

ISRAEL PUT TO THE TEST

BIBLE TEXT : Deuteronomy 8:1-20; Hebrews 3:17-19; 4:1, 2

LESSON 123 Senior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it" (Hebrews 4:2).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Deuteronomy 8:1-20

¹ All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers.

² And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

³ And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

⁴ Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell, these forty years.

⁵ Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, *so* the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

⁶ Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to fear him.

⁷ For the LORD thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;

⁸ A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and

BIBLE REFERENCES:

I An Admonition to Remember

1 Israel was admonished by Moses to remember all the way that God had led them the past forty years, Deuteronomy 8:2-4, 11, 15, 16;

Deuteronomy 7:18-19 ¹⁸ Thou shalt not be afraid of them: *but* shalt well remember what the LORD thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt;

¹⁹ The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders, and the mighty hand, and the stretched out arm, whereby the LORD thy God brought thee out: *so* shall the LORD thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid.

Deuteronomy 29:2-3 ² And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Ye have seen all that the LORD did before your eyes in the land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his servants, and unto all his land;

³ The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, the signs, and those great miracles:

Deuteronomy 4:32-39 ³² For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and *ask* from the one side of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been *any such thing* as this great thing *is*, or hath been heard like it?

³³ Did *ever* people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?

³⁴ Or hath God assayed to go *and* take him a nation from the midst of *another* nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?

³⁵ Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he *is* God; *there is none else beside him*.

³⁶ Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.

³⁷ And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;

³⁸ To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou *art*, to bring thee in, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance, as *it is* this day.

³⁹ Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that the LORD he *is* God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: *there is none else*.

Psalm 77:11-20 ¹¹ I will remember the works of the LORD: surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

¹² I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

¹³ Thy way, O God, *is* in the sanctuary: who *is so great* a God as *our* God?

¹⁴ Thou *art* the God that doest wonders: thou hast declared thy strength among the people.

¹⁵ Thou hast with *thine* arm redeemed thy people, the

pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey;

⁹ A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any *thing* in it; a land whose stones *are* iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

¹⁰ When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the LORD thy God for the good land which he hath given thee.

¹¹ Beware that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day:

¹² Lest *when* thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt *therein*;

¹³ And *when* thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

¹⁴ Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;

¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein were* fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

¹⁷ And thou say in thine heart, My power and the might of *mine* hand hath gotten me this wealth.

¹⁸ But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for *it is* he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers,

sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah.

¹⁶ The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled.

¹⁷ The clouds poured out water: the skies sent out a sound: thine arrows also went abroad.

¹⁸ The voice of thy thunder *was* in the heaven: the lightnings lightened the world: the earth trembled and shook.

¹⁹ Thy way *is* in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known.

²⁰ Thou leddest thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Psalm 106:7-48 ⁷ Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked *him* at the sea, *even* at the Red sea.

⁸ Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

⁹ He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness.

¹⁰ And he saved them from the hand of him that hated *them*, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

¹¹ And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left.

¹² Then believed they his words; they sang his praise.

¹³ They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel:

¹⁴ But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

¹⁵ And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

¹⁶ They envied Moses also in the camp, *and* Aaron the saint of the LORD.

¹⁷ The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram.

¹⁸ And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked.

¹⁹ They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

²⁰ Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.

²¹ They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

²² Wondrous works in the land of Ham, *and* terrible things by the Red sea.

²³ Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy *them*.

²⁴ Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:

²⁵ But murmured in their tents, *and* hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

²⁶ Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

²⁷ To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

²⁸ They joined themselves also unto Baalpeor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead.

²⁹ Thus they provoked *him* to anger with their inventions: and the plague brake in upon them.

³⁰ Then stood up Phinehas, and executed judgment: and so the plague was stayed.

³¹ And that was counted unto him for righteousness unto all generations for evermore.

³² They angered *him* also at the waters of strife, so that it went ill with Moses for their sakes:

³³ Because they provoked his spirit, so that he spake

as *it is* this day.

¹⁹ And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.

²⁰ As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.

Hebrews 3:17-19

¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1-2

¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

unadvisedly with his lips.

³⁴ They did not destroy the nations, concerning whom the LORD commanded them:

³⁵ But were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works.

³⁶ And they served their idols: which were a snare unto them.

³⁷ Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils,

³⁸ And shed innocent blood, *even* the blood of their sons and of their daughters, whom they sacrificed unto the idols of Canaan: and the land was polluted with blood.

³⁹ Thus were they defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions.

⁴⁰ Therefore was the wrath of the LORD kindled against his people, insomuch that he abhorred his own inheritance.

⁴¹ And he gave them into the hand of the heathen; and they that hated them ruled over them.

⁴² Their enemies also oppressed them, and they were brought into subjection under their hand.

⁴³ Many times did he deliver them; but they provoked *him* with their counsel, and were brought low for their iniquity.

⁴⁴ Nevertheless he regarded their affliction, when he heard their cry:

⁴⁵ And he remembered for them his covenant, and repented according to the multitude of his mercies.

⁴⁶ He made them also to be pitied of all those that carried them captives.

⁴⁷ Save us, O LORD our God, and gather us from among the heathen, to give thanks unto thy holy name, *and* to triumph in thy praise.

⁴⁸ Blessed *be* the LORD God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting: and let all the people say, Amen. Praise ye the LORD.

2 Israel was to consider in their hearts that God chastened them as a father chasteneth his son, Deuteronomy 8:5;

2 Samuel 7:14 ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men:

Job 5:17-18 ¹⁷ Behold, happy *is* the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:

¹⁸ For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole.

Psalm 89:31-32 ³¹ If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;

³² Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

Psalm 94:12 ¹² Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;

Proverbs 3:11-12 ¹¹ My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:

¹² For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom* he delighteth.

1 Corinthians 11:31-32 ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

³² But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Hebrews 12:5-11 ⁵ And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

⁶ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and

scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

⁹ Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

¹⁰ For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness.

¹¹ Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

Revelation 3:19 ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

3 Moses told Israel that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, Deuteronomy 8:3;

Psalms 104:27-29 ²⁷ These wait all upon thee; that thou mayest give *them* their meat in due season.

²⁸ That thou givest them they gather: thou openest thine hand, they are filled with good.

²⁹ Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust.

Matthew 4:4 ⁴ But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Luke 4:4 ⁴ And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

Proverbs 30:8 ⁸ Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me:

4 Israel was told to remember the goodness of God toward them, evident in the wealth of the land they were to inherit, Deuteronomy 8:7-10;

Deuteronomy 6:10-11 ¹⁰ And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

¹¹ And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

Deuteronomy 11:10-12 ¹⁰ For the land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst *it* with thy foot, as a garden of herbs:

¹¹ But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven:

¹² A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God *are* always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year.

Nehemiah 9:25 ²⁵ And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became fat, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.

Ezekiel 20:6 ⁶ In the day that I lifted up mine hand unto them, to bring them forth of the land of Egypt into a

land that I had espied for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands:

5 Israel was warned to beware that they forget not the Lord their God, in not keeping His commandments, Deuteronomy 8:1, 6, 11-20;

Deuteronomy 4:9 ⁹ Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;

Deuteronomy 4:23 ²³ Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.

Hebrews 3:17-19 ¹⁷ But with whom was he grieved forty years? *was it* not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

¹⁸ And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

¹⁹ So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Hebrews 4:1-2 ¹ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left *us* of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

² For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard *it*.

Psalms 106:21 ²¹ They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt;

Psalms 106:24-27 ²⁴ Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word:

²⁵ But murmured in their tents, *and* hearkened not unto the voice of the LORD.

²⁶ Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness:

²⁷ To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands.

II God's Chastening Hand

1 Israel was humbled, caused to hunger, tested, tried by the chastening hand of God to prove their loyalty to Him, Deuteronomy 8:2, 3, 15, 16;

Deuteronomy 8:2-3 ² And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, *and* to prove thee, to know what *was* in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

³ And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every *word* that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

Deuteronomy 8:15-16 ¹⁵ Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, *wherein were* fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where *there was* no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;

¹⁶ Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at thy latter end;

Deuteronomy 13:3 ³ Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Genesis 22:1 ¹ And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, *here I am*.

Proverbs 17:3 ³ The refining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the LORD trieth the hearts.

Malachi 3:2-3 ² But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

³ And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

John 15:2 ² Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every *branch* that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

James 1:2-3 ² My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

³ Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

1 Peter 1:6-7 ⁶ Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

⁷ That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

Jeremiah 17:9-10 ⁹ The heart is deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

¹⁰ I the LORD search the heart, *I* try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, *and* according to the fruit of his doings.

2 Every Christian will be tested by the Word of God, and the hand of God, even as Israel was,

Hebrews 12:7-8 ⁷ If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

⁸ But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

James 1:12 ¹² Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

James 5:11 ¹¹ Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

1 Peter 5:9 ⁹ Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Job 23:10 ¹⁰ But he knoweth the way that I take: *when* he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

Lamentations 3:1 ¹ *I am* the man *that* hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.

Lamentations 3:27-33 ²⁷ *It is* good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

²⁸ He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne *it* upon him.

²⁹ He putteth his mouth in the dust; if so be there may be hope.

³⁰ He giveth *his* cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.

³¹ For the Lord will not cast off for ever:

³² But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.

³³ For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

3 God's chastenings and teachings are to instruct us in the way of righteousness, to enable the Christian to inherit

eternal life,

Deuteronomy 4:36 ³⁶ Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.

Job 36:22 ²² Behold, God exalteth by his power: who teacheth like him?

Psalms 25:12 ¹² What man *is* he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way *that* he shall choose.

Psalms 94:10 ¹⁰ He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he correct? he that teacheth man knowledge, *shall not he know?*

Isaiah 48:16-17 ¹⁶ Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there *am* I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me.

¹⁷ Thus saith the LORD, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I *am* the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way *that* thou shouldest go.

Nehemiah 9:20 ²⁰ Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst.

John 6:45 ⁴⁵ It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.

John 6:63 ⁶³ It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

John 16:13 ¹³ Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

Romans 8:14 ¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

4 To reject God's Word and His teachings is to reject eternal life, and to receive condemnation from God, Hebrews 3:17-19; 4:1, 2

2 Chronicles 36:16 ¹⁶ But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the LORD arose against his people, till *there was* no remedy.

Proverbs 5:11-14 ¹¹ And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed,

¹² And say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof;

¹³ And have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!

¹⁴ I was almost in all evil in the midst of the congregation and assembly.

Romans 2:4-5 ⁴ Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

⁵ But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Hebrews 10:28 ²⁸ He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

Acts 13:38-41 ³⁸ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

³⁹ And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

⁴⁰ Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

⁴¹ Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

NOTES:

God's Curse

Moses' admonition to Israel was: "And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no." Israel suffered many things in their forty years of wilderness wanderings.

To the casual reader of the Bible it might seem that God was severe in His dealings with them. God is never severe nor unrighteous in His dealings with men. Sin in the world and in men's hearts is what brings severity of circumstances to the lives of men. It was Israel's own sins that brought forty years of wilderness wanderings upon them. That same sin was the cause of many plagues in their midst, and other dangers and hardships, too, that they would not otherwise have needed to experience.

In the beginning, the whole creation was cursed by God because of man's sin. All mankind suffers under that curse even today. Disease, death, pain, sorrow — all are the result of the curse placed upon the earth because of sin.

Chastened Sons

Irrespective of the curse of sin which is on the world, we see that in the pages of the Bible God in His infinite wisdom and mercy often uses these pains and trials for the benefit of His own people. This truth is what Moses had in mind when he reminded Israel to remember all the way that God had led them through forty years of trouble and trials.

The Bible tells us that many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivereth him out of them all (Psalm 34:19). God does not permit afflictions just to prove that He can deliver His people out of them, but often to work out a desired end.

Moses told Israel that they were to consider in their heart that as a man chastened his son, "so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee."

Israel was God's chosen people, and He treated them as sons. The Christian is a son of God, and receives both the blessings and chastisement of a son. Many people are willing enough to receive the blessings that God can and does bestow upon people, but are very unwilling to accept chastening from the Lord.

Paul tells us: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, **and** live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Hebrews 12:5-11).

Israel's Test

"Consider in thine heart," was the Lord's injunction to Israel. Well it would be with all if they would consider in their heart that disobedience brings swift and evil returns, and that if they are to enter the gates of Heaven they must learn of God. God permitted great hardship of circumstances to come upon Israel that they might have revealed to them their unbelief and lack of faith in God. Israel, while standing at the very threshold of entering the Promised Land, woefully disobeyed God. Their hearts became full of unbelief and fear and they sinned against themselves and against God. They were forced to wander forty years in the wilderness because of their sin. It was while they were in that wilderness that God attempted to awaken them to the true condition of their own hearts. Peter the Apostle said: "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:16). It is one thing to come to an awakening of sin through the knowledge of Christ; it is quite another to continue in that knowledge, and to grow in the grace of God. Israel had been awakened to their need of a savior when they were bondsmen in Egypt. They had followed God momentarily until they had escaped that particular bondage. Their failure was that they did not continue in that grace and knowledge of God.

God's Love

God desires all to inherit eternal life. The Christian, starting out **in** his profession of Christ, is as a newborn babe. (**1 Corinthians 3:1** ¹ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even as unto babes in Christ.* **1 Peter 2:2** ² As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:) It is obvious that babies as they grow older must have much instruction in the ways of life. So it is in the Christian walk: we stand in need of much instruction. We do not know our own hearts, nor our proneness to drift away from the love of God. It is these hard tests and trials of life, that seemingly have no meaning other than unwanted sorrow and pain, that are many times God's method to teach us our own hearts, to prove to us whether we are willing to serve Him or no. These tests and trials are to humble us and prove us, that God might do us good at our latter end.

Sickness, pain, approaching death, are all very strong tests that may come upon a child of God, by God's permission, to awaken him to some truth God knows he needs to see more clearly. Job is a grand example of a man who stood the test. God permitted him to be afflicted to the point of death, his possessions all taken away — not because he had sinned but because God wanted him to be a testimony to the world that he served God because he loved Him God also used him as a shining example for all Christians, that no matter how terrible the trial may be, God knows and sees, and in His own good time will deliver.

"Lest Thou Forget"

Israel was faced with two extreme tests. They lived in a world of sin and of unbelief. They had to be completely convinced in their hearts that God was their King and He was their Salvation. They had to come to an undoubting faith and belief in God as their Savior in every circumstance and hardship. By passing through many difficulties and trials, seeing the mighty hand of God in their behalf, they became more firmly established in their confidence in God. Yet they had another equally difficult test to face. Moses told them to beware "that thou forget not the LORD thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: lest

when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

These were Israel's tests, and are every Christian's tests: to have implicit faith in God, and not to forget Him who delivered from sin and its consequences. When man is in desperate straits, and despairs of life, he will cry to God; but when the riches of life come, too often he forgets the One who loved him when he was lost.

Peaceable Fruit

Sinners look at the lives of Christian people and often observe that Christians must suffer as does the sinner. It is true that the Christian suffers many things here in the world, but he has a hope of eternal life; he believes the Word of God is true in that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Romans 8:28). No sinner has such hope in his heart. If one does not suffer correction and chastisement from God, then he is not a son. Israel could not always believe that truth. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."

Israel's test was to believe that in every circumstance God knew all about it, and in His own good time He would take action in their behalf. It is the final test for every child of God. He can say like Paul: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).

QUESTIONS

- 1 What was the reason for God's testing Israel?
- 2 What was Israel to remember?
- 3 Is a child of God free from sickness and affliction?
- 4 What is God's purpose in trials and afflictions?
- 5 Can we refuse to submit to the chastening of God and still remain in a good state of grace?
- 6 What is the primary cause of sickness and disease?
- 7 Did Israel have to wander in the wilderness for their sins or because God merely wished to test them?
- 8 What are two great tests with which every child of God is faced?
- 9 Explain the chastening of God.
- 10 Are sinners chastened by God as are His own children?

