

## 1 Corinthians 10:9

We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. (*NIV*)

1. The reason this verse is a problem verse is that the Greek manuscripts differ. Some texts read “Christ,” while others read “the Lord.” As it is translated in versions like the *NIV*, *Amplified*, *NASB* and others that take the word “Lord” as original, there is no problem at all. This verse is only a problem in some versions that have “Christ” instead of “the Lord.”

2. The subject of textual criticism is very involved, and it is common that scholars differ in their opinions as to which texts are more original and which texts have been altered. In this case, there are early texts that read “Lord,” and some that read “Christ,” so the job of determining the original reading from textual evidence becomes more difficult. We agree with the conclusion of Bart Ehrman (*The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture*) that “Lord” is the original meaning, and refer anyone who wants to examine the textual argument to his work.

3. Every translator will testify to the importance of *context* in determining the correct translation of Scripture. We feel the context makes it clear that “Lord” is the correct reading. Although there are dozens of times that the Israelites were said to tempt “God” or “the Lord” in the Old Testament, there is not even a single reference to tempting Christ. By reading the verse carefully, we obtain a vital clue to its meaning and the proper translation. The verse says that when the Israelites tempted the Lord, they were “destroyed by serpents.” This phrase allows us to find the exact record in the Old Testament that is being referred to. In Numbers 21:5, the Israelites “spoke against God” and then “the Lord sent venomous snakes among them.” In the record of this event in the Old Testament, “God” and *Yahweh* are both mentioned, but “Christ” is never mentioned. Furthermore, there is no scripture anywhere in the Old Testament that says “Christ” poured out his “wrath,” and certainly not by sending serpents. Thus, if some Greek texts read “the Lord” and others read “Christ,” the context points to “Lord” as the correct interpretation.

Ehrman, pp. 89 and 90

Norton, pp. 473 and 474

Snedeker, pp. 441 and 442

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