


END-TIMES ISSUES



GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO
KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS.
HE TELLS US TO **BE READY.**

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#79

Commandment #4 –
Learning from Manna (Part 3).

1

HOW DO YOU GET FROM HERE ...

WE BELIEVE IN SELF-RELIANCE!

WE DON'T HAVE TO DEPEND ON OTHERS!

WE CAN DO IT ON OUR OWN!

And eventually ...

WE DID IT! WE SUCCEEDED!

OUR SELF-RELIANCE PAID-OFF!

... TO HERE?

WE CAN'T DO IT ON OUR OWN!

WE NEED GOD! TOTALLY!

OR ELSE WE WILL COMPLETELY FAIL!

And eventually ...

GOD DID IT! HE BROUGHT US SUCCESS!

HE DID WHAT WE COULD NEVER DO!

2

MANNA was part of the transitioning process!

[The LORD] humbled you, and in your hunger He gave you **manna** to eat, ... so that you might understand that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 8:3 (BSB)

[The LORD] fed you in the wilderness with **manna** ... in order to humble you and test you, so that in the end He might cause you to prosper.

Deuteronomy 8:16 (BSB)

- The move from "self-sufficient pride" to "complete dependence on God" is not always an easy path.
- *But without it, they would forget the source of the blessings they would later receive, when they were living in the promised land.*

You might say in your heart, "The power and strength of **my hands have made this wealth for me.**"

Deuteronomy 8:17 (BSB)

3

The "manna event" was specifically intended to show them their need for God.

- **It wasn't the *only* thing** God used to teach this, but it was a *major* thing, and the *first* thing. It set the direction that the rest would follow.
- **God provided:**
 - ✓ The "manna event," along with an explanation of its significance.
 - ✓ Other instructions, including the Fourth Commandment.
 - ✓ Activities and circumstances that would *prove to them* their need.
 - ✓ Testing, to see if they had learned the lesson.
- Along the way, **he demonstrated his ability to:**
 - ✓ Protect them.
 - ✓ Bless them (when their conduct made it possible, and often when they *shouldn't* have been blessed).
 - ✓ Punish them (as a last resort, when it was necessary).

4

DEUTERONOMY 8 – OUR NEED TO FOCUS ON GOD.

Since we live in a different context, there will be some differences. *But the principles remain the same.*

We have the SAME types of temptations that Israel had – both as individuals, and as a nation.*

We have the SAME temptation to take credit for blessings that God has provided – and to *not* remember their source.

We need to learn the SAME lessons that they needed to learn. We need to recognize our total dependence on God.

* Today, it seems that *all* nations ignore God; but Scripture *always* calls this an *evil* response. (It is *not* a "neutral" position.) In the past, some nations expressed at least a *superficial* loyalty to God. Though doing so couldn't change the hearts of the unsaved, it could at least restrain their sin.

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An overview of Deuteronomy 8:

- **The need** (v. 1).
 - ✓ The need to pay attention to God's commandments and to live by them. You cannot experience God's blessings* without doing so.
- **God's provision of lessons and experiences that would teach what was needed** (vs. 2-5).
 - ✓ He tested, led and disciplined the nation so that they could understand this need. (*We will come back to this, later.*)

- **A caution about blessings:** This is a complex issue. The blessings and prosperity that come from following the true God do not always occur immediately. [It takes time to prove that one's conduct is genuine and long-term. Because of this, the blessings (or judgments) often have a greater effect on *later* generations.] Furthermore, there are differences between the effects on *individuals* vs. *nations*. There are also *eternal* blessings vs. *temporal* blessings. (The concept of "judgment" is just as complex.)

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- **The right way to respond to God's teaching** (vs. 6-10).
 - ✓ The right response is to follow and obey the true God, and to thank him (= give him the credit for) the blessings.
- **Beware the consequences of not responding this way** (vs. 11-14).
 - ✓ If you *forget* God by not obeying him, you will begin to give *yourself* credit for those blessings, and will become lifted up with pride, forgetting that it was God who was the source of them.
- **Don't take credit for blessings you receive, because it is God who strengthens you and empowers you to prosper** (vs. 15-18).
 - ✓ God did the teaching/testing, in order that good might come to you.
 - ✓ Beware the temptation to take credit for what God has made possible!
- **Choosing to forget God will result in horrible consequences** (vs. 19-20).
 - ✓ Speaking to them as a *nation*: You will perish, *just like God makes other nations perish*. (Note: Scripture offers *future* hope to Israel; but it is because of promises made to their *ancestors*, not to them. Otherwise, there would be no hope for any future restoration.)

7

WHAT GOD DID TO TEACH THEM/US ABOUT OUR NEED FOR HIM.

Note the emphasis: **1) What God did**; and **2) Why he did it (= purpose)**.

Remember that these forty years the LORD your God **led you** all the way in the wilderness, so that He might **humble you** and **test you in order to know** what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep His commandments.

He **humbled you**, and in your hunger He **gave you** manna to eat, which neither you nor your fathers had known, **so that you might understand** that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Your clothing did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. So know in your heart that just as a man disciplines his son, so the LORD your God disciplines you.

Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, walking in His ways and fearing Him.

Deuteronomy 8:2-6 (BSB)

ALSO ...

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He **led** you through the vast and terrifying wilderness with its venomous snakes and scorpions, a thirsty and waterless land. He **brought you** water from the rock of flint. He **fed** you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers had not known, **in order to** humble you and test you, **so that in the end** He might cause you to prosper.

Deuteronomy 8:15-16 (BSB)

- In all this, *manna* had a significant – and 40-year long – role. But the various other things that occurred (the "context") were also important.

More about blessings/judgments and the time delay: This *time delay* between one's conduct (following or ignoring God's commands), and the blessings or judgments associated with it, means that consequences aren't fully seen *immediately*. *On the individual level*, the consequences of one's actions won't be *fully* seen until the final judgment. *On the national level*, this delay the reason that a nation that previously acknowledged God, but now has totally rejected him, may *for a while* continue to experience blessings from God.

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★ THE BIG ISSUE: WHO WILL YOU SERVE? ★

- The whole "exodus from Egypt" event was *more* than a movement of bodies from one geographical location to another. It involved the question of which God/god the people would serve.
- Being brought out of Egypt – *redeemed* from slavery and from Egypt's gods – *required a change in loyalty*.
- Because of this, Israel needed to recognize their *total* dependence on "the God of Israel," and to *live their lives based on that fact*.
 - ✓ A *refusal* to live this way was a rejection of both the true God and the blessings that come from following him.
 - ✓ This is no different than what God expects from us today: we must reject the world and its values, and determine to follow the God of the Bible.
- Israel's journey through the wilderness was intended to accomplish this – to develop their awareness of their *complete* need for God, as well as to prepare them for life in the land God had promised them.

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How do people develop an awareness of their need for God?

- Humans are, by nature, *sinners* who do not want to be dependent on the God of the Bible – at least no "dependence" that requires repentance, trust and obedience to that God.
 - ✓ People want blessings, prosperity and happiness. Most don't want the responsibility and obligations that come with these things.
 - ✓ This is like spitting in God's face, and then expecting him to say "Thank you," and shower you with rewards!
- Normally, the only hope is to be exposed to God's Word (which tells us about our need), and then to be put into a situation that forces us to decide whether or not to accept what God's Word has said – his instructions about *how* to deal with that need.
 - ✓ Even then, most people are too *proud* to turn to God. They need to be *humbled* and made willing to *admit* the truth, and to actually place their *trust* in the God they need.

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HERE ARE SOME OF THE SPECIFIC THINGS GOD DID FOR ISRAEL, IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS.

- Be aware that, even with all that God did, many *refused* to admit their need... and they died because of it.

They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink...

Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them, for **they were struck down in the wilderness**.

1 Corinthians 10:3-4a, 5 (BSB)

"Spiritual" means *God* provided it. "Spiritual food" refers to manna, and "spiritual drink" refers to water from the rock – Exodus 17.

- The big question is this: **Are we willing to learn from all of this?**

These things took place as **examples** to keep us from craving evil things as they did.

1 Corinthians 10:6 (BSB)

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1. GOD TOOK THEM TO A PLACE THAT WOULD "FORCE" THEM TO RECOGNIZE THEIR NEED.

Remember that these forty years **the LORD your God led you** all the way in the wilderness, ...

He led you through the vast and terrifying wilderness with its venomous snakes and scorpions, a thirsty and waterless land.

Deuteronomy 8:2a, 15a (BSB)

- **Many** would stubbornly *refuse* to recognize their need.
- **Many** would *claim* to need God; but their actual interest wasn't in God, but in *getting their needs met*. Their only reason for God was to get what they wanted – like a "tool" for reaching their goal.
- **Few** would cling to God because he was worthy of it, *whether or not he gave them what they needed*. To them, God was the greatest value in life.
 - ✓ These are the only ones who fully learned the lesson. (Perhaps some in the second group eventually got to this point.)

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... **God led you all the way ...**
He led you through the ... wilderness ...

Deuteronomy 8:2b, 15a (BSB)

- It is important to note that God *led* them. He didn't push them, or drop them off or abandon them there.
- Rather, he went ahead of them, and he did it *even when they didn't trust him*.

... **you did not trust the LORD your God, who went before you** on the journey, in the fire by night and in the cloud by day, to seek out a place for you to camp and to show you the road to travel.

Deuteronomy 1:32b-33 (BSB)

- He also led them *purposefully*. We might recoil at the idea of snakes, scorpions, lack of water, etc.; but these were part of what was needed to *teach* them about their *need* for God. (All they needed to do was to *trust* God to do what he promised, and they would be safe.)

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2. FOR THEM TO RECOGNIZE THEIR NEED FOR GOD, THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE TESTED. There would be several aspects to this testing.

- The *ultimate* goal was to cause them to prosper (in all of life, not just in wealth – the thing we often associate with "prosperity").

... in order to humble you and **test you, so that in the end He might cause you to prosper.**

Deuteronomy 8:16b (BSB)

- For this to happen, they would have to pass the test – i.e., they would have to recognize their need for God, and respond appropriately. *Those who hardened their hearts* (refusing to learn the lesson) *would end up perishing in the wilderness*.

- ✓ We should *learn* from the example of such people, and *do the opposite!*

... **do not harden your hearts,** as you did in the rebellion, in the day of **testing** in the wilderness ...

Hebrews 3:8 (BSB); see vs. 7-11.

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- Testing would also *prove* what was in their hearts – i.e., whether or not they were willing to obey God.

... so that He might humble you and **test you in order to know what was in your heart,*** whether or not you would keep His commandments.

Deuteronomy 8:2b (BSB)

- ✓ This type of testing requires *more than* mere verbal assent to a fact statement. People can do this much *without* letting the fact have any effect on their hearts, minds or conduct.
- ✓ To *truly* pass the test requires *living by* the fact. It requires being put into situations where the fact has to be *applied*.
- ✓ During such tests, many other things may be happening. Here, humility and discipline were part of it. God uses *all* such things to accomplish his *good* purposes in those who are willing to learn.

* In terms of God's *sovereignty*, he already knew the outcome of the testing. But in terms of God's *interaction with humans* (on *our* level), one's response to the test would determine how God would respond.

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3. THIS TESTING WOULD INCLUDE DISCIPLINE, AS NEEDED.

So know in your heart that just as a man **disciplines** his son, so the LORD your God **disciplines** you.

Deuteronomy 8:5 (BSB)

- When people hear the word "discipline," they often think of "punishment." This may be part of it; but discipline includes much more than that!
- The above passage indicates that God treats us as his *children*. We need to remember this, and have the attitude that is expressed in both Hebrews and Proverbs:

"My son, do not take lightly the **discipline** of the Lord, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you.

For the Lord **disciplines** the one He loves, and He chastises every son He receives."

Hebrews 12:5b-6 (BSB); quoting Proverbs 3:11-12.

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- To benefit from this discipline, we need to apply *God's Word* to our life's circumstances. Doing so allows the following to happen:

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for **instruction**, for **conviction**, for **correction**, and for **training** in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 (BSB)

- **Physical blessings:** Israel, as a *nation*, included unsaved people. Those who did not openly rebel (and get destroyed) might experience some aspects of this discipline, and might experience some of the blessings that came from it. But any such benefit would be *only temporary*, ending at death.
- **Spiritual blessings:** The spiritual aspect that was intended to be part of their *redemption* from Egypt would be experienced only by those who were willing to *learn* what this testing intended to accomplish.
- God also disciplines us, as New Testament believers. Through this, we also can experience spiritual (and sometimes physical) blessings!

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4. THIS TESTING WAS ASSOCIATED WITH HUMILITY. Without this, they would be *incapable* of reaching the *necessary* goal of recognizing their need for God.

... the LORD your God led you ... in the wilderness, so that He might **humble** you and test you ...

He **humbled** you, and in your hunger He gave you manna to eat, ...

He fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers had not known, in order to **humble** you and test you ...

Deuteronomy 8:2b, 3a, 16a (BSB)

- There are different types of humility. Here, it indicates the recognition that *we can't survive without God and his provisions*. Pride and self-sufficiency need to be destroyed!
- The focus was on *more than* "I need you to give me something to eat." This provision of *physical food* was intended to be a "springboard," to lead them to an awareness of their *spiritual* need for God (= an even *greater* expression of humility).

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He **humbled** you, and in your hunger He gave you manna to eat, ...

He fed you ... in order to **humble** you and test you ...

Deuteronomy 8:3a, 16a (BSB)

- It seems that humility was to occur at two points here:
 - ✓ **Short-term:** "I need God! I can't make it on my own: I will starve to death, if God doesn't provide!"
 - ✓ **Long-term:** "I need God! I need to live by *everything* he says, or I won't survive!"
- Teaching the long-term goal began with the "manna event"; and it would continue throughout their journey to the promised land.
 - ✓ The "manna event" would introduce the Sabbath concept. The requirements for collecting and using the manna would *force* them to cooperate! Additional teaching and discipline would come later. As the people reflected on all these things, they would learn a very important principle...

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- There is a long-term goal that humility is intended to accomplish:

He humbled you, and in your hunger He gave you manna to eat, which neither you nor your fathers had known, **so that you might understand that man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.**

Deuteronomy 8:3 (BSB)

- How important was this lesson that began with the introduction of manna? Important enough that *Jesus* not only quoted this verse, but he *based his life on it*.
- When the devil tried to tempt/test Jesus, Jesus responded by referring back to what the "manna event" taught!

But Jesus answered, "It is written:

'Man shall not live on **bread** alone, but on **every word that comes from the mouth of God.**'"

Matthew 4:4 (BSB); see also Luke 4:4.

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5. IN ALL THIS TESTING, GOD PROVIDED EVERYTHING THEY NEEDED, AND WOULD CONTINUE TO DO SO. They were never without the things they needed, other than during the *temporary* moments required for the testing.

- He *led* them in the journey (as we have already seen). He also *provided* for their daily needs. Examples:

... in your hunger He gave you **manna** to eat, ...

Your **clothing** did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years.

He brought you **water** from the rock of flint.

Deuteronomy 8:3b, 4, 15b (BSB)

A note about "clothes not wearing out": God could accomplish this *provisionally*, instead of by direct intervention. The people had flocks and herds; and the wilderness contained plant materials. (It lacked food that *people* could eat, and in some places, water.) God provided plenty of materials for *making* clothes... and they had plenty of time to do so!

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6. THE END RESULT. As they were about to enter the promised land, Moses could tell them:

Indeed, the **LORD your God has blessed you** in all the work of your hands. **He has watched over your journey** through this vast wilderness. **The LORD your God has been with you** these forty years, and **you have lacked nothing.**

Deuteronomy 2:7 (BSB)

- All this was linked to their *need* for God. Without him, none of this would have happened. In the wilderness, without God, they would have died, lacking *everything*.
- But learning this was a *process*. those who were willing could *learn* even from their past failures. They could *grow* in their awareness of their need (and how the Sabbath-concepts would satisfy that need). They would be able to trust God for the future, whatever the future might bring. They could *trust* God to do what he had already promised he would do.
- But those who were proud and rebellious would die along the way.

23

Our Mission: SELF-EXAMINATION

What have you truly learned? To what extent do you want to learn?
(The way you *respond* to your "claimed" answer reveals your "real" answer.)

By now, if someone asks us if people need God, we all know that the "correct" answer is "YES!"

But is the way you live based on that answer?

CONSIDER:

How much of your time do you dedicate to focusing on God and his Word?

OR...

How much of *God's* time do you give to focusing on yourself, your plans and your interests?

24

THE IMPORTANCE OF TESTING

First, some basic concepts:

- Be aware that different things may be implied in different contexts.
 - ✓ It may be a *temptation*, especially if done by the devil. (In such passages, the word is sometimes translated as "tempt.")
 - ✓ It may imply the *examining* or *proving* of one's character or ability, or *finding out* the disposition or inclination of one's heart.
 - ✓ It may refer to *evaluating* something as being good or evil.
- The reason for the testing will determine whether the test itself is good or evil.
- Testing is something that is done to people and things that have the potential of imperfection or failure, or even the potential for change and improvement.
 - ✓ *It does not apply to God*, who, by nature, *cannot* fail, change or improve. When we choose to test God, it is like questioning (or attacking) his very nature.

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An overview of the "testing" concept: (These examples illustrate the wide range of concepts found in Scripture. Much more could be said.)

- **The sin of testing God.**
 - ✓ Israel tested God on many occasions – questioning his ability and willingness to do what he had promised (Exodus 17:2, 7; Numbers 14:22; mentioned several times in the Psalms; Hebrews 3:9).
 - ✓ The religious leaders often tested Jesus. Sometimes, it may have been a legitimate attempt to find out who he was; but usually it was hypocritical, and actually an attempt to find fault with Jesus.
 - ✓ *Don't do it* (Deuteronomy 6:16; Matthew 4:7; Luke 4:12; 1 Corinthians 10:9).
- ✓ When *Gideon* tested God, it was a different issue. It wasn't a question of God's character or ability. Gideon was *willing* to obey God, but needed to confirm that his understanding of what God called him to do was correct (Judges 6:39). After all, it would affect the fate of the entire nation!

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- **God tests people and nations.** When he does so, it is for a good purpose. The ultimate goal is our good; but along the way, there may be testing to build character, or in some cases, to reveal the evil that is lurking in our hearts.
 - ✓ God tested the nation Israel; using manna to test their obedience; to evaluate their hearts; and ultimately, for their good (Exodus 15:25; 16:4; Deuteronomy 8:2, 16).
 - ✓ God tests people's hearts (1 Thessalonians 2:4); example: Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 32:31).
 - ✓ The entire world will someday be tested (Revelation 3:10).
- **Concerning those who fail the test.**
 - ✓ They have hardened hearts (Israel's example, Hebrews 3:8+).
 - ✓ Some are like the second type of soil, in the parable of the sower: They "believe" for a while (= they may seem to be saved); but eventually, when testing comes, they "fall away" (Luke 8:13). [These are "church-going fakes," as are those who *claim* to be "saved," yet aren't willing to forsake the world's influences.]

27

- **Being tested by the devil and his followers.** (This would include passages where the "test" words are translated as "tempt.") It includes temptation to sin, as well as his persecution and other attacks. In all of these, their goal is to get us to turn away from God.
- The devil's purpose is to *destroy*. But as for God's people, God uses the devil's (and his follower's) attacks to accomplish *good* in us.
 - ✓ We should not be surprised when trials come (1 Peter 4:12).
 - ✓ God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13 – here, translated as "tempt").
 - ✓ God has planned for us a glorious outcome (1 Peter 4:12+); a crown of life (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10); and even before then, perseverance (James 1:3).
- In O.T. Israel, God used false prophets and Canaanites to test Israel's loyalty to him (Deuteronomy 13:3; Judges 2:22; 30:1, 4). The people's reactions to these tests (not their verbal claims to follow God) would provide the answer.

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- **People testing people and things.** This may be done for evil reasons (see previous slide) or for good ones. Here are some good reasons:
 - ✓ Paul tested the Corinthians' obedience and love (2 Corinthians 2:9; 8:8). The Queen of Sheba tested King Solomon's wisdom (1 Kings 10:1; 2 Chronicles 9:1).
 - ✓ King Solomon tested various aspects of life, to find out what gave purpose and meaning to life (Ecclesiastes 2:1; 7:23; etc.).
 - ✓ We are told to test the spirits, to see if they are from God (1 John 4:1; Revelation 2:2). We are to test *all* things, and cling only to the good (1 Thessalonians 5:21).
- **What attitude should we have toward our own testing?**
 - ✓ Having a desire for God to test us (Psalm 26:2).
 - ✓ The need to test *ourselves* in various situations (Galatians 6:4); this includes testing to see if we are *saved* (2 Corinthians 13:6).

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Have you learned?

THE ULTIMATE ISSUE:

... whether or not you would keep His commandments.

WHAT THE "MANNA EVENT" WOULD TEACH:

...man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD.

Deuteronomy 8:2b, 3b (BSB)

Credits

SCRIPTURE

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