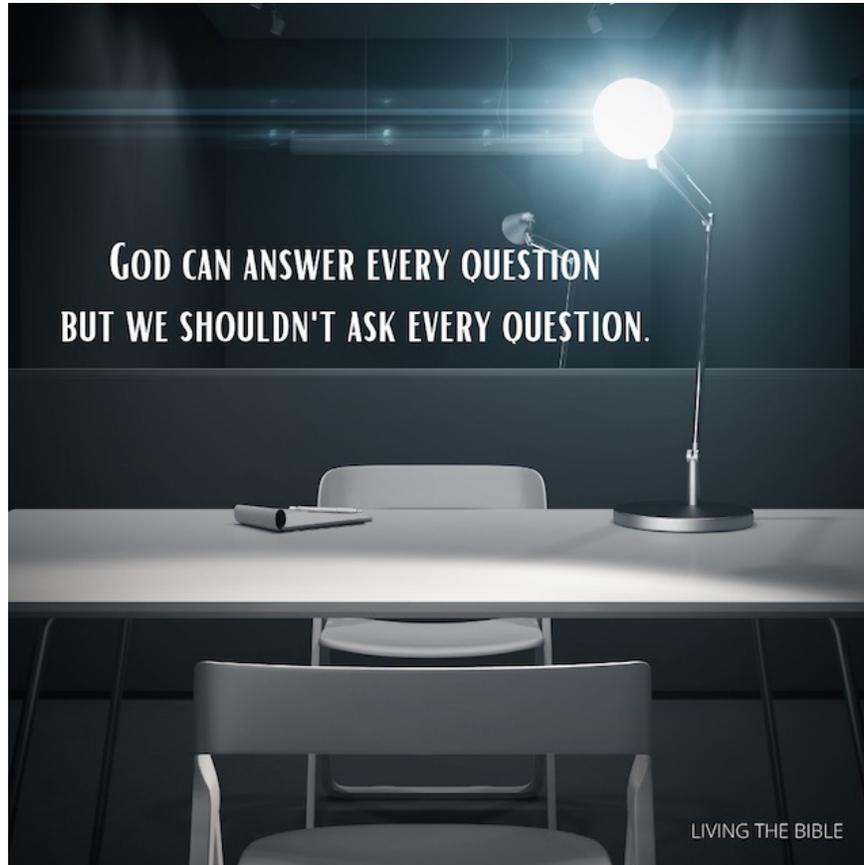


# GOD SITS AN EXAM

EXODUS 17:1-7



Imagine you're a teacher. You set a simple short exam of three questions. The whole class fails badly. The next day, the students come to you. You're expecting them to say, "We're really sorry, we're terrible students, but we're going to learn and study much better going forward." Instead, they say, "Teacher, sit down and take this exam we've all put together for you and let's see how you do." How would you feel? What would you say or do? I think I'd tear up their exam and throw them out the classroom. The cheek!

Yet that's what Israel did to God in Exodus 17:1-7. In the previous chapter, God tested Israel with three questions: Will you trust me? Will you rest in me? Will you remember me? They failed badly. In this chapter, believe it or not, Israel turns the tables, and tests God with two questions: Will you provide for us? Are you present with us? What daring and dangerous questions. How will God react to such an impudent challenge? Let's see, because I'm afraid we also can dare to test God in this way.

- **WE SOMETIMES TEST GOD (1-4, 7)**
- **GOD ALWAYS PASSES THE TEST (5-6)**

## LEARNING

### **WE SOMETIMES TEST GOD (1-4, 7)**

After some days walking in the wilderness, the Israelites camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" (1-2). Indeed they argued so violently with Moses that he cried to the Lord, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me." No wonder, later in the passage, we're told that he called the name of the place Massah (testing) and Meribah (quarreling) because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?" (7).

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Israel tested God's provision (Will you give us water?) and God's presence (Are you among us or not?).

GOD IS NOT TO BE TESTED  
BUT TRUSTED

So what's the result when we test God? Pass or fail?

### **GOD ALWAYS PASSES THE TEST (5-6)**

What would you do in these circumstances? Remember God has recently delivered the Israelites from Egyptian slavery, Egyptians soldiers, and the Red Sea. He'd also provided bread and quails from heaven. And yet Israel question his provision and his presence. Again, I ask, what would you do? I think I'd say, "I'm not answering your silly questions."

But God doesn't. He submits himself to the test and answers the question by providing water from a rock, and by standing with Moses as he did so. God said, **"Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink,"** And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel (6).

God answered the questions about his provision and his presence: I always provide and I'm always present.

GOD CAN ANSWER EVERY QUESTION  
BUT WE SHOULDN'T ASK EVERY QUESTION.

LOVING

We still test God today don't we? It looks different. We're surrounded by cars instead of camels, but we still question God's provision and presence. As we look back on our wilderness walk, we see many places named Massah and Meribah, many places we tested God and argued with God. Did God ever fail the test? No, he took the same test again and again and always got 100%. Maybe it's time we stopped testing him and arguing with him and instead just trusted him and agreed with him.

LIVING

Instead of testing God, trust him for his provision and presence in times of testing.

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