



SERIES: MY LIFE WITH GOD

Finding God's Blessings in the Wilderness

Life Reference: Exodus 13:17-22

Focus Verse:

"But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea: and the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 13:18).

Who of us has not at one time or other felt as though we were trudging our way through a wilderness. We felt empty, desolate, and lonely. Although not in a literal wasteland, we faced a bleakness of spirit.

The children of Israel were confronted with a true wilderness experience after their departure from Egypt. What on one hand was a place of great trial and testing also became a place of great miracles and blessing for them. The lessons they learned in the wilderness can help us should we walk through our own desert place. In a wilderness experience we learn more about God.

As God had promised Abraham hundreds of years before, the children of Israel's time in Egypt was now at an end. God had orchestrated events to provide for them during a great famine, but it was never His intent for Egypt to become their permanent home. With their possessions gathered around them, they



© 2008

Visit: www.moretolifetoday.com for Terms of Use



stood waiting to leave Egypt.

- ***"And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years . . . and afterward shall they come out with great substance" (Genesis 15:13-14).***

Their early years in Egypt were times of replenishment and favor. As the family of Joseph, who was second in command to Pharaoh, they enjoyed the best of the land. Their numbers grew and they prospered. Exodus 1:7 says that they were ". . . fruitful, and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them."

However, the good years did not last. Later, "a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" rose to power (Exodus 1:8). Observing their vast numbers, he feared their strength should they ever align themselves with the country's enemies. He determined that something must be done to weaken their power. Soon, their status changed, and the Israelites became slaves under the control of harsh taskmasters.

Life Reflection:

Have you ever experienced a time in your life when circumstances suddenly changed for worse?

What emotions did you feel? Did you struggle and ask God, "Why me?"

Were you able to trust that He had an ultimate plan for all that was happening to you?

Exodus 13:17 tells us that God intentionally led the Israelites into the wilderness. There was another route—a much shorter way—so why would He deliberately put them into such harsh surroundings? Was He unconcerned about the things that they would endure in the wilderness? Not at all. It was because of His love and concern that He directed them through the wilderness.



© 2008

Visit: www.moretolifetoday.com



- ***"... that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt."***

God knew that if the people encountered battles and became discouraged so quickly after leaving Egypt they might change their minds and turn back. What may have seemed harsh was instead a means of protection.

Life Reflection:

Read Romans 8:28. How do you think this verse relates to God sending the Israelites through the wilderness?

Have you had a time of difficulty in your life in which you later saw that God's hand had been upon the situation the entire time?

The wilderness was a place of wandering and waiting, but it was also a place of blessings and miracles. As we read through the account of the children of Israel's sojourn, we see that God's hand was with them. This time of wandering was also a time of learning to trust and obey the Lord.

Exodus 13:21-22

God led them with a pillar of cloud by day and gave them light by a pillar of fire by night. This was a visual assurance that He was always with them.

Exodus 14:19

The angel of God and the pillar of the cloud separated and protected them from the pursuing Egyptians. The Egyptians were in darkness, but the Israelites had light.

Exodus 14:21-31

God made a path through the sea for them to walk through. This path closed on the Egyptians, and they were drowned.



© 2008

Visit: www.moretolifetoday.com



Exodus 15:22-25

The bitter waters were made sweet so that they had a good water source.

Exodus 15:26

God promised that "I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am the LORD that healeth thee."

Exodus 16:4-18
Psalms 78:23-24

God provided manna for their food, what the Psalms call "the corn of heaven" and "angels' food." His blessings were evident each day when they gathered that day's provision.

Exodus 16:13

God sent quail to provide meat for them to eat.

Exodus 17:2-6
Psalms 78:15-16

When they had no water, God caused water to flow from a rock. The Psalms describe it as flowing like a river—sufficient for the needs of the vast multitude as well as their flocks and herds.

Exodus 17:9-13

God gave them victory over their enemies.

Exodus 19:2-20

God spoke to them from the mountain.

Life Reflection:

Have you experienced miracles and blessings even in the midst of great difficulties?

How did God demonstrate His love and faithfulness to you at such times?

Life Response:

There is a time and a place that God will lead each of us into a wilderness experience. We may not understand the reason, but it is all in His plan. When it





happens, He will use it for our good. Special things will happen in our lives that we cannot learn any other place. As a result of our experience, the wilderness becomes:

- **A Place of Cleansing and Purifying** — Our wilderness experience may be part of a purging or pruning process that God uses in our lives to make us more fruitful in our walk with Him. It will reveal to us areas of our lives that need cleansing and purifying. (Read II Corinthians 7:1; II Timothy 2:21; James 4:8; I John 3:3.)
- **A Place to Learn to Trust** — There are times when circumstances are outside our control, and we do not have the power to alter the situation. Our dependency must be upon God. "Give us **help** from trouble: for **vain is the help** of man" (Psalm 60:11). (Also read Psalm 37:3-5; Proverbs 3:5; Jeremiah 17:7; Nahum 1:7.)
- **A Place to Learn Obedience** — God gave the children of Israel a choice: "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse" (Deuteronomy 11:26). If they chose to obey His commandments, they would be blessed. If they chose to disobey, they would receive a curse instead. Obedience brings blessings into our lives, but like the Israelites, we have a choice. God honors us when we obey Him. (Read Exodus 19:5; Psalm 25:10; Proverbs 19:16; John 15:10-16.)
- **A Place to Find Victory** — Battles are won in the wilderness, but the strength is His, not ours. "The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (Exodus 14:14). (Also read Psalm 44:5; Romans 8:35-37; Revelation 21:7.)

At one time or another each of us has no doubt asked God, "Why?" We do not always understand the reason He allows certain things to come into our lives. We may even suggest to Him that it would have been better if He had done this . . . or that . . . or perhaps even another way. We try to control things and devise our own plans on how to get through our problem.

But God does not work like we work. With our limited vision, it is impossible for us to see all that He is doing, all of the pieces that He is weaving together to form a beautiful tapestry of our lives. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that "no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." Another version reads, "People cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end" (NLT). We see only a tiny part of the design in the tapestry. To us it may even seem just a lot of tangled threads. At the time, we are too close to the situation to have a true perspective.

When you are frustrated with the obstacles you are facing, when you really doubt that "all things work together for good," remember you are standing too close to the





tapestry to see the scene that is being woven. In time, God will reveal the beauty of what He is doing in your life.

My Prayer:

Lord, when You lead me into a wilderness experience, help me to learn the lessons that You have for me. Let it be a time of cleansing in my life of the things that hinder me from serving You wholeheartedly. Teach me to trust and obey You completely, and give me victory over the things that would defeat me. I claim the promises that You have for me when I learn to walk with You confidently and obediently.

More Life with God References:

Promises to Claim when Walking in Your Wilderness:

Psalm 34:18

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit"

Joshua 1:9

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

Philippians 4:19

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

II Corinthians 4:16-18 (NKJV)

"Therefore, we do not lose heart ... for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory ... For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Psalm 42:5 (NKJV)

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."

Deuteronomy 20:4

"For the LORD your God is he that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you."

II Timothy 1:7

"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

Bible Study Submitted by Mary Loudermilk



© 2008

Visit: www.moretolifetoday.com