

Psalms 95:9-11

⁹ "When your fathers tested Me, They tried Me, though they had seen My work.
¹⁰ "For forty years I loathed *that* generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, And they do not know My ways. ¹¹ "Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest."

The number one mistake that the children of Israel made in the wilderness journey is that instead of allowing the Lord to test them; they continued to test Him. Consequently, they lost their opportunity to enter the Promised Land. Is this not the same pattern of rebellion, which is still keeping many of today's Christians from entering God's best? Nothing could be more disheartening, than to learn that you will not enter the rest of our God. What many Christians fail to realize, if not remember, is that there is no guarantee that anyone will automatically survive the wilderness. Unfortunately, many times a believer dies in the wilderness, and never experiences all that the Lord had in store for them on the other side. Some die due to unbelief, while others die because of sin. Still many die in their wilderness journey; because they refuse to recognize the season in which they are living. What would you think of a person who wears extreme winter clothing during the dog days of summer? What about the mindless person who wears shorts and a t-shirt in the dead of winter in New England? It doesn't take great wisdom or knowledge to recognize that people, who make such choices, are disengaged from reality, and that they lack discernment in their environment. This discernment can often mean the difference between life and death!

Friends, if we can recognize these blatant poor choices in the physical realm, then why can't we discern the spiritual realm? Could it be that we don't believe that real dangers of spiritual wilderness living exist? So we become angry and feel sorry for ourselves. We then make the most dangerous choices of all, when we start to blame God; because too many times it is there that our most rebellious hearts are exposed. Even though we often know the truth of God's Word, we become offended, and then we start to test and try our Lord. Many times we look at the trials and testing of this life, through the eyes of unbelief. We fail to see that our God is with us every step of the way! We want to quit, or crawl up into a fetal position because things are more difficult than we imagined. Rather than embracing all that our God is trying to teach us, we simply would rather give up. Often, all Satan has to do to knock someone off of the path that the Lord has for them is to simply make it a little bit difficult. For those who are more tenacious and mature, the tests often grow in ever increasing intensity. The end result is don't quit! Our Heavenly Father has promised not to put more on us than we can endure; so press in, and allow the Lord all of the latitude that He requires. Church, I am convinced that we need all of the "spiritual muscles" that we can get. This maturity comes at a cost; but as one of the great preachers of our time said, "I have never sacrificed for my Lord." What this man of God is not saying, is that he was never willing to sacrifice for the Lord; but that it was an honor to give the Lord anything He wanted, so it wasn't a sacrifice, but a joy! Can you say the same thing? Friends, we are facing some of the greatest days that mankind has ever been exposed to, and we need to allow the Lord to do whatever He asks in our life; so that we can not only survive these turbulent times, but that we can come through it victoriously. I exhort you to keep your eyes on the eternal prize that always satisfies!!