

## TEMPTING GOD, 9 pgs

**Ps.78:18**, They **willfully** put God to the test by demanding the food they craved.

**78:41**, Again and again they put God to the test; they **vexed** the Holy One of Israel.

**78:56**, But they put God to the test and **rebelled** against the Most High; they did not keep his statutes.

**106:14**, In the desert they gave in to their craving; in the wasteland they put God to the test.

**Mt.22:18**, **Lk.20:23**, But Jesus perceived their **wickedness**, and said, Why tempt ye me, hypocrites?

**Acts 5:9**, But Peter asked **Sapphira**, How is it that you have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord?

**15:10**, **Peter** said, Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear?

**1 Cor.10:9-10**, **Paul** said, let us not put Christ to the test [*Lit, overtempt Christ*], as some of them also *did* and were destroyed by serpents [**Num.21:5-6**]. And do not **complain** [*murmur, grumble*], as some of them did, and were killed by the destroying angel [**Num.16:41-45**].

**Heb.3:8-10**, The Holy Spirit says ... Do not harden your hearts as **in the rebellion** [*provocation*], in the day of testing [*temptation*] in the wilderness. There your fathers tested [*tempted*] me and tried me [*tested me by trial*], therefore, **I became angry** with that generation and they saw my works for forty years ...

The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, **traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded**. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. So they quarreled with Moses and said, Give us water to drink. Moses replied, Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test? ... **Ex.17:1-3**

**In what way were they testing the Lord?** Almost 40 years later, just before the Israelites were going to cross over into the Promised Land, Moses reminded them of all God had done for them, and of this incident, Do not test the LORD your God as you did at Massah, **Dt.6:16**.

### Temptation of Jesus

After Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened and **John** saw **the Spirit of God** descending like a dove and coming to rest on him [*anointing him for his mission*], **Mt.3:16**. Jesus was **led by the Spirit** [*The Spirit immediately drove him, Mk.1:12*] into the wilderness [*Judean Desert*] to be tempted [*purpose*] by the devil [*slanderer or accuser*]. After he fasted forty days and forty nights he was famished [*and weak, his energy drained, then*] **(1)** the **tempter** came and said to him, if you are the Son of God, [prove it, show me! <sup>a</sup>] command these stones to become bread. But **Jesus** answered, It is written, Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God [**Dt.8:3**]. **(2)** Then the devil took him to the holy city [*Jerusalem*], had him stand on the highest point of the temple, and said to him, if you are the Son of God, [prove it!] throw yourself down. For it is

written, He will command his angels concerning you to protect you [from injury, **Ps.91:11-12**, a mis-application of the passage <sup>b</sup>] ... Jesus said to him, Once again it is written: **You are not to put the Lord your God to the test [Dt.6:16]**.

(3) Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their grandeur [glory]. And he said to him, I will give you all these things [to you ... for this whole realm has been relinquished to me [the whole world lies in the power of the evil one, **1Jn.5:19**], and I can give it to anyone I wish, **Lk.4:6**] if you throw yourself to the ground and worship me [a sign of devotion to and acknowledgment of a superior <sup>c</sup>]. Then Jesus said to him, Go away, Satan adversary or accuser! For it is written: You are to worship the Lord your God and serve only him [Dt.6:13]. Then the devil left him [until a more opportune time (though the devil never again confronted him directly) **Lk.4:13**], and angels came and began ministering to his needs, **Mt.4:1-11**. When Jesus began his ministry, he was about thirty years old. Lineage or genealogy: He was the son (supposedly) of Joseph ... David ... Abraham ... Adam, the son of God, **Lk.3:23-38**

a. In the 1<sup>st</sup> temptation Jesus would not be breaking any OT laws if he created food for himself. But he didn't come to serve himself. The Spirit of God brought him into the desert and God denied him food until the trials were over. God weakened him to face the devil for a reason. His resistance to this temptation set the example for us, **Jas.4:7-10; 1Pt.5:8-9**. Had he given in to his physical desires, he would have broken the **most basic rule** in true spiritual living: **Submitting to God by waiting faithfully for him** to change one's circumstances, **Ps.27:14** [see **God's Training – 1, p.12**, another aspect to fear].

Just after Jesus was baptized [anointed by the Holy Spirit **Mt.3:16**], before entering into His 3 year ministry, he was driven (**Mk.1:12**) into the desert by the Spirit where the devil challenged him to demonstrate that he was the son of God, which would have **compromised his mission**. Scripture gives several reasons for Jesus' coming. Chief among them was to do the will of God.

it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. So when he came into the world, he said, Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me [Ps 40:6-8, LXX] ... Then I said ... I have come—it is written of me in the scroll of the book—to do your will, O God. When he says, sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and sin-offerings you did not desire nor did you take delight in them ... then he says ... I have come to do your will. He does away [abolishes] with the first to establish the second. By his will we have been made holy through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all, Heb.10:4-10

Jesus said to his disciples I have food ... that you know nothing about ... My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to complete his work [ie, finish the mission], Jn.4:32-34. Christ's mission involved two parts: 1<sup>st</sup> to live a life of complete obedience to his father so that he would be an unstained and righteous sacrifice; 2<sup>nd</sup> to offer himself as a sacrifice for the sins of humanity. But Jesus was functioning at a higher level than mere obedience. He was seeking to PLEASE his father even when there was no law to obey. The essence of pleasing God is humility [submitting to him by submitting to his will], Phil.2:4-8; Mt.26:39, 42.

Remember the whole way by which *the Lord* has brought you [*Israel*] these forty years through the wilderness so that he might, *by humbling you, test you* to see if you have it within you to keep his commandments or not. So *he humbled you by making you hungry and then feeding you with unfamiliar manna* [*a supernatural provision given after the trial*] He did this to teach you that human-kind cannot live by bread [*physical food*] alone, but also by everything that comes from the Lord's mouth, **Dt.8:2-3**.

**b.** The context reveals the devil's deception: **Ps 91** addresses one who has sought shelter in the Lord and assures him that God will protect him from injury. Jesus points out that **this protection does not extend to cases** where the intent is to put the Lord to the test [*ie, bait Jesus into forcing God to save him from harm*].

**c.** In the **3<sup>rd</sup> temptation** instead of challenging Jesus' status again, the devil offers him all the kingdoms of the world as an alternative to having to suffer an awful death for mankind. Of course, Jesus refuses knowing that this was not the path that would accomplish the Father's goals.

If both Jesus and the Israelites were required to pass tests before entering the fullness of what God had called them into, **we too will endure testing** before entering into the fullness of all God has called us to.

### What is testing really about?

*But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst? Ex.17:3* Their request for water was rooted in deeper concerns - their concerns for their lives. They so doubted God's promise and plan that when they looked at the severity of the circumstance around them, their hearts failed them and they came to **distrust** the God who had just parted the Red Sea, wiped out the Egyptian military, and with ten incredible plagues, set them free from a life of slavery which they had endured for almost 400 years. Still they doubted God's promise, and out of this doubt came their cry for water. They needed God to change their circumstance so they could trust His promise. If God would provide water, perhaps then they would come to trust Him, right? But **Isaiah** wrote of these people, saying, *they say, We want God to speed up his work, to hurry it along, so we can see it! We want the Holy One of Israel's plan to come true right now, so we can be sure of it! Isa.5:19*

If God gave them what they asked for, would they trust him then? **David** said of them, *but they continued to sin against him, rebelling in the desert against the Most High. They willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved. They spoke against God, saying, Can God spread a table in the desert? When he struck the rock, water gushed out, and streams flowed abundantly. But can he also give us food? Can he supply meat for his people? Ps.78:17-20* [*This is the background for Jesus' statement in Jn.6:26, Truly, truly I say to you, you are seeking me not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.*] When God delivered them from slavery, still they doubted, when He parted the Red Sea and swallowed up their enemies, still they doubted, when God provided water from a rock, still they doubted, when He provided bread from heaven, still they doubted, and when God provided meat, they still doubted. They tested God ten times in the desert

and continued to doubt His faithfulness and His provision. [They continued to impugn His motives (to question His goodness) at every hardship.]

Contrast the trust of the Israelites with that of their forefather, Abraham, when God told him to sacrifice His only son (**Gen.22:1-18**), his son of promise which he his wife Sarah had born to him when he was 100 years of age. Abraham did not doubt God as he packed the firewood and he didn't take a sacrifice on purpose. When his son asked about this his only response was that God himself would provide it, **22:7-8**.

### Gods love for us cannot be determined by our circumstances

We run the risk of putting our God to the test when we determine Gods love for us [or measure His goodness] by looking at our circumstances. We must **look at our circumstances through His Love and purposes**. The book of James puts it this way, *Regard it all as joy, my brothers, when you face various kinds of temptations; for you know that the testing of your trust produces perseverance. But let your perseverance do its complete work; so that you may be complete and whole, lacking in nothing, Jas.1:2-4 [ie, the work of perseverance is to build character and it is therefore for our good]* God is interested in our happiness, and its true that he does want the best for us, even on earth, however, more important than our happiness is that we be found faithful. To God our trust is worth far more than pure gold, *even gold is tested for genuineness by fire. The purpose of these trials is so that your trust's genuineness [real confidence in God] ... will be judged worthy of praise, glory and honor at the revealing of Jesus the Messiah, 1 Pt.1:7*

The Bible has many accounts of people that faced great opposition as a result of being called by God. It is this opposition when endured with faith that establishes the promise. God said ... *because you [Abraham] haven't withheld ... your only son. I will most certainly bless you; and ... increase your descendants to as many as there are stars in the sky ... Gen.22:16b-17*

### Conclusion

Before we enter into the fullness of what God has called us to, we also must pass tests like the Israelites faced in the wilderness, one of which is learning not to put our God to the test by doubting His love and faithfulness to us. When God gives us an assignment, there will be opposition. **God will not always seem near to us** either, but we must come to trust Him even when he seems distant. When the Israelites wandered the desert facing their trials in the harshness of the desert, *there you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place [Kadesh Barnea, Dt.1:19-20]. Dt.1: 31* We may not see God carrying us through our trials, but He is. *Who among you fears ADONAI [lord]? ... Even when he walks in the dark ... his servant will trust in ADONAI's reputation and rely on his God, Isa.50:10*

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### WHEN GOD WAS PUT ON TRIAL

*All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water ... Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, Give us water to drink. And Moses said to them, Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?*



But the people ... grumbled against Moses and said, Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst? So Moses cried to the LORD ... these people are almost ready to stone me. And the LORD said to Moses, Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall **strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink**. And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah [*mng. testing*] and Meribah [*mng. quarreling*], because ... they tested the LORD by saying, **Is the LORD among us or not?** **Ex.17:1-7**

The ESV notes at **Ex.17:1-7** point out that **Meribah** (v.7) is often used in legal contexts having to do with bringing suit (ie, *plead a case*, **Mic.6:1**). God was being ... **accused of abandoning his people** to die in the desert. Normally man stands on trial before God, but here God takes the place of the accused, Behold I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, **v.6a**. There Moses struck the rock **bringing judgment upon God** himself and water poured out of it vindicating His justice.

**Rom.1:16-17** In the Gospel [*the good news that Jesus has born the penalty for our transgressions*], the righteousness of God has been **revealed**, **3:21-26**. But now the righteousness of God has been **manifested** ... the law and the prophets bear witness to it - the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For ... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified by His grace [*as a gift*], through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus whom God put forward as a propitiation [*mng. Satisfaction, appeasement, turning aside his wrath*] by His blood [*death*], to be received by faith. This was to show Gods righteousness, because in His divine forbearance He had passed over former sins.

Paul is arguing not only that **God delayed judgment** of OT believers by leaving previously committed sins unpunished, but also that He transferred their sins to Jesus where they were punished and thus righteousness upheld. That is the core of what the discussion of Abraham's justification in **Rom.4** is about. It was to show His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. **5:21**, so that grace might rein through righteousness ...

When John expressed his reservation about baptizing Jesus, Jesus answered Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness, **Mt.3:13-15**

**2 Pt.1:1** To those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours [*apostles*] by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ > **1 Jn.1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful **and just** [*righteous*] to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

### JERICO, Rahab, Achan & Ai

After 40 years traipsing through the wilderness, Israel again came to Canaan and this time began the conquest with **Jericho**, a small walled city of about seven acres; a very strong **fortress** really, prepared to resist siege. It controlled the way of ascent into the mountains. At the head of the ascent was another smaller fortress, **Ai**.

Joshua ... secretly sent two spies from Shittim across the Jordan river. Go, look over the land, he said, especially Jericho, **Josh.2:1**. So they went and entered the house of ... **Rahab** and stayed there ... she ... said to them [her words were a sign of encouragement], I know that the LORD has given you this land ... so that the hearts of all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you ... and everyone's courage failed because of you, for **the LORD your God is God** in heaven above and on the earth below, **1-11**.

Just before the Israelites came out of Egypt, they had celebrated the Passover feast in haste with loins girded, feet shod, and staff in hand, **Ex.12:11**. They were being made ready to see the world as a place of pilgrimage and war. This is exactly how the Christian lives, and Rahab is a tremendous example for us as she turned against her entire culture to help the spies. Though we have stepped from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear son, we are still surrounded by a culture controlled by Satan ... **It is just plain stupid of a Christian not to expect spiritual warfare while he lives in enemy territory** [ Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History, **p.79-80** ].

Dear friends, **do not be surprised** at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you [it is the norm for the persecuted church, to be expected]. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you, **1Pt.4:12-14; Rom.8:17; Col.1:24**.

The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness for forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died ... So God raised up their sons ... whom Joshua **circumcised** ... **Josh.5:6-7** ... while camped at Gilgal [which remained the central camp throughout the war] ... the Israelites celebrated the **Passover**. The day after ... they ate some of the produce of the land ... **The manna stopped** the day after that ... **10-12**.

Joshua's commands to the people made it clear that everything in Jericho except **Rahab** and all that were with her in the house was **devoted** to God. The fortress of Jericho represented the **first fruits** of the land. keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it, **6:17-19**. The city was totally burned, **v.24**. Supposedly, it was neither spoiled nor plundered, nothing was removed, **p.105-106** .

Afterward, Joshua sent men to reconnoiter the smaller fortress, **Ai**, at the top of the mountain. Upon their recommendation, only three thousand men ascended to take it, **Josh.7:3-5**. But they were overwhelmed and 36 were killed. The whole camp knew that God's blessing had stopped. Joshua couldn't understand this and lamented the situation before God, **6-9**. But he had ample reason to know what was wrong so God responded to him in a rather harsh way, **10-12**, **p.107-108** .

God had the people **sanctify themselves**, **v.13**, as when they first entered the land before they began the conquest. God himself pointed out **Achan** and he confessed that he had taken and hidden some things from the fortress. At his judgment everybody knew he had sinned. Jesus said, The things that are done in the darkness will be known in the light, **Lk.12:3**, **p.109-111** . All the people of God joined in the judgment that God directed, and stoned Achan and his family, **Josh.25**. After the

nation was cleansed, all the people moved against Ai. Jericho was the first fruits to God. At Ai the tithe had already been given so the people were free to take it's spoil. Tragedy came to Achan and to the people because he had been impatient. Had he waited obediently, **he could have had the blessing instead, p.112-113** .

*The **Captain of the Army of the Lord** told Joshua exactly what to do and he did it - and thus led the Israelites to victory over Jericho. Joshua was desperate because the battle against Jericho seemed beyond his ability to win, but they did. Ai was nothing compared to Jericho. So Joshua figured that if he was able to win against the seemingly impossible battle of Jericho, then he should be able to easily win the battle of Ai.*

*This is where Joshua teaches us our next lesson. We must never presume upon God. We can never **assume** that just because God brought us through difficult times before and led us to success then, that He is obligated to do it again because we are His children. [That conclusion is neither axiomatic nor automatic because there are always conditions related to being careful with God's word to be met.]*

*Heres **the positive way to put it**: We must always remain men and women of prayer. We must live every moment as though we desperately need God to come through for us, because if we do not, we will quickly discover that we can get a lot of man-sized things accomplished under our own power – but we will miss the God-sized things that he wanted to do through us **if we had only been attentive to His word**. It doesn't matter how many battles we've won, we can never presume that God will again act on our behalf just because He did it last time and we were victorious. We discover time and time again in the Scriptures that God will let us fall flat on our faces **when we substitute past successes for present submission**.*

***Proverbs 21:31** says, The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but victory rests with the LORD.*

*Chorus from **Victory Through Grace** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wVa82Ca-El>*

*Not to the strong is the battle, Not to the swift is the race; Yet to the true and the faithful Vict'ry is promised through grace.*

*And especially those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed ... **2 Pt.2:10***

*David prayed, Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great transgression, **Ps. 19:13**. As we live our lives by faith, we have to understand the difference between faith and presumption:*

**Faith** is a response to the initiative of God. **Presumption** takes the initiative away from God so that the person acts on his own initiative. Presumption is acting according to our own human will. *But they continued to sin against Him, **rebell**ing in the desert against the Most High. They willfully put God to the test by demanding the food they craved (Ps.78:17-18)*. Presumption is a sin against God. In almost all cases it is classified as such a deadly sin, it is punishable by death!

## Presumption is linked to the Word of God in two ways:

- (1) To claim a prophecy to be a Word of the Lord when it is not - often leads to death, **Dt.18:20, 22**
- (2) To overstep the Word of the Lord and to do beyond what His Word has said - often leads to destruction, **Num.14**

## There are various occasions of presumptuous sin recorded in the Bible:

- (1) The presumptuous sin of the children of Israel, **Num.14:39-45**
- (2) The presumptuous sin of Saul, **1 Sam.13:8-14**
- (3) The presumptuous sin of David, **2 Sam.6:1-7**

While faith recognizes and yields to God's sovereign will, presumption asserts self-will. Faith is totally dependent on God and His **rhema** (Word), but presumption is dependent on our own interpretation of the **logos**. Faith will bear fruits that glorify God, but presumption contains an element of human arrogance and self-glorification. Faith is yielding to God, but presumption demands, compels, forces, and insists.

## SECRET FAULTS AND PRESUMPTUOUS SINS

*Cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. **Ps.19:12-14**.*

All Christians of experience in the good way, and in the battle against sin and self have learned that there can be no outward or presumptuous sins that have not first had their beginning in the secret vaults of the mind. The sinful thought may be one of **pride** suggesting self-exaltation; of **avarice** suggesting unethical acquisition of wealth; or of some other fleshly desire. The mere suggestion of the thought before our minds is not sin; it is merely the operation of our faculties, and of the influences which surround us inquiring of **[probing]** our wills, whether or not we will consent to such thoughts. My consent to thoughts of evil must be repudiated. If such thoughts be *entertained* it is a secret fault, and the growing tendency would surely be toward the more outward and presumptuous sinful conduct. Their tendency always leads from bad to worse. The beginnings are always small, and correspondingly much easier to deal with than in their developed form. Hence, the prophetic prayer, *Cleanse thou me from secret faults and thus keep back your servant from presumptuous sins, **Ps.19:12-13***.

In **James 1:14-15** we read, *Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own desire and enticed. Then, when desire hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*. Here we have the same thought differently expressed. The temptation consists at first in the presentation to the mind of *suggestions* which are impure or unkind or unfaithful to obligations; but there is no sin, no fault, as yet. The fault begins when we harbor the evil suggestions, begin to turn them over in our minds, and to consider the attractions which they may have to offer. This is where *desire* (taking hold of the evil thing instead of resisting it) causes a beginning of the secret fault; and it is only a process of development, which in many instances, under favorable



circumstances, may be very rapid, that sin, the presumptuous or outward acts of sin, results--for instance, bearing false witness against a neighbor, or slander, or other evil deeds. And the evil course having begun in the fostering of the evil suggestion, and having progressed to presumptuous sin, there is a great danger that the entire course of life will be ultimately affected thereby.

The more attention we give to this subject, the more we will be convinced, from our own personal experiences, of the truth of the Scriptural declarations respecting the beginnings of sin as *secret faults in the mind*; and the more we will appreciate the statement of the Word, *Keep thy heart [mind, affections] with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*--**Prov.4:23.**

The difficulty with many is that they are looking for some great battles, instead of availing themselves of the Lords provision in the mundane issues of life. The little battles, which are much more numerous, are for our training to ready us for the unknown difficulties we may yet face. *Greater is he that ruleth his own spirit [mind, will] than he that taketh a city,* **Prov.16:32.**