

DOCTRINE OF TESTING

I. Vocabulary.

A. Hebrew vocabulary.

1. בָּחַן (bachan), to search out, to examine, to try, prove or test something. Used of assaying a metal to determine its composition.
2. בֹּחָן (bochan), 1X, something which has been tested and evaluated thoroughly and determined to be of proven quality. Isa. 28:16
3. נָסַח (nasah), to smell or examine something by smelling, to try, test or prove something.

B. Greek vocabulary.

1. δοκιμάζω (dokimazo), 23X, to examine or scrutinize something, to test, try or prove whether something is genuine or not.
2. δοκίμιον (dokimion), 2X, that by which something is tested or proved, the means of testing something, the test itself.
3. δοκιμή (dokime), 7X, the process of proving or certifying something is what it should be.
4. δόκιμος (dokimos), 7X, an object that has been tested and found to be genuine, reliable, trustworthy or valuable. Something that has gained approval following careful examination.

II. Definition.

- A. The process of testing something is the method employed to examine or scrutinize an object or person via any number of means for the purpose of determining the genuineness, authenticity and/or value of the object or person being tested.
- B. While it may not always be overtly evident, testing is the process that makes plain the true nature or character of something or someone.
- C. Testing must be distinguished from temptation, which is the overt solicitation to do wrong or evil.
- D. Temptation always implies an evil intent, whereas testing implies more of a neutral intention.
- E. Temptation is designed to be harmful, to cause one to pursue something that is not in their best interest, while testing is simply designed to obtain information about something.
- F. God, therefore, tests men, not because He lacks information but to make what is true manifest; God never tempts anyone. James 1:13
- G. Temptation arises when the lust pattern of the old sin nature is incited by something it desires in the cosmos, provoking the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the boastful pride of life. James 1:14; IJn. 2:15-17
- H. All temptations fall under the category of testing, but all testing is not necessarily temptation.

- III. Various forms or categories of testing.
- A. Man may test or evaluate any number of things.
1. Stones. Isa. 28:16
 2. Metals. Zech. 13:9
 3. The truth of what he hears. Job 12:11
 4. The value of what he eats. Job 12:11
 5. Weather conditions. Lk. 12:56
 6. Animals. Lk. 14:19
 7. The conditions of history so as to ascertain the spiritual condition of a nation or the direction in which history is headed. Lk. 12:56
 8. The truth of God's word and plan. Rom. 2:18, 12:2
 9. The spirits, those that come with information, claiming to represent God's plan. IJn. 4:1 cf. IThess. 5:21
- B. Men may test other men.
1. The Queen of Sheba tested Solomon. IKings 10:1
 2. Jesus tested Philip. Jn. 6:6
 3. Paul tested those under his charge. IICor. 8:22
 4. Deacons are to be tested before they assume the office. ITim. 3:10
 5. Believers are to test themselves before they participate in the Lord's Table. ICor. 11:28
 6. Believers are to evaluate their own Ph₂ applications. Gal. 6:4
- C. God can and does test man.
1. God obviously does not test man in order to acquire knowledge; omniscience applied. Job 11:11; Ps. 94:11; Isa. 46:9-10
 2. God tests the positive believer as well as the negative unbeliever, determining future blessing or cursing. Ps. 11:4-7
 3. God tests the believer to make manifest whether or not they intend to obey Him. Ex. 16:4; Deut. 8:2, 13:1-3
 4. God allows evil men to come into the periphery of believers and espouse their false doctrine in order to demonstrate the depth of that believer's love for God. Deut. 13:3
 5. Testing is designed by God to get the believer to focus on the truly important issues of life and prioritize accordingly. Deut. 8:3
 6. This type of testing teaches us not only to rely on God's grace, but serves as a means of demonstrating his goodness and greatness. Deut. 8:3,15-18
 7. The ultimate test of mankind by God will occur during the final seven years of Daniel's 70th week. Rev. 3:10
- D. Man can test God, although the Word of God does not ever view this as a positive thing.
1. God, who is perfect and immutable, cannot truly be tested by man; this is an anthropopathism.
 2. Men test God when they refuse to believe what He says, thus calling God a liar and slandering the attribute of veracity. Num. 14:22; Heb. 3:9

3. The Exodus generation is the most notable example of believers testing God. Ps. 78; Heb. 3:7-19
 - a. They rejected the divine viewpoint. Ps. 78:10
 - b. They did not focus their attention on the work of God toward them in the past. Ps. 78:11-16
 - c. They rejected their living grace provision, opting instead for satisfying their fleshly appetite. Ps. 78:17-20
 - d. Failure to believe God under GAP is revealed to be the ultimate cause. Ps. 78:22
 - e. God continued to provide for them, demonstrating His goodness, but riddled them with Divine discipline. Ps. 78:23-31
 - f. Due to their failure to acclimate and continued insistence on testing God, they eventually died the sin unto death. Ps. 78:32-33
 - g. Their failure is ultimately rooted in the fact that they continued to embrace human viewpoint, even after they heard the truth. Heb. 3:16-19
4. One clear evidence that a believer is testing God is the constant whining and complaining about God's provision. Ex. 16:2-7, 17:2-7; Ps. 106:24-25
5. Lack of gratitude for what one has manifests a lack of contentment; this in turn suggests that God's provision is not good enough. ICor. 10:5-11
6. When a believer is not satisfied with his niche, spends his time blaming God for boredom or other factors in his niche he does not like, he is testing God. *Operation Scapegoat*
7. We will either believe God, orient to His word and our niche, or we will test God via unbelief. Heb. 3:11,19
8. Ananias and Sapphira are examples of two believers that tested God in the early part of the Church age. Acts 5:9
9. Legalism is another means that believers use to test God. Acts 15:10
10. Interestingly enough, there is one area in which God encourages men to test Him; the issue of giving and temporal prosperity. Mal. 3:10

IV. Kinds of testing

- A. Testing occurs in both the physical realm and in the spiritual realm. IICor. 11:23-29
- B. In the physical realm, testing may be classified as:
 1. The too much test. Ex. 14
 2. The too little test. Ex. 17:1-7
 3. The wrong kind test. Ex. 15:22
- C. While we recognize that there is some overlap between physical and spiritual testing, spiritual testing includes:
 1. Living grace tests; including issues related to your job, house, car, finances, etc. Mk. 4:19
 2. Persecution that comes on the positive believer from negative family, friends, co-workers, etc. Mk. 4:17; IPet. 4:12
 3. Various types of health tests, up to and including the death test. IICor. 4:16

4. Direct solicitation to evil. Matt. 4:1-10
5. The prosperity test. Gen. 22:2ff; Eccles. 2:1; ITim. 6:17-19
6. The four walls test, no social life; including testing relating to separation, dating, RM/RW, etc. Ps. 25:16, 68:6; Rom. 11:3; IITim. 4:16
7. The test of lupe that comes from those that are, or have gone negative. Rom. 9:2; ICor. 7:15-16; Phil. 3:18-19
8. The testing of others. Eph. 3:13; IThess. 3:3-4
9. The patience test. James 5:7-11

V. Testing and the Christian way of life.

- A. Believers should be put on notice very early that the Christian way of life is loaded with testing. Acts 14:21-23
- B. They should be informed that testing can come in almost any form and that it is not limited in one particular area. James 1:2; IPet. 1:6
- C. New believers should be told not to be shocked by the form or intensity of testing, recognizing that anything can happen. IThess. 3:3; IPet. 4:12
- D. Testing is designed to produce and enhance spiritual growth and is a necessary component for anyone that intends to make the maturity adjustment. Rom. 5:3-5; James 1:2-4
- E. Those that acclimate to testing and apply the appropriate doctrine(s) are promised SG₃ reward. Rom. 5:4; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10
- F. The formula each believer should memorize is:

Bible doctrine + Testing + Application = Divine good

- G. Through an understanding of God's word and faith in the same, we are able to see the value of our testing and keep things in perspective. Job 23:10; IPet. 4:13-16
- H. With any and every test that comes to us, God can and will provide sufficient grace so we may pass that test. ICor. 10:13; IICor. 12:9
 1. No one faces unique tests. ICor. 10:13
 2. You cannot be tested beyond your ability (it only seems that God does that), since God must have provided you the doctrine to pass that test.
- I. God is certainly aware of our testing and perfectly understands all that we experience. Heb. 2:17-18, 4:15-16

VI. Reasons that believers do not pass tests.

- A. Every test is passed or failed based on our orientation to Bible doctrine.
- B. Therefore, a breakdown at some point in the GAP system ultimately accounts for why believers fail tests.
- C. Failure to assemble to hear Bible doctrine consistently is not only a violation of God's word, it makes spiritual success impossible. Heb. 10:25; Hosea 4:6
- D. Failure to believe the doctrine taught by the pastor-teacher destines one for failure when he encounters a test. Heb. 3:12,19
- E. Failure to follow through and actually apply the doctrine resident in the inner man to the test is the final reason for failure. James 1:22-25, 2:14-26

- F. Therefore, we fail to successfully pass our tests due to some breakdown in our own thinking and never due to any lack of provision or failure on God's part.

VII. Testing and the local church.

- A. Every believer will come under testing at some point in the Christian way of life; this is unavoidable and the real question is the magnitude of the test.
- B. One major purpose for the organization called the local church is so believers have a human resource on which they can rely during periods of testing; we are to provide aid and support in the conflict. Gal. 6:2,10; Heb. 3:13
- C. When you fall under any kind of testing you have a right to privacy; but you also need to recognize that help may be available simply by sharing the details of your test with other positive believers around you.
- D. Other believers may be the very resource that God intends to use to provide aid or total deliverance from the test. IICor. 9:12
- E. Therefore, those that have repudiated the local church have cut themselves off from one of the single most important resources he has when under testing.
- F. The first thing every believer should do when he finds himself under testing is to immediately begin to pray about the matter. Heb. 4:16
- G. Believers should not seek to avoid those under testing but should learn to seek ways to apply toward those around them that are in need. Rom. 12:16; Tit. 3:14
- H. When seeking to encourage and support those under testing, do not resort to human viewpoint solutions; make certain that you are offering the divine viewpoint when attempting to help another believer. IICor. 1:3-4; IThess. 4:18
- I. The Bible speaks very specifically to the issue of believers under the living grace test.
 - 1. Each believer is responsible to have a legitimate job, not only to supply his own needs, but also to have the wherewithal to aid others that come under testing. Eph. 4:28
 - 2. When a believer suffers a living grace test, other believers are to rally to his aid. James 2:15-27; IJn. 3:17
 - 3. Failure to apply in this area when you have excess and enjoy luxuries while other positive believers around you are not able to meet their basic needs is shameful.
 - 4. The Word of God recognizes that certain believers are not candidates for living grace support. IIThess. 3:10-15
- J. The principle of **“do unto others..”** applies when seeking to determine how to apply toward other believers in the local church. IICor. 8:13-14, 9:6ff
- K. One major motivation factor that you cannot afford to overlook is the harvest of SG₃ that comes to those that make these types of applications. Gal. 6:7-9
- L. The enemy of these types of applications is the STA motivated selfishness and self-centeredness, something that is rampant in this period of history. Phil. 2:3-4,14; IITim. 3:2

VIII. Conclusions.

- A. Testing is a reality that will not change in the angelic conflict and believers must recognize that it is not something to be avoided.
- B. Testing comes in various forms, varying in intensity from the charge of the mosquito to the charge of the elephant.
- C. If we intend to pass our tests, advance spiritually, and glorify God in time, we must avail ourselves of the grace provisions of prayer, Bible doctrine, other believers, etc.
- D. We should be sensitive to one another and seek to be aware of the testing of others without being meddlesome or attempting to invade one another's privacy. IPet. 4:15
- E. When we become aware of a believer under testing, we should be willing to get under the test and help him bear his burden. Gal. 6:2
- F. This attitude and willingness most closely models the attitude of Jesus Christ. Phil. 2:5-8
- G. God is aware of our concern and aid for other believers and will reward such applications with great SG₃. Gal. 6:9
- H. The mature believer does not resent his tests but has come to recognize the necessity of testing and the value of such in the Christian way of life. Rom. 5:3; IICor. 12:9-10

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that at the revelation of His glory, you may be ecstatically happy.”

IPeter 4:12-13