

I Peter 1:6-7 -- "In this you greatly rejoice, even though now, for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various temptations, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ"

II Peter 2:7-9 -- "and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day with their lawless deeds), then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment."

Revelation 3:10 -- "Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth."

[2] The distinction between testing and tempting

In the New Testament the same word PEIRAZO (πειράζω) is used for both testing and tempting. What is the difference?

One set of ideas in the word includes the meanings "examine", "assay", "prove", "make trial of", "scrutinize", "test".

Another set of ideas in the word includes the meanings "tempt", "seduce", "solicit", "entice to do evil".

The first set of meanings focuses on the testing of character. Peter uses an illustration from the assaying of gold to illustrate the testing of faith (in I Peter 1:6-7). An assayer scrutinizes and examines and tests gold ore to see if it is genuine and to determine how rich or poor it is. Peter says that his readers have been distressed by various tests of their faith, but reminds them that these tests will not only show their faith to be genuine, but will strengthen and purify it so that it will result in praise and honor and glory when Christ is revealed from heaven.

James 1:2 appears to fall into this same category of usage. He exhorts his readers to count it all joy when they encounter various kinds of tests, because they know that the testing of their faith develops perseverance, and perseverance must finish its work so that they may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

The second set of meanings focuses on enticement to moral evil. Paul, in I Thessalonians 3:5, is concerned that those who have professed Christ may have been enticed by the tempter to fall away from their profession. In I Timothy 6:9 Paul states that people who want to get rich fall into enticement to evil and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. In Matthew 6:13 our Lord exhorts his disciples to pray to God that they will not be led into enticement to evil. In Luke 22:40, 46 Jesus urges his disciples to pray that they will not fall into enticement to evil. In Galatians 6:12 Paul exhorts, "If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be enticed to evil."