

A Tested People

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Introduction: How do we become the people of God? Am I part of His people?

- A. God will always bring forth His people through a series of tests. **(Zech 13:9)**
 - 1. These people heard the same preaching but only some believed. **(Acts 13:48; 14:1-2; 28:24-29)**
 - 2. There were 12 spies but only 2 claimed the land could be taken. **(Num 32:12)**
- B. Some doubt that the Bible could be God's word because of the different reactions men have to it.
 - 1. God told us ahead of time that only a few would find the truth. **(Mt 7:13-14)**
 - 2. By design God has given a message that would cause the proud to reject it and the humble to find it. **(1 Cor 1:22-29)**
- C. Jesus plainly stated that God's truth must be carefully pursued. **(Jn 7:17; Mt 13:10-15)**
 - 1. Potentially anyone can find the truth of God, but those who do will have to dig deep and not be easily discouraged by the tests God places before them.
 - 2. Do you have what it takes? Can you find the truth and keep the truth because you have a love for the truth?

I. The test of discovering who is Jesus of Nazareth?

- A. While God gave powerful evidence, there were many who did not believe in Jesus. **(Mt 16:13-16)**
 - 1. Jesus did not give men the kind of evidence they demanded but rather gave them sufficient evidence to believe. **(Jn 5:38-40)**
 - 2. When men demanded signs, Jesus gave them something else. **(Jn 2:18-22)**
 - 3. Consider the tests men had to pass in order to believe.
- B. The test of alleged contradictions
 - 1. How could Jesus be from Nazareth and still be the Messiah? **(Jn 1:45-46; Mic 5:2)**
 - 2. Did Jesus fulfill the prophecy? How would one come to know this?
 - 3. Those who are quick to turn away will never find God's truth!
- C. The test of knowledgeable, influential men. **(Jn 7:45-49)**
 - 1. These popular men did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - 2. How many stopped listening at the words of these men?
- D. The test of Jesus teaching and doing "hard" things.
 - 1. Jesus taught without apology in a way to drive off the shallow. **(Jn 6:61-69)**
 - 2. Jesus at times responded in a way that would have caused the sensitive to quit. **(Mt 15:22-28)**
 - 3. Blessed are those who persist and pass the test of truth.

II. The test of knowing how to be saved

- A. While God wants all men to be saved, one must search the scriptures to learn how to be saved. **(1 Tim 2:3-4)**
 - 1. Some are confused when they fail to find all requirements of salvation specifically listed in one verse.

2. There are very different views that are widely taught that require a careful serious study of God's word.
- B. As a result some will interpret a passage in a way to contradict others.
 1. Some interpret passages showing the necessity of faith in a way that contradicts passages teaching the necessity of baptism. **(Jn 3:16; Acts 2:38)**
 2. Others interpret salvation by grace in such a way to contradict other passages. **(Eph 2:8-9; Jn 6:28-29)**
- C. One must overcome the beliefs of influential men.

III. The test of our obedience

- A. Men who begin serving God will face additional tests of their faith.
 1. Abraham could plainly tell us that. **(Heb 11:17-19)**
 2. Abraham was tested and God proclaimed his grade! **(Gen 22:12)**

“I will welcome happiness, for it enlarges my heart; yet I will endure sadness, for it opens my soul. I will acknowledge rewards, for they are my due; yet I will welcome obstacles, for they are my challenge.”
- B. Jesus expects His disciples to follow all things He commands. **(Mt 28:20)**
 1. He made no exceptions to those who were required to make a great sacrifice. **(Mt 19:20-25)**
 2. That is a requirement of all who would be His disciple. **(Lk 14:33)**
- C. We are tested in our morals. **(Eph 5:3)**
 1. We must stand against those who are in adulterous marriages. **(Mt 19:9-10)**
 2. As God's people we are to be separate! **(Rev 18:4; 2 Cor 6:16-18)**
- D. We are tested as a local church. **(2 Cor 2:9)**
 1. We must not let one or two outspoken men cause us to pull back from obeying.
 2. While conflict may come, we will be faithful to God.
 3. Do not be dismayed when such tests come! We can pass it. **(Acts 15:1-2,22)**

IV. The test of faithfulness in trials

- A. God will allow various trials to come into our lives. **(1 Pt 1:6-7; Rev 2:10)**

“On preacher noted that when God permits his children to go through the furnace, he keeps his eye on the clock and his hand on the thermostat.”

 1. This is a test that will bring greater blessings when we pass it. **(Rom 5:3-5)**
 2. Do you glory in tribulations? **(Phil 1:29-30)**
- B. In these tests we must go back to the foundations of why we believe. **(1 Pt 3:15)**
 1. What did Jesus tell John the Baptist during his suffering? **(Mt 11:3-6)**
 2. We should not become offended at Christ because He allows certain things to come into our lives!

Conclusion: One day we will be God's people throughout eternity. **(Rev 21:3-4)**

- A. The response you give will determine if you will become part of God's people. **(1 Pt 2:4-8)**
 1. The unbeliever fights God. No man will win that battle.
 2. The believer will have Jesus as his foundation and builder.
- B. What is keeping you from fully following the Lord?