

# The Wilderness – Testing the Heart

This week marks the first days of Lent, a season of recollection and reflection rooted in the 40 days Jesus spent in the wilderness. *The Spirit immediately drove him out **into the wilderness**. He was **in the wilderness** forty days, **tempted** by Satan.* (Mark 1:12-13)

---



To understand this scripture an Old Testament symbol is helpful. The word “tempted” is more accurately translated as “tested” as in assaying a lump of ore. *Fire tests the purity of silver and gold, but the Lord **tests** the heart.*

(Proverbs 17:3)

*God said, “Now I have come down to pry them loose from the grip of Egypt, **get them out** of that country and **bring them to a good land with wide-open spaces.**”* (Exodus 3:7-8)



**NOTE THE DISSIMILARITY OF THE ROUTES!**

Along the Mediterranean coast Via Maris was the major expressway between Egypt and the Promised Land. However, the Lord instructed Moses to take a major detour. *The Israelites reached the western Sinai desert on the 15th day of the second month after leaving Egypt.* (Exodus 16:1)

# Why?

## THE QUESTION IS

*You must remember the entire trip that the Lord your God has led you through these 40 years in the wilderness. He was **testing** you. He wanted to know what is in your heart.* (Deuteronomy 8:2)

The first Adam disobeyed God's command. (1 Corinthians 15:45) The Spirit drove Jesus, the Second Adam, into the wilderness to assay his heart. *Jesus had to suffer **before he could LEARN what it really means to obey God.*** (Hebrews 5:8).

Lent is a time to intentionally enter the wilderness, making one's self available for a "heart exam." *"The heart is hopelessly dark and deceitful, a puzzle that no one can figure out. But I search the heart and examine the mind. I get to the heart of the human. I get to the root of things. I treat them as they really are, not as they pretend to be."* (Jeremiah 17:9)

*May I suggest that David's prayer is indispensable for one moving through the wilderness to the Cross.*

Search me [thoroughly], O God, and know my heart;

Test me and know my anxious thoughts;  
And see if there is any wicked *or* hurtful way in me,  
And lead me in the everlasting way.  
(Psalm 139:23-24)