

Does God Test People Today?

Genesis 22:1 says God tested Abraham by commanding him to offer Isaac. *This study considers whether or not still God tests people today.*

General Teaching about Tests

“Test” Can Be Used in a Good or Bad Sense.

To “test” means to examine, experiment, or prove.

In the bad sense, Satan entices or seduce us to do wrong, resulting in spiritual harm. But God never tempts people in this sense (James 1:13).

In the good sense a test may examine someone to give them an opportunity to demonstrate character, integrity, etc., with the hope that they will do what is right, resulting in their benefit.

Can you think of examples of good tests in everyday life (not spiritual tests) today?

Bible Examples in Which People Made Good Tests

Judges 6:39 – Gideon tested God’s instruction by exposing a fleece overnight to dew.

1 Kings 10:1 – The queen of Sheba tested Solomon’s wisdom with hard questions.

Proverbs 17:3 – Metal is tested to determine if it is gold or silver.

Daniel 1:12-14 – Daniel’s diet was tested to see if it was better than the king’s diet.

Luke 14:19 – A man who bought oxen wanted to test them

This is the sense in which God tested Abraham.

(1 Samuel 17:39; Ecclesiastes 2:1ff)

Tests in the Old Testament

Old Testament Passages

Exodus 15:24-26 – When Israel complained, God tested their obedience.

Deuteronomy 13:1-3 – Prophets who taught error were a test from God.

Psalms 11:4,5 – God’s eyes behold, He tests the righteous

Psalms 17:3 – You have tested my heart; You have tried me and have found nothing.

* Psalms 26:2 – Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; Try my mind and my heart

* Proverbs 17:3 – Like silver and gold, but the Lord tests the hearts.

* Isaiah 48:10 – I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.

* Jeremiah 17:10 – The Lord searches the heart and tests the mind

(Exodus 20:18-21; Ecclesiastes 3:18; Judges 7:4; 2:22; 3:1,4; Job 23:10; 1 Chronicles 29:17; 2 Chronicles 32:31; Psalms 7:9; 66:10; 81:7; Jeremiah 6:27-30; 12:3; 11:20; 20:12)

The Nature and Purpose of God’s Tests

Bible Examples of Tests Had the Following Characteristics

- 1) A command/requirement
- 2) A choice to be made (often difficult)
- 3) Success was possible, but so was failure.
- 4) An opportunity to demonstrate faithfulness to God.
- 5) God rewarded obedience and people learned important lessons.

Explain how each of the following examples had the above characteristics.

Genesis 22 (note verse 1) – God tested Abraham (Hebrews 11:17-19)

Exodus 16:4 (verses 14-30); Deuteronomy 8:2,16 – God sent manna as a test

Psalms 105:16-22 (Genesis 50:20,21) – Joseph was sold as a slave and imprisoned.

Can you think of other examples that fit the pattern (Adam and Eve, Job, etc.)?

Tests in the New Testament

Tests We Must Make

2 Corinthians 13:5 – Examine yourself whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.
1 Timothy 3:10 – We must test men before they are appointed as elders or deacons
1 John 4:1 – Test the spirits, because there are many false prophets

Evidence that God Tests People in the New Testament

Zechariah 13:9 – God will refine the remnant and test them as gold is tested.
Matthew 4:1 – Jesus was led by the Spirit to be tempted by the devil.
Hebrews 2:18; 4:15 – Jesus was tempted so He can aid us in our temptations.
John 6:5,6 – Jesus' statement was intended to test Philip.
2 Corinthians 2:9; 8:8 – Paul tested the Corinthians to see whether they were obedient.
1 Thessalonians 2:4 – Paul spoke, not to please men, but God who tests our hearts.

Ways God May Test People Today

Affliction, hardship, suffering

James 1:2-4 – Rejoice in trials, because the **testing** of our faith benefits us
1 Peter 1:6,7 – Just as fire **tests** gold, so our faith is proved by various trials.
Revelation 2:10; 3:10 – Suffering and trial would come to **test** them. Those who were faithful until death would receive the crown of life.

Explain how suffering has the same characteristics listed above for Old Testament tests.
(2 Corinthians 8:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 4:12)

Giving rebuke/discipline

2 Corinthians 2:4-11; 7:11 (1 Corinthians 5) – Paul instructed the church that he might put them to the **test**, whether they would be obedient in all things (verse 9). (Galatians 6:1)
Explain how dealing with sin in a congregation fits the characteristics of a test.

Prayer

(This and other points below are not called “tests,” but they fit the characteristics of tests.)
Matthew 6:7,8 – God knows our needs before we ask. So, why should we pray?
Explain how the instruction to pray has the characteristics of a test.

Baptism

Mark 16:16 – He who believes and is baptized will be saved.
Acts 2:38 – Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins.
Acts 22:16 – Be baptized and wash away your sins.
Explain how baptism as a condition of salvation has the characteristics of a test.

Obedience

1 Corinthians 11:23-26; 16:1,2 – Jesus said to meet each first day of the week to have the collection and the Lord's Supper.
2 Corinthians 8:24 – Giving shows “the proof of our love.” It's a test!
John 14:15 – If you love me, keep my commands.
1 John 5:3 – This is the love of God, that we keep His commands.
Explain how instructions we must obey have the characteristics of a test.

Conclusion

Hebrews 12:1 compares life to a race. So **all of life is a test!**
How will you respond to the tests God gives you every day in life? Have you submitted to the test of baptism? Are you passing the test of life?

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