

Deuteronomy 6:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah.

Analysis

The prohibition 'Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted him in Massah' forbids testing God through demanding signs or doubting His promises. At Massah (Exodus 17:1-7), Israel demanded water, questioning whether God was among them. Tempting God manifests as: demanding proof beyond His Word, challenging His power or faithfulness, and presuming upon His grace. Jesus quotes this verse resisting Satan's temptation (Matthew 4:7), demonstrating proper trust in God's promises without demanding miraculous validation. Faith trusts God's Word; unbelief demands additional proof.

Historical Context

At Massah (meaning 'testing') and Meribah ('quarreling'), Israel's third month after Exodus, the people contended with Moses, demanding water and questioning God's presence (Exodus 17:1-7). Despite witnessing plagues, Red Sea crossing, and manna provision, they doubted. God commanded Moses to strike the rock, producing water. Yet the place remained named 'Massah' as perpetual warning against testing God. Psalm 95:7-11 references this incident, warning against hardened hearts.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does demanding signs or proof beyond God's revealed Word constitute 'tempting' God?
2. What does Jesus' use of this command when resisting Satan teach about trusting Scripture without requiring miraculous validation?

Interlinear Text

ל א נְטוּ�ת מ אַת יְהִי ה אֱלֹהִים מ
H3808 Ye shall not tempt H853 the LORD your God H834
H5254 H3068 H430

בְּמַסָּה: נְטוּ�ת מ
Ye shall not tempt him in Massah
H5254 H4532

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 17:7 (References Lord): And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?

Luke 4:12 (References God): And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

Matthew 4:7 (References God): Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

1 Corinthians 10:9 (Parallel theme): Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents.

Exodus 17:2 (References Lord): Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?

Numbers 20:13 (References Lord): This is the water of Meribah; because the children of Israel strove with the LORD, and he was sanctified in them.

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