

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Tempting God

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The inspired writer of Hebrews draws the Hebrew Christians back to what their fathers did to God in Israel's early existence. He reminds them of their wanderings in the wilderness as they left Egyptian bondage for the promised land: “*where your fathers tried me by proving me...*” (Hebrews 3:9). No one is to “*make trial*” or “*tempt*” the Lord our God (Deuteronomy 6:16, Matthew 4:6). The word “*trial*” denotes “*tempting*,” putting to the test, or “*proving*” God.

It is not that God cannot be proven. David exhorts all to “*Oh, taste and see that Jehovah is good...*” (Psalm 34:8). Peter encourages those who have “*tasted that the Lord is gracious*” to continue to grow in the word (1 Peter 2:2-3). By conforming to God's revelation and wisdom, we “*may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Romans 12:2). We can prove to ourselves and others by following God's way and tasting of God's blessings that God is gracious, and one worthy of our total commitment.

The making trial of, or the proving of God that is condemned by Moses and Jesus is

when one demands God to act in a certain way and a specific time.

For example, Paul reminds the Christian to not be like the Israelites who made “*trial of the Lord and perished by the serpents*” (1 Corinthians 10:9). This event is recorded in Numbers 21:4-6 when the Israelites journeyed from mount Hor and were “*discouraged*” (Numbers 21:4). They complained that “*there is no bread, and there is no water...*” (Numbers 21:5). They were not only manifesting a lack of confidence in God, but also putting down the provisions He was giving them. Notice they were saying in their complaint, “*...our soul loatheth this light bread*” (Numbers 21:5). The people were “*speaking against*” God questioning His plan for bringing them out of Egypt, accusing Him that such a plan meant certain death in the wilderness (Numbers 21:5).

God was feeding them with manna from heaven, but they wanted bread after their own “*desire*” (Psalm 78:18). If they did not get what they wanted when they wanted it, and in the way they wanted it, then God's faithfulness was in question.

Why did Jesus respond with the demand to not make trial of God when tempted of the Devil (Matthew 4:7)? It was not that the Devil was failing to refer to Scripture, but that he was determining the circumstances for the passage to be fulfilled. He demanded Jesus cast Himself towards the ground from the high pinnacle of the temple (Matthew 4:5). Psalm 91:11-12 is the promise of God's faithfulness for protecting the Israelites from harm as they followed the ways of Jehovah, not by defying the laws of gravity, deliberately placing oneself in danger. Implicit in such a jump would be “*God, if you do not fulfill this passage in this circumstance that I have deliberately put you in, then you are not faithful to your word.*”

“*Tempting God*” often overlooks the provisions He is currently bestowing. Those putting God on trial for “*bread*” were being blessed with daily “*manna*” from heaven. “*Tempting God*,” we are often forgetful and are overlooking God's current expressions of faithfulness. God will be proven repeatedly in your walk of faith with Him, but He refuses a subpoena summons into your court room!