

TESTING OR TRUSTING?

THE PROMISED LAND WEEK 10 | JOHN REILLY

1 Corinthians 10:9

We must not put Christ to the test, as some of them did and were destroyed by serpents.

→ Testing God isn't about asking questions, it's about not trusting Jesus' ability and character.

Numbers 21:4-6

From Mount Hor they set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom. And the people became impatient on the way. And the people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food." Then the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died.

Numbers 14:1-4

Then all the congregation raised a loud cry, and the people wept that night. And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?" And they said to one another, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

Numbers 14:22-23

None of the men who have seen my glory and my signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the test these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give to their fathers. And none of those who despised me shall see it.

WAYS WE TEST GOD:

1. Testing His use of his power

- a. Even though the Israelites saw God bring plagues on Egypt, part the Red Sea, lead them with cloud and fire, and provide manna they questioned His power, complaining about obstacles, timing, etc.
- b. It's not, "Are you powerful enough", but "Are you powerful enough to do it my way?"

Question: What am I treating as though it's too big for God to handle? Why do I think God can't handle it?

→ This type of testing demands God prove He's powerful enough.

2. Testing the goodness of His character

a. God led the Israelites out of Egypt, fed them and cared for them and yet they assume He doesn't care.

b. Asks, "Do you care enough to do something about this?"

Numbers 14:3

Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword?

→ Fear rewrites the story of God and makes us forget the moments He cared for us in the past. When we're afraid we see His guidance as neglect, delays in timing as punishment, and challenges become evidence of God's unpredictability.

Matthew 8:1-3

When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Thelo: to will, to wish, to desire, to intent

Hebrews 1:3

He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

→ The same God who healed the leper is the same God who sent the serpents.

For 38 years the Israelites had been testing God.

Numbers 21:7-9

And the people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD and against you. Pray to the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live." So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live.

→ God knows the Israelites didn't need less serpents, they needed more trust in Him.

The real venom was their unbelief. They needed to lift their eyes to Him. Healing and wholeness come through trust, not escape.

John 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 3:14-15

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

The cross answers the question, “Can God be both powerful and loving?”

Psalm 78:19

Can God spread a table in the wilderness?

We ask, “Can you give me what I need in this moment?”

Through communion we are reminded that yes, God is powerful enough, He loves us enough, and He has what we need.