

# Ten Temptations

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“Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it” (Num. 14:22-23)

**Learning grace** has two elements: God’s favor, and man’s need. Israel was dealt with in grace, despite their murmurings, etc., until they reached Sinai. God was showing them that He was sufficient to meet every need. But He also wanted to show them their need; so He proposed the Law (Exodus 19). The purpose of the Law is to expose man’s true moral condition, and produce a spirit of dependence. However, at Sinai, they arrogantly put themselves under law. As a result, God began to treat them differently.

**Ten Temptations.** We see this with the "*ten temptations*" (Num. 14:22) where Israel tempted Jehovah in the wilderness. Five were before Sinai, and five were after. The consequences of their failures after Sinai were far more severe than before. For example, compare Israel’s murmuring for food in Exodus 16 (before Sinai) with Numbers 11 (after Sinai). In Exodus 16, God gave them quail as well as manna without any reproof. But in Numbers 11, “*while it was yet in their mouths, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote them with a very great plague.*” The ten temptations are:

1. Not trusting the Lord at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:11-12)
2. Questioning the wisdom of the Lord (Ex. 15:24)
3. Asking for bread to fulfill their lusts (Ex. 16:2)
4. Gathering manna on the Sabbath day (Ex. 16:27-28)
5. Questioning the Lord's presence among them (Ex. 17:2)
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6. Worshiping the golden calf (Ex. 32:7-14) - *Three thousand slain by the tribe of Levi.*
7. Complaining against the Lord (Num. 11:1-3) - *The fire of Taberah broke out among them.*
8. Lusting after Egypt's foods (Num. 11:4-34) - *They were smitten with a very great plague.*
9. Criticizing Moses their leader (Num. 12:9) - *Miriam's leprosy.*
10. Despising the pleasant land (Num. 14:1-5) - *Sentenced to wander until death.*

But in the first phase it is grace that is the theme, not government. Each of the steps in this phase of the journey begins with a failure by the people, but results in a demonstration of the Lord's grace.