

TUESDAY

February 20

The Lord's Test

Read Psalm 81:7, 8; Psalm 95:7-11; and Psalm 105:17-22.

What does divine testing involve in these texts?

Meribah is the place where Israel tested God by challenging His faithfulness and power to provide for their needs (*Exod. 17:1-7; Ps. 95:8, 9*). Psalm 81 makes an intriguing reversal and interprets the same event as the time when God tested Israel (*Ps. 81:7*). And, by their disobedience and lack of trust (*Ps. 81:11*), the people failed God's test.

The reference to Meribah conveys a twofold message. First, God's people must not repeat the mistakes of past generations. Instead, they are to trust God and to walk in His way (*Ps. 81:13*). Second, although the people failed the test, God came to their rescue when they were in trouble (*Ps. 81:7*). God's saving grace in the past gives an assurance of God's grace to new generations.

Psalm 105 shows that the trials were God's means of testing Joseph's trust in God's Word about his future (*Gen. 37:5-10, Ps. 105:19*). The Hebrew *Tsarap*, [*tsaw-raf'*] "tested," in verse 19

conveys a sense of "purging," "refining," or "purifying." Thus, the goal of God's testing of Joseph's faith was to remove any doubt in God's promise and to strengthen Joseph's trust in God's guidance.

16 Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of bread.

17 He sent a man before them, even

Joseph, who was sold for a servant:

18 Whose feet they hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron:

19 Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him.

20 The king sent and loosed him; even the ruler of the people, and let him go free.

21 He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance:

22 To bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom.

23 Israel also came into Egypt; and Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

24 And he increased his people greatly; and made them stronger than their enemies.

Genesis 45:

1 Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren.

2 And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard.

3 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I *am* Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence.

4 And Joseph said unto his brethren, Come near to me, I pray you. And they came near. And he said, I *am* Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt.

5 Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.

6 For these two years *hath the famine been in the land*: and yet *there are five years*, in the which *there shall neither be earing nor harvest*.

7 And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.

8 So now *it was not you that sent me hither, but God*: and he hath made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house, and a ruler throughout all the land of Egypt.

9 Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: come down unto me, tarry not:

The goal of divine discipline is to strengthen God's children and to prepare them for the fulfillment of the promise, as shown in Joseph's example (*Ps. 105:20-22*).

However, rejection of God's instruction results in growing stubbornness and hardening of an obstinate person's heart.

"God requires prompt and unquestioning obedience of His law; but men are asleep or paralyzed by the deceptions of Satan, who suggests excuses and subterfuges, and conquers their scruples, saying as he said to Eve in the garden: 'Ye shall not surely die.' Disobedience not only hardens the heart and conscience of the guilty one, but it tends to corrupt the faith of others. That which looked very wrong to them at first, gradually loses this appearance by being constantly before them, till finally they question whether it is really sin and unconsciously fall into the same error."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 146.

What has been your own experience with how sin hardens the heart? Why should that thought drive us to the cross, where we can find the power to obey?

[Gen 41:51](#) And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, *said he*, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house.

MOSES TEST -

AS MOSES INTERCEDED FOR ISRAEL, HIS TIMIDITY WAS LOST IN HIS DEEP INTEREST AND LOVE FOR THOSE FOR WHOM HE HAD, IN THE HANDS OF GOD, BEEN THE MEANS OF DOING SO MUCH. THE LORD LISTENED TO HIS PLEADINGS, AND GRANTED HIS UNSELFISH PRAYER. GOD HAD PROVED HIS SERVANT; HE HAD TESTED HIS FAITHFULNESS AND HIS LOVE FOR THAT ERRING, UNGRATEFUL PEOPLE, AND NOBLY HAD MOSES ENDURED THE TRIAL. HIS INTEREST IN ISRAEL SPRANG FROM NO SELFISH MOTIVE. THE PROSPERITY OF GOD'S CHOSEN PEOPLE WAS DEARER TO HIM THAN PERSONAL HONOR, DEARER THAN THE PRIVILEGE OF BECOMING THE FATHER OF A MIGHTY NATION. GOD WAS PLEASED WITH HIS FAITHFULNESS, HIS SIMPLICITY OF HEART, AND HIS INTEGRITY, AND HE COMMITTED TO HIM,

AS A FAITHFUL SHEPHERD, THE GREAT CHARGE OF LEADING
ISRAEL TO THE PROMISED LAND. . PP 319.2

OUR TEST -

ALREADY THE JUDGMENTS OF GOD ARE ABROAD IN THE
LAND, AS SEEN IN STORMS, IN FLOODS, IN TEMPESTS, IN
EARTHQUAKES, IN PERIL BY LAND AND BY SEA. THE GREAT I
AM IS SPEAKING TO THOSE WHO MAKE VOID HIS LAW. WHEN
GOD'S WRATH IS Poured OUT UPON THE EARTH, WHO WILL THEN
BE ABLE TO STAND? NOW IS THE TIME FOR GOD'S PEOPLE TO
SHOW THEMSELVES TRUE TO PRINCIPLE. WHEN THE RELIGION OF
CHRIST IS MOST HELD IN CONTEMPT, WHEN HIS LAW IS MOST
DESPISED, THEN SHOULD OUR ZEAL BE THE WARMEST AND OUR
COURAGE AND FIRMNESS THE MOST UNFLINCHING. TO STAND IN
DEFENSE OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS WHEN THE MAJORITY
FORSAKE US, TO FIGHT THE BATTLES OF THE LORD WHEN
CHAMPIONS ARE FEW—THIS WILL BE OUR TEST. AT THIS TIME
WE MUST GATHER WARMTH FROM THE COLDNESS OF OTHERS,
COURAGE FROM THEIR COWARDICE, AND LOYALTY FROM THEIR
TREASON. THE NATION WILL BE ON THE SIDE OF THE GREAT
REBEL LEADER. . 5T 136.2

