

God's Test

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Main Scriptures: Exodus 16: 1- 31

Supporting Scriptures: Exodus 15: 25; Deuteronomy 8: 2; Exodus 20: 20; Zachariah 13: 9; 1 Corinthians 3: 13; John 6: 5-6; James 1: 2-3; Romans 5: 3-5

Notes:

We read of the account where God's people who were delivered out of Egypt faced a crises in their journey after leaving their deliverance at the Red sea. They came to the waters of Mara (bitter waters) and were unable to drink that water. Coming out of Egypt God is now placing Israel on trial. From time to time you will recognize God will test his people. When God tests us it is to prove to us who we really are.

God tests us for various reasons:

1. Sometimes it is to humble us and to prove what is in our hearts. - Deuteronomy 8: 2
2. God will also test us to prevent us from sinning and strengthen us - Exodus 20: 20
3. He will establish the fear of God in our hearts so we won't sin.
4. He tests us in order to see if we will obey Him.
5. He also tests people to refine them and restore them to live righteous lives. It has everything to do with the purification of the believer - Zachariah 13: 9
6. 1 Corinthians 3: 13 - to test the soil/heart to prove what sort of work we have produced.
7. God tests people to prove if we genuinely trust him John 6: 5-6
8. God will test us that we will learn more patience and endurance - James 1: 2-3; Romans 5: 3-5
9. God will test us to purify us and refine us so that we will obey him.

Exodus 16 tells us of another moment of crisis. One month after leaving the land of Egypt only one month after the great Exodus the whole community complained about Moses and Aaron. Just imagine everywhere in the camp people were complaining and murmuring against the leaders. Murmuring against Moses and Aaron. After what the Lord had done the people thought it was better to be in Egypt. After the ten signs of what the Lord had done for them in Egypt and the deliverance at the Red sea and at Elim the people thought it better to be slaves in Egypt. It was a very short while ago that they had a similar crisis of water and God showed up and they drank from Mara the bitter water that was turned to sweet water and from there to Elim the place of springs and now they have forgotten what God had done. It shows us how careful we should be concerning identifying and believing by faith knowing from day to day we live by the hand of God. The moment we take God out of the picture we would slip into a state of unbelief and murmuring and complaining. We should take note that they complained about Moses and Aaron in verse two but in Verse 4 it is the Lord who responds to Moses. God will meet their need of hunger but in meeting their need it is a test to see if they will obey. We also need to identify in our lives what God is testing us with. What test am I passing through right now? Is he refining me and testing me if I am obedient? Is he putting me on trial to develop some patience in me? Does He want to reward me? Or does He want to prove me and the state of my heart? Here is a test of obedience if they will listen to the Lord's instructions and follow. Before the creation of time God had already planned to provide for them daily. We have to look at what the Lord is saying and think; the world will give us a

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strategy to work smart and not hard so instead of going out six days or each day until the six day, why not gather enough to work three days and take three days off. But the Lord says each day, the world will teach us that we need to hoard. The Lord is saying don't keep anything you don't need for the day. I am a God who provides daily. I don't want you to have containers filled in your house. You must understand I am a God who is committed to the covenant. Pick up as much as you need not want. Many of them were ignorant to the fact that God delivered them out of Egypt. When we read the word of God we will recognize that after being in Egypt for such a long time many of them now had assimilated so much with the Egyptians that they were superstitious. They did not realize the mighty hand of God that brought them off. Every act of God was against the Gods of Egypt. But now Moses is saying now you will know it is the Lord who delivered you and you will see the glory of the Lord. It is God who we would be complaining and murmuring against. God has heard your complaints. At the beginning God told Moses he heard the cry and saw how hard the task masters are to his people and he took notice and now God says here I have heard the complaints of my people and I will give them food. It's never good when God answers us because of our murmuring. Where did this spirit of complaining come from? Yes unbelief and lack of faith will cause us to question the Lord and question Him as if He is not able but is there anything too hard for the Lord to do?

Lets understand, Moses instructs Aaron to tell the nation to draw near to the Lord and present yourselves before the Lord and the bible tells us that as Aaron began to speak they look out in the wilderness they could see the awesome glory of the Lord. This is not the first time where we see the Lord showing up in the cloud. It was the same cloud that led them by day and as a fire by night and was the same cloud that stood between the Israelites and the Egyptians. It is significant because here we understand why there is a spirit of complaining and murmuring in the camp. When people are not close to God eventually they will become complainers. The spirit of unbelief will take hold on their lives. They will begin to hoard because they don't believe God can provide from day to day. They will question everything because they are now walking in the flesh and so God tells Moses to tell the people to come near to God. There is a blessing in drawing near. Why is it that Israel has to be instructed to draw near to God? You see there are times when God reveals himself, When he shows up as he did in the form of a cloud leading them by day and a fire by night, when we see the miracles we have to allow our minds to be saturated with that encounter we will treat it like any ordinary thing. For example, no man has the power to heal. It is God that heals. God can move in the assembly and will anoint someone and allow his servant to be praying or speaking or touching people and we will see God healing people because there is a move of the anointing to heal but when the service ends and that anointing has lifted, someone will come and say Pastor can you pray for me I need prayers and to be truthful I have to instruct persons when you see the anointing moving it's not the man it is God who wants to heal his people. When it lifts the man has no power he has to beseech God to find out what is his will etc. Sometimes ignorance and pride will cause us not to see how important the move of God is for the present time. Sometimes we treat the move of God so lightly, the mystery and revelation of this cloud that moved for Israel the people did not recognize. Let's recognize that one of the challenges here is that people don't realize the deliverance is of the Lord.

The quail covered the camp but the Mana was protected by the dew and they could only see it when the dew evaporated.

It doesn't matter what the people intended in their hearts when they gathered the food but when they measured it (it's a mystery) every one had just enough. If this is not teaching us something then what is? It's a great principle in life - the promise made to Abraham about this nation that came from the family of 70 to now almost 3 million. The principle taught was that hoarding and greed are not the principles we should endorse. If we are not submissive to the will of God we will test the boundaries like children do. Failure in our belief is showing in our disobedience. Do we sometimes hoard? - every sale we have to catch we store and store and don't have a concern for others Some will buy and buy because they give and give

but others will buy buy buy and store store store. They had to see the hand of God acted against their disobedience for them to be obedient. Disobedience produces corruption and obedience produces preservation. God is showing Israel that he is the provider. He can create a day where we can't find food and other days when we will have an abundant supply of food.

What have we learnt? What is God trying to teach us as we read the word of God on the history of the nation of Israel?

It's never good to complain and grumble and murmur. When we find ourselves complaining it's because we are not near to God and we have removed ourselves from the presence of his glory. Only the ignorant of the glory of God will complain. A complainer is a man who truly has not understood the power of God's word. When we are aware of his presence the fear of God will be established in our hearts and where the fear of God is we will find people of wisdom. Foolish people are complainers because they don't have the fear of God.

Where do we stand? Which seat do we take tonight? Am I going to believe God and firmly believe that God is good and nothing bad comes from him? So if he places me in a difficult position, it is good. We have folks who will say it's the enemy who has caused difficulties and the gateways of superstition opens up but God told Moses to carry them where they would be thirsty for three days. God created the crisis and now because we are not in the presence of the Lord we pray against the hand of God.

God sees our hearts are as bitter as the waters of Mara but God can make it sweet. Ask the prophet Jonah who had turmoil with the inner man and the will of God. God took what was happening within Jonah and made it physical where there was turmoil on the seas. God will put you in some places to prove to you what's in your heart. God will allow the waters to dry up to see if you will trust Him. He will allow the store baskets to go empty to see if we will trust Him. God will allow this whole world to go crazy now and we can't pray against the Pandemic. We pray God's will be done and prove us. The important thing is to see God in everything. You lose some money somewhere ;see God. The enemy can't do anything to the believer unless God allows it. We can remove ourselves out of the camp of the complainers and be a believer. Wise men will risk their lives to see Jesus. Believers will worship God in the most difficult circumstances.