ninth ed., (London: n.p., 1880; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), p. 280.

occurrences of the noun in the Testament of Job were found.⁵⁷ These occur only in the Greek manuscript Vatican 1238. This manuscript, dating from the 12th or 13th century A.D., is viewed by Kraft as not being a single maverick text, but part of a branch of textual development characterized by a full range of differences varying from minor to major in comparison with other texts.⁵⁸ The actual origin of the Testament of Job is dated somewhere within the first century B.C. to the first century A.D. Although some suggest an Aramaic original, most view it as originally being in Greek. It is a midrash composed of fifty-three chapters in the form of a testament on the Canonical Book.⁵⁹

One occurrence of the noun is in 2:2 which translates "and the beginning of my trial occurred as follows: for neighboring my house was a certain idol of one worshiped by the people."⁶⁰ The other occurrence is in 4:5 referring

⁵⁷ Christ. A. Wahl, Clavis Librorum Veteris Testamenti Apocryphorum Philologica, ed. by J. B. Bauer (Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck--u. Verlagsanstalt, 1972), p. 725.

⁵⁸ Robert Kraft, ed., The Testament of Job According to the SV TEXT, in the Pseudepigrapha Series, (Missoula, Montana: Scholar's Press, 1974), p. 5.

⁵⁹ James H. Charlesworth, The Pseudepigrapha and Modern Research in the Society of Biblical Literature, Septuagint, and Cognate Studies, ed. by H. M. Orlinsky (Missoula, Montana: Scholar's Press, 1976), p. 134-5.

⁶⁰ Kraft, Testament of Job, p.23.

to what Satan will do. God says "he will do many evils to you, and you will be as an athlete who spars and endures pain and receives the reward and suffers trials [πειρασμός] and tribulations [θλΐψις]".⁶¹

Actual implications from these two occurrences must be limited as the entire Greek text was not cited by Kraft in the footnotes where these variants occurred. It is interesting to note that while the LXX does not use the noun to describe Job's situation, by the time this book was written the author does. However this may only reflect a tendency already seen in the Apocrypha in which the noun is used to describe a situation in which adversity or affliction besets an individual. It would seem only to be a continuation of the LXX usage of the noun and not an expansion to stress temptation.

Usage in the New Testament

These words, within the context of the New Testament continue to reflect their heritage from the LXX. Yet there also appears a certain widening of meaning with a tendency toward the negative concept of enticement to sin or intending to pervert. This does not appear to be predominant however. Moule suggests that this new connotation is due in part to the placing of *πειράζω* in a context where the neutral affliction/experimentation is viewed from the perspective

⁶¹Ibid., p. 25.

of warfare against evil, hence temptation to succumb to a negative moral condition.⁶² Trench observes that the progression possibly came about when the concept of testing for the purpose of discovering or exposing also came to indicate the breaking down under the test due to the fact that men so often fail when tested. In this manner the sense of solicitation to evil and of even calling Satan the tempter (ὁ πειράζων, Mt. 14:3, 1 Thess. 3:5) came to be seen in the word.⁶³ Such usage allowed the New Testament writers the use of the more abstract term πειράζω instead of such concrete terms as entice, bait, or lust. The clearest association of πειράζω with temptation is seen in James 1:13-14. Moule suggests that the reason this association appears so clearly in this passage is due to the words being associated with "lure" and "bait", thus giving it the unambiguous meaning of temptation.⁶⁴ However the verb appears thirty-six times and the noun twenty-one in the entire New Testament.⁶⁵

Clearly secular usages

Certain occurrences clearly reflect a non-moral

⁶²Moule, "Unsolved Problem in Lord's Prayer," p. 70.

⁶³Trench, Synonyms, pp. 280-1.

⁶⁴Moule, "Unsolved Problem in Lord's Prayer," p. 68.

⁶⁵W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, A Concordance to the Greek Testament, fourth ed., rev. H. K. Moulton (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1963), pp. 787-8.

usage. These include Paul's attempt to join the group of disciples (Acts 9:26); his attempt to enter Bithynia (Acts 16:7); the accusation that he attempted to desecrate the temple (Acts 24:6). Possibly here should be classed 2 Corinthians 13:5 where Christians are to examine themselves and Revelation 2:2 where the Ephesian church is said to have tested the false apostles and found them liars.⁶⁶

The related verb *πειράω* occurring in Acts 26:21 also means "attempt, endeavor." The Textus Receptus has *πεπειραμένος* from *πειράω*. Arndt and Gingrich suggest that the meaning would then have to be "he experienced in all respects." They prefer to accept a form of *πειράζω* here.⁶⁷

Usages indicated by English translations to be ethical

From the English translations of the remaining occurrences, the meanings appear to have temptation resident in each situation. However, under closer examination, it will become apparent that most of these usages do not stress enticement to sin within the context of the passage. In considering these instances the verb usages will be first, followed by the noun.

⁶⁶Seesemann, "*πειράω*," p. 28.

⁶⁷William F. Arndt and F. Wilber Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, Second edition revised by F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

The verb usages

There are a number of instances in the Synoptics where this verb is used to describe the actions of Jesus' opponents. It is translated "they came tempting him." Upon examining the occasions in which he was approached, it appears that rather than being attempts to entice him into sin, they are rather attempts to set up situations in which whatever way he answered he would become ensnared in his words. Each situation can be resolved into a is-it-this-way-or-that-way answer, (e.g. Mk. 8:11, they began to debate-- συζητεῖν --with him seeking a sign--will he give one or not; Mk. 10:2, Mt. 19:13. Is it lawful or not to divorce a wife?; Mk. 12:15, Mt. 22:18, Lk. 20:23, Is it lawful or not to give taxes to Caesar; Mt. 16:1, Lk. 11:16. Will he show us a sign or not; Mt. 22:35. Which commandment is the greater?). Special note should be made of Mk. 12:13 where they desired to trap him in a statement (ἵνα αὐτὸν ἀγρεύσωσιν λόγῳ) and so they asked him about taxes (cf. also Mt. 22:15 παρὰδεύσωσιν ἐν λόγῳ and Lk. 20:20). A better translation of πειράζω in these instances is to entrap or ensnare rather than to entice to sin. The sin was not in their intention to cause him to sin, rather it was in their unbelief which caused them to desire to

discredit him.⁶⁸

Some passages appear to stress the mode of testing by giving the word the meaning of affliction. Revelation 2:10 with its reward of the crown of life appears to be an example of this.⁶⁹ Hebrews 11:37 would best be translated in this manner when due consideration is given to its context. Revelation 3:10 with its reference to the world suffering appears to best fit here.⁷⁰ 1 Thessalonians 3:5 may belong here or it may have a stronger temptation overtone. 1 Corinthians 10:13 may

⁶⁸ Best in dealing with this issue in Mark 8:11 believes that this attempt cannot be viewed as mere "test" as Seesemann, ("πειρα", p. 28) does. Rather it is a temptation. Not because the Pharisees intended it to be, but because they were enticing the Messiah to do an action he should not do. However in Mark 10:2 and 12:5, even though hostility is present, these situations because of the question content are more neutral. Ernest Best, The Temptation and the Passion: The Markan Soteriology in Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, ed. by Matthew Black (Cambridge: University Press, 1965) p.31-2. While such an interpretation is possible of Mark 8:11, it would appear just as valid to retain the more neutral meaning of entrapment or assault. The situation could be described as a *πειρασμός* in the sense that the circumstances in which Jesus found himself tested his genuineness.

⁶⁹ Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 640 view this occurrence as enticement to sin because of its context in which Satan is mentioned. While he is the cause for their circumstance, because it is Christ that is speaking, would it not be just as reasonable to see the more neutral meaning here of afflictive pressure because he is describing the situation. Note that *ὀλέψς* describes the situation.

⁷⁰ Brown's discussion, especially as it relates to LXX Daniel 12:10 should be considered here. Schuyler Brown, "The Hour of Trial (Rev. 3:10)," Journal of Biblical Literature, 85:3 (September, 1966), pp.311-12.

or may not belong here depending on the emphasis seen in verse 12.

The LXX overtones of man testing God definitely appear in some passages. One is P  ter's statement that to reject God's evident acceptance of the Gentiles without making them Jews is to test God if the Church requires all to conform to Jewish patterns (Acts 15:10). So is Peter's challenge to Sapphira about her actions which questioned if God really would judge sin (Acts 5:9). Hebrews 3:9 refers to Israel doing so in the wilderness. So also 1 Corinthians 10:9 which refers to Israel testing God, (with Paul's admonition based on Deut. 6:16 reflected in his use of *  κτεράζω*).

Two passages seem clearly to reflect an enticement to sin. These are Satan's temptation of a married person refraining from conjugal relations to sin (1 Cor. 7:5) and the warning to rebuke a man in meekness lest the rebuker also be tempted (Gal. 6:1).

The occurrence of the verb in the Synoptics to describe Christ's wilderness encounters with Satan and the two references to His experiences in Hebrews may or may not reflect temptation to sin. Hatch views most of these as reflecting the more neutral LXX meaning of afflictive testing.⁷¹ Such a meaning does not appear to detract from either Christ's humanity or deity if taken

⁷¹Hatch, Essays, pp. 72-3.

in the sense that testing is a refining or maturing process. The Gospel accounts would then be stressing the afflicting, refining pressure which Christ underwent. The assertion then made of Him in Hebrews 2:18 would mean that as he felt the pressure to reject God's leading so He can help those who also are under pressure to not submit to God. Mayor criticizes Hatch's definition on this very point. To Mayor, it appears to be too restrictive to affliction. Mayor sees riches being as much of a trial as poverty and cites James 1:10 and 1 Timothy 6:9 as examples. He notes that Christ was not so much under pressure from fear as of hope and desire misused.⁷²

Mayor's criticism is just in that it warns against limiting the concept of affliction as producing only an inward reaction of fear. However Mayor may have missed the major point of describing the situation as affliction. Perhaps a better description would be afflictive pressure. The burden of riches can be just as much an afflictive pressure as poverty. Space does not permit, but a brief survey of the usages of *θλίψις* would show that that word is descriptive of outward pressures. The words of the *πειράζω* group appear to go beyond to concern the reaction of the individual under the pressures. The individual is tested under various afflictive pressures. These are not to be solely classed as abhorrent to the

⁷²Mayor, James, p. 34.

individual, but rather they are circumstances or situations in which the individual finds himself which test and probe his character because he must react to these demands. Admittedly, the distinction between circumstances which try a man and tempt him is a blurred line. However, it is the view of this writer that the word group *πειράζω* tends to stress the circumstances of pressure (which may or may not lead to temptation depending on the individual's faith) rather than the action of enticement to sin. Thus, the verb generally carries with it the connotative meaning of to put someone under pressure (or passively to be put under pressure) that the character might be revealed. The intention of the originator of the pressure may tend to color the interpretation of the situation, but that appears to be outside the words themselves.⁷³

It is possible in these instances concerning Christ to view the usages of the verb in a more sinister light. The texts clearly attribute these testings to Satan whose intention appears to be one of enticement to sin (Mt. 4:1 *ὑπὸ τοῦ διαβόλου*, Mk. 1:13, Lk. 4:2). The suggestions presented would lead to transgressions of the will of the Father. Such a usage would not be against the possible connotative meaning of the word. As was stated before, the constant failure of men under testing may have led to a

⁷³Moule, "Unsolved Problem in Lord's Prayer", p. 67-9 wrestles with this blurred distinction when intention is introduced into the situation.

viewing of these words as presenting a more negative connotation, especially when the initiator appears to desire failure.⁷⁴ It is possible that here we have part of the expansion of the meaning of this word group beyond the usual LXX meanings. A major factor in this expansion is due to the context in which God opposes Satan, thus pushing the moral emphasis to the foreground.

However, another option in these instances may be that the writers by the usage of these words may be stressing the conflict and the circumstances rather than the temptation to moral evil itself.⁷⁵ That is, in the minds of the first readers, the image would have been created of Christ being in the crucible of afflictive pressure. The emphasis would then have been on his being tested and coming out untainted, rather than his resisting enticement to evil. That both are present, due to context is not denied. The question resolves down to which is emphasized.⁷⁶

⁷⁴Trench, Synonyms, pp. 280-1.

⁷⁵The writer is in part obligated to Best for this idea. His statement "In the temptation story, temptation is definitely present, that is, Satan tempts to moral evil, though Mark stresses the conflict rather than the actual tempting." (Best, Temptation, p. 22), suggested this possibility. Though if it were read in its context, it would be seen that Best is moving towards a different viewpoint because of his interpretations of the Gospels.

⁷⁶Hatch's support of his interpretation of Hebrews 5:7-9 should also be considered. Taking the statement of Irenaeus on Hebrews 4:15 "ὥστε ἢ ἄνθρωπος εἴνα πειρασθῆναι"

The noun usages

The noun *πειρασμός* has as much variation in meaning as the verb. The plural form of the noun in Acts 20:19 is used by Paul to describe the actions of those who hated him, and probably reflects the LXX usage of trials and afflictions.⁷⁷ This is also true of Hebrews 3:8 with its day of testing in the wilderness, The noun of Revelation 3:10 would best be considered as describing this sort of a test.⁷⁸

Luke 8:13 deserves special notice. Luke uses *πειρασμός* to describe the time during which those whose hearts are like rock fall away (*ἀφίστανται*). The parallel accounts, (Mk. 4:17, Mt. 13:21), use the phrase affliction or persecution, *θλίψεως ἢ διωγμοῦ*. Even though these suffer on account of the word (*διὰ τὸν λόγον*), there does not appear to be an enticement to sin. They suffer for their faith, and that faith not being genuine, they abandon it.⁷⁹ Luke is stressing that testings lead

οὕτως καὶ Λόγος ἵνα δοξασθῇ," as He was man that He might be afflicted, so also was He Logos that He might be glorified." Hatch states that affliction was viewed as prominent by Irenaeus. Hatch's translation of *πειρασθῇ* as "afflicted" appears to rest on the parallel *δοξασθῇ* being used in Hebrews 5:5-9, although he does not clearly state this in his article. Hatch, Essays, p. 73.

⁷⁷Hatch, Essays, p. 72; Seesemann, "πειρά," p. 24.

⁷⁸Hatch, Essays, p. 72; Brown, "Hour of Trial," p. 312.

⁷⁹Seesemann, "πειρά," p. 31.

to failure. Matthew and Mark are parallel, in that they state that afflictions result in stumbling or being offended (σκαρδαλίζω). The being offended results from the afflictions as the falling away results from the circumstances described as πειρασμός. It would appear that as the results are parallel so are the conditions. If so, the stress would be on the means of testing, i.e. that of afflictive pressure. To this writer it would seem best to view this situation as a test which exposes their lack of real faith, rather than a temptation to do evil. Admittedly the two are close, but the question must be asked what did the writers wish to stress, a time of temptation or of testing? To this writer, the concept of testing which exposes, fits the context which is also concerned with the genuineness of response.

Galatians 4:14 also deserves special comment. Here the noun cannot mean an enticement to sin being in Paul's flesh and still make sense. It is better viewed as a weakness (vs.13 ἀσθένεια with 2 Cor.12:8-9) which was an affliction or a test to those Christians.

The usage in 1 Peter appears to be parallel to James 1:2-12. The occurrence in 4:12 is in the context of suffering for Christ's sake and for their own purification (vs.17). This indicates that it represents more a trial of suffering and purification than temptation.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 30.

2 Peter 2:9 also appears to represent this same sort of affliction. It is in parallel to the day of judgment for the unjust.

However, certain usages of the noun may at least include temptation. Luke 4:13 due to the context possible indicates this, however the meaning of affliction is not out of sight in the passage. 1 Timothy 6:9 due to its being qualified by *καὶ παγίδα καὶ ἐπιθυμίας κ.τ.λ.* (possibly translated as: even a snare and lusts), seems best taken as temptation.⁸¹

Most controversial to classify is the use of the noun in the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:13 and parallels) and his admonition to his disciples to pray in the garden (Mt. 26:41, Mk. 14:38, Lk. 22:40, 46). Moule raises several interesting points on the issue and concludes that the difficulties remain. He appears to lean towards testing with the practical suggestion being that we should pray to escape too severe or unbearable testing.⁸²

Conclusion concerning New Testament usage

On the basis of the above observations it seems reasonable to conclude that these words in the New Testament

⁸¹Moule, "Unsolved Problems in the Lord's Prayer," p. 71 & 72.

⁸²*Ibid.*, p. 65-75.

generally carry within their usage much of the meanings formed in the LXX. Generally that can be described as a neutrally moral meaning of affliction or testing to expose or demonstrate character. Where the words appear to gather a moral meaning, in most cases negative, is via association with other factors in the context. Within the New Testament, there is an apparent broadening of meaning with a tendency to push these words towards an enticement usage. Such a usage however should not be considered as either primary or prominent.

When these words are encountered in the book of James, all the above must be considered. Both that James appears to be quite familiar with the LXX and that enticement to sin is not primary in these words. Granted that in later Christianity the temptation concept of these words does come to the foreground.⁸³ The New Testament usage appears to be the beginning of such emphasis. Perhaps James himself either is reflecting this new trend or is one of the originators of it.

The Usage of δοκιμάζω Presented
for Comparative Purposes

Usage in Secular Greek Summarized

The word group of δοκιμάζω, δοκιμος, δοκιμιον will now briefly be considered. The verb is used in

⁸³Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, c. 200-265 is cited in Moule on Lk. 22:45-46. Ibid., p. 72.

classical Greek meaning "to assay, test, make trial of, approve, sanction."⁸⁴ Cremer suggests that the movement from testing or examining to approval or recognition is due to special stress upon the purpose for the testing becoming prominent. From this development such usages as "to ratify by inquiring, to present as approved, to demonstrate, to adduce proof, to acknowledge" appear to have developed.⁸⁵ The term came to be used as a political term indicating that one was approved as fit for office.⁸⁶ It is occasionally used as a synonym for ὑποδέχομαι⁸⁷ stressing acceptance because of approval. It appears in opposition to κολάζω in Plutarch and δικάζω in Wisdom of Solomon 11:11.⁸⁸

The noun and adjective follow a similar trend of meaning. The noun δοκίμιον is the neuter form of an adjective δοκίμιος (Meaning tested, genuine). In classical literature the substantive form is used to mean "means of

⁸⁴Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, p. 442.

⁸⁵Hermann Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek. Fourth English ed., trans. by W. Urwick (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1895), p. 699.

⁸⁶Liddell and Scott, Lexicon, p. 442.

⁸⁷Meaning "to receive, entertain, welcome." Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, p. 844.

⁸⁸Cremer, Lexicon, pp. 699-700. κολάζω means "to punish", while δικάζω means "judge, condemn with the negative." Arndt and Gingrich, Lexicon, pp. 440, 195.

testing."⁸⁹ The adjective usually means "reliable, trustworthy, recognized, esteemed, genuine, or valuable."⁹⁰ Apparently the usage of this term to describe coinage is due to its usage to describe tested and approved men. Out of this arose the association with testing of coins and metals to prove them genuine.⁹¹

Usage in the LXX

General meanings defined

The verb δοκιμάζω is the most frequent translation of the Hebrew פָּנָה. The meaning of to test prevails in the LXX. The noun and adjective both appear only in contexts which relate to refined metals (cf. 1 Chron.29:4, Ps. 12:6, Prov.27:21, Zech. 11:13, Gen 23:16, 3 Kgs. 10:18, 1 Chron. 28:18, 29:4, 2 Chron. 9:17).⁹² The verb however displays the full range of meanings. It is used with reference to testing metals (Zech. 13:9, Prov. 8:10, 17:3, Sir. 2:5, 27:5), and of trusted men (2 Macc. 4:3). The distinction between approval and evaluation is not

⁸⁹Walter Grundmann, "δοκιμος," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. II, ed. by Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. by G. W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1964), p. 256.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 255.

⁹¹Cremer, Lexicon, p. 697; Trench, Synonyms, p. 278.

⁹²Philo also uses the noun and adjective in the sense of respected and approved as well as a few times meaning genuine. Cremer, Lexicon, p. 697.

always sharp. Probably approval is seen in Judges 7:4 where Gideon's men are tested at the drinking spot and in Sirach 42:8 where a man is said to be approved in the eyes of every man. Evaluation may be seen in Jeremiah 6:27, 9:7[6], 11:20, 12:3, 20:12, Wisdom 11:10. But the distinction between evaluation suggesting separation and approval suggesting acceptance or success in the test is not always clear, (e.g. Job 34:3 where the ear evaluates words as does the palate food; and Jer. 17:10). An illustration of a possible negative use of the verb is in Psalm 80[81]:7 where God says He has proved Israel at the waters of Meribah. The results were negative. Perhaps the word is employed here in the sense that what was reality was demonstrated. This may also be true in such passages as Psalm 138[139]:1 & 23 where the writer asks God to test him to know his anxious thoughts and to see if there are hurtful ways in him. His reason is to attain approval in the end and to walk in the everlasting way.

Occurrences of δοκιμάζω and πειράζω together

From a study of passages where both these words appear in close context something of their parallels and distinctions may be gleaned. By such a study, a degree of insight as to why James chose πειράζω to express the situation in which his readers found themselves may be gained. As will be shown, these two terms are often

parallel. This is due to the concept of testing being conceived by each word. Yet at times different emphases appear, with δοκιμάζω expressing approval or genuineness as opposed to πειράζω being more concerned with exposure and testing. It would appear that δοκιμάζω tends to push beyond testing to a positive quality being revealed. But πειράζω usually indicates experimentation or testing with the result in question.

Psalm 25[26]:2 reads:

Prove me [δοκιμάσον] , O Lord and try me [πειράσον] ;
Purify as with fire [πυρῶρον from πυρόω] my reins
and my heart.⁹³

Verse one deals with a call for vindication of the writer by the Lord because of his claim to trust God and walk in integrity. Verse two with the call for testing is followed by verse three with its claim to have walked in God's truth and have avoided evil men. It would appear that both words are close in meaning. If a distinction is seen, it would indicate that the LXX translators saw the writer asking to be proved genuine or approved through the means of testings and refining of his heart and mind. If these terms are considered parallel, then it is clear that temptation is not present in πειράζω in this context.

Psalm 94[95]:9 reads:

⁹³The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament, With an English Translation, (London: Samuel Bagster & Sons, Ltd.; reprinted., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 712.

Where your fathers tempted [ἐπειράσαν] Me; proved
[ἐδοκίμασαν] me, and [καὶ] saw My works.⁹⁴

The context refers this action to the day of Massah in the wilderness. Again the similarities seem to predominate. But the testing of God could stress their unbelief, while the proving of God especially with the qualification "though they had seen My works" reflects that the result should not have been doubted and in fact God proved consistent to His word.

Wisdom of Solomon 1:2-3 reads:

Because he [referring to God in vs. 1] is found of them that tempt him not [πειράζω], and is manifested to them that do not distrust him. For crooked thoughts separate from God; And the supreme power, when it is brought to the proof [ἐδοκίμαζω], it putteth to confusion the foolish.⁹⁵

That the meaning of πειράζω here is the usual one attached to the word when it is used of man testing God is apparent. Notice also the parallel of unbelief. The power tested belongs to God (δοκιμαζομένη τε ἡ δύναμις). While it is possible to render this verb his power being tested, the rendering of his power being demonstrated genuine or proved gives a clearer sense of why it exposes as fools those who test God in unbelief. There appears in this instance to be a difference in emphasis between the two words.

Wisdom 2:17-19 reads:

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 756.

⁹⁵Charles, I, p. 535.

Let us [those who oppress] see if his [the righteous man's] words be true. And let us try [πειράζω] what shall befall in the ending of his life. For if the righteous man is God's son, he will uphold him, and he will deliver him out of the hand of his adversaries. With outrage and torture let us put him to the test [ἐτάσωμεν], that we may learn his gentleness, and may prove [δοκιμάζω] his patience under wrong.⁹⁶

The testing of the outcome of his death reflects the uncertain or open possibility of the verb πειράζω. While the use of δοκιμάζω is in parallel to learning his gentleness or patience, and reflects better the testing to see if his forbearance is genuine.

Wisdom 3:5-6 reads:

And having borne a little chastening, they [the righteous] shall receive great good; because God tested [πειράζω] them, and found them worthy of himself. As gold in the furnace he proved [δοκιμάζω] them, and as a whole burnt offering he accepted them.⁹⁷

While both words may be taken to be similar in this case, by reading each word with its different meaning a progression of thought is seen. God has tested them in the sense of affliction and pressure and they have remained loyal. This thought of being worthy is then further amplified in verse six where they are said to be approved as gold and accepted as a whole burnt offering.

The above usages of πειράζω appear to be consistent with the previous findings in the LXX. Both words involve some sort of testing or trial. As will be

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 538.

⁹⁷Ibid., p. 539.

seen, the distinction of δοκιμάζω emphasizing approval with περάζω tending to leave the outcome uncertain will continue within the New Testament.

Usage in the New Testament

Within the New Testament the δοκιμάζω group appears to reflect the full range from the sense of testing to that of ascertaining what is approved or genuine.⁹⁸ Such usages are also witnessed to in the papyri.⁹⁹ There are several instances which demonstrate the meaning of testing in them. Luke 12:56 indicates just this when Jesus says the Jews know how to evaluate the sky (in parallel is Mt. 16:3 using ὁρατεῖν). The same parallel is seen in 1 Corinthians 11:28 with vs. 31 (ὁραίνοντες). Also included are such usages as in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 which states "examine all things and hold fast the good"; in Galatians 6:4 of examining work; in 1 John 4:1 of testing the spirits if they are of God or not; in Luke 14:19 of a man testing oxen.

Among the instances where concern with positive approval is prominent is the reference to deacons who

⁹⁸Trench, Synonyms, p. 278.

⁹⁹The general meaning of testing occur in several passages. However, there occurs several instances where approval is the concept, e.g. of men approved by both persons to settle a marriage dispute, of physicians who have passed the examinations, and as a technical term for qualifying for a public office. Moulton and Milligan, Vocabulary, p. 167.

should be proved worthy before they are allowed to serve (1 Tim. 3:13). Romans 12:2 could mean either the demonstrating or discovering of the will of God. There are other passages where the stress is on a man being qualified (2 Cor. 8:22, 1 Cor. 16:3). The fire in the last day will demonstrate the works of a man as to quality (1 Cor. 3:13). Also included in the stress on accepted or approved would be Philippians 1:10, Romans 1:28, Ephesians 5:10, and 1 Thessalonians 2:4.¹⁰⁰ Romans 1:28 and 14:22 appear with ἐν signifying to elect or verify.¹⁰¹

Within the New Testament there are a few passages where these two word groups appear together. In Galatians 6:1 and 4 the words appear to be used as "temptations" (πεπράζω) and "demonstrated approved" (δοκιμάζω). Hebrews 3:8-9 is a quote of Psalm 95:9. Paul's usage of these two synonyms in 2 Corinthians 13:5-7 is instructive of their differences. It reads:

Test yourselves [πεπράζω] to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves [δοκιμάζω]. Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you--unless indeed you fail the test [ἀδοκιμοί ἐσσε]. But I trust that you will realize that we ourselves do not fail the test [ἡμεῖς οὐκ ἐσμεν ἀδοκιμοί]. Now we pray to God that you do no wrong; not that we ourselves may appear approved [δοκιμοί] but that you may do what is right even though we should appear unapproved [ἀδοκιμοί].

¹⁰⁰Ibid., p. 167, cites the first two references as demonstrating the tension within the word and ambiguity due to the shift from proving to approving.

¹⁰¹Cremer, Lexicon, p. 701.

The usage here of *πειράζω* appears to stress testing with the outcome unstated for certain. But the use of *δοκιμάζω* stresses the outcome hoped for, i.e. that of a demonstration of approval. If they are not of Christ, then they are not approved (*ἀδοκίμοι*) even though they have undergone *πειρασμός*.

Summarization of These Word Studies

Having surveyed *πειράζω* and compared it to *δοκιμάζω* it would appear that while there is a distinction between the two words, there is also much overlap. The former word tends to remain more indifferent or uncertain concerning the outcome of the test. While the latter word often moves beyond testing toward the more positive result of either approval or demonstration of genuineness. Caution needs to be exercised in not stressing this distinction to the point that the great commonality of testing is overlooked.

Trench's assertion that *δοκιμάζω* could never be used of Satan appears to be correct. But his statement that *πειράζω* is only exceptionally used of God does not appear to be well founded in LXX usage or necessarily excluded by general New Testament meaning.¹⁰² That a morally negative tone could easily attach itself to *πειράζω* is due to this tendency of the word to be concerned

¹⁰²Trench, Synonyms, p. 281.

with testing. Men often fail under testing. The test becomes that which exposes their weakness. In that sense the test could be equal to a situation of enticement to sin. To a great degree the perspective from which the situation is viewed will determine the moral overtones.

CHAPTER III

IMPLICATIONS OF THE WORD STUDY WITHIN JAMES ONE

The implications of these word studies for the usage of *πειράζω* and *πειρασμός* by James must be cautiously stated. It would appear reasonable to state that he was fully aware of the LXX usage which retains the morally neutral meaning of a test. Also present is a connotative meaning which stresses the situation as being one of affliction or pressure. Within the New Testament, there appears to be a widening or at least a new emphasis upon the hostile use of the word in a morally negative context. Yet such a usage does not appear to predominate and must not therefore automatically be assumed to be predominant within James.

There would appear to remain certain problems which must be dealt with before a more certain conclusion can be reached. First, the study of the concept within *πάντες χαρὰν ἠγάσαντο*. What does it mean to consider it all joy, especially as used elsewhere in the New Testament? Second, a better understanding of the meaning of *δοκίμιον* in verse three would likely help clarify exactly what James has in view when he asks these believers to rejoice. Does he mean that they know that the genuine element of

their faith will indeed be demonstrated? Or does he mean that the testing for approval of their faith is what produces endurance? A third area that also needs to be understood is what James sees as the result of this testing. Both *ὑπομονήν* and the result of that need to be clarified. Fourth, how much influence in interpreting should be given to possible parallel passages such as 1 Peter 1:6-7, or Romans 5:3-5? A fifth investigation would be a more specific study into the recipients of this letter. Such a study might give a better insight into how they would have read these words due to their previous exposure to usages. A sixth area would be the patristic usages and possible development of these words into a more technically religious term for temptation. Did in fact, the tendency to interpret words with the emphasis on temptation arise from the later interpretations of the passages where they occur? Then it might be resolved as to how the original writers in the New Testament differed in their meanings from later interpreters. The possibility may exist, but this writer could not substantiate it, that due to the usage of this word group in the wilderness encounter with Satan, the words gained a more obviously sinister usage. It may only be that the Synoptic usage of these words is reflecting a widening trend of the first century that has not yet been discovered in writings outside the New Testament. A seventh area

would be the possible relationship of James chapter one as an interpretation of the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer. Could not James and 1 Corinthians 10:13 both be early attempts to dispell the misuse of that petition as an excuse for failure? An eighth area of consideration is the relation of these words to such words as *θλίψις* and *σκανδαλίζω*. By the study of these words perhaps a better concept of how the New Testament handled the varying perspectives on temptation, testing, and troubles could be gained, thereby giving better insight into which aspect James was stressing.

With the above unresolved problems in mind, the following suggestions as to interpreting James chapter one will be offered. These are not conclusive, but only seem to be the best in light of the word study.

The Meaning of the Noun

In interpreting the meaning of the noun in verses two and twelve a majority of men have felt that the best meaning is one of test or trial. In light of the word study such a usage appears most natural to assume.¹

¹Although dealing with Ecclesiastes 7:28-8:1a, Michael Fox and Bezalel Porten, "Unsought Discoveries: Qohelet 7:23-8:1a" Hebrew Studies, 19(1978), pp. 26-38, deal with the same problem of the same word being used within the passage in two differing manners. "If an author uses a word in an unusual or unexpected way, he must give the reader a way of knowing what the new sense is. Otherwise there is no limit to the meanings one can read into the text and the author will have failed to

There are several considerations for doing this. Foremost in this writer's mind is the LXX background which did form the basis from which James drew his vocabulary at least in part.

Also is the problem of reconciling with accounting as joy the idea of encountering temptation. What is James suggesting is being tested here? Because of his apparent stress on proving true, (vs. 12 δοκιμος γερόμενος), it appears that James is considering the fidelity of the believer as being tested. It is true that remaining pure is a part of that. But James is apparently concerned with not only rejection of morally wrong impulses, but of developing maturity as well. Perhaps it is best to state that the perspective of James is not from the negative of being tempted as from the positive of growth into maturity.

If temptation is read into these verses, it does not matter whether one views it as external or internal. But viewing the emphasis of James as being enticement to sin, when one is asked to rejoice in facing them, is he not asked to rejoice in the capability that he is able to be tempted? Parry² suggests that the idea here is one of a

communicate his meaning." (p. 28) They are dealing with the writer's usages of wisdom. The problem faced in James is that of testing and temptation. If James is to use the word in its more restricted sense, he should give some sort of indication of such a usage. To this writer there would appear to be no such indication until later in the chapter.

²Parry, James, pp. 33-34.

soldier who has faced battle and been found true. But to this writer, the New Testament presents less confidence in a believer's abilities to face temptation. Rather it warns against any self-confidence when temptation is faced (Gal 6:1, 1 Cor. 10:1-13, Js. 4:6-10).

James, in his use of the noun, appears very vague about the source of these tests. He assumes a believer will encounter them and uses the verb *περιτέσσει* to describe how they are encountered. Adamson asserts that the verb is capable of being used for both affliction and temptation because it can have a deliberate as well as the more usual unplanned and undesired meaning.³ But both Ropes and Mayor cite Luke 10:30 as illustrating being taken unexpectedly by affliction.⁴ Adamson himself states "Much of the strength of temptation lies in our never knowing what it is going to do next."⁵ Even if the deliberate meaning is attached to the verb here, it is apparently only from the perspective of the tempter. But James writes

³Adamson, James, p. 54. He cites Xenophon Anabasis i. 8.28: "when Artapotes saw Cyrus fallen, he leapt down from his horse and threw his arms around him" (*περιτέσειν αὐτῷ*).

⁴Ropes, James, p. 134, also cites Prov. 11:5; 2 Macc. 6:13, overtaken by sickness and misfortunes. Mayor, James, p. 34. Wilhelm Michaelis, "*περιτέσειν*," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Vol. VI, ed. by G. Friedrich, trans. and ed. by G. W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 173 states "to come on something accidentally, to be innocently involved in something" commonly with mishaps, etc.

⁵Adamson, James, p. 54.

from the perspective of the ones being tested or tempted. Surely he is not saying "consider it joy when you deliberately fall in with temptation." For James the stress appears to be on the circumstances in which the believer finds himself. That may or may not be temptation depending on the believer's response. But it could always be considered a test. James is not looking at this problem from the perspective of God or Satan, but from the recipient's. As he will develop in verse thirteen, man is responsible for his response and cannot blame failure on a being outside himself.⁶

The statement of James in verse twelve that it is the man who shows he is genuine by persevering under these circumstances may be an attempt to clarify why one should consider these trials as joy. They are not joy in themselves, but they offer an opportunity to demonstrate one's fidelity. This may be a cautioning of the more general Jewish attitude which assumed testing was the lot of the pious (cf. Wis. 3:4-6, 11:9-10; Sir. 2:1-12). Abraham,

⁶The objection by Adamson about the translation of ποικίλοις (various) does not appear to significantly affect this interpretation. Essentially he argues that James would not waste space saying "varied trials" meaning both trials and temptations (James, pp. 52-4). However see Ropes, James, p. 134; Mayor, James, p. 34. There appears to be no real objection with either translation (of either the more strengthened usage as in classical Greek or the weakened usage of Koine which does not imply intensity as to numbers to the same degree) for the interpretation of πειρασμός as trials.

Isaac, and Jacob were held up as examples of righteous men under testing (cf. Judith 8:24-27). For the Jews, testing had become primarily pedagogical for the nation. Was it not after all the plight of those who were righteous to encounter such testing?⁷ James asserts that it is not just the fact of being tested, but the proper response to it that demonstrates that a man's faith is genuine. Only that man is blessed.

It would appear best to view the norm as suggesting the circumstances in which a man finds his faith tested. These would refer to any situation which results in pressure. That some may very well lead to temptation is not denied. In fact it is for this reason, the reason of a wrong response, that James will deal with temptation in verses fourteen and fifteen. But in the use of the noun the stress appears to be on the morally neutral usage of test with the outcome uncertain. James desires them to be approved, but acknowledges they may not.

The Meaning of the Verb

Having defended the neutrality of the noun, the difficult explanation of the shift in usage must be faced. In verse fourteen the verb definitely appears to mean tempted. This is most likely due to the close connection with the words "when he is carried away and enticed by his

⁷Dibelius, James, p. 71.

own lust."

As was presented in chapter one, many men view the transition to be somewhat abrupt between verse twelve and thirteen. This option seems reasonable. Verse twelve would be dealing with the proper response of a man under testing. But verse thirteen shifts to the improper response of a man.

It is the question of when the shift occurs that has caused this word study to be undertaken. The following is a tentative suggestion by this writer. The essential difference from the above position is that the shift is viewed as occurring within the near end of verse thirteen. It is more of a gradual transition rather than a sharp distinction based on some sort of play on words. The reader is led into this more restricted meaning by James as he reasons with the reader through the logical consequences of the reader's hypothetical reactions to the testing when the reader feels himself being under an undue amount of pressure.

Before the view can be presented, it would be best to present a brief investigation into the meaning of ἀπειράτος. This word forms one of the pivotal points in the suggested progression of thought.

One suggested interpretation which is found in the Vulgate and certain other older versions and commentators gives it the active meaning of "God does not tempt

to evil."⁸ Not only does this make the second statement, ("He Himself does not tempt anyone"), a tautology to the first one, but the quality of the Greek in this epistle would most likely indicate that $\delta\epsilon$ would be used in some sort of adversative or at least to indicate some sort of additional material being added.⁹

A second translation is to view ἀπειράτος as being neutral, "God is inexperienced in evil, untried." Hort proposed this view. He saw James as taking the familiar ἀπειράτος κακῶν and substituting the kindred ἀπειράτος for it in conformity with περᾶν of the context.¹⁰ While this is possible it does not really appear to fit the context. Grammatically, a different conjunction such as an οὐν or ἄρα most likely would have been used.¹¹

⁸Peter H. Davids, "The Meaning of ΑΠΕΙΡΑΣΤΟΣ in James 1:13" New Testament Studies, 24:3 (April 1978), p. 387, fn. 2.

⁹Ibid.; cf. also Robertson, Grammar, pp. 1183-86. He says there is no essential notion of antithesis or contrast inherent within the word. Instead there is indicated the addition of something new and not so closely associated in thought to the preceeding as would be true of $\tau\epsilon$ or $\kappa\alpha\iota$. It is copulative in the sense of additional, but not in the sense of equivalent. Robertson does caution against automatically viewing $\delta\epsilon$ as adversative. He views the usage in vs. 13 of $\delta\epsilon$ as continuative, while the one in vs. 14 as adversative.

¹⁰F. J. A. Hort, The Epistle of St. James, (London, 1909), p. 23 cited in Davids, "Meaning in James 1:13," p. 388.

¹¹Alford, Greek Testament, IV, p. 280 also follows this view because he points out that if ἀπειράτος were a verbal from περᾶν, it must be interpreted by the meaning of the verb in the context giving it a meaning foreign to the logic of the passage as there is no question here of

To translate it "For God is inexperienced in evil, but he tempts no one" does not logically make sense. Nor does such an assertion, which no believer would deny, appear to be a really good reason against a man saying ἀπὸ Θεοῦ *πειράζομαι*, "I am tested/tempted from God."¹²

The third solution has the widest acceptance today. It would translate the words as "God cannot be solicited to evil." In its favor are the grammatical permissibility of such a translation and the proper accounting for the particle *δέ*.¹³ There are problems with this also. First does this interpretation fit the general usage of its apparent root word *πειράζω*? The LXX uses these terms to describe the very thing that men have done to God. (That man was not to do it is beside the issue here.) For James to assert that God could not be the subject of *πειράζω* is to draw a sharp contrast to the LXX usage. Second, this meaning of "untestable" is not found in later literature. Rather it retains the more simple meaning of

God, being tempted but of Him tempting. For Alford, the use of *ἀπειράτους* is due to James creating a play on words within the verse. He explains the use of *δέ* by saying that after the assertion that God has no part in evil things. The next phrase of "but He tempts no man" stands in contrast to the phrase "I am tempted from God" making the *ἀπειράτους* phrase parenthetical.

¹² Davids, "Meaning in James 1:13," p. 389.

¹³ Ibid., p. 387-8. Also Mayor, James, p. 51-3.

"untested" or "untried".¹⁴

The fourth solution is to translate the phrase as "God ought not to be tested". Support for such a translation is found in certain later usages of ἀπειράτους.¹⁵ Such a translation has good support in Jewish theology. Deuteronomy 6:16 presents a direct command that God ought not to be tested. Israel as a nation was often guilty of just such action. Christ cites the Deuteronomy passage in response to Satan's suggestion to presume upon God's care. Such a translation in James would allow the γάρ to give the reason why one should not say he is tempted/tested of God with the εἰ giving the contrast of what God does not do that men assert he does.¹⁶

Having considered the best translation of ἀπειράτους to be "God ought not to be tested by evil men," the interpretation of the larger passage can now be considered. James has presented in verses 2 and 12 how a man ought to react under testing. Possibly the tradition which was later recorded as the sixth petition of the Lord's prayer (Mt. 6:13, Lk. 11:4) arose in his reader's minds. They may have thought something like this: "I prayed not to be led into

¹⁴ Davids, "Meaning in James 1:13," p. 388.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 390. Davids cites Acts of John 57 and Pseudo-Ignatius to the Philippians 11 as two examples.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 390-1.

testing, but I am in it. How should I respond?"¹⁷ James says "you are to consider it as joy knowing that a man who perseveres under such trials is demonstrating that he is approved and worthy of the crown of life." There is no need to read into this a works salvation. All that James is asserting is that a man who is a genuine believer will persevere.

"But," certain readers would object, "If God has chosen to lead me into this testing, then is all the responsibility mine when the pressure becomes too great for me?" In effect they might be considered to be asking what Israel asked at Rephidim (Ex. 17:1-7). Israel had been led of God into the wilderness where they then faced a lack of water. Their reaction, which is described as testing, was to ask "Is the LORD among us, or not?" (vs.7). In both cases they are asking if God is still with them or not. They are asking if all the responsibility is theirs if

¹⁷Even if it is believed that Christ spoke these words in Aramaic, they would most likely have been translated by the same Greek word *πειρασμός* that the LXX used. The Aramaic word used in the Targum in Gen. 22:1 to translate the Hebrew *נִסָּה* is *'ō*; cf. *נִסָּה* *נִסָּה* *נִסָּה*, (New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1951). Marcus Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerusahalmi, and the Midrashic Literature, (2 vols.: New York: Pardes Publishing House, Inc., 1950), II, p. 916 defines it as "to put up a sign; to ask for a test; to try, test; to be tried in Hithpa. and Nithpa."

they fail.¹⁸

James's answer to the above question is found in these two verses. He is dealing with the issue of responsibility. Does the fact of God being providentially responsible for the situation in any way alleviate some of the responsibility of a man for failure? James answers that indeed not, responsibility in this situation is no different than at Rephidim.

Although the exact restriction in meaning of the verb from testing to temptation cannot be pinpointed, the following possible interpretation is suggested. James says, "Indeed, no one is to say while being tested, 'I am being tested to extreme by God'; for God ought not to be challenged by evil men, since He Himself does not test to evil anyone. Rather each man is tested to the breaking point by his own desire when he is lured and enticed by it." Exactly where the concept of afflictive pressure shifts into enticement to sin must remain somewhat subjective. What is clear is that (1) God while being responsible for the circumstances providentially is not responsible for a wrong reaction; (2) the wrong response which is labeled sin in vs. 15 is due to the lust or desire within each man.

This suggested interpretation would appear to

¹⁸The parallel at least in thought to 1 Cor. 10:1-13 is striking. However Paul deals with it from a slightly altered angle.

shift the emphasis away from the concept of God tempting or enticing a man to sin. It is a very spiritually weak person who would hurl the accusation that "God enticed me to sin" against God. Rather it emphasizes the aspect of God testing so intently and with so much pressure that the individual feels he has no real resistance left. It sounds more palatable to the spiritual mind to say that "God tested me beyond endurance and what could I do?" That both are wrong is obvious. But is not the human tendency to, by means of euphemisms, excuse wrong behavior?

In this light James will then assert that from God only good is bestowed. The reason is due to God's unchanging attitude toward those whom He begat by His will in the first place. He does not first regenerate and then attempt to break a believer. Rather if a believer sins, it is due to his own wrong response. Testing in this life is no excuse for failure.¹⁹

¹⁹Unfortunately this writer did not locate the article by Karl G. Kuhn, "New Light on Temptation, Sin, and Flesh in the New Testament" in From the Scrolls and the New Testament, ed. by Krister Standahl (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), pp. 94-113 until it was too late to interact with his thoughts for this paper. Kuhn starts his discussion from Mark 14:38 by suggesting that the disciples were in danger of falling into "peirasmos" because of the "weakness of the flesh" (p.94). This situation, which cannot originate with God who would only "test", must be of Satan. He points to James 1:2, 12-13 to show that God is not the originator (p. 95). "Peirasmos, by definition, applies only to the believer. . . . Peirasmos is just that: The constant danger that Satan may devour the believer." (p. 96). In this manner, James's exhortation to rejoice is viewed as given to a tested soldier of this

cosmic battle between God and Satan(p. 97). He finds a great degree of parallel with the Qumran concepts in this idea. The unbelievers, being in Satan's power, "are not in the state of peirasmos" (p. 96). It is doubtful that all of Kuhn's interpretations fit the New Testament usage of these words. But his suggestion concerning the relationship of the idea to the believer would bear further investigation. The danger that appears to this writer in such an approach is that of forming definitions which become code words in meaning, known only to the initiated. Was not the New Testament written for all to understand? As this paper was being typed a brief handling of James 1:13 by Nigel Turner, Grammatical Insights into the New Testament, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1965), pp. 161-3 was located. Although some of his observations are contrary to this paper's suggested views, his suggestion that ἀπὸ is not to be taken in the sense of ὅτι which indicates direct agent, (as Luke does in Acts 20: 9 and Lk. 6:18), but as indicating providential responsibility. Turner's article does not appear in this paper's Bibliography.

CONCLUSION

James would appear to be dealing with the response of a believer to afflictive pressure in chapter one. He first exhorts the believer to consider the encountering of testing circumstances as joy because of the opportunity for maturity which accompanies them. He makes it perfectly clear that it is the right response to these trials that enables a man to be called blessed.

But James acknowledges that some will not respond correctly to trials. They will be weighed down and begin to falter. At this point they would have a tendency to ask if they are responsible for failure under such extreme circumstances as the ones in which they find themselves. After all, haven't they prayed that God would not lead them into trials? Yet He has. Does not He love them and know that they cannot handle such pressure?

James answers that those who feel this way should in no way challenge God as to his love and holiness. His ways are above man's understanding at times. James asserts that God does not test a man to the point that he must fail. If failure comes, it is due to a man's own desires taking control. The responsibility for failure, no matter what the circumstances, rests entirely upon the man.

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