

This is a Test!



I am a member of the T.V. Generation—the Baby Boomers. TV was a large part of our family life. “Back in the day,” families watched TV together—we did not separate after dinner and watch TV on our own entertainment devices. Believe it or not, back then, there were actually shows families could watch together. My mother would pop a large bowl of Jiffy Pop, which we munched while enjoying the thrills of Wild Kingdom and the magic of Walt Disney. Those were the days...great memories of family-fun and laughter, gathered around the TV set, until THE TEST.

This is a test.

While relaxing and at peace with the world, a piercing siren-like whistle would suddenly interrupt a favorite TV program. The Test! It's blaring warning whistle, usually signaling some impending doom, like an incoming nuclear warhead, continued uninterrupted for about thirty seconds until the announcer finally informed us of the nature of the coming crisis. Thankfully, most of the time, the commentator conveyed the siren was only a TEST. We would not have to seek the nearest fallout shelter and eat saltines for the duration. Every once in a while, there was an actual emergency and these occasions kept us on our toes, fearing THE TEST.

God also sends us tests.

They show up when we least expect them. God does not send tests to trick us. Tests are for our benefit, designed to help deepen and strengthen our faith in Him. Unlike THE TEST of long ago, we can face our tests by drawing on the strength of the Holy Spirit, knowing He will bring us through victoriously.

“So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea; then they went out into the Wilderness of Shur. And they went three days in the wilderness and found no water. 23 Now when they came to Marah, they could not drink the waters of Marah, for they were bitter. Therefore the name of it was called Marah. 24 And the people complained against Moses, saying, “What shall we drink?” 25 So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

There He made a statute and an ordinance for them, and there He tested them, 26 and said, “If you diligently heed the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in His sight, give ear to His commandments and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have brought on the Egyptians. For I am the LORD who heals you.”

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve wells of water and seventy palm trees; so they camped there by the waters.”

**From what had the Hebrew people just been delivered (verse 22)?
What test kind of test are the people facing (verse 22)?**

Water Test 2.

Just prior to this test, God had proved He was Lord over the water by causing the Red Sea to part before His people so they could escape Pharaoh's army. The same God who parted the Red Sea could

certainly handle a water shortage.

When the people did find water, what was wrong with it?

I have heard adversity brings out the contents of one's heart.

Perhaps the bitterness of the water of Marah was a reflection of the bitterness residing in the hearts of God's people.

How did the people react to this test (verse 24)?

They reacted as I have often reacted, and as you have often reacted, by complaining. The Hebrew word for *complained* is *luwn*. *Luwn* means to *complain*. Interestingly, it also means, *to lodge, to live, to dwell, to abide*. Complaining can become a lifestyle; our way of living, our default mode. Once we fall into this pit of complaining, it is hard to get out. Tests will reveal if we have a lifestyle marked by complaining and grumbling or prayer and praise.

How should the people have reacted to their test (verse 25)?

Like Moses, they should have cried out to God for help. As expected, God answered Moses and showed him how to heal the waters. God will also show us how endure and benefit from our tests, if we will cry out to Him for help. The Hebrew word for *test* used in verse 25 is the word *nacah*, which means *to test, to try, to prove, to make a trial*.

On what issue does God test His people?

On whether or not they *would* (not *could*) depend on Him to meet their daily needs.

Let's ask ourselves the same question ... will we depend on God to meet our needs?

In order for us to follow God, we must focus must on Him and His glory. We must be so deeply committed to His will that we trust Him for the provision of our daily bread, even when our situation seems hopeless.

During times of testing, God often reveals something we depend on more than Him. He loves us too much to let us continue building on the sand.

What would your life look like or what would you do next if you truly trusted God with the challenge that you face right now?

What was waiting on the other side of the challenge the Hebrew people were facing (verse 27)?

In your present challenge, God is waiting to reveal Himself to you in a new way. Tests will grow your faith, not destroy it. Blessings await on the other side. Keep walking.

Action Points:

1. **Pray.** Ask God to give you the strength and grace you need to prosper by this testing process. Also, ask Him to reveal to you what needs to be skimmed off—any sinful attitude, action or habit.
2. **Cooperate.** Believe that God has allowed this test to come to you to benefit you not harm you (Romans 8:28). Claim that promise and rejoice in the blessing that will surely follow.
3. **Seek.** Read and study God's Word, memorize Scripture, and listen to sermons and podcasts that speak to your present challenge. Spend time in His Presence.
4. **Minister.** There is nothing like helping others to get our minds off of ourselves.
5. **Share.** Please share your current hardship with a trusted mature Christian friend. Someone who has walked the same path can be a great encouragement.
6. **Rest.** Please take extra time to rest and relax. Do something that brings you joy and peace.

By Mary Kane

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