

When God Tests Us

written by Tim Jennings, M.D. | January 11, 2024



These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Leboc Hamath.

They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses. The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods (Judges 3:1-6 NIV84).

What do you understand these verses to mean?

What law lens do you read them through? What is the overall context of Scripture—its grand central theme? What is the purpose of God in having the Scriptures written and inspiring writers to record such stories?

When the Lord puts someone to the test, what is He testing? It is always the same ultimate reason behind the test: Do they trust God or not? Do they have faith/ confidence in God or not? And does their faith/trust/confidence go beyond the belief of devils who tremble, to the faith that is a living faith that results in loyalty to God?

Such tests are necessary in this world of sin because we cannot grow in faith, in trust, unless we are placed in a position in which our faith is tried or tested and we choose to exercise our faith. We must choose to say no to the fear, the insecurity, the doubts, the temptations to act to save self and, instead, choose to apply the truth and do what we understand is right, what is God's will for us in that situation, and trust God with the outcome.

This is the issue; it has always been the issue—are we faithful, loyal friends of God who actually trust Him?

Jesus asked this very question about His second coming:

When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8 NIV84).

When Jesus comes again, will He find people who trust Him, who will be faithful to Him, who have chosen to trust Him with their lives, futures, fortunes, and families? Or will He only find people who claim to believe in Him but who have put their trust in their rules, rituals, ceremonies, blood payments, wealth, institutions, and the power they can wield over others—all in His “name,” of course?

Paul said, “Everything that does not come from faith is sin” (Romans 14:23 NIV84).

God wants us to return to a living confidence, trust, and faith in Him, and He allows events to come upon us that will test our faith, put us in positions in which we have to decide whether we scheme, calculate, plot, plan, connive, manipulate, bend the rules, make excuses, cheat in order to save self, or whether we stand for what we know is right and trust God with how it turns out.

David, when he was dedicating materials and his son for the building of the temple, prayed:

I know, my God, that you **test the heart and are pleased with integrity**. All these things have I given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. O LORD, God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep this desire in the hearts of your people forever, and **keep their hearts loyal to you** (1 Chronicles 29:17, 18 NIV84, emphasis mine).

God doesn't test, as a human teacher would, to discover the answer—God already knows the answer. God tests so we can actively choose to trust and, thereby, grow, develop, advance, and mature. It is for our development that God tests.

This is why God provided the test in Eden with the [Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil](#)—it was the simplest of tests, yes, but it was a place for our first parents to exercise their abilities to think and choose to trust God—or not—and, thereby, either develop mature godly character or corrupt their character with fear, selfishness, guilt, and shame—the knowledge of evil. God, of course, wanted them

to know only good, but they chose to know evil.

God tested Abraham when He told him to sacrifice Isaac:

Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, "Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. Then God said, "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about" (Genesis 22:1, 2 NIV84).

God did not test Abraham like this as a trap to trip him up but as the application and outworking of God's eternal design laws of truth, love, and liberty. This was the opportunity for Abraham to freely choose to trust God and, thereby, overcome the fear and selfishness that plagued him and caused him to distrust God on several previous occasions. (You can read more about this in our blog [Why Did God Tell Abraham to Sacrifice Isaac?](#))

What God wants cannot be created by Him nor chosen by Him. God wants our love, devotion, trust, friendship, and loyalty. He wants us to internalize into our hearts and live out His living laws and, thus, develop Christlike character. This requires us to be placed in circumstances and situations in which we have to choose to trust God or not. So God tests us, but He never allows the test to be more than we can handle at any given point in our development. He has promised:

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13 NKJV).

God always provides everything necessary for our healing, salvation, and deliverance from fear and selfishness.

- He provides the truth that destroys lies and wins us to trust (John 8:32)
- He provides the love that casts out the fear (1 John 4:18)
- He provides the Savior, His Son, who became a real human and as a human, using only human abilities, chose to love and trust His Father in all things and received as a human the empowering of the Holy Spirit to succeed in all things. And as a human, Jesus developed a perfect righteous and mature human character and destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness that Adam introduced into humanity when he broke trust with God. Thus, Jesus became the new head of humanity, the second Adam (Hebrews 2:14, 4:15, 5:9; 2 Timothy 1:10; 1 John 3:8).
- He provides the Holy Spirit to bring the truth home to our hearts and minds, to convict of sin, to convict of duty, and then (John 14:16) ...
- He provides freedom, real freedom, to accept and choose the truth or reject it—and when we choose the truth (Joshua 24:15; Galatians 5:1) ...
- He provides the opportunity to test our faith, situations that require us to choose—do we trust God? Do we choose what we know is in harmony with His will, purposes, instructions, guidance, design laws for life and trust Him with outcomes, or do we choose to break trust with Him and seek to advance and save ourselves?
- When we choose to trust Him, He then provides divine power, the indwelling Holy Spirit, to give

us the ability to carry out the truth, to stand firm in the face of fear, threat, selfish temptations with a peace that passes understanding, with love for our enemies, with a vision of eternity as we choose to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus and our hearts loyal to Him.

God brings people into circumstances that are beyond their ability so that they will choose to turn to Him, ask for His deliverance, and learn to trust Him; i.e., increase their faith in Him. I encourage you that when faced with tests to remember the secret to victory is turning to Jesus, to:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:4-7 NIV84).