

## The Trial of Faith: Part III Deuteronomy 8:1-20

1. The Context of the Test (v. 1)
2. The Foil for the Future Test: The Desert Experience (vv. 2-5)

### God's Mystery Food (Exodus 16)

- a. What is this mystery food? מַן הוּא ( *mān hū* )
- b. In what ways was the manna test?
  - (1)
  - (2)
- c. Why did Aaron place an omer of it before the "Stipulations"?
- d. Why did YHWH treat Israel this way?
  - (1) To humble Israel
  - (2) To test Israel
  - (3) To expose the depth of Israel's commitment to him
- e. Who needed to know the depth of Israel's commitment?
  - (1)
  - (2)
  - (3)
  - (4)
- f. What was it that came from the mouth of YHWH?
  - (1) That "which comes from the mouth of God" is the word of God that nourishes the inner spiritual self, in contrast to physical food with which we feed the body.
  - (2) That "which comes from the mouth of God" is every provision decreed by YHWH, in contrast to that which one gains through human effort.
  - (3) That "which comes from the mouth of God" to be his revealed will, as represented by the Supreme Command and all the stipulations, decrees, and judgments.

3. The Nature of the Future Test (vv. 6-9)

a. The Logic of Verse 6

obedience → eating → satisfaction → blessing

b. Moses' Ode to "The Good Land" (vv. 7-9; cf. v. 10)

a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs,  
    flowing out in the valleys and hills,  
a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates,  
a land of olive trees and honey,  
a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing,  
a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper.

Whatever Moses' personal feelings about not being permitted to enter the land (3:23–26), his literary style rises to a new semi-poetic register, as he describes the Edenic world that awaits his people beyond the Jordan. This style of description is not the objective report of a surveyor who has personally explored the land, but the wistful dreaming of a man who has spent four decades fixated on the "home" that Yahweh had reserved for his people centuries earlier, but can only imagine what it must be like. No doubt his imagination was fed by the concrete evidence of the land's fertility that the scouts had brought back thirty-eight years earlier—the pomegranates, figs, and a single cluster of grapes so huge it had to be hung from a pole and carried by two men (Num. 13:23). And with time the memory idealizes and exaggerates the reality. Moses' description is idealized and idyllic; it is obvious he had never been there.

## The Trial of Faith: Part II

### The External Test of Covenant Commitment

### Deuteronomy 7:1-26

#### A. The Nature of the External Test (7:1-16)

1. The Context of the Test (vv. 1-2a)
2. The Elements of the Test (vv. 2b-5)
3. The Basis of the Test: The Gospel according to Moses! (vv. 6-8)
4. The Importance of the Test (vv. 9-15)
  - a. Its Theological Significance (vv. 9-10)
  - b. Its Ethical Significance (v. 11)
  - c. **Its Missional Significance (vv. 12-15)**

(1) Note the Conditions (v. 12)

(2) Note the Promise (the thesis statement; v. 13a)

(3) Note the anti-idolatry polemic (vv. 13b-16a)

- YHWH's Fertility Powers
- The Names for the Products:

"grain" (*dāgān*; cf. Dagon, Philistine god of grain; Judg 16:33; 1 Sam 8:1-12; *bn dgn* in Ugaritic texts)

"wine" (*tīrōš* instead of *yayin*; cf. Tirshu/Tirash, Canaanite god of gran)

"olive oil" (*yīshār* instead of *sJemen*; cf. Yīshar, supposed god of oil)

"increase of your cattle" (*šēgar ʾālāpēkā*, instead of *ʿēgel*; cf. the god Shaggar/Sheger, widely attested, perhaps the deity of the full moon)

"*ʿaštērōt šō ʾnēkā*, lit. "the ashtaroth of your flocks," instead of *kebes*, "lamb"

- The specific reference to fertility (v. 14)
- The reference to diseases (v. 15)
- Supremacy over the nations (v. 16a)

#### 5. The Concluding Challenge (v. 16b; cf. vv. 11-12a)

**Questions:**

**Is this advocating a new kind of fertility religion?**

**What forms does fertility religion take today?**

B. The Required Response to the External Test (vv. 17-26)

1. The Question (v. 17)

2. The Answer (vv. 18-26)

a. The Promise of Divine Support (vv. 18-24)

(1) Remember that God has been with you in the Past (vv. 18-19)

(2) Remember that God is with you in the Present (vv. 20-21)

(3) Remember that God will be with you in the Future (vv. 22-24)

b. The Warning against Spiritual Defection (vv. 25-26)