

# **PUTTING GOD TO THE TEST**

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Cinco de Mayo 2019

# Today's Text

chp 17:1-7

Then all the congregation of the sons of Israel journeyed by stages from the wilderness of Sin, according to the command of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, and there was no water for the people to drink. <sup>2</sup> Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” <sup>3</sup> But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” <sup>4</sup> So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.” <sup>5</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. <sup>7</sup> He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us, or not?”

# BACKGROUND [Exodus]

Chapter 12 – final plague – death of all firstborn  
departure of Israelites from Egypt →  
plundering of the Egyptians

Chapter 14 – pursuit by Pharaoh; crossing of the Red  
Sea on dry ground; drowning of  
Pharaoh's army

Chapter 15 – song of Moses (& Miriam); grumbling →  
no water (threw tree into the water to  
make it sweet v.25)

Chapter 16 – grumbling (no bread) → manna

# I. Failure to See the Obvious

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# I. Failure to See the Obvious

Ex 13:21-22

The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. <sup>22</sup> He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.

## II. The Quarrel

<sup>2</sup> Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water that we may drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?” <sup>3</sup> But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, “Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?”

**The tyranny of the present often embellishes the memory of the past**

<sup>16:3</sup> The sons of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the LORD’S hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”



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**The tyranny of the present often overrules  
the practices of the present**

**- no prayer**

# III. Moses' Response

<sup>4</sup> So Moses cried out to the LORD, saying, “What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.”

**Moses prayed!** (just as he did in 15:25)

Then he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree; and he threw *it* into the waters, and the waters became sweet.

There He made for them a statute and regulation, and there He tested them.

# IV. God's Response

<sup>5</sup> Then the LORD said to Moses, “Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. <sup>6</sup> Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.” And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

## **God always has a way**

Luke 4:28-30 And all the people in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; <sup>29</sup> and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff.

<sup>30</sup> But passing through their midst, He went His way.

# IV. Epilogue

<sup>7</sup> He named the place Massah and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the LORD, saying, “Is the LORD among us, or not?”

**Testing/Contending**

# V. Conclusions

**Is “Testing God” part of your true character?**

Ps 95:8-11

<sup>8</sup> Do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah,  
As in the day of Massah in the wilderness,

<sup>9</sup> “When your fathers tested Me,  
They tried Me, though they had seen My work.

<sup>10</sup> “For forty years I loathed that generation,  
And said they are a people who err in their heart,  
And they do not know My ways.

<sup>11</sup> “Therefore I swore in My anger,  
Truly they shall not enter into My rest.”

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# V. Conclusions

**Is “Testing God” part of your true character?**

Deut 6:16 “You shall not put the LORD your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

Mt 4:7 Jesus said to him, “On the other hand, it is written, ‘YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.’”

Acts 5:9 Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.”

# V. Conclusions

## Miracles often instill their addiction

(consider all the miracles the Israelites had witnessed)

Mt 12:39

But He answered and said to them, “An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and *yet* no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet;

Mt 16:4

An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign; and a sign will not be given it, except the sign of Jonah.” And He left them and went away.

# V. Conclusions

**God has a great love for us!**

Eph 2:4

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

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**God will never desert us**

Deut 31:8

The LORD is the one who goes ahead of you;  
He will be with you. He will not fail you or  
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