

Sunday — April 16, 2023

A Final Test

Exodus 15: 25 & 26 (NLT)

²⁵It was there at Marah that the LORD set before them the following decree as a standard to test their faithfulness to him. ²⁶He said, “If you will listen carefully to the voice of the LORD your God and do what is right in his sight, obeying his commands and keeping all his decrees, then I will not make you suffer any of the diseases I sent on the Egyptians; for I am the LORD who heals you.”

The LORD said to Moses, “Walk out in front of the people. Take your staff, the one you used when you struck the water of the Nile, and call some of the elders of Israel to join you. ⁶I will stand before you on the rock at Mount Sinai. Strike the rock, and water will come gushing out. Then the people will be able to drink.” So Moses struck the rock as he was told, and water gushed out as the elders looked on. ⁷Moses named the place Massah (which means “test”) and Meribah (which means “arguing”) because the people of Israel argued with Moses and tested the LORD by saying, “Is the LORD here with us or not?”

Exodus 7: 1 & 2 (ESV)

And the LORD said to Moses, “See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. ²You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land.

Exodus 19: 3 – 5 (NLT)

Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants of Israel:

⁴‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. ⁵Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, **you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me.** ⁶And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.’ This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.”

1. Judean Hills

2. 12 Tribes Territories

3. Terraced Farms

Micah 4: 4 & 5 (NLT)

Everyone will live in peace and prosperity, enjoying their own grapevines and fig trees, for there will be nothing to fear. The LORD of Heaven's Armies has made this promise! ⁵ Though the nations around us follow their idols, we will follow the LORD our God forever and ever.

4. Vineyards

Joel 3: 18 (NLT)

In that day the mountains will drip with sweet wine...

Deuteronomy 6: 10 – 13 (NLT)

*"The LORD your God will soon bring you into the land he swore to give you when he made a vow to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It is a land with large, prosperous cities that you did not build. ¹¹ The houses will be richly stocked with goods you did not produce. You will draw water from cisterns you did not dig, and you will eat from vineyards and olive trees you did not plant. When you have eaten your fill in this land, ¹² **be careful not to forget the LORD, who rescued you from slavery in the land of Egypt.** ¹³ You must fear the LORD your God and serve him. When you take an oath, you must use only his name. ¹⁴ **You must not worship any of the gods of neighboring nations,** ¹⁵ for the LORD your God, who lives among you, is a jealous God. His anger will flare up against you, and he will wipe you from the face of the earth. ¹⁶ You must not test the LORD your God as you did when you complained at Massah.*

5. Terraced Farm

Isaiah 5: 1 & 2 (NLT)

Now I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a rich and fertile hill. ² He plowed the land, cleared its stones, and planted it with the best vines. In the middle he built a watchtower and carved a winepress in the nearby rocks. Then he waited for a harvest of sweet grapes...

6 Vineyard with Watchtower

Isaiah 5: 3 & 4 (NLT)

Now, you people of Jerusalem and Judah, you judge between me and my vineyard. ⁴ What more could I have done for my vineyard that I have not already done? When I expected sweet grapes, why did my vineyard give me bitter grapes?

Isaiah 5: 7 (NLT)

The nation of Israel is the vineyard of the LORD of Heaven's Armies. The people of Judah are his pleasant garden. He expected a crop of justice, but instead he found oppression. He expected to find righteousness, but instead he heard cries of violence.