

This Is A Test (part 2)

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[0 : 00] Please take your Bibles and turn to Deuteronomy chapter 8.! Deuteronomy. It's the fifth book of the Bible.

! Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.! We're going to read the entire chapter, Deuteronomy 8.

And I think we hear some clear echoes of even the Great Commission of obeying every command. Deuteronomy chapter 8, verse 1. Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land that the Lord promised on oath to your forefathers.

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these 40 years to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

[1 : 06] He humbled you, causing you to hunger, and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

Your clothes did not wear out, and your feet did not swell during these 40 years. Know then, in your heart, that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.

Observe the commands of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and revering him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and pools of water, with springs flowing in the valleys and hills, a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey, a land where bread will not be scarce, and you will lack nothing, a land where the rocks are iron, and you can dig copper out of the hills.

When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day.

Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, and when your herds and flocks grow large, and your silver and gold increase, and all you have is multiplied, then your heart will become proud, and you will forget the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

[2 : 58] He led you through the vast and dreadful deserts, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock.

He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you, so that in the end it might go well with you. You may say to yourself, my power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.

But remember, the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.

If you ever forget the Lord your God, and follow other gods, and worship, and bow down to them, I testify against you today, that you will surely be destroyed.

Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed, for not obeying the Lord your God. Well, there's a man, and he's standing over a fiery furnace, or beside the fiery furnace, and he's feeding it with wood, and he's got his bellows, and he's blowing it into a hotter and hotter flame, until that furnace is just blazing hot.

[4 : 26] And inside is a crucible, a heat-resistant vessel, into which he's put his gold. And that gold is now melted, and become liquid.

What is this man doing? Well, he is refining. He's refining his gold. And the intense heat will cause the dross of lead, and other base metals, to come to the surface, separating from the gold, that it

might then be removed from it.

And in the end, the man will have gold that is more pure, and more precious. Now that's the picture of what the Lord is doing with all his people.

We're studying Proverbs 17 and verse 3. We began last week. The crucible for silver, and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.

The Lord is testing our hearts. I wonder if you recognized his tests this past week. It happens far more than we're aware of often.

[5 : 38] Did you remember what he's doing in those tests? His purpose is to discover what's on the inside of your heart. Not to himself, for he always knows what's in our heart, but to ourselves, that we might see what's in our heart.

And we saw that often what these tests bring to the surface is the scum of our sins. And that's part of his purpose, then, in this testing process.

That sin was always there. The test did nothing to put it in. It simply brought it to the surface where we would see it. Where we would be aware of what is there yet.

Now, why does God do this? We saw he doesn't do it just to rub our noses in it. No, he does it to humble us. To show us what is still in these hearts of ours in order to purify us.

That humbled for our sins, we will come to him and ask him to confess to him our sin and ask him to forgive it. And what is he faithful to do? He's always faithful to forgive our sins and to cleanse, to purify us from all unrighteousness.

[6 : 59] For the blood of Jesus, God's Son, does indeed purify us from every sin. So, blessed furnace that humbles us and makes us more holy.

Blessed crucible that shows us our sins and chases us to the Lord Jesus for cleansing and for power. And, blessed Jesus whose loving heart controls the furnace and says to us in our test, when through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie, my grace, all sufficient shall be thy supply.

The flame shall not hurt thee. I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine. So, that's what the Lord was up to last week in your life, in mine, indeed all of our lives.

He's testing the heart even as a refiner tests his gold in the furnace. And, so it behooves us to know what he's doing, to be aware of it, and then to work with him in that testing that he's doing.

Not to work against him, but with him. Remember, that's the devil's design. In every one of our tests, the Lord's design is to purify. The devil's design is to drag us down into sin.

[8 : 24] Well, last week, we saw the Lord testing Peter's devotion to the Lord Jesus. We saw him testing Philip's faith in Christ.

And today, I want us to learn from some more examples that we are given in Scripture about the Lord testing his people. And, and when the Bible speaks of God testing his people, more often than any other, it points to the testing of Israel.

Especially during those 40 years in the desert. That was a test. All 40 years. In fact, the number 40 in the Bible comes to, to bear the symbolic idea of testing.

So, 40 days, the men are spying out the land. Well, that was a test on the spies and the people of Israel.

Will they obey God? Will they trust God and go into the land? There was a test, you see. 1 Samuel tells us that for 40 days the Philistine giant stood and called from Israel a man to come and fight him.

[9 : 37] Every morning and evening, Israel was being tested for those 40 days. Would they trust in the Lord or just put their eyes on men? Jonah, what was his message in Nineveh?

40 more days and Nineveh will be overthrown. A time of testing for the city of Nineveh. Will they continue in their sin or will they repent and be spared?

And so, we find the 40 days, 40 years, the number 40 takes on an idea, a symbolism of testing. So, let's consider God testing Israel.

Well, they were barely through the Red Sea, just three days walk into the desert and all along the way they found no water. On the third day they came to Marah and there was water, but they couldn't drink it because it was bitter.

And whether they realized it or not, this was a test. Exodus 15, verse 25, says, there he tested them.

[10 : 44] There in Marah they were put to the test. It was a test of their faith, wasn't it? It was a test of their patience. It was a test and they flunked it.

For they grumbled against Moses saying, what are we to drink? And what did the test bring to the surface? What did it discover? Well, it discovered a heart of discontentment with God's providence. I don't like the way God's doing things here on this journey. And the furnace of their thirst brought it up to the surface in the form of grumbling. And they're grumbling against Moses, which is really grumbling against God.

They're complaining. They're murmuring. And it brings to the surface their unbelief. They couldn't trust God for a drink of water when just three days earlier he had brought them through a whole sea of water on dry land.

So let's understand what God was doing. He caused them to thirst testing them to see if they would trust him to meet their need for water.

[11 : 53] You see it? God caused them to thirst that he might test them as to whether they would trust him for their needed water. So people of God expect to find God providentially leading you into places of need where you don't have what you need.

And you are being tested at that point. Will I look to him and trust him to provide? He causes you to thirst.

He brings you into humbling circumstances where you're made to feel your insufficiency. I don't have what I need in this situation. I don't have what it takes to go through this.

And it's a test. What will you do when you don't have what you need? Maybe you had no strength to meet the need. No patience for what was before you.

No endurance. No wisdom to know the way forward. This is a test. And God's design is to draw you heavenward and to see that you have in him all that you need.

[13 : 00] Trust him. Ask for his help. Give thanks for his promise to provide all that you need. Lean on him for support. Put your hope in him. Expect it.

That's God's purpose in the trial. Oh, but the devil's design is to bring you to complain about your lack. I don't have. I don't have. This isn't what I wanted today to be like.

And so on and so forth. To fill you with doubt and unbelief and to thoughts about God that he's something less than good and loving towards you. God's design.

The devil's design. Two aims in the same test. And as James says, what are we to do? Submit to God and resist the devil and he will flee from you.

Well, they didn't do that. They gave in and murmured and grumbled in unbelief. Now, sometimes when the whole class flunks a test, there are some very kind teachers who let them take it over again.

[14 : 04] Had any teachers like that come back and let's do it all over again and be more prepared the next time. You know, God is that gracious of a teacher.

It's just two chapters later, Exodus chapter 17, and Israel comes to Rephidim, which is later called Masa and Meribah.

And the Lord's summary is found in Psalm 81, 7, I tested you at the waters of Meribah. So, here we are.

The waters of Meribah. Exodus 17, they came to this place, Rephidim, and though they were thirsty, there was no water for the people to drink. Sound familiar?

It is. It's a retake. The same test. So, how'd they do this time? Well, just as bad, if not worse. Notice what bubbled up to the surface as they were put into the furnace again on this very point.

[15 : 08] They, this time, quarreled with Moses and said, give us water to drink. They were demanding now. And they blamed Moses saying, why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst as if God's purpose were to kill them in the desert?

And Moses says they were so angry they were ready to, almost ready to stone him. And worst of all, they tested the Lord saying, is the Lord among us or not?

Do you see the perversity that boiled to the top? The Lord was testing them and they twisted into a test of the Lord.

You're going to show up? You're going to show up and do something? They were testing the Lord. Well, that angered the Lord.

And this becomes a passage that's often quoted throughout the Bible and in the New Testament. And though the Lord graciously gave them water out of a rock that time, this place goes down in history as a place where they hardened their hearts and tested and tried the Lord, though they had seen all that he had done for them.

[16:31] Meribah is what God called it, quarreling. Massa is what God called it, testing, because they tested him when he was really testing them.

So I wonder, have you had any retakes of tests? Same issue? Same matter of trust? Same matter of your view of how you're going to get through this and where you're going to find resources? Don't we find God all the time re-giving! us tests to retake? Take it again, John. You didn't learn it the last time. Maybe I did learn it the last time.

Will I learn it this time? We're retaking tests all the time in our lives. God is gracious and kind to do that. And the message of the Bible looking back on Israel is don't harden your heart like Israel did. They didn't learn their lesson. Rather, in humility, repent. While it is called today, repent and harden not your heart.

[17:34] so in Exodus 15 and Exodus 17, the Lord tested and retested their hearts by making them thirsty.

Do you know what comes between 15 and 17? That's right, kids, 16, Exodus 16. And the Lord in chapter 16 tested their hearts by making them hungry.

He makes them thirsty, he makes them hungry, and it's all a test. It's a test. Forty years later, Moses reminds them of this test.

And that's Deuteronomy 8 that we had read for us as we began this morning. I'll just read from verses 2 and 3. Moses is now telling this second generation, they're now ready to go into the promised land, and he said, remember what's going on for 40 years now in the wilderness, in the desert.

Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these 40 years to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

[18:47] He humbled you, causing you to hunger, and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

his test was to cause them to hunger. His aim was to discover to them what is in their heart, whether they will trust God and obey his commands.

And Exodus chapter 16 tells us all about it. The Israelites are now 45 days out of Egypt, and so their supplies are running low and they're hungry.

hungry. It's a test. Would they trust the goodness of God toward them? Would they trust the faithfulness of his promise to provide for them and trust his supernatural power to supply all that they need?

And no, they're no better with their hunger than their thirst. They failed this test too in many ways. They grumbled again against Moses and Aaron. If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt.

[19:55] There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you've brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death. What bubbled to the surface in this test was a denial of God's love and his power and his faithfulness.

And Moses makes it clear you're not grumbling against us, you're grumbling against God. He's the one leading you, not us. It's through us that he leads you. Nevertheless, in grace, God fed them, didn't he?

Fed them with quail that night and with manna the next morning. But even in the giving of the manna, the Lord was testing his people.

Exodus chapter 16 verses 4 and 5, Moses is giving the instructions of the Lord to his people about gathering the manna. And he says in Exodus 16 4 and 5, the people are to go out each day and to gather enough for that day.

In this way, I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. On the sixth day, they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days.

[21:09] Now, there's the instructions he's given to Moses. Moses will give to the people. Sounds simple enough, doesn't it? Just gather every day, only enough for that day. They're told not to keep any overnight.

But on the sixth day, gather twice as much as on the other days because there won't be any on the ground on the seventh day. Okay, it's a test, it's a test.

Will they obey me? Well, most of the Israelites did as they were told this time. Each one gathered as much as they needed, but some paid no attention to Moses.

And they kept back part of their manna for the next day. Now, we can understand this, can't we? It's one thing to understand a person's sin, it's another thing to excuse it.

We don't excuse their sin in the slightest, but we understand it. These people are in the desert. I don't know that we've ever been where they are, where there's nothing to eat, and now look, there's all this manna on the ground, and if I gather a bit extra, I'll have some for tomorrow.

[22 : 18] You see, it's a test of their faith. Will the Lord provide tomorrow for me? I don't know that I can trust him for tomorrow. I see it here today, let me gather some extra today. I can't trust him for tomorrow.

Well, they failed the test, didn't they? Because in the morning they went to have their bowl of manna and found it full of maggots and it began to stink. And then also on the sixth day, they gathered twice as much and were told to keep some of it overnight for the seventh day, the Sabbath, because there would be none on that day.

And in the morning, they found that the manna in their jars did not have maggots and was not stinking. Nevertheless, you got it, some of the people went out on the Sabbath day to gather manna and they found none.

And then the Lord said to Moses, how long will you all refuse to keep my commands and my instructions? You see, God is testing us in everyday things.

We're talking about what we eat and drink. Could anything be more everyday and basic than that? Don't just think of God's tests as some huge things out there that we face maybe three times in our lifetime.

[23 : 44] No, no. We will miss most of his tests if that's how we view them. No. In the everyday little things, he's testing us to see if we'll trust and obey him.

Will we lean on our own understanding, our own unbelief? Will we do what we want and what we think is best? This is a test. Well, they get to chapter 20 and they appear before God and God comes down on Mount Sinai, you remember, and the lightning and the thunder and the blaring trumpet and the billowing smoke coming out of the mountain and hearing the voice of God audibly speak the Ten Commandments, they were petrified with fear.

They thought they were going to die. And listen to what Moses says in Exodus 20, 20. He said to the people, do not be afraid. God has come down to test you so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.

I wonder if you've ever thought of God's commands as tests. Once you do, you begin to realize they're not just a few tests, are they? But that in every situation where we have an option to obey God's command or not to, we are being put to a test, aren't we?

And he's trying us in the furnace of his commandments to reveal. Is there the fear of God? Is there an esteem of God that is such to keep you from sinning and to keep you obeying?

[25 : 25] What are the commandments of God bringing to the surface in your life? Well, you remember they finally made it into the promised land. We're studying that on Sunday nights as Joshua leads them into the promised land.

But what we find and we'll see is that the Lord did not drive out all the nations at once from the promised land. He allowed some nations to remain.

And his reason is of interest to us. Judges 2 22. I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the Lord and walk in it as their forefathers did.

And sadly, they failed the test because as they lived among these other nations, they learned their ways, they intermarried with them, and they came to worship their gods.

And that angered the Lord. There's a lesson here for us. In this present age in which we live, it's not just the righteous inheriting the land.

[26 : 29] Have you noticed that? That God has left some unconverted people here. And you work beside them and you work for them or they work for you or they live beside you.

They're living with you. In one way or another, we're left in contact with people that don't know the Lord. This is a test. God is testing us.

Will we remain his peculiar people? His people that are set apart from the world? They're unique.

They're different. They're holy. They follow God's way rather than following the world's way.

They're a bit odd and out of step with the world. It's a test. Or will they just capitulate and compromise and conform and let the world squeeze them into its mold rather than into the shape of Jesus?

It is a test, you see. These remaining nations in Israel were a test. The remaining unbelievers around us. I believe there's another application we could make of this principle that when God led them into the promised land, he left some of the nations there as a test.

[27 : 43] And it has to do with the remaining sin. When the Lord saved you, he didn't get rid of all your inward corruptions and sins, did he? He didn't get rid of indwelling sin, did he?

To be sure, he broke the power of reigning sin. It no longer controls you. It no longer owns you. It no longer makes you serve it. You now have a greater power.

Greater is he that is in you. Greater than the world. Greater than sins remains left within you. But he's left it in you. That's my point.

He didn't just clear the land of all sin. Didn't clear your heart of all sin, did he? I wonder why. Could it be the same reason that he left the nations of unbelievers in the land, some of them in the land?

Why is he left remaining sin in the believer? To test you. To test you. The very presence of sin. The fact that there is a part of you Christian that still hates God, still hates his commands, still doesn't want to go his way, still wants to turn your back on him and go your way, that you still have a part of you like that is a test.

[29 : 08] It's a test of your heart and its devotion. And those remaining sinful desires are being used by Satan to try to tempt you and pull you down into sin while the Lord is testing you by those remaining sinful desires to send you running to Jesus for forgiveness and greater power over them.

It's a test. To bring us to Christ, bringing our sins with them to Christ for the killing of them. I can't reel in this desire in my heart, Lord.

I find it's too much for me. Would you help me put it to death? We're humbled. We're humbled that I should still be struggling with this problem as a 40-year-old Christian in the Lord.

I still struggle with this. What's it meant to do? Will you humble yourself and come and confess it? Will you come and seek help from the Lord? Will you recognize, I've got to be careful.

I've got to watch and pray against this. You see, God is taking the enemy in the land. The indwelling sin still left in your heart to show you just how much you need him.

[30 : 27] Just why Jesus is not optional for living the Christian life. You can't live the Christian life without him. You need him and you come and you confess and you beg for mercy and help in your time of need.

The remaining presence of indwelling sin is one of the greatest furnaces of affliction to the believer in which the Lord is testing our hearts. The crucible for silver, the furnace for gold, and indwelling sin for the believer to test their hearts.

Next time you feel that powerful downward drag of the flesh, remember it's a test. And that there is everything in the Lord to help you in that test, to humble you, to teach you, and to bless you.

Well, that's Israel. One of their kings was Hezekiah, godly king of Judah, who was ill with a deadly disease. He pleaded to the Lord, and the Lord spared his life and gave him 15 more years and actually performed a sign to ensure Hezekiah it's going to happen by moving the sundial back, ten steps on the stairway.

Envoys of Babylon, they noticed the change in the sun, whatever that was, and they had heard that God had healed the king of Judah. And so this envoy from Babylon came, and they came to congratulate him and bring him gifts for his healing, but also to ask about this miraculous sign in the heavens.

[32 : 01] And these Babylonians were part of God's test of Hezekiah's heart. 2 Chronicles 32, 31 says that when the Babylonians came to Hezekiah, God left him to test him, to know everything that was in his heart.

And what bubbled up was his pride. His pride, and he just showed off to these Babylonians.

Everything in his storehouse, all the silver, gold, his armory, his treasures, there was nothing in his palace or in all of his kingdom.

That Hezekiah did not show them. And the result of that pride would be God's judgment that those Babylonians would be coming back to get what he just showed them.

You see, it was a test. And remember that the next time people are admiring your things, your house, your clothing, your appearance, your gifts, your family, or you're tempted to show off about anything.

This is a test. A test of your heart. Will you swell with pride or walk humbly with your God? God's testing us. He's sitting as the refiner and purifier of silver, and I venture it's happening far more than

we're aware.

[33 : 14] So let's be more aware of it in our lives. that we're living under the refiner's watchful eye, his loving care, who wants to shape us into what we were created for, to be like our Lord Jesus Christ, to reflect the glory and beauty of our Lord Jesus, and to be transformed into his image.

It's not a painless process. It's one that involves the furnace of affliction, situations that test us to the core, that show us what we are. And these tests are indeed revealing things, but they're also purifying things, necessary for our spiritual growth and our perseverance to the end.

Think of basic training in the military. Maybe our Navy SEALs, or those in some of the special ops. What do we do with these young men? Well, I dare say we test them, don't we?

Physically, emotionally, mentally, in every way we can. We push them to their limits. We put them into extreme situations, seeking to mimic what will be warlike experiences.

I recently saw on the evening news a training camp over in Norway in the dead of winter, where men are required to break through the ice of the frozen lake and jump in and do some exercises inside that extreme shock on their bodies.

[34 : 44] How will they do under that kind of strain? And indeed some things might appear more like torture than training. But what is the purpose of it all?

Why do we do that to these men? Is it not that we want our men prepared for the real battlefield? We want them succeeding out there. We want them to live, to return home, to tell about it.

We don't want them to be casualties. And I wonder if anyone could argue that staying alive in combat situation is often dependent on what they learned back in basic training.

Well, in the same way God tests our basic training, God's tests are his basic training by which he's preparing us for future battles that we might stay alive and make it all the way home to heaven.

He's not one to start a work in his people and then leave it to fizzle out. Paul says, I'm confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

[35 : 49] And how? How does he carry that work on in your heart, Christian? How does he keep you from quitting and washing out like so many others who started out on this journey, maybe baptized with you, went to the same church?

They're nowhere to be found. They've turned from the Lord. What is going to keep you? Well, God is putting you through basic training. God is putting you through test after test to get you home.

He's ensuring that you have just the right kind of test, just the length of test, the right amount of tests that are needed to develop a perseverance in you that will enable you to make it all the way home to perfection.

perfection. Isn't that where we're headed? To perfection where there's no more indwelling sin.

According to James, this is reason enough for you and me to put all of our tests into the category of pure joy.

James 1, 2 to 4. Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face tests. Same word, trials, tests, of many kinds.

[37 : 03] Why? Why should I put it in the category of pure joy? Because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Oh, do we need that?

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be perfect and complete, not lacking anything. If I'm going to make it to the end, I'm going to need perseverance.

And the Lord knows that. And so he's got just the right set of tests to exercise the muscle of my faith and to build some perseverance so that I'm ready for the next test and the next test.

And you'll find me at the end with the Lord Jesus Christ, that gracious refiner who got me all the way home by his grace.

And there's a beatitude found in James 1, 12, blessed is the man who perseveres under trial. who perseveres under testing because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

[38 : 10] God's tests are the ongoing basic training that you need to get you all the way home to heaven. To enable you to stand the test, that means to come through the test still standing.

The furnace is testing the metal. Is it genuine or is it fake gold? And we come through the trial and we're there in heaven at the end and we're proven to be genuine, genuine followers of Christ, true gold that Christ has made us.

Not only are we found standing after all the tests of this life, but at that final test of the last judgment, you will stand approved as genuine, the genuine article, a true Christian, one who had the spirit of God in you, one who had a relationship with Jesus Christ.

And you will receive the promises the crown of life, eternal life, which God has promised to all who love him. And oh, how you will love him then in that day for not having catered to your love of ease in this life, but for having put you through tests to exercise your faith, to strengthen your perseverance, to keep you from quitting before the end.

Those painful tests in life will be seen as God's ways of preserving you, keeping your eye on Jesus, showing you don't have any resources in yourself, you've got to look to him.

[39 : 43] And it's that, you see, that keeps us going. And that will be your everlasting joy, and to God's everlasting praise. For now we walk by sight, by faith, but then by sight.

And I think it will be one of the great glories of heaven when we get to heaven and we are able to look back over our lives and to see the ways that the Lord, our refiner, was building perseverance in our faith.

And all will see our brokenness, that thing that hurt so bad. Look what he did with that in my life. He stirred up my faith to look away from self to him, and that kept me going.

Then he sent this other thing, and oh, I didn't want it in my life at all, but he was testing my faith to develop perseverance, to bring me all the way home.

Oh, how we'll love him for his testing us. Even now, consider it pure joy. Well, we've seen Israel's failure under God's testing in the desert for 40 years.

[40 : 56] And you know, that's just a picture of all mankind. I mean, we're all there in Israel, really, aren't we? We all have failed the test. Is that not the record of scripture and of your life and mine?

We've all come short of the glory. We've all sinned. And it was true of Adam. He failed the test, and he passed on to us hearts that failed the test. We've all sinned.

We've all failed. And that's why we should have the greatest interest when we find the perfect man, God's own son on the earth, being led by the spirit into where?

The desert to do what? To be tested for 40 days by the devil. We ought to be all ears wondering what's going to happen with him.

Will he be any different from every other human being? And now for 40 days and nights Satan tempts him but saves the most powerful temptations for the end of the 40 days when he is now hungry from having eaten nothing.

[42 : 01] And then it was that Satan tempted him to use his divine powers to turn those stones into bread. You can't, his insinuation is you can't wait on your father.

You can't trust him. If you're going to eat Jesus, you're going to have to use your power and change. And Jesus answered by quoting from Deuteronomy 8.

Interesting. The very passage referring to Israel's test in the desert over what? Being hungry. And he says, it is spoken of in the scriptures that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.

And God taught his people of old all he has to do is speak and there will be bread on the ground. I'm waiting for him. I'm trusting him. Every word that comes out of his mouth becomes reality.

I will trust him. Grumbling Israel did not trust God to provide food in the desert. Jesus does. Satan takes him to the highest point of the temple, tempts him to jump off and to prove that he is indeed the son of God and to prove the truthfulness of Psalm 91 that he will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully and they will lift you up in their hands so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

[43 : 18] And Jesus detects their scripture test twisting, detects Satan's scripture twisting, and he answers again from Deuteronomy concerning Israel's test in the desert.

Do not put the Lord your God to the test as you did at Meribah, at Massa, where grumbling, hard-hearted Israel failed the test of faith in God to provide for them and instead turned and put God to the test.

Let him prove himself and show himself that he is among us. That's what Satan wanted him to do, to jump off, to make God prove himself and catch him before he hit the ground.

And once again where Israel had sinned and failed the test, Jesus succeeded. And lastly, Satan shows Jesus all the kingdoms of the world in their splendor and says, all this I will give you if you'll just bow down and worship me.

Oh, that's an if that Jesus cannot give. And once more from Deuteronomy 6 in the history of Israel, Jesus counters Satan's temptation with God's word. As Israel's preparing to go up into the promised land, Moses warned them, fear the Lord your God and serve him only.

[44 : 33] Do not follow the other gods, the gods of the peoples around you. And where idolatrous Israel failed the test and went running after other gods, the Lord Jesus succeeded and feared and served the Lord alone.

Do you see what's going on in the wilderness, in the desert temptation? Jesus submits to God his father and resists the devil.

And the devil indeed does flee from him and leaves him until a more opportune time. But Jesus does that 100%. He's tempted and tested in every way like we are and yet without sin.

And we're told in the Bible that what Jesus did in the desert under his testing, he did as a representative for his people. He was not just there as an individual.

He's there as the representative, the representative head of his people. And that simply means that he not only represented us on the cross, praise God, he represented us in the tests, in the trials, in the temptations.

[45 : 44] He's there representing us so that all that he accomplished was accomplished for his people. He passed the tests and those past tests of his are counted as ours who believe.

His obedience is put to our account so that through the obedience of the one man, the many, the many who trust him will be counted righteous. So here's good news.

Here's good news. It is good news that the crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the hearts. It's good news that the Lord Jesus was put to the test for us.

And it's good news for any who are here who have ever failed a test of the Lord because if you failed even one test, that's it. You deserve eternal punishment. But here is one who has been tested and proven faithful.

100% of the time. Therefore, he can take all of your failed tests and his, your F's onto himself and bear the punishment on Calvary. And then he can give you all his past tests and put it onto your account.

[46 : 57] Glorious exchange, you see. Because Jesus has come to save his people from their sins. Trust in him.

His past test is only yours as you trust him and receive him by faith alone. His death for you, his life for you, it's the gift of faith.

Trust him. salvation. And so you will pass not only the tests of this life, but that final test. If we have trusted in Christ, his faultless performance will be put to our account so that when we appear in judgment in that day and the books are open, there will be on your page all the past tests of Jesus, his perfect righteousness.

righteousness. And so we will pass the last and final test, dressed in his righteousness alone, faultless to stand before the throne. It's good news, believers, that Jesus was tested for us and he passed, that we might pass that final test.

not everybody likes to have what's on the inside brought out and we'll see that more, Lord willing, in a few weeks when we return to this thing.

[48 : 18] But it's a mark of a believer that he comes into the light that his deeds might be made manifest. And so here's David, far from a sinless believer, but a true one.

And what does he say? He says, search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me. And try my thoughts and see if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

You know, if you don't know Christ, you can't say that. You run from him like Adam and Eve did in the garden. You don't come to him and say, search me, O God. I know there's stuff in here that is offensive to you.

And folks, that's what our sins are. We little know how offensive that stuff is to him. But David knew it and he says, search me, O Lord. I want you to try me and test me. And yes, if it's in there, I want it boiled up that I can see it and confess it and I can flee from it and watch it.

Search me and test me. And if there's any offensive way in me and then lead me in the way everlasting. You see, it's a, it's a only those who have a savior will ever come to this God with such open honesty.

[49 : 39] We can face whatever offensive stuff is in us. Why? Because we have a savior who died for that offensive stuff and suffered all the damnation that we would have deserved and would have

suffered for that offensive stuff.

And so I'm able to praise him. And when the offensive stuff comes to the surface in my test and I come and I bring it to him and confess it afresh and receive that kiss of forgiveness, what does it do?

It shows me what a wonderful savior I have who has more grace than I have in dwelling sin and who is able to keep me until that day.

Well, let's pray and thank him for it. We're blessed to be in your cauldron, oh Lord. We're blessed to be in your furnace because it's not the fiery furnace of hell that we deserve.

It's rather the furnace with which you are refining us and preparing us for heaven. So thank you.

And bring us then to count it all joy when we find ourself in the test, not because the test is so fun, but that what you are doing in it is so needful.

[50 : 51] As you're building perseverance of faith in the Lord Jesus, do it in our lives this week and bring out of these hearts, not only the crud of sin, but bring out your own good work, the work of your spirit in our hearts of praising you and trusting you and obeying you and living for you.

We ask in Jesus name and for his praise. Amen. Amen. Amen.