

Scripture Focus: Exodus 16:1-4; 9.

More in-depth reading: Exodus 16; Genesis 2:8-25; Hebrews 3

I'm very sure that the children of Israel looked around them and saw the obstacles and the great needs facing their community. They saw over a million men, women, and children and their burden with which they had to bear. They saw hardship after hardship, yet failed to realize Who was actually in charge. They saw Moses and Aaron and through grumbling amongst themselves, the people in the camp began to see their leaders as the root of their problems. They forgot the true character and purpose of God. They became weary and stopped believing that God had a plan and their best interests in mind.

Part of God's plan is to know whether people will follow His leading. He tested man in the Garden of Eden. He tested the children of Israel in the wilderness. He tested Israel throughout history. And I believe He tests all men at certain points in their lives, otherwise He would not be just towards man, concerning eternal reward and punishment. Certainly, He wants to know where we are at so that He can get us to the place we need to be. The reality is that God is actively involved in the lives of His children and all men at large. It's very cool that God reveals His glory to man, in spite of our failures as people. Yet, many have exercised their free will and right to rejected Him, not fully understanding the consequences.

Today, mankind has the same struggles that previous biblical generations did. We also see wave after wave of hardship and problems developing. We also come to the end of our resources and faith. We also have grumbled and complained at some point in our lives. Hopefully, we have learned this does not work and through the grace of God, we overcome these temptations to turn against God in our hearts, even subtly. Scripture warns us not to fail as the children in the wilderness did and reveals how they were destroyed by their own iniquity.

To achieve this perspective, our prayer can be, "Lord help us to trust you as each wave of testing comes. Help us to know that what is happening is not your anger toward us, but to see that if you were really angry, we would really know it. Help us to see through these trials and catch the glimpse of Your Glory. Help us to be good and honor You, in spite of all we must face. Help us to know You."

Our answered prayer is "God is gracious. Each time we have gone through trials and tribulations, we have gotten stronger. His grace allows us to see beyond our limitations and perceptions and helps us enter into His glorious presence as little children. For His children have experienced the spiritual salvation of the Lord and we will, by His grace, experience much more in either comfort or deliverance as we face temporal trials here on earth. We have everything we need, through Christ, who is God's ultimate provision."

My personal reflection is that I am no exception. My life has been relatively easy as an adult compared to what others have experienced. Some, who have heard of my life experiences, have wondered how I am as together as I am. Yet, as time passes, the trials fade, revealing only shadows, and are replaced with my God. Surely, I have walked through hardship, because I am a man. I can remember critical times and see God was faithful, whether or not I was. If I am honest, I can admit that some tests are more than I thought I could bear. They seemed difficult, and during them I did not always realize the true purpose of each one. Most of the time, the answers to difficult tests came much later. And the reason was because I had not captured God's nature and intent, or fully apprehended the life of Christ.

In holy relationship, though, I would venture to say that the answers do come with heavenly and

earthly reward. And by the grace of God, they produce wisdom and discernment. There will continue to be tests that we cannot escape. We also cannot escape from God's plan. We need to stay in His camp and get as spiritually close to His cloud of Glory and His Son as His provision allows. He knows where we are at.