

The Purpose of Testing

“What is man . . . that You should visit him every morning, and test him every moment?”

Isn't that an amazing revelation—that Yah visits us every morning and tests us every moment?

I had to ask myself: Am I prepared to receive a visit from Yah every morning? Do I wake up with that expectation?

Then I went on to ask myself: Why does Yah test us? What is His purpose? Collins English Dictionary gives an interesting definition of the verb test: to ascertain the worth of a person . . . by subjection to certain examinations. Yah does not test us because He is angry with us or wants to put us down. On the contrary, testing is a mark of Yah's favor. He tests us because He wants to establish our value.

A jeweler will subject gold or silver to certain tests. He does this because they are valuable. He does not bother to test base metals such as iron or tin. In the world of the patriarchs there was one man of outstanding righteousness. His name was Job.

Yah was proud of Job. He actually boasted about him to Satan: “Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears Yah and shuns evil?”

2.Characteristically, Satan's response was to attribute selfish motives to Job: “He only serves You because of what He gets from You.” In response, Yah permitted Satan to put Job to the test. First, He allowed Satan to destroy everything that belonged to Job: his possessions, his servants and his children. Then Yah even permitted Satan to touch Job's body—to afflict him with boils from head to toe. But He did not permit Satan to take Job's life.

Job recognized that Yah was testing him. "When He has tested me," he said, "I shall come forth as gold" that is, gold that had been tested by fire. This gave him the strength to endure. He cried out in agony of soul, but he never gave up.

Eliphaz and Job's other two religious friends concluded that Job's sufferings were due to sins he had committed and they brought all sorts of terrible accusations against him. In the end, however, Yah vindicated Job and rebuked his friends. He told Eliphaz, "You have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

4. Abraham was another righteous man who was subjected to severe tests—even to the point of being required to offer his son to Yah as a burnt offering. Abraham was subjected to special tests because he had a special destiny—to become the father of Yah's chosen people.

5. Yah applies special tests to those for whom He has special purposes. The New Testament clearly warns us that, as Believers, we must expect to undergo testing. Peter compares our faith to gold, the genuineness of which must be tested by fire.

6. James tells us that we should respond to testing with joy: My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience [endurance]. But let patience [endurance] have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. On different occasions we have each had to repent and ask Yah's forgiveness because we did not respond rightly to some of our tests. We did not count them all joy! Further on, James takes Job as an example of how to respond to testing: You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome of the Master's dealings, that the Yah is full of compassion and merciful.

7. Testing or Chastening?

It is vitally important that we learn to distinguish between Yah's testing and His chastening.

Many people seem to assume that once they become believers they are exempt from Yah's chastening—especially if they have been believers for any length of time. This attitude, however, has no basis in Scripture. To such believers Hebrews gives a powerful warning: And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of Elohim, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Yah loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives." If you endure chastening, Yah deals with as sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons.

We see it in the example of His dealings with Moses. Moses was 80 years old when Yah commissioned him to return to Egypt and deliver Israel from their slavery. Yet when Moses was actually on his way back to Egypt, Yah met him and sought to kill him. Why?

Because of his disobedience. Moses had not fulfilled the covenant of circumcision which Yah had made with Abraham and his descendants.

Only when Moses repented and had his son circumcised, did Yah spare Moses' life and release him to go on his way. Yah would rather have killed Moses than have permitted him to go through with his mission in disobedience. His position as a leader did not exempt him from Yah's discipline. It made him all the more accountable.

We cannot expect to complete our Yah given assignment if we make room for disobedience in our lives. When we come under the dealings of Yah, we need to humble ourselves before Him and pray the prayer of David in Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV):

Search me, O Yah, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. If we sincerely allow Yah to search our hearts and He does not put His finger on anything that is offensive to Him, then we may conclude that we are under Yah's testing, not His chastening.

What Yah reveals will determine how we respond. Our response to chastening should be to repent; our response to testing should be to endure. But if we persist in trying to endure when we should repent, we are guilty of stubbornness and insensitivity.

What Is Yah Looking For? The basic issues of sin or righteousness are defined in Satan's original temptation of Adam and Eve. His Greek title *diabolos* (English devil) means slanderer. To slander someone means to defame their character. This is Satan's primary activity.

First and foremost, Satan defames the character of Yah Himself. Hence his original question to Eve: "Has Yah indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?" Satan implied that Yah was a despot—arbitrary, unfair and unloving.

Yah was shutting Adam and Eve out from a "higher level" of knowledge which would open up to them if they tasted of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Satan's goal was to undermine their trust in Yah's goodness when, in actual fact, Yah had already provided them with everything that was good, beautiful and delightful. From mistrust of Yah's goodness, Adam and Eve moved to disbelief in Yah's word and then to the act of disobedience.

There were three stages in their fall: mistrust, disbelief and disobedience. Through faith in Messiah, Yah has provided a redemption that reverses the downward process of the fall. It replaces disbelief

with faith, disobedience with obedience, and mistrust with trust. Faith leading to obedience is the first stage. But the process is not complete until faith has developed into trust. What is the difference between faith and trust? One answer would be: faith is an act; trust is an attitude. (It was Smith Wigglesworth who continually emphasized that faith is an act.) A clear illustration of the difference between faith, as an act, and trust, as an attitude, is provided in Psalm 37:5 (NAS): Commit your way to Elohim, Trust also in Him, and He will do it.

Commit describes a single act of faith; trust describes a continuing attitude that follows the initial act of committing. After that, Yah takes over: He will do it.

A simple example would be making a deposit in a savings bank. You hand your money to the teller and receive a receipt. That is committing. After that, you do not lie awake at night wondering: Is the bank really taking care of my money? Am I receiving the interest due to me? You just put the receipt in a safe place and sleep soundly. That is trust.

Many Believers take the first step, an act of faith, but do not maintain an attitude of trust. Strangely, many of us find it easier to trust an earthly bank than to trust Yah in heaven!

A primary purpose behind Yah's tests is to produce trust in us. This was true of Job. In the midst of all his trials he affirmed: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Furthermore, trust momentarily enabled Job to lift his eyes above the realm of time and to catch a glimpse of eternity and the resurrection:

"For I know that my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;
And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,
That in my flesh I shall see Yah,

Whom I shall see for myself,
And my eyes shall behold, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!"

Why is trust so important? Because it reveals our thoughts of Yah's character. When Adam and Eve yielded to Satan's temptation, their actions spoke louder than any words.

They were saying: "Yah is not just and loving. He is not dealing fairly with us. He is not to be trusted."

Our salvation from sin is not complete until it has undone the effects of the fall and produced in us this quality of trust.

This may require us to go through many tests. It is important that we never lose sight of Yah's end purpose: to produce in us an unshakable confidence in His absolute trustworthiness. Yeshua Himself has provided us with the supreme example of trust.

In fulfillment of His Father's plan, He was handed over to wicked, cruel and godless men. They mocked Him, spat on Him, flogged Him, stripped Him naked and nailed Him to a cross. Eventually He cried out, "My Yah, My Yah, why have You forsaken Me?"

Yet in all this His trust in His Father's faithfulness never failed. With His last breath He yielded His spirit back to the Father. How do we respond if we cry out to Yah and He does not seem to answer us? Can we still trust His faithfulness?

Remember, Yah is more concerned with our character than with our achievements. Achievements have importance only in the realm of time.

Character is eternal. It determines what we will be through eternity. Yah will not permit us to be tested beyond what we can bear.

He may not expect of us what He required of Yeshua—perhaps not even what He required of Job. Every test we go through is designed to mold our character, until we have become in Messiah all that Yah created us to be.

15. Blessed is the man who endures temptation [testing]; for when he has been proved [approved], he will receive the crown of life.

More scripture we can glean in regards to this topic.

1 Job 7:17-18 2 Job 1:8 3 Job 23:10
4 Job 42:7 5 1 Peter 1:7 6 James 1:2-4
7 James 5:11 (NAS) 8 Hebrews 12:5-8 9 Exodus 4:24-26
10 Genesis 17:9-14 11 Genesis 3:1 12 Job 13:15
13 Job 19:25-27 14 Matthew 27:46 15 James 1:12