

Can Our Heavenly Father Trust You with Eternity?

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A few years ago, I traveled to Monterrey, Mexico to conduct services there on the Sabbath. I flew United Express which has several direct flights per day between Houston and Monterrey. As I was boarding the plane, a very youthful looking pilot was at the door of the cockpit and welcomed the passengers aboard the plane. As he welcomed me aboard, and as we exchanged pleasantries, a fleeting thought crossed my mind, "Does he really know how to fly this plane?"

Whenever we fly, we put our total trust in the pilot, the co-pilot, the crew, the ground crew, the air traffic controllers and all others who are involved in preparing the plane for departure and for actually flying the plane during the flight. That's a significant trust. We place our very lives into their hands.

I remember when my daughter Erin was 15 years old, she had finished her driver's education course. I still remember the day that I let her drive my car to the grocery store. Part of the route to the store was on a 50-mph stretch of the Beltway 8 feeder road of the Sam Houston Tollway. This was the first time that Erin had driven on a very trafficked roadway at "high" speed. I remember sitting in the front passenger seat of my own car, realizing that I was not at all in control of the car. I had no steering wheel, or gas pedal, or even more important, no brake pedal. I had to put my total trust in her as she continued driving among the traffic on the feeder road. We arrived without any incident. She is actually a pretty good driver.

"Trust" is part of just about every action that we perform or experience, even in the mundane things in life. When we flip on a light switch, we trust that the light will go on. When we pass through an intersection on a green light, we trust that the other lights are all red, and so forth. Trust can be a part of the mundane and ordinary aspects of life, or it could be part of something much deeper.

At this moment, some of us may be undergoing significant trials. Maybe we're having severe health issues. Or severe issues at work. Or severe issues with certain relationships with others. Maybe we're getting to where we feel that we just can't keep going.

At many times in our lives, we come to a point where we have no other place or person to turn to except to our Heavenly Father. All other remedies have failed. There is no other relief in sight. At those deep dark moments, we surrender our will to God Our Father, and we trust Him that His will would be done and that He would see us through the crisis.

Today, brethren, I would like to address the topic of "trust". Normally, a sermon on trust would be along the lines of how we should trust our Heavenly Father, having faith in Him, being confident in trusting Him, and ways to increase our trust in Him. The topics

and offshoots of this subject of trusting our Heavenly Father are innumerable. These are very valuable and important topics. But that aspect of trust is not the topic of today's sermon.

Instead, this afternoon, I would like to ask a question that is one of the most important questions that we can ask ourselves. In a previous sermon entitled "What Is Our Motivation?", we explored the importance of having the right motivation for the right action: for having the right intent, for having the right heart, for having the right attitude, not having ulterior motives for doing the right action. The question that I pose today continues where the other sermon left off. This question cuts to the heart of why we are here, why we attend services each Sabbath, why we are living this way of life, why we treat others the way we treat them. This question cuts to the heart of whether we are simply living a lie in the way we live, whether we are truly committed to our Heavenly Father and to His way of life, whether His precious truth and His path are just a game that we are playing as a show to others.

But the question for today's sermon is not whether you will trust our Heavenly Father. Instead, today, I would like to turn the topic 180 degrees and ask the question "Can our Heavenly Father trust you?"

Today brethren, my sermon is entitled:

Can Our Heavenly Father Trust You with Eternity?

I would like to explore the topic of "trust" and discuss the critical question of whether God Our Father can indeed trust us with all eternity.

The word *Trust* is defined in Webster's Collegiate Dictionary as:

- (1) the assured reliance on another's integrity, veracity, and justice;
- (2) confidence;
- (3) assured anticipation.

Trust is one of the hardest things to build and one of the easiest to destroy. Years of building trust in someone can be completely eradicated in a moment by a wrong action, a wrong word, or a wrong decision.

The word in Hebrew translated as *trust* is "batakh" – Strong's #982 which means "to trust, to be confident, to be sure".

We can read many scriptures where God Our Father tells us that we need to learn to trust Him.

Psalm 25:1 *Unto You, O LORD, do I lift up my soul.
2) O my God, I trust in You: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me. (KJV)*

Psalm 37:3 *Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shall you dwell in the land, and verily you shall be fed.*

4) *Delight yourself also in the LORD; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

5) *Commit your way unto the LORD; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass.* (KJV)

Psalm 56:11 *In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.* (KJV)

Psalm 62:8 *Trust in Him at all times; you people, pour out your heart before Him: God is a refuge for us. Selah.* (KJV)

Psalm 115:11 *You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD: He is their help and their shield.* (KJV)

In Hebrews 13, we read about a very well-known promise from our Heavenly Father.

Hebrews 13:5 *Let your conversation [conduct] be without covetousness; and be content with such things as you have: for he hath said, I will never leave you, nor forsake you.*

6) *So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* (KJV)

The last part of verse 5 is a quote from Joshua 1:5, where Yehovah was telling Joshua that He would not fail nor forsake Joshua. So, the "He" in Hebrews 13:5 is God Our Father.

That is a promise that our Heavenly Father has made to us. He will never leave us; He will never forsake us. That is a promise we can trust in. God Our Father wants us to trust Him. He earnestly desires that our relationship with Him is so deep, so strong, and so special that we trust Him implicitly.

Again, having trust in our Heavenly Father is of paramount importance and we need to learn to totally trust Him and have trust in His wisdom, His timing, and His love for us. Our Heavenly Father and Jesus have perfect character. God Our Father has perfect love. He has perfect motivation and perfect intentions. He is perfectly dependable.

But the very purpose of our physical lives, the very reason why our Heavenly Father has called us to His truth in this lifetime is to test us, to see if we will obey Him, to see if we will choose Him and His way instead of our adversary, the devil, and his way, to see if our Heavenly Father can trust us. This life that we all lead is a testing ground for that all-important question -- Can our Heavenly Father trust us with eternity? He tests each of us in so many ways.

From the scriptures, we know a little of what happened with Lucifer and how he became the adversary, the devil. Lucifer was one of the main angels in the heavenly realm.

God Our Father trusted him. Lucifer's wings apparently covered our Heavenly Father's throne at one time in the distant past.

Ezekiel 28:12 *Thus says the Lord GOD [Adonai Yehovah]; You seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.*

13) *You have been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of your tabrets and of your pipes was prepared in you in the day that you were created.*

14) *You are the anointed cherub that covers; and I have set you so: you were upon the holy mountain of God; you have walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.*

15) *You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till iniquity was found in you.*

16) *By the multitude of your merchandise they have filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned: therefore I will cast you as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy you, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.*

17) *Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness: I will cast you to the ground, I will lay you before kings, that they may behold you. (KJV)*

Isaiah 14:12 *How you are fallen from heaven, O shining star, son of the morning! You have been thrown down to the earth, you who destroyed the nations of the world.*

13) *For you said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven and set my throne above God's stars. I will preside on the mountain of the gods far away in the north.*

14) *I will climb to the highest heavens and be like the Most High.'*

15) *Instead, you will be brought down to the place of the dead, down to its lowest depths. (NLT)*

Our Heavenly Father trusted that angel. He gave him great honor. He gave him great power. But that power, the lust for power, the pride of power, the lust for being something he could not be, destroyed him and caused him to sin. He became ha-satán (the adversary). The angel whom our Heavenly Father trusted became His adversary along with a third of all the angels. Angels are not divine Elohim Beings like God Our Father and Jesus are. They are created spiritual beings that God Our Father created to serve Him and later to serve humanity. They are ministering spirits. Apparently, the devil and his demons have permanently and irreparably warped their minds to where they cannot be salvaged. Ultimately, they will be destroyed.

So, God Our Father has a great wonderful plan of salvation that allows us as humans to have the incredible opportunity to have eternal life and to become spiritual sons of our Heavenly Father. This earth is a testing ground for us. God Our Father proves and tests us in this physical life so He can determine whether He can truly trust us. Before our Heavenly Father and Jesus ever give us eternal life, They have to know that once we

have the power to never sin, that we would always choose His way, that we would always obey, that we would never choose to sin. Not for a day, not for a week, not for a year, not for a billion years, not for a billion, quadrillion gazillion years. Never in eternity. Do we truly ever think about how much is at stake? What is God Our Father putting on the line for us? Do we truly realize the deep trust that He has to have in each of us in order to give us that much power and that much freedom for an eternity?

So, God Our Father proves us, He tests us and He tests us some more. He tests us again and again and again. God Our Father tested Israel for 40 years. He wanted to know if they would obey Him in their hearts and if He could trust them.

Deuteronomy 8:1 *All the commandments which I command you this day shall you observe to do, that you may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore unto your fathers.*

2) *And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you, and to prove you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments, or not. (KJV)*

Deuteronomy 13:3 *You shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proves you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.*

4) *You shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear Him, and keep His commandments, and obey His voice, and you shall serve Him, and cleave unto Him. (KJV)*

The overwhelming majority of the Israelites failed miserably in every test that our Heavenly Father gave them. In the end, He simply could not trust them and consequently, both the Kingdoms of Israel and Judah were ultimately invaded and conquered.

God Our Father proves each generation that He works with. After Joshua died, the Israelites once again sinned against Yehovah and did not obey His laws and commandments.

Judges 2:19 *And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they returned, and corrupted themselves more than their fathers, in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them; they ceased not from their own doings, nor from their stubborn way.*

20) *And the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and he said, Because that this people hath transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers, and have not hearkened unto my voice;*

21) *I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died:*

22) *That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the LORD to walk therein, as their fathers did keep it, or not.*

23) *Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out hastily; neither delivered He them into the hand of Joshua. (KJV)*

The Bible is full of stories of tests that our Heavenly Father gave to the men and women whom He chose throughout the centuries in order to find out if He could indeed trust them. One of the most famous examples of this testing was with Abraham. God Our Father tested Abraham in a powerful way.

Genesis 22:1 *Sometime later, God [ha Elohim – the God – the Mighty One – God Our Father] tested Abraham's faith. 'Abraham!' God called. 'Yes,' he replied. 'Here I am.'*

2) *'Take your son, your only son—yes, Isaac, whom you love so much—and go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.'*

3) *The next morning Abraham got up early. He saddled his donkey and took two of his servants with him, along with his son, Isaac. Then he chopped wood for a fire for a burnt offering and set out for the place God had told him about.*

4) *On the third day of their journey, Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance.*

5) *'Stay here with the donkey,' Abraham told the servants. 'The boy and I will travel a little farther. We will worship there, and then we will come right back.'*

6) *So Abraham placed the wood for the burnt offering on Isaac's shoulders, while he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them walked on together,*

7) *Isaac turned to Abraham and said, 'Father?' 'Yes, my son?' Abraham replied. 'We have the fire and the wood,' the boy said, "but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?"*

8) *'God will provide a sheep for the burnt offering, my son,' Abraham answered. And they both walked on together.*

9) *When they arrived at the place where God had told him to go, Abraham built an altar and arranged the wood on it. Then he tied his son, Isaac, and laid him on the altar on top of the wood.*

10) *And Abraham picked up the knife to kill his son as a sacrifice.*

11) *At that moment the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!' 'Yes,' Abraham replied. 'Here I am!'*

12) *'Don't lay a hand on the boy!' the angel said. 'Do not hurt him in any way, for now I know that you truly fear God. You have not withheld from me even your son, your only son. (NLT)*

God Our Father then knew that He could trust Abraham. Abraham would not even keep his son of promise from Yehovah. His devotion to obeying our Heavenly Father didn't waiver.

Another example of faith and trust is the story of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. Turn with me to Daniel 3. King Nebuchadnezzar had issued a decree that at the sound of certain music, everyone was to bow down to the new statue that he had made. Anyone who refused would be thrown into the fiery furnace. Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to obey King Nebuchadnezzar and to bow down to the statue. They knew it meant certain death, a painful death of being burned alive. But they did not waiver at all when they were confronted by King Nebuchadnezzar.

Daniel 3:16 *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego replied, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you.*

17) If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God whom we serve is able to save us. He will rescue us from your power, Your Majesty.

18) But even if he doesn't, we want to make it clear to you, Your Majesty, that we will never serve your gods or worship the gold statue you have set up.

19) Nebuchadnezzar was so furious with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego that his face became distorted with rage. He commanded that the furnace be heated seven times hotter than usual. (NLT)

We know the rest of the story. They are thrown into the fiery furnace, but God our Father miraculously protects them from harm, much to the amazement and incredulity of Nebuchadnezzar. The faith and trust in Yehovah that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had is the epitome of the righteous character that our Heavenly Father can trust.

Another example is the story of Daniel and the lions' den. King Darius had given a decree that no one could pray to any god or deity for thirty days or be thrown into the lions' den. What was Daniel's reaction to this life-threatening decree?

Daniel 6:10 *But when Daniel learned that the law had been signed, he went home and knelt down as usual in his upstairs room, with its windows open toward Jerusalem. He prayed three times a day, just as he had always done, giving thanks to his God. (NLT)*

Daniel knew the penalty. He knew the risks. But he was willing to "pay the price" in order to continue to obey and worship our Heavenly Father and Daniel was indeed caught worshipping Him.

Daniel 6:16 *So at last the king gave orders for Daniel to be arrested and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to him, 'May your God, whom you serve so faithfully, rescue you.'*

17) A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den. The king sealed the stone with his own royal seal and the seals of his nobles, so that no one could rescue Daniel.

18) Then the king returned to his palace and spent the night fasting. He refused his usual entertainment and couldn't sleep at all that night.

19) Very early the next morning, the king got up and hurried out to the lions' den.

20) When he got there, he called out in anguish, 'Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God, whom you serve so faithfully, able to rescue you from the lions?'

21) Daniel answered, 'Long live the king!'

22) My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.'

23) The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him, for he had trusted in his God. (NLT)

Again, even with the threat of an agonizing death by being eaten by hungry lions, Daniel's faith never wavered. His relationship with Yehovah and his prayer time with Him was more important than the threat of death. That is the faith and the attitude that God Our Father can trust.

Brethren, what is your fiery furnace? What is your lions' den? Maybe you are in the midst of a severe trial. Will our faith and trust in our Heavenly Father waiver with adversity? Our Heavenly Father tests us, and sometimes He tests us severely, to test our resolve and to see how deeply He can indeed trust us.

Hebrews 11 lists many of the patriarchs of old and the deep faith that they had in Yehovah. They are good examples of faith. But I want to start in verse 35.

Hebrews 11:35 *Women received their dead raised to life again and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:*

36) And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37) They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38) (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39) And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40) God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect. (KJV)

These nameless saints all showed to God Our Father that their faith was in Him and not in this life. With these severe trials, our Heavenly Father determined that He could trust them with a future life. God Our Father has called us out of this world. He has carefully and individually selected us out of the billions on this earth because He believes that we can be trusted with the truth, that we can be trusted with His Spirit, that we can be trusted in this present lifetime to faithfully serve Him and obey Him. In answering that call that our Heavenly Father has given to us, each one of us has had to count the costs for living this way of life. Jesus the Anointed One stated this in Luke 14.

Luke 14:25 *And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,*

26) If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27) And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sits not down first, and counts the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30) *Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (KJV)*

The Greek word for "hate" in verse 25 is miséo Strong's #3404 meaning "to love less in comparison".

So, God Our Father wants to know whether we will put Him first in our lives in all instances and in all circumstances. Nothing at any time in our lives should take a higher position than our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 16:24 *Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. 25) If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it. 26) And what do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul? Is anything worth more than your soul? (NLT)*

Is our Heavenly Father of primary importance in our lives? Does He always take the top spot in our internal decision-making process? Or do we relegate our Heavenly Father to a lower spot, placing pleasures or money or position or power or prestige or our own selfishness above Him in our lives? Jesus the Anointed One addressed this issue in Luke 9.

Luke 9:59 *He said to another person, 'Come, follow me.' The man agreed, but he said, 'Lord, first let me return home and bury my father.'*
60) *But Jesus told him, 'Let the spiritually dead bury their own dead! Your duty is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God.'*
61) *Another said, 'Yes, Lord, I will follow you, but first let me say good-bye to my family.'*
62) *But Jesus told him, 'Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God. (NLT)*

Once we start down this road of our relationship with our Heavenly Father, there is no turning back. Do we truly appreciate that we are all here worshipping God Our Father on His Sabbath because we have been called out of this world specifically and personally by Him? Our Heavenly Father has invited us to a relationship with Him, because He believes that He will be able to trust us.

Just as God Our Father tested Abraham and the patriarchs of old, just as He has tested all of His saints, He is testing us at this present time to see if He can ultimately trust us for an eternity. Brethren, we cannot hide anything from Him. He sees all that we do. But more importantly, our Heavenly Father sees our hearts. He sees our thoughts. He sees our intent.

In 1 Samuel 16 when God Our Father told Samuel to anoint a new king in Israel, He warned Samuel to look at the heart of the individual and not by outward appearance.

1 Samuel 16:1 *And the LORD said unto Samuel, How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel? Fill your horn with oil,*

and go, I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite: for I have provided me a king among his sons. (NLT)

Continuing in verse 6) ...

6) And it came to pass, when they were come, that he looked on Eliab, and said, Surely the LORD's anointed is before him.

7) But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart. (NLT)

Our Heavenly Father sees us the way we actually are, not the way we show to others, not the way that we may want to be. He sees the good, the bad and the ugly in each of us. So as I said earlier, this question of our Heavenly Father being able to trust us cuts to the heart of whether we are simply living a lie in the way we live, whether we are truly committed to God Our Father and to Jesus His Son, and to His way of life. Whether God Our Father's precious truth and His path are just a game that we are playing as a show to others. Do we yearn to hear our Heavenly Father's truth? Do we take advantage of every Sabbath to learn more of His way? Are we tired of hearing the truth about God Our Father, about Jesus the Anointed One, about Their plan of salvation, about our future in it, about our ultimate destiny? Is our Heavenly Father's truth becoming dull to us, unexciting, been-there-done-that?

How do we treat others? How do we treat each other here at Church? Is the love and the righteous character of God Our Father and Jesus the Anointed One exemplified in our actions and in the way we treat one another? Our Heavenly Father is studying each of us to see what truly is in our heart.

God Our Father wants to give us eternity. He wants us to have eternal life. God Our Father and Jesus Christ love us so much, and They want to give us eternal life so much that the Being who became Jesus was willing to come to this earth as a man and die a horrible death and that God Our Father was willing to watch and allow His only begotten Son to die that horrible death for us.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (KJV)*

Everlasting or eternal life is our Heavenly Father's goal for us. It is His desire and it is His will that all of us be saved and given eternal life and live forever as His spiritual sons and daughters and not just us, but all humanity.

1 Timothy 2:3 *This is good and pleases God our Savior,
4) who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth. (NLT)*

Brethren, it is the express desire by our Heavenly Father that all of humanity would be saved and given eternal life. But we must respond to His invitation. We must turn away

from our sins and repent and change from our evil ways and totally put on the righteous character of our Heavenly Father and of His Son.

God Our Father has laid the groundwork for our ultimate salvation and for the ultimate salvation of all mankind. But salvation is not a sure thing. He will not give us eternity; He will not give us eternal life; He will not allow us to live forever if He cannot trust us that we would never ever turn from Him.

Our Heavenly Father wanted to trust Adam and Eve. He placed them in a beautiful paradise, the Garden of Eden. But Adam and Eve sinned against Him. What happened?

Genesis 3:22 *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:*

23) *Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.*

24) *So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” (KJV)*

God Our Father placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and He opened the opportunity for them to partake of the Tree of Life. There was only one tree in the Garden of Eden that they were forbidden to eat of and that tree was not the Tree of Life. Yet, once Adam and Eve showed our Heavenly Father that they would not obey Him, that they would follow their own path in deciding good and evil, when they showed Him that they could not be trusted, our Heavenly Father drove them out of the Garden of Eden and barred their reentry. Why? Verse 22 told us the answer:

22) *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: (KJV)*

Adam and Eve were driven out of the Garden of Eden, specifically so that they could not eat of the Tree of Life and live forever. Why? Because God Our Father could no longer trust them with eternity.

We should actually include our Heavenly Father’s proving of us in our daily prayers to Him. David made this part of his prayer in Psalm 26.

Psalm 26:1 *Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in my integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore, I shall not slide.*

2) *Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. (KJV)*

Are we ready to pray this prayer that God Our Father would prove us and that He would test us to see what really is in the depths of our hearts? God Our Father proves us and chastens us as a good father does with his children.

Hebrews 12:3 *For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

4) *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

5) *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord [Kurios – without the definite article “the” – Yehovah – God Our Father], nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

6) *For whom the Lord [Yehovah – God Our Father] loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

7) *If ye endure chastening, God [ho theos – the God – God Our Father] dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

8) *But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

9) *Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? (NLT)*

Brethren, God Our Father has tested the saints and patriarchs in the past whether they would follow Him so that He would know if He could trust them with eternity. God Our Father is testing His saints now in this present age whether will follow Him so that He will know if He can trust us with eternity. He will test all of humanity at the end of the Millennium to see if humanity will follow Him so that He will know if He can trust them with eternity.

After the physical resurrections during the Millennium, humanity will finally have an opportunity to learn and live our Heavenly Father’s way of life. The world will be just like the Garden of Eden. Humanity will live the way that our Heavenly Father intended for mankind to live. But after living in a wonderful paradise of peace and prosperity and happiness during the Millennium, God Our Father still has to test humanity as to whether humanity will follow Him or not and whether He can trust them with eternity. This is the reason why our adversary, the devil and his demons will be released from the bottomless pit at the end of the thousand years.

Revelation 20:7 *And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,*

8) *And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.*

9) *And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. (KJV)*

Unfortunately, apparently billions will turn against our Heavenly Father and His way and will follow our adversary to go to battle against God Our Father and Jesus. God Our Father will defeat and annihilate those who rebel against Him and those whom He cannot trust.

Brethren, our inheritance, our ultimate goal in our physical existence, the reason why God Our Father has called each one of us is to have eternal life. The physical universe is a testament to the power, the majesty, the creativity and the awesomeness of God Our Father and of His Son, Jesus. The universe contains billions of galaxies with each galaxy containing billions of stars.

We live on Earth in the Solar System, which is located in one of the spiral arms of the Milky Way Galaxy. The Milky Way Galaxy has between 100 and 400 billion stars. In astronomical terms, distances are given in light-years, or the distance that light travels in one year. One light-year is nearly 5.88 trillion miles. The Milky Way Galaxy has a width of 100,000 to 120,000 light-years. So, our own galaxy has a width of around 650,000 trillion miles. Our human minds cannot fathom the vastness of space.

Our sun has a diameter of 865,000 miles. If the sun were the size of a golf ball, the Earth would be traveling in a circle 15 feet away from the golf ball. Pluto's orbit at the edge of the Solar System would be 600 feet away from the golf ball. The next closest star would be the triplet star system of Alpha Centauri A, Alpha Centauri B and Proxima Centauri which are approximately 4.3 light-years away. So, our nearest neighbor outside the Solar System would be 775 miles away from the golf ball. The size of the universe is mindboggling.

Fraser Cain, who is the publisher of *Universe Today*, wrote that there are more than 100 billion galaxies in the Universe – maybe as many as 500 billion. If you multiply stars by galaxies, at the low end, you get 10 billion trillion stars, or 10 sextillion stars in the known Universe – a 1 followed by 22 zeros. Write that number down with all the zeros. That's 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars. That's the low end of the estimate. The high end is 20 times higher. What is absolutely incredible is that God Our Father has counted them and has names for each of these 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars!

Psalm 147:4 *He counts the stars and calls them all by name.* (NLT)

It is estimated that approximately 80,000,000,000 people have lived on the earth. If every one of these 80,000,000,000 people inherit eternal life and are part of God's Kingdom, and each were given the same number of stars, every person would be given 125,000,000,000 stars. What would you do with 125,000,000,000 stars? It just boggles the mind.

Astronomers have found some elliptical galaxies which contain more than a trillion stars. And astronomers are now in agreement that the universe is expanding.

That universe in all of its awesome splendor and vastness is waiting for us. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 2. Our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus, have a wonderful, indescribable future awaiting mankind in His eternal Kingdom. We cannot begin to fathom what They have in store for us.

1 Corinthians 2:9 *But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God [ho theos – the God – God Our Father] hath prepared for them that love him. [Note Isaiah 64:4] (KJV)*

Just as the physical universe is continuing to expand, our Heavenly Father's spiritual Kingdom will continue to expand forevermore. We read about that eternal expansion in Isaiah 9.

Isaiah 9:7 *Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. (KJV)*

As incredible and vast and magnificent that the physical realm is that our Heavenly Father and Jesus have created, it cannot compare to what He has created in the spiritual realm that we have just never seen. Our Heavenly Father wants so much to share all of this with us for an eternity.

But He will not share this incredible wondrous realm with us if He cannot trust us. That trust can only be gained with time, with testing and with victory. That trust cannot be obtained instantly or at the last moment. The Godly character that our Heavenly Father wants in us, the character that we must have in order for Him to trust us, is not developed over night. We simply cannot put off developing righteous character until later in life or sometime in the future or at the last moment.

Brethren, let's examine ourselves to see,

where we truly are in our relationship with our Heavenly Father,

where we are in our relationships and treatment of others,

where we are in our desire to serve others instead of being served,

where we are in our desire to be selfless instead of selfish,

where we are in our desire to forgive instead of seeking revenge,

where we are in our desire to reconcile with one another instead of striving against one another, and,

where we are in our desire to please God Our Father instead of pleasing ourselves.

As we move forward from today, let us remember this important question. When we come to the many forks in the road of life of choosing the path of sin or the path of righteousness, let us ask ourselves this important question. When we are tempted to do wrong and to sin, let us ask ourselves this important question. When we are faced with

trial after trial after trial after trial, let us ask ourselves this important question. This question puts everything in our lives into perspective.

That all-encompassing question simply put is: "Can our Heavenly Father trust you with eternity?"