

ONE TORAH FOR ALL

Zerubbabel ben Emunah

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Testing of the Set-apart Ones

Why We Should Take Pleasure In Trials.

Now it came about after these things, that Elohim tested Avraham, and said to him, "Avraham!" And he said, "Here I am."

B'reshit (Genesis) 22:1

What was YHWH thinking, anyway? He finally fulfilled the promise He had made to Avraham so many years ago, and now He is directing him to go and offer up the promised son as a burnt offering. What is the whole point of this?

Avraham is known as the "friend" of YHWH (Ya'aqov/James 2:23). And if YHWH treats His friends like this, just where do I stand in the scheme of things?

Shemot (Exodus) 16:4

Then YHWH said to Moshe, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction (Torah)."

Here we see that YHWH gave the manna not just to provide for their physical nourishment, but He provided for them in such a way that He tested them (the whole nation of Yisrael). This seems to be the only sure way of determining whether a person will truly keep Torah.

Manna was a physical blessing to His people from the hand of YHWH. YHWH designed this blessing to test His people, besides meeting their daily food requirements. YHWH tested them in this manner to see if they would walk in His Torah. But instead of being thankful, they grumbled about His food provisions. They did not keep Torah in this regard. Perhaps they kept the letter of the Torah, sort of, but they certainly did not keep the Spirit of the Torah.

Shemot (Exodus) 20:20

And Moshe said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for Elohim has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin."

Here we learn one of the core reasons why it is that YHWH tests His people. He tests us so that we will not sin against Him, by remaining in fear of Him.

In our Western society, it is sadly doubtful that we truly understand the concept of the "fear of Elohim." The church system generally teaches people that Elohim is like a big Sugar Daddy and we should just talk to Him as we would anyone else, asking and expecting to receive everything we want. He is not there to serve us, but we are created to serve Him; to do His will.

But this passage of Scripture teaches us that He tests us so that the "fear of Him" will remain with us. This is something that we do not want to lose. If we lose it, sin is sure to follow. And of course, that would not be good for us!

Devarim (Deuteronomy) 8:2, 16-18

2 "And you shall remember all the way which YHWH your Elohim has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

16 "In the wilderness He fed you manna which your fathers did not know, that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do good for you in the end.

17 "Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'

18 "But you shall remember YHWH your Elohim, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day."

YHWH is in the business of revealing what is in hearts. When He holds a mirror up to us, often it is not pleasant being confronted with the darkness inside us. However, He does these things so that in the end, He can do good for us and in us. The good that He desires to do is to form us into the image of His Son, Yeshua our Mashiach. He does these things out of His great love and compassion for us!

If we were never tested, how would we know if we would truly keep His commandments? Saying we will obey His commandments is easy to do; anyone can say he will keep His commandments. But are we willing to pay the price and actually keep His Commandments? Even during the hard times? Testing

brings forth the true answer to that question, an answer one cannot deny. It will be an answer that not only the individual can see, but all of YHWH's people will be able to see.

Divre HaYamim Aleph (1st Chronicles) 28:17

"Since I know, my Elohim, that You try the heart and delight in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered all these things; so now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to You."

YHWH tests the hearts of those who belong to Him. He wants us to be worthy of being His people. In order for this actually to come to pass, there are things in our hearts that need to be removed. Before He can remove them, He needs to reveal them to us.

Iyov (Job) 7:18

"What is man that You magnify him, and that You are concerned about him, that You examine him every morning, and test him every moment?"

YHWH is in the business of testing His people. Each and every person needs to get that truth solidly in his mind and heart. It is important to understand this dynamic of the spiritual realm; for when one does, it will strengthen that person tremendously and move him toward spiritual maturity.

Tehillim (Psalms) 26:2

Examine me, YHWH, and try me; test my mind and my heart.

Have we gotten to the place where we actually ask YHWH to test and try us? If not, why not? If one is relatively new in his walk, then perhaps it could be understandable. However, if we have been walking with YHWH for a long time (years), then shouldn't we be asking Him to test us and examine us? To be sure!

Testing is so important in the life of the believer, for the one being tested will progress into spiritual maturity. Is spiritual maturity important to you? It should be! It so, then testing must be a part of the maturing process.

Tehillim (Psalms) 94:12

Blessed is the man whom You chasten, YHWH, and teach out of Your Torah

Being tried and tested (chastened) by YHWH is one of His primary ways of teaching us to walk in His Torah. This is where the righteous character of a person's life gets hammered out on the anvil of adversity. Sometimes that hammering can hurt. But it is entirely necessary.

One reason why it is such a blessing to be tried and tested by YHWH is that this testing equips one to be able to obey Torah in a better way. It is not easy to willingly go through these fires of refinement. Not

everyone chooses to go through them. This is a choice that each and every person must make for himself.

Zecharyah (Zechariah) 13:9

“And I will bring the third part through the fire, refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested; they will call on My Name, and I will answer them; I will say, ‘They are My people,’ and they will say, ‘YHWH is my Elohim.’”

As silver or gold melts in the refining process, all the impurities float to the surface. After easily scraping the impurities off the surface, one discards them. Likewise, in the life of the believer, YHWH puts us in the crucible of trials, tribulations, tests, and adversities of life to melt us. This is where the impurities of one’s character come to the surface for all to see, particularly the believer himself.

Then, that person must make a decision. Will the tested person just ignore the impure character trait(s) and push them back under the surface and hide them? Or, will the tested one bring these impurities into complete and total subjection to the Ruach Qodesh (Holy Spirit), doing with them as He commands?

Ivrim (Hebrews) 12:7

“It is for discipline that you endure; YHWH deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?”

When a person repents and accepts Yeshua as his Mashiach and Savior, it is only the beginning of the relationship. That person then needs to mature in his walk with Mashiach. Testing brings maturity into the relationship with YHWH. He tests His children.

If he is not testing a person, then does that person belong to YHWH? No he does not, at least not in the sense of being His child. Scripture seems to indicate that he is not His child if Elohim is not testing him.

Ya’aqov (James) 1:2-4

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

3 knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.

4 And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Do you have lack in your life? Are you perfect? Are you able to have joy in the trials of life?

What you need in your life is to have your faith tested. When we let the tests and trials of life produce a righteous work in us, then we will be perfect. The perfection spoken of here is not an absolute one, but rather one of function.

Take an example of a well used chair. It has many scratches, dings, and imperfections. The purpose of the existence of the chair is to hold a person in a sitting position without his falling down on the floor or ground. In spite of all the imperfections, it fulfills the purpose of its existence perfectly. In this sense the chair is perfect.

Likewise, we too can be perfect before YHWH when we fulfill the purpose of our existence; i.e., to love and worship YHWH and to have communion with Him through keeping His Torah. This is the greatest commandment. The second is to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is the purpose for which we have been created.

Thus, the command that Yeshua gave to us to “be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect” (Matithyah 5:48) is only possible when seen in this way. We are to be perfect in the sense of fulfilling the purpose for which He originally created us.

Romiym (Romans) 5:3-5

And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of Elohim has been poured out within our hearts through the Set-apart Spirit who was given to us.

Torah (Tanak & Brit Chadasha) commands us in many places to be people of good character. Here we see how this comes to pass. It is the trials and adversity of life that ultimately brings this to pass in a person’s life.

Kepha Bet (2nd Peter) 5:12

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you.

We are not to view these intense times of testing as something strange. Rather, we are to view these as common among the talmidim of Yeshua our Mashiach. Remember, YHWH is in the business of testing His people.

Ya’aqov (James) 1:13

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by Elohim;” for Elohim cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.

YHWH never tempts us to sin. That is the territory of Satan.

And we can be sure that any time that YHWH tests us, Satan will be there to tempt us. We need to be spiritually alert to distinguish what is a temptation and what is a test so we can act appropriately.

Matithyah (Matthew) 16:21-23

21 From that time Yeshua Mashiach began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.

22 And Kepha (Peter) took Him aside and he began to rebuke Him, saying, "Elohim forbid, Master! This shall never happen to You."

23 But He turned and said to Kepha, "Get thee behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting your mind on Elohim's interests, but man's."

Please note that it was Kepha (Peter) to whom Yeshua spoke these very strong words of rebuke. Kepha did not have his mind on what YHWH was doing, but rather he was thinking of only his own personal interests.

There are times when we are working to build His Kingdom and Satan will come and speak to us through well-meaning people, people that are actually part of His Kingdom (like Kepha), and the words that they speak can be a cause of stumbling for us if we do not properly guard our gates and test their words with Scripture, and His Voice to us, personally. Not doing so can be quite costly as this next portion of Scripture will amply illustrate.

Malakim Aleph (1st Kings) 13:7-10

7 And the king said to the man of Elohim, "Come home with me, and refresh yourself, and I will give you a reward."

8 And the man of Elohim said to the king, "If you will give me half your house, I will not go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place;

9 for so was it charged me by the word of YHWH, saying, 'You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, neither return by the way that you came.'"

10 So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.

Please note that by the testimony of this prophet's own words he tells us that YHWH has commanded him not to eat or drink in the place he went to testify against (the northern kingdom of Israel). In addition to this, he was to go home by a different route than the one by which he went to the altar at Beth El.

Malakim Aleph (1st Kings) 13:11-19

11 Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el; and one of his sons came and told him all the works that the man of Elohim had done that day in Beth-el; the words which he had spoken to the king, them also they told to their father.

12 And their father said to them, "What way did he go?" Now his sons had seen what way the man of Elohim went, that came from Judah.

13 And he said to his sons, "Saddle me the ass." So they saddled him the ass; and he rode thereon.

14 And he went after the man of Elohim, and found him sitting under an oak; and he said to him, "Are you the man of Elohim that came from Judah?" And he said, "I am."

15 Then he said to him, "Come home with me, and eat bread."

16 And he said, "I may not return with you, nor go in with you; neither will I eat bread nor drink water with you in this place;

17 for it was said to me by the word of YHWH, 'You shall eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that you came.'"

18 And he said to him, "I also am a prophet as you are; and an angel spoke to me by the word of YHWH, saying, 'Bring him back with you into your house, that he may eat bread and drink water.'" But he lied to him.

19 So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

The first thing that we need to see, is that this prophet again testifies by his own words that he was not to eat or drink in this place. Then he was confronted by the words of another prophet, who said it was okay to do that which YHWH told him not to do. There are several things that we need to understand from this text. One, is that we have the words of a man contradicting the word of YHWH. Which would you believe? It is easy to say we would only believe the word of YHWH. However, can we be honest enough to admit that we have all been guilty of this same sin at some point in our lives, by following the traditions of man rather than the commandment of Elohim?

Furthermore, the inspired word tells us that this prophet *lied* to the other prophet. Please do not make the mistake of thinking or saying that this second prophet was not a prophet of Elohim, for Scripture indicates that he was. What this should show us is that prophets are fallible humans just like the rest of us.

The error the first prophet made was not testing the words (spirit) of this second prophet against the commandment of Elohim. As we are about to see, this was a very costly error.

Malakim Aleph (1st Kings) 13:7-10

20 And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of YHWH came to the prophet that brought him back;

21 and he cried to the man of Elohim that came from Judah, saying, "Thus says YHWH, 'Forasmuch as you have been disobedient to the mouth of YHWH, and have not kept the commandment which YHWH your Elohim commanded you,

22 but came back, and have eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which He said to you, "Eat no bread, and drink no water; your body shall not come to the sepulcher of your fathers.'"

23 And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

24 And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him; and his body was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it; the lion also stood by the body.

Because this prophet received the word of YHWH, and He commanded him to do and not do certain things, and then he disobeyed that commandment, YHWH took his life! His disobedience came through the avenue of another prophet, a *fellow believer*! My brethren, please, I beg of you, to hear the

message of this portion clearly. YHWH tests us in many ways, and sometimes those tests come through another believer. We dare not fail this type of test, for it is even more critical than all the other tests combined. We cannot afford to fail this type of test, for failing this type of test will cost us our lives.

One of the most common tests today is to give up Mashiach. Are you willing to bet your life on doing this? Because when one goes down this road and gives up Mashiach, perhaps at the bidding of another former believer, that is exactly what they are doing. And neither you nor I can afford this! Testing is serious to YHWH and to us. He wants to know without any doubts whether we love Him supremely.

Please note in the above example what it was that killed the disobedient prophet. It was a lion. After the lion killed the prophet, the lion stood guard over him. Could it be that those who are led away from Mashiach Yeshua that He (the Lion of Judah) personally will slay them and then stand guard over them? It is a legitimate understanding of this passage.

Testing draws us closer to YHWH. (At least, that is what it is supposed to do if we make the appropriate choices to listen to and obey His Voice, rather than listening to and obeying the voice of a man.) Temptation, when one gives in to it (which is sin), separates us from our Heavenly Father. And either one or both of these aspects (testing and temptation) can come through people we know and meet; even those whom we would call friends and brothers.

Qorintyah Aleph (1st Corinthians) 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and Elohim is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

Temptation needs to be distinguished from tribulation, persecution, trials, troubles, suffering, and testing. When a believer enters a test, YHWH is teaching that person a truth. When a person does not learn the truth He is teaching him in the test, it will ensure that he must repeat the test. Considering the short length of one's life, how can we afford to miss what He is teaching us?

However, with each test the adversary (Satan) also comes to tempt the believer to fail the test, to tempt him to be disobedient to YHWH. Learning to recognize the test early on will not only help speed the learning process, but will also shorten the test as well as lessen the chance of succumbing to the temptation.

When one knows what "the way" of escape refers to it will open up the understanding of the previous verse. Notice that "way" is not plural and is preceded by the definite article "the", indicating that there is only one way. The question then comes to mind, "What is 'the way' of escape?"

Yochanan (John) 14:6

Yeshua said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me."

Yochanan 14:6 states that Yeshua is “the way.” The way of escape is Yeshua! The way is not a what, but rather a Person. And that Person is Yeshua our Mashiach, who was tempted in all things like we are, but was victorious through them all. He overcame sin. He knows how to lead us to victory!

Ivrim (Hebrews) 5:8-9

8 Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.

9 And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.

A person can only find everyday victory through his troubles in Yeshua. Yeshua is the only Person who ever was able to resist temptation and not sin. He is the only One who can help one not to sin (break Torah).

When temptation comes, whatever the form, Yeshua will not allow one to be tempted beyond his level of spiritual maturity. Not only this, but He has already been tempted in all things, and knows how to help His people in that hour of need.

The temptation believers are dealing with, has plagued all of mankind. That common temptation is to not obey YHWH. But, each person must choose to obey Him, because he loves Him. This is where the spiritual battle is the fiercest in the life and mind of the follower of Yeshua.

Matithyah (Matthew) 7:13-14

13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it.

14 “For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it.”

The way that leads to eternal life is not a well-traveled road as this path is narrow, and one encounters numerous trials upon this way. The word “narrow” here is the Greek word “thlibo” which means to afflict or trouble. So this is saying that the way to life is full of afflictions and trouble. This is not the common message of today, to be sure. But it is the truth.

The Peshitta agrees with this definition with even stronger words. In the Peshitta the word “tzar” (rock) appears twice in this verse, once in the masculine form and once in the feminine form. The feminine form also means “trouble, anguish and distress.”

Kepha Aleph (1st Peter) 1:15-16

15 But like the Set-apart One who called you, be set-apart yourselves also in all your behavior;

16 because it is written, “You shall be set-apart, for I am Set-apart.”

How can we expect to be set-apart in everything that we do unless we allow all the adversities of life to have their good result and we become “perfect” in our lives?

And how is this possible? Only in this way:

Galatiym (Galatians) 5:16

But I say, walk by the Set-apart Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

We must learn to walk in the Set-apart Spirit day by day and moment by moment. We must learn to hear and distinguish that Still Small Voice in our spirit, so that when we do hear it, we obey.

When we live in this way, we do not carry out the fleshly desires.

How long will the testing of the set-apart ones continue?

Kepha Aleph (1st Peter) 4:12-13

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you:

13 but rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Mashiach's sufferings; that, when His glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy.

The English word “revealed” here is the Hebrew root word “galut.” Please note that this testing of believers will continue until the physical revelation (BeHITGALUT) of Yeshua Mashiach. These things come upon the disciples of Yeshua that they might share in the sufferings of Mashiach, for their own refinement.

The particular circumstances that we find ourselves in at any given moment are only transitory. They will change. What will not change is YHWH.

One of the things that testing is to instill in us, is to be able to hear His Voice clearly so that we listen to Him, rather than listening to and allowing circumstances or people to dictate our actions. This is a constant challenge for us to do. Especially when people and/or circumstances are pressing in upon us and demanding that we do things in an expedient way. This is precisely the time that it is critical to listen to and obey His Voice.

This is exactly where Avraham found himself in B’reshit (Genesis) 22. The pressure (test) to do other than obey His Voice had to have been at its pinnacle in his life. Furthermore, the price for obedience in this instance had all the markings of being very high. Likewise, when we find ourselves in circumstances that are difficult, do we take the easy way (what the circumstances are dictating), or listen for the sound of His Voice?

What is the purpose of the testing of the set-apart ones?

- To see if we will walk in Torah.
- To have the fear of YHWH that we may not sin
- To know what is in our heart
- To humble us
- To call upon His Name and to be His people
- To discipline us
- To be perfected in Him
- To instill righteous character traits in us
- To have endurance
- To have eternal life

In essence, testing prepares us to be an eternal part of the Kingdom of YHWH. As we enter into this new millennium it is even more important to know and understand these truths so that we may be a part of His Kingdom as it is set up here on Earth.

A Final Admonition

Matithyah (Matthew) 13:18-23

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower.

19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

20 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word, and immediately receives it with joy;

21 "yet he has no root in himself, but is temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

Please take careful note of verse 21 above. Notice that the affliction that this person is experiencing is directly due to the presence of the Word in his life. But alas, he falls away from the true faith.

The indication here is that he is falling away because he was not willing to submit to YHWH in the affliction and allow the trouble in his life to perfect his faith. It seems that his "faith" dictated to him that he expected to have smooth sailing all the way to heaven.

However, because he did not have as good an understanding as those who had prepared their hearts to be good soil, he was only a “temporary” believer from the very beginning.

May the seed of His Word fall upon good soil in our heart and give an increase in and for His Kingdom.

May YHWH cause this study to increase our faith and our maturity in Yeshua Mashiach that we may be true Kingdom builders to His glory and honor; in the Name of Yeshua our Mashiach, Amein.

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