

“A FAITH THAT CAN’T BE TESTED ...”

James 1:2-5

Introduction:

1. Times of Testing Reveal the Character of Belief

A) Abraham

> What was Abraham asked to believe?

God’s promise and Abraham’s belief (Genesis 12:1-4)

> How real was Abraham’s belief?

But by abiding in God’s word Abraham proved his belief was genuine (Genesis 15:1-6)

Abraham’s belief, strengthened by abiding and enduring in God’s Word, would face a test of great magnitude (Genesis 22:1-2, 9-12; Hebrews 11:17-19)

B) The nation of Israel

> What was Israel asked to believe?

Their belief appeared to be weak or fading at times

But they continued to believe God and follow Him (Exodus 24:3-8)

And then, at the edge of the promised land, their beliefs were tested again

The confident belief of Caleb (Numbers 13:30)

The report of the 10 spies (Numbers 13:31-33)

The response of the Israelites (Numbers 14:1-4)

God reveals what happened in Hebrews 3:16-19)

C) A Significant Distinction

> Maybe a closer evaluation of the nature of true belief ... faith, would be helpful

Real belief involves three characteristics

Notitia – the intellectual aspect of faith, knowledge

Assensus – the emotional aspect of faith, assent – acknowledging the data is true

Fiducia – the volitional aspect of faith, trust

Israel believed, but they didn’t trust. Caleb believed and trusted.

Satan and the demonic host believe but they do not trust (James 2:19-20)

2. Some Tests that Reveal the Character of our Belief

A) Our attitude towards testing reveals the character of our belief

> Tests reveal what we value the most and values reveal our beliefs

“Our values determine our evaluations. If we value comfort more than character, then trials will upset us. If we value the material and physical more than the spiritual, we will not be able to “count it all joy!” If we live only for the present and forget the future, the trials will make us bitter, not better.”

Warren Wiersbe

> Our prayers during times of testing reveal what we value the most

Do they sound like the Lord’s Prayer?

Or do our prayers sound selfish (James 4:3)

B) God’s attitude towards us when we wander from abiding in His Word reveals the character of our belief (Hebrews 12:5-6)

> If you are not abiding in Christ and His word and there is no apparent consequence, take heed

God discipline His children (Hebrews 12:7-11)

His discipline can be severe (1 Corinthians 11:27-30)

QUESTION: Do you profess faith in Jesus Christ but are living a life of disobedience – seemingly without any repercussions? .

C) The world’s attitude toward us can also reveal something about the character of our belief (Luke 6:26; John 15:18-20; James 4:4)

> The intent of these verses is not to encourage obnoxious behavior

We are to love our neighbor as ourselves

We are to love our enemies and do good to those who despitefully use us

We are to represent Jesus Christ and proclaim a message of reconciliation

* Remember, when Jesus did that the world rose up and crucified Him.

The more we abide in Christ and His Word the world, who is at enmity with God, will be at enmity with us.