

That the World May Know: With All Your Heart – Session 5: With All Your Might: The Final Test

Why Did God Test His People?

When God delivered the Hebrews from Egyptian bondage, they proudly marched into the desert armed for battle. But their bold confidence quickly waned. Even after seeing God destroy the Egyptian army at the Red Sea, the people who God selected to represent him to the world became afraid that the desert would destroy them. They repeatedly grumbled and rebelled against God. Finally, with a few exceptions, God declared that no one twenty years or older would enter the land promised to their ancestors. For the next forty years, God's people would wander in the desert, learning to trust him and obey him with all their heart, soul, and strength.

1. What kind of picture does Scripture paint of the desert?
Numbers 20:1 – 5
Deuteronomy 1:19 – 21
Deuteronomy 32:10
Jeremiah 2:6

Why would a loving God want his people to live in such a place?
Deuteronomy 8:1 – 5
2. Before God appeared to his people at Mount Sinai, he gave Moses a message for the Hebrews. After reminding them of what he had already done for them, what did he reveal about his purpose for them? How were they to accomplish it?
Exodus 19:1 – 6

God Gave His People a Land to Possess

God redeemed his people to be his witness that he alone was God. And he gave them a land in which they would be his holy nation, his kingdom of priests who would display his character to the world. In order to possess the land God had chosen for them and to be his witnesses, the Hebrews needed to remember the lessons God had taught them in the desert. They needed to trust in his provision and obey his commands completely.

1. From the beginning of his relationships with humankind, it seems God has made a connection between his people living well in the land he provides for them and their obedience to him. Think about the Garden of Eden. Why did God put people in the garden?
Genesis 1:26 – 31
Genesis 2:8 – 15
2. What prevented God's people from continuing to be his partners and fulfill their mission to increase, fill, and rule his world?
Genesis 16 – 17
Genesis 3:11 – 13
Genesis 3:21 – 24
3. What did God want to happen when he gave the Promised Land to the Hebrews?
Deuteronomy 6:13 – 19
Deuteronomy 8:1 – 5
Deuteronomy 11:26 – 32

Just Enough

By the time the Hebrews entered the Promised Land, which was a paradise compared to the desert, they had learned much about God and his provision. Rather than allowing the Hebrews to gather days or weeks or manna at one time, for example, he gave them enough for each day. Any manna they hoarded stank and became inedible. The exception, of course, was on the sixth day, when he instructed them to gather an extra portion to eat on the Sabbath. This was but one of the lessons that taught the Hebrews to obey God's words, depend on his provision, and trust that he would provide enough for each day.

1. How did Moses describe God's daily provision for his people? What do his words reveal about God's character and love for his people, and Moses' trust in God?
Deuteronomy 2:7

Psalm 9:10

Psalm 65:9 – 13

Psalm 146:5 – 8

Matthew 6:25 – 33

From these brief descriptions, does God take pleasure in providing for his people? Why?
2. In each of the following passages, what was God providing?
Deuteronomy 7:9

Psalm 9:10

Psalm 65:9 – 13

Psalm 146:5 – 8

Matthew 6:25 – 33

From these brief descriptions, does God take pleasure in providing for his people? Why?
3. Would you be willing to trust in a God who provides for his people?

Do Not Forget

As the Hebrews approached the Promised Land, Moses challenged them to obey these words: “Love the Lord your God with all you heart and with all your soul and with all your strength...Be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” from Deuteronomy 5. Moses was warning them against thinking that the hardest times were past. Yes, the heat of the desert, the limited diet, and the lack of water in the desert tested their faith and commitment to obey God, but a greater challenge was yet to come.

1. Everyone has their own desert journey which would profit from God's leadership. How has God proven himself faithful by leading you through the difficult situations in your desert?
Deuteronomy 8:1 – 10

Are you confident of his love and provision for you?

As you consider what he is now asking of you, how do you feel about your willingness to obey?

2. What is God's concern for your future?
Deuteronomy 8:11 – 18

What is the risk of success that lies at the root of forgetting God and not being thankful for his blessings?

What is the only antidote for this danger?

The Tragedy of Be'ushim

When God's people entered Canaan, they no doubt were overjoyed by the blessings God provided. But over time, they forgot that God was the source of all blessings. Through the prophet Isaiah, God pronounced judgment using the metaphor of a vineyard, a *gan*, an image his people readily understood. This vineyard represented God's people, and with all the work the farmer put into it, it should have produced an abundant harvest of wonderful fruit. Instead, it produced be'ushim—a crop of stinking, rotten, worthless grapes.

1. In the metaphor of the vineyard, how hard had God worked to prepare the vineyard for his people, and his people for the vineyard?
Isaiah 5:1 – 7
Psalm 80:8 – 16
Jeremiah 2:21
John 15:1 – 4

What type of vines did God plant in the vineyard?
Isaiah 5:2

What did God do that showed how much he valued his vineyard and was committed to protecting it?
Isaiah 5:2

2. What kind of “fruit” did God expect his people to produce in the vineyard he had prepared for them?
Exodus 19:1 – 6
Exodus 23:9
Leviticus 19:1 – 37
Deuteronomy 24:10 – 22
Isaiah 5:7
Isaiah 43:10 - 12

References

Genesis 1	Genesis 2
Genesis 3	Genesis 13
Exodus 3	Exodus 5
Exodus 6	Exodus 7
Exodus 15	Exodus 16
Exodus 17	Exodus 19
Exodus 23	Leviticus 19
Leviticus 23	Leviticus 26
Numbers 14	Numbers 20
Deuteronomy 1	Deuteronomy 4
Deuteronomy 6	Deuteronomy 7
Deuteronomy 8	Deuteronomy 11
Deuteronomy 16	Deuteronomy 16
Deuteronomy 24	Deuteronomy 28
Deuteronomy 32	Joshua 5
1 Samuel 17	1 Kings 4
Psalm 9	Psalm 23
Psalm 25	Psalm 37
Psalm 65	Psalm 78
Psalm 80	Psalm 95
Psalm 146	Proverbs 3
Jeremiah 2	Isaiah 3
Isaiah 5	Isaiah 10
Isaiah 17	Isaiah 31
Isaiah 43	Isaiah 58
Amos 5	Zechariah 7
Matthew 6	John 10
John 15	1 Corinthians 10
Hebrews 13	James 1
Micah 4	Joel 3
Matthew 21	