

Lesson 2: The Wilderness Trials

Central Point: Life is a series of tests of obedience

The exodus out of Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea was certainly a test of faith, with Pharaoh and his army meeting a fitting end. With God, beginnings are significant because through them He establishes precedence and institutes guiding principles for the long term. The newly formed nation of Israel probably assumed their next leg to the Promise Land was going to be quick & uneventful, but they were a diamond in the rough with many rough edges.

- I have three very important questions that God's people need to come to grips with
- **Question:** "1-Does God test His people? 2-How does He test us? 3-For what purpose?"
- Many Christians doctrines throughout the ages have been derived from these questions
- Some circles pervert God's discipline and attribute them to the works of Satan- sickness
- For others, like charismatics this subject is often overlooked and avoided all together

Our current feel good, coddled, pampered, safe space, sheltered and protected generation, needs to hear this message more than any other. Life is a challenge and a long array of tests and trials to train and prepare us for something much greater than our personal comfort. Fortunately there are seasons of vacation, rest, fun, pleasure and enjoyment in life, but these are merely pit stops on the long road and race that is set before us to become more like Jesus.

- **Please Read: 1 Peter 1:3-9** *The crucible of suffering grief in all kinds of trials and tests*
 - o So that our faith may be proved genuine and result in glory to God
 - o Persecution and crucifying the selfishness of the flesh is not a pleasant task
 - **1 Peter 4:1-4, 12-19-** what it means to suffer according to the will of God
- **Please Read: James 1:2-18** *Don't be deceived – only good gifts from God Mt.7:11*
 - o vs 2- The testing of our faith develops perseverance, character & maturity
- **Heb. 12: 1-6-** For the joy set before Him, Jesus paid the price of obedience so must we
 - o **Hebrews 2:18; 5:7-10; Php. 3:10-11-** Jesus set an example for us to follow
- **Please Read: Romans 5:3-5**
 - o Biblical suffering produces perseverance, character and hope

The Greek word *paideia* in Hebrews 12:7, English translations for "Hardship", "Chastening", "Discipline": child training, tutorage or education; by implication disciplinary correction. Same Greek word for "Training, Nurture, and Discipline" found in Ephesians 6:4

- Notice also the use of "Hardship" in **Ro. 8:35; 1 Th. 2:9; 2 Tim 2:3-4; 4:5**
- God's primary training in godliness (**1 Tim. 4:8**) is through His Word (**2 Tim3:14-16**)

- **Please Read: Deuteronomy Chapter 8** *Applies to them and us today!*
- Jesus when tempted by the devil in Mt. 4:4 to turn a stone into bread, quoted Dt. 8:3
- As we are today and Israel was in the desert so was Jesus - tested in obedience
- The root word for crisis comes from the word "Opportunity, crossroads or turning point"
- **Question:** "When hard times come in life, in what ways do people respond?"
- Either people rise to the occasion to serve others or fall into despair and be selfish
- Purpose of a test is to see what we know, so we can continue to learn, study & grow

Life is a series of tests of obedience, when tested the million dollar question is what we will do, what's our response or reaction- the purpose is to see what we are made of- to be sifted as wheat (Luke 22:31). Note Israel's murmuring in the desert was mostly for food and water. Other times it was out of jealousy, or they were prompted by bitterness and cowardice.

- Upon the heels of a great victory and mighty deliverance came their first test
- **Please Read: Exodus 15:19-27**
- Verse 25, the "Piece of Wood" is a type of the cross of Jesus- turns a bitter life to sweet
- This first test (one of many) was to show that obedience = blessing
- Put God's Word first in obedience and His promises will provide what we need
- Seek God first and we'll have all we need; seek things first, they will elude and dissatisfy
- **Please Read: Proverbs 30:7-9; Matthew 6:24-34; Luke 12:13-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-19**

Isa 1:19-20, "If you are willing and obedient, you shall eat the good of the land; But if you refuse and rebel, you shall be devoured by the sword"; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

For the 40 years the people of Israel were in the desert, God provided for their every need. God was revealing to them that He was their source; the provider, the supplier, their all in all. Just think, every day God was faithful to give them their daily bread (Ps. 78:24-25) until in Joshua 5:11, the manna stopped the day after they first ate the produce of the Promise Land.

- **Please Read: Exodus 16:1-20**
- Ex 16:20, "some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning"
- **Question:** "Why is it so hard for people to follow simple instructions?"
- **Please Read: Exodus 16:21-35** *Manna kept in the ark as a reminder- Hebrews 9:4*
- Lesson Learned: God does not take too kindly to grumbling and complaining does He?
 - o Bonus Reading: Numbers chapter 11; 1 Cor. 10:1-13; Php. 2:14-15
- **Please Read: Exodus 17:1-7** *Another type of Jesus was when water came from the rock*
 - o Jesus the rock of our salvation was struck (Mt. 26:31) for us – John 4:10-11
- The 2nd instance of water from the rock was after Israel failed to enter the Promise Land
- **Please Read: Numbers 20:1-13** *Not to strike the rock (Jesus) again but speak to it*