

PARABLES

Bringing Hidden Things to Light

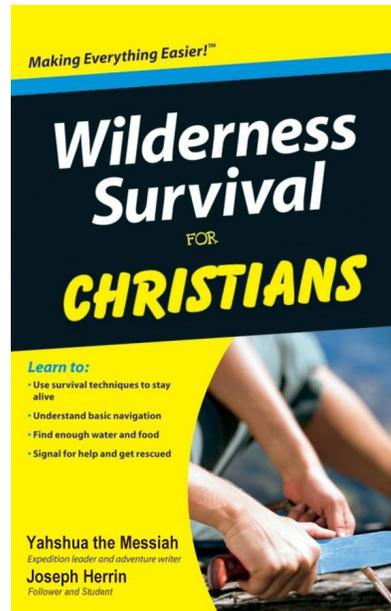


Psalms 78:2-4
I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 2.18.2

Series 2 of the Parables Bookshelf contains a variety of writings covering a wide range of topics related to the Kingdom of God. These writings originally appeared as posts on the Heart4God website, or the Parables Blog, both of which are the websites of Bible teacher Joseph Herrin.

Wilderness Survival For Christians



Wilderness Survival for Christians - Part Four

Joseph Herrin (04-09-2010)

Expectations

I have learned much from my own wilderness walk. I desire to share these things that I might lessen some of the agony that comes to people when they do not

understand what is happening to them. Oftentimes perplexity can lead people to despair for they may believe they have somehow gotten out of God's will and are on their own. To think such

a thing will rob the saint of peace and make it very difficult to continue on their way.

I have shared that in 1999 the Father brought me to a place of surrender to follow Him wherever He would lead. This was actually my moment of counting the cost of being a disciple of Christ and accepting it. I was immediately led into a wilderness walk. The narrow gate opened before me and the afflicted path to life greeted me.

The Father in-

Parables Newsletter

- Series 2.18.2
- *Wilderness Survival For Christians Parts 4-6*
- *Mayday!*
- Heart4God website (www.heart4god.ws)
- Parables Blog (www.parablesblog.blogspot.com)

Wilderness Survival For Christians

structed me to quit my job as a computer professional and to begin a ministry of writing. He said He would supply all of our needs. My way was made very difficult because I had false expectations of what that would mean. Yahshua has promised all His people that if they seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, His Father will supply all our needs (Matthew 6:33).

The immediate context of this passage in Matthew finds the Lord speaking of the birds of the air being fed daily by the Father, and the lilies of the field being clothed in raiment. These are the necessities of life, food and covering. The apostle Paul echoed this sentiment to Timothy, declaring that with these things we should be content.

I Timothy 6:7-8

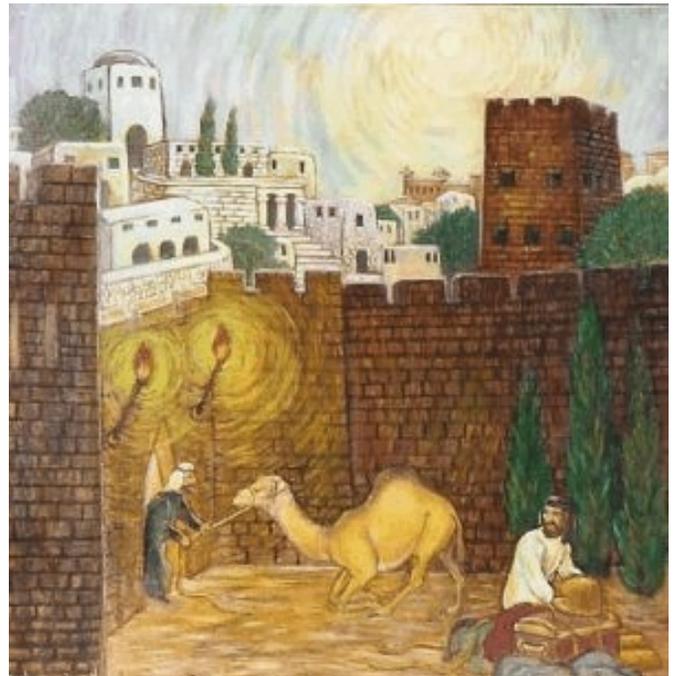
For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

When the Father led me through the narrow gate in 1999, I found that it was so narrow that I could not carry all of my worldly possessions with me. I have written elsewhere about the meaning of Christ's words concerning a camel going through the eye of a needle, but I believe it is appropriate to share it again here.

Matthew 19:23-24

"Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Many have misunderstood the message of Christ in these words, for they have mistakenly equated "the eye of a needle" with a sewing needle. Camels do not go through the eye of a sewing needle, so this makes little sense. In the days of Christ cities were surrounded by walls for protection against invading enemies. Gates were set in the walls to allow people and materials to come and go. These gates were closed at night and in times of danger, but it was still necessary to allow a limited flow of people in and out. Therefore, built into the large gates was a small door which could be opened to let a man in or out. This small door was called "the eye of the needle."



Camels at the time were used for transport of goods. They would be piled high with merchandise and goods to be traded. If a man came to the gates after they had been closed and needed to enter, it was possible to go through and take his camel along, but it was very difficult. The master of the camel would have to take all the merchandise off of the camel, and the camel would have to go through the gate on his knees.

Parables Bookshelf

This is a picture of how a rich man must enter the kingdom of heaven. Getting on one's knees speaks of humility, and removing all the goods from the camel's back speaks of the necessity of Christians being unburdened from their possessions.

Matthew 19:21-22

Yahshua said to him, "***If you wish to be perfect***, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieved; for he was one who owned much property.

The word rendered as "perfect" in this Scripture is the Greek word *teleios*. This Greek word means "perfect, mature, of full age." What Yahshua was telling this rich young ruler of the Jews is that if he wanted to come to maturity as a son of God, then he needed to free himself from his possessions which were making his life very comfortable and easy. He would then be free to follow Christ. Christ would lead this young man down an afflicted path, but it would lead to spiritual maturity. Holding onto his possessions, and clinging to his comfortable lifestyle, would hinder this man from coming to a perfect conformity to the image of Christ.

Most Christians think that the Lord's words to this young ruler were exceptional. They have been convinced by preachers of prosperity that this young man had an inordinate affection for the world's goods and therefore he was required to give them up. They are told that this example does not apply to them. What the saints have not understood is that the Lord is revealing a very general principle through these words, a principle with application to all

of the lives of Yahweh's sons and daughters. A life of material ease and comfort will hinder all men from coming to maturity in Christ. "The way is afflicted" which leads to life. Comfort and affliction are opposites. We cannot choose to live comfortable lives and expect to find the life of Christ revealed in us at the end of our journey. It will not happen.

I did not understand this in 1999. According to the Biblical definition of wealth, I was wealthy. So too are many who are reading this. Paul contrasts the person who is content with food and covering with the one who desires to get rich. This then must be our standard to understand what an inordinate desire for material things is. If we cannot be content with food and covering, but must have many other material things, then we are those who desire to be rich, and we risk falling into a snare and many hurtful desires.

Now, I am not saying that a Christian cannot have more than their daily bread and the clothes on their back. What the Scriptures teach is that if this is what the Father chooses for us, we must be content.



Wilderness Survival For Christians

When I was directing my way I naturally accumulated a great amount of the world's goods. I had a house, multiple vehicles, many furnishings, closets full of material goods, and a garage filled with the same. Many of the things I had were for entertainment, comfort, or ease. I anticipated that in following the Father that He would continue to supply me with the financial means to keep this mass of worldly goods.

Soon after quitting my job and entering a full-time ministry of writing, my money began to run out. I knew I had heard Yahweh correctly, for He had given me an abundance of affirmations that I was walking the path He had chosen for me. Yet my expectations were not met, and this led me to much inner wrestling. Perhaps the word terror would more accurately describe this period of my life. I did not understand what was happening, and great doubts began to assail my mind, as well as fears of being out on the street homeless with my wife and kids.

It became necessary to begin selling some of our accumulated possessions to have money for food and to pay the bills. So we had a garage sale.



The money would last us for a time, and then I would find that it was necessary to lighten the load some more. In God's sight I was still carrying way too much worldly baggage with me.



I found that I could not get past the narrow gate with all of these goods. The first thing the Father did upon my surrendering to Him was to begin stripping me of the baggage of this world. I believe this to be the pattern for a great many people who are brought to a place of counting the cost of following Christ. Christ traveled very lightly through this world. His focus was not upon material acquisition, or personal comfort, but upon doing the will of His Father.

When we read of the story of the rich young ruler, many Christians automatically think that the story does not describe them. They do not consider themselves rich in this world's goods. The Bible describes this young man as one who "owned much property." Does this not describe a majority of Christians today? Property is not merely real estate. It is every item that we purchase. It is all the things that fill our homes, our attics, our garages, and our storage rental buildings.

Parables Bookshelf

The reaction of this young man who came to Christ is the same as a great many Christians. If Christians today heard Yahshua speak to them, telling them to sell all they had and to them come and follow Him, most would go away greatly saddened. What the church has done instead is to change her doctrines. The church promotes the accumulation of goods. They have made the gate very wide and the path broad, but they are leading men and women to destruction.

Christ's first disciples testified that they had left all behind to follow Christ (Mark 10:28). They are not an exception. We find in the book of Acts that the Christians of that first church in Jerusalem began selling possessions and lands and bringing the money and depositing it at the apostles feet to be distributed to those in need. They did what Christ urged the rich young ruler to do. We see then that Christ's words were not an exception to be applied to one man who was inordinately wealthy. The entire church began to practice this disengagement from the world and its possessions.

Acts 4:32-35

And **the congregation** of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and **not one** of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own; but all things were common property to them...For there was not a needy person among them, **for all** who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales, and lay them at the apostles' feet; and they would be distributed to each, as any had need.

Notice the highlighted words. They reveal that what was done by the first Christians was a general work, not an exceptional one. Upon

surrendering to Christ, I too found this to be an immediate work of the Father. I believe the reason we see so little of this occurring today is that there have been very few saints who have yet counted the cost of following Christ. There are hardly any who have accepted the invitation of the Spirit to follow wherever He would lead and do whatever He would say. Men and women who are directed by their own souls are not naturally led to do those things that Christ directs His disciples to do.

People of God, my purpose in sharing these things is to prepare your heart to have correct expectations of what you will meet with when you surrender to be led of the Spirit. I was tremendously distressed, for I did not understand these things. My heart was filled with anxiety, but I submitted to the stripping of my worldly goods nonetheless. Each time I had a sale the Father cut deeper into those things I thought I needed to have, or desired to have. At the end of a year my wife and children and I found ourselves with a 28 foot motorhome and a small car in tow. We had clothes, and a few possessions which would fit into the motorhome. We also had freedom. We had no debt and no attachments to a specific place. We could go wherever the Father directed.



Freedom

Wilderness Survival For Christians

The Israelites who left Egypt to enter the wilderness had to leave many things behind. They could take only what they could carry, or what their few wagons could hold. They left homes in Goshen, and furnishings, and a great many things. Necessity dictated it. For forty years they dwelt in tents. The day came, however, when they took possession of Canaan. They received houses they did not build, and vineyards they did not plant. They became possessors of a land flowing with milk and honey.

We too are seeking to enter into the land of our inheritance. Our Savior has promised us that He goes to prepare a place for us. We will one day receive many glorious things, but on our journey to that destination we should travel very lightly through this world. We are aliens and strangers here. This is not our home.

These things I write are for that remnant of Yahweh's people who will surrender the direction of their lives to Him. I would that you would not be tormented by the perplexity I was met with when I began this journey. I am now accustomed to traveling light through this world, but the initial adjustment came as a shock. I would now have it no other way. What I once possessed actually possessed me. I had been in bondage to the material things I owned. Now my burden is light, for I am yoked to Christ and I am walking as He walked, and continues to walk.

Wilderness Survival for Christians - Part Five

Joseph Herrin (04-12-2010)

Counting the Cost of Your Journey

Surviving an arduous wilderness journey is made possible by doing the preliminary prep

work. The value of careful planning cannot be overestimated. Some things must be done BEFORE one enters the wilderness. What adventurer would set forth on a difficult trek without first calculating the cost and making sure he had available resources to properly outfit himself for the journey? Many have perished in the wilderness for lack of such planning.

Let me remind those reading this series that the wilderness experience of every Christian is a metaphor of the disciple's life. When we commit to following Christ we are to immediately leave all behind us, take up our cross, and follow Yahshua. This was symbolized on the night of the first Passover that Israel observed in Egypt.

The Israelites were commanded by Moses to eat the Passover meal in the following way.

Exodus 12:11

Now you shall eat it in this manner: with your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste - it is Yahweh's Passover.

It was not simply because the Israelites were going to depart Egypt that night that they were given these instructions. These things were recorded for **our** benefit. They were written for the ekklesia, the called out ones of Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah.

I Corinthians 10:11

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Parables Bookshelf



Passover Sketch by Rossetti

Why did Yahweh tell the Israelites to eat the Passover meal fully clothed, with sandals on their feet, and with staff in hand? It was because all who become partakers of Christ, the Passover Lamb, are to be ready to depart from this world system in haste. Having applied the blood of the Lamb to their lives for the remission of sin, having become a partaker of His Spirit, signified by taking the lamb into their body by eating it, they are to not tarry, but to immediately begin a life of being led by the Spirit of Christ.

Notice that Moses gave the Israelites these instructions BEFORE they ate the Passover supper. This corresponds to Christ telling all those who desired to be His disciples to FIRST count the cost. If they became His disciple they must be ready to follow Him immediately, and never turn back from following Him.

Luke 9:59-62

And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Permit me first to go and bury my father." But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." And another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." But Yahshua said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."



What do these words of Christ signify? Those who come to Christ must be ready to depart immediately from their former manner of life. They must forget the life they formerly lived. They are to embark on a new life, for they have become a new creature in Christ.

Philippians 3:13-15

Forgetting what lies behind and reaching for-

Wilderness Survival For Christians

ward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Yahshua. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude.

The disciple of Christ must be ready immediately to begin a new life, a new journey. Before they had their soul to guide them, but as Christ's disciple they must yield to the leading of the Spirit of Christ.

Romans 8:14

For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Christ's counsel to those who wanted to be His disciples seem cruel and unreasonable to the natural man. To not even be allowed to go bury one's father, or say good-bye to those at home appears unnecessarily harsh and demanding. Why the rush? Why cannot following Christ be put off for a brief season? Why must we enter into this relationship of discipleship fully girded for travel and with our staff in hand?

The one who would be Yahshua's disciple must be brought to understand that a radical change has occurred. Before they could choose their own way. If they wanted to tarry a while and enjoy the fellowship of natural relations, they were free to do so. But a Christian does not have this liberty.

I Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know... that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price...

A change of ownership has occurred. The disci-

ple of Christ is translated from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of Heaven. They are under a new Headship. To be a disciple of Christ, one must become like Christ.

John 5:30

"I can do nothing on My own initiative."

John 6:38

"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

John 8:28

Yahshua therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative..."

John 8:42

"For I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me."

People of God, to be Christ's disciple requires a **total** change of life. We must take upon the mind of Christ which was declared in these words. Yahshua lived ONLY to do the will of His Father. He did not live to please Himself. He saw all relationships in this world as secondary to that of His Father in Heaven. So too must all His disciples.

Luke 14:26

"If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple."

Certain things need to be settled in the mind of

Parables Bookshelf

those who would be Christ's disciples before they embark on their wilderness journey. Foremost is that discipleship requires complete submission to the will of Yahweh. Discipleship cannot be entered into by degrees.

This is why Christ told all who thought they wanted to be His disciple to **first** count the cost of what this commitment would mean to them. It was an all, or nothing, proposition. There could be nothing held back. If absolutely everything was not given over to God; family, friends, possessions, and one's own will, then the time would eventually come when they would find following Christ to be too costly and they would turn back. Having begun this journey, they would eventually realize that they could not finish. Only those who surrender all can finish this wilderness trek.

Luke 14:28-30

"For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not **first** sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'"

My own wrestling with this issue of surrender in 1999 lasted for weeks, for I knew what was at stake. What I was facing was the death of self-rule. I would be committing to doing whatever Yahweh required of me, and He could require absolutely everything. He had required that Abraham, His friend, lay even his cherished son on the altar to slay him.

I have watched people enter the wilderness, beginning to follow the leading of the Spirit, without first counting the cost, soberly appraising their willingness to yield everything to

Yahweh, and then accepting it. Instead they go along haltingly. At every new command of the Spirit they wrestle with whether they will pay this cost too. Having never committed to follow Christ to the point of death, they limp along painfully, and are tossed about as double-minded creatures.

Their way becomes very bitter, for they keep looking over their shoulder, thinking that if things get too difficult they can always go back. The temptation to flee the wilderness and seek an easier walk becomes a snare to them. Not having decided from the onset that there is no going back, the temptation remains as a constant nagging thorn in their mind.

We see that the majority of the Israelites had not counted the cost. If following Yahweh got too difficult, they had held onto "plan B." They could go skulking back to Egypt, and return to an existence that for all its bondage seemed to be easier to them.

Numbers 14:2-4

And all the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! And why is Yahweh bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

People of God, do not say you will follow Christ wherever He will lead you if you do not intend to keep your commitment. If there is any wavering in your heart, He will surely seek it out. He has promised to see you through to the

Wilderness Survival For Christians

journey's end. He will not fail you, but you can fail Him. If you commit to follow, you must hold fast your commitment, even if death be your lot. He has promised that you will suffer no eternal loss as long as you continue to trust and obey.

Hebrews 10:35-39

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

Your very soul is at stake. You can hold onto all the things of the world that you find comforting and necessary, but in the end you will forfeit your own soul.

Mark 8:35-36

"For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul?"

There are truly issues of life and death at stake before the people of God. They can cling to their natural life and lose all they hoped to hold onto. Those who survive the wilderness are the ones who have counted the cost. They have surrendered to follow Christ through riches or poverty, through health or sickness, through peace or distresses, through honor or shame, through life or through death.

Revelation 12:11

"And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death."

I am not exaggerating the cost of discipleship with these words. The Israelites saw the giants they had to face, the multitudes of people to be fought, the great walled cities, and they rightly understood that they would be risking their lives if they obeyed Yahweh's command to go in and take possession of the land. The only thing between them and death was the word of God.

Yahweh has said to us today that He will never abandon or forsake us. Though He lead us through the valley of the shadow of death, He will be with His people. He did not say they would not suffer. I live in the midst of America, a country that calls itself a Christian nation, and I have experienced hunger, homelessness, and loneliness. My fellow ministers cast me out. I have been refused communion and any opportunity to teach in Yahweh's churches. My wife and son departed from me. Family have labeled me a heretic and deluded. I have even been imprisoned for obedience to Christ.

Do not think such experiences as Christ and His early disciples went through were only for that day and hour. The cost of discipleship has never changed.

II Timothy 3:10-12

But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord delivered me! And indeed, **ALL** who desire to live godly in Christ Yahshua will be per-

Parables Bookshelf

secuted.

There are not two roads that lead to life, a broad and easy highway, and a narrow and afflicted wilderness path. There is only one way that leads to life, and few there are that find it.

People of God, I do not share my trials to elicit sympathy. Rather, it is to reveal that even in this hour the cost of following Christ fully is the same as it was in the book of Acts. If Yahweh can take one of the weakest, most timid, and fleshly of all men and bring me through these experiences without shrinking back, then He can bring any and all men through. He is a Father of great compassion. His mercies are new every morning. His love never fails.

If you have not yet settled it in your mind that you will follow Christ come whatever may, and not shrink back, then how long will you avoid the decision. Yahweh has tarried patiently with many of His sons and daughters, but He will not wait indefinitely. If you are experiencing the drawing and conviction of His Spirit today, there is no guarantee that in putting Him off that He will still be calling you tomorrow.

Hebrews 3:7-11

Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, and saw My works for forty years. Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; and they did not know My ways'; As I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'"

Have you already partaken of the Passover

Lamb? Have you already applied the blood to your life? Then why do you not have yourself girded, sandals on your feet, and staff in your hand? He is calling you to follow Him now. Do not miss your opportunity.

Matthew 24:37-40

"For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah. For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and they did not understand until the flood came and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."

Wilderness Survival for Christians - Part Six

Joseph Herrin (04-13-2010)

An Absence of Applause



The church calls Christ "Lord." It is perhaps the most common appellation used in reference to both the Son and the Father. The church speaks of the cross, albeit usually in reference to the one that Yahshua bore. The church speaks the word "Faith" endlessly. Observing these things, you might think that someone who truly accepts Christ as Lord, surrendering to obey the leading of His Spirit in

Wilderness Survival For Christians

all things, and who embraces a walk of faith would receive much encouragement and support from other Christians who observe their life.

If this is your expectation, then I must warn you that you will be greatly disappointed.

That small remnant of the people of God who commit to following the Father wherever He leads; those few who find the narrow path to life and walk it, will experience trials, tests, and sorrows due to their surrender and obedience that makes the experiences of the carnal and lukewarm pale in comparison. During significant portions of their walk these disciples of Christ are waging war with Herculean effort. They are refusing to turn aside despite intense pressures from within and without.

One might expect other Christians to see their struggle and to encourage them on their way. They might anticipate that others would confess that they are doing right, even if those saying such things are unwilling to walk the same path. One might think that it would be obvious to the church that this suffering saint is experiencing all this hardship because of their commitment to follow Christ no matter the cost. But the reality is quite different.

Let me share with you an illustration from the Israelites' wilderness experience that reveals the truth of this situation. It should be kept in mind that although 600,000 men, as well as women and children, went into this wilderness, these people are not to be confused with those who stand as types of the **disciples** of Christ. They are merely types of the church, the Ekklesia. They were called out of the world, but few of them actually embraced this calling.

The majority of those who went into the wilderness regretted immediately having done so. Had they the opportunity they would have returned to Egypt. They were kept in the wilderness by the strong hand of the Father.

Among this large number of people we read of only a few who were intent on following the Lord. There was the smallest number who did not entertain thoughts of returning to the comforts of Egypt. Among these were Moses, Joshua and Caleb. The majority of the people did not have any desire to endure hardship, or to face trials and battles, even if the end result would have been an inheritance described as a land flowing with milk and honey.

The majority of Israelites in the wilderness represent the mass of Christians today. What was their response when they observed a small remnant among them who were willing to embrace hardship and difficulty? We can observe their attitude when, after approximately two years in the wilderness, Yahweh brought them to the border of the land of Canaan.

Yahweh instructed Moses to send in 12 men to spy out the land. These 12 spies spent 40 days looking over the land. They saw its abundance. They saw the bountiful fruit, the flowing streams, the fertile valleys and the forested mountains. The land was so fruitful that it took two men to carry a single cluster of grapes on a staff carried between their shoulders. Truly, Yahweh was setting before them an incredible inheritance.

Yet, these same men also observed a great many people living in walled cities. They observed giants, the descendants of the Anakim and Nephilim, dwelling in the land. They understood that it would be no cakewalk to go in

Parables Bookshelf

and possess this land. Great courage would be required. Fierce battles would have to be fought. And enemies more numerous and mightier than themselves would have to be overcome.



Yahweh had promised His people that He would fight for them. They had adequate proof of this already. The mightiest nation on earth had seen its entire military destroyed in the Red Sea as Yahweh fought for the Israelites. The Israelites had complained bitterly at this event. They did not relish facing an enemy. They had no stomach to fight. They manifested great unbelief in Yahweh's presence with them, and His willingness to support them. They rejoiced AFTER they saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore, but we see their hearts revealed when they were brought once more to face an enemy stronger than themselves.

Numbers 13:27-33

Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit. Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there. Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan." Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses, and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it." But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us." So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of great size. There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

People of God, do not think too hard of these Israelites who shrank back from the battles before them. The majority of Christians today are doing the same thing. There is a cross that all disciples must take up if they are to follow Christ. There are giants of fear, and unbelief to be slain. There are walled cities of lust, pride, and covetousness to be conquered. There are many enemies in the land that we must take possession of, and few Christians have the stomach to fight.

Yahshua said "The Kingdom of God is within you." He also said, "The kingdom of God suffers violence, and violent men take it by force."

Wilderness Survival For Christians

There is no other way to establish Yahweh's kingdom in our lives than by fighting battles with an array of enemies that dwell in our hearts.

Consider for a moment the thoughts that arise in your own heart as you contemplate surrendering the leadership of your life to Yahweh. Does not fear leap up as a great giant as you consider the paths Yahweh might lead you down? Does it not cause your knees to grow weak to consider the complete surrender of the direction of your life to the Father? There is a reason that Christ uses the imagery of crucifixion to describe discipleship. Who could consider submitting to crucifixion and not be tempest tossed within their soul? Even Christ wrestled to the point that He sweat drops of blood in Gethsemane as He viewed the things before Him.

Joshua and Caleb were not insensible to the risk before them. They too must have known a quivering in their soul as they looked upon the Anakim dwelling in the land. But they knew it was Yahweh guiding them to these battles, and He had promised to fight for them. They subdued the turmoil in their soul and began to reckon on Yahweh's presence. They were willing to cast all over into the care of Yahweh, considering Him to be faithful.

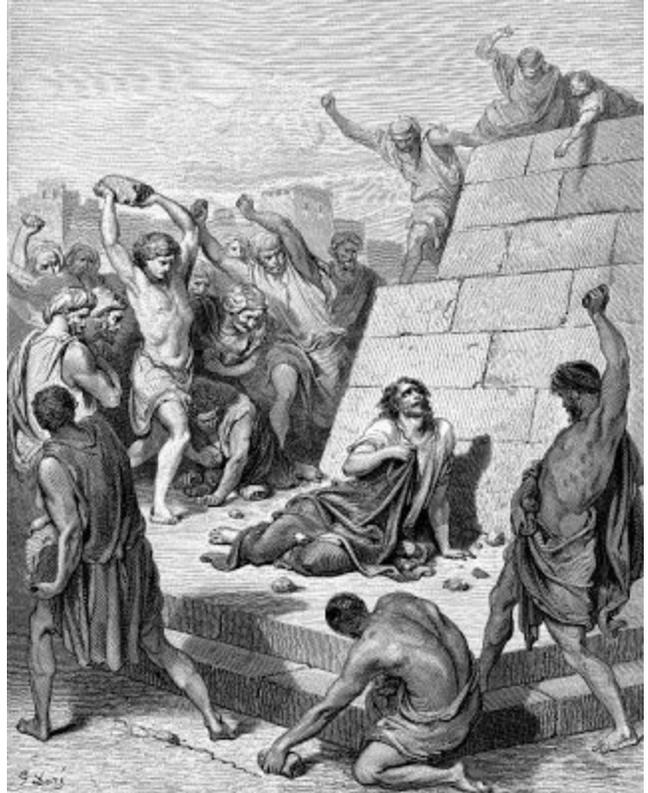
Both Joshua and Caleb counseled the people to go forward as Yahweh was directing them. They were willing to put their lives on the line. The rest of the congregation were not.

Did the congregation of God's people confess that Joshua and Caleb were courageous? Did they admit that these two men were more dedicated to obeying Yahweh than they were? Did they encourage Joshua and Caleb to go in

and fight these battles? No, we read their response in the following verse.

Numbers 14:10

But **all the congregation** said to stone them with stones.



Men, women and children, in one accord, looked at these two men, both of them types and shadows of Christ's disciples and the overcomers, and they wanted to stone them to death. This too is the response of the church today when it observes those few who are willing to follow the Lord wherever He leads. They will not praise you. They will despise you. They will vilify you. They will hurl many rocks of insult and reproach at you.

It took a wrestling of the soul for Caleb and Joshua to rule over their own fears, and to commit to a path they knew to be perilous. Yet

Parables Bookshelf

they received no applause for their faith. Neither will you.

When you commit to follow the Father, to surrender to the leading of His Spirit, you will be led into experiences that others have not gone through, experiences which they do not even want to contemplate for themselves. The church will observe you being stripped of houses, lands, possessions, and encountering division in your closest family relationships. They will see that you have truly counted the cost of surrendering all your possessions and relations in order to follow Christ. And despite the fact that you arrived at such a surrender only after great inner wrestling that has taxed you to the utmost, they will not praise you. No, they will condemn you.

The wilderness is a type and shadow of the disciple's cross. It is that daily struggle through difficult situations, following the Spirit wherever He leads. Did the people of God applaud Christ for His supreme sacrifice as He hung upon the cross? No! They hurled abuse and insults at Him. He was counted as a transgressor. They judged Him to be smitten and stricken of God.

So too will the majority in the church view your afflicted path and judge you to be suffering due to disobedience.

Discipleship is a lonely road. Though there be professing Christians in abundance, the path to life is found by only a few. Many are the called, but few are chosen.

There is an aspect of every disciple's life where they must bear the cross alone. When Christ went to the cross His disciples were scattered.

Only John was named as being present, along with Yahshua's mother and some of the women. It is certain that those present watching His suffering did not understand what He was going through. His closest friends could only grieve as they watched Him suffer.

Christ was the Great Pioneer of this victorious wilderness journey. His example is a pattern for those disciples who would follow after Him. We read of His suffering that there was present in it the false judgments of His own people.

Isaiah 53:3-4

He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

I desire that you would have your heart prepared to anticipate similar things. Be at rest in your suffering. Do not add to your burden by seeking the applause of other Christians. Do not be distressed when no one understands the great spiritual battles you are fighting. Yahweh sees all things. The day will come when He will reward you openly.

Wilderness Survival For Christians

Mayday!

Joseph Herrin (05-01-2013)

Mayday: *the international radiotelephone distress signal, used by ships and aircraft.*

[Source:
<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/mayday>]



SS United States Berthed in Philadelphia

(Click on any image to view larger)

Some days ago a brother in Christ (thank you Darrell) sent me a link to an article that has very obvious prophetic implications. The article focused on the crisis facing the caretakers for the ocean liner pictured above. The SS United States is viewed by many as America's flagship. This once grand ocean liner was built in 1952 at a princely sum for the period of \$78 million dollars. In many ways this ship serves as a type, or symbol, of the nation whose name she bears.

The SS United States is 990 feet in length. For comparison, the HMS Titanic was 882 feet in length. One of the design goals of the shipbuilders was to make the SS United States fast. The Blue Riband is a maritime trophy awarded to the passen-

ger liner with the fastest Atlantic crossing time. Of the 35 Atlantic liners to hold the Blue Riband, 25 of them have been British, and 5 German. The United States had only held the trophy twice prior to 1952 when the SS United States was built. Since the late 1930s the Atlantic crossing record was held by Great Britain's HMS Queen Mary. In a parallel to Britain's waning power, and America's ascendancy, the SS United States smashed the record set by the Queen Mary, making the crossing from New York to England, while slicing more than ten hours off of the previous record.

The SS United State's builders had chosen a hull design that was built for speed. They also utilized more aluminum in the construction of the ship than had been used in any other building construction on land or sea up until that time. By utilizing this lighter weight metal, many tons of weight were removed from the ship, allowing it to ride higher in the water and attain a greater speed. The ship also utilized the most powerful steam turbines to be found in any merchant marine vessel. She had four turbines that produced a combined 240,000 SHP (Shaft Horse Power). This gave the ship the greatest power to weight ratio of any passenger ship before, or since, her construction.

There is much in these details that parallel aspects of America as a nation. America is a superpower. The United States has ridden higher than any other nation on earth. She has used technological innovation to advance far beyond the scope of other nations. Even as America has remained ascendant over the nations since World War II, so too has the Blue Riband trophy remained with the SS United States. No other Atlantic liner has ever broken her crossing record.

The SS United States made the New York to England crossing in 3 days, 12 hours, and 12 minutes. This gave her an average speed of 35.59 knots. This

Parables Bookshelf

was a phenomenal pace. In miles per hour this would equate to 41 MPH. To push a vessel greater in length than three football fields through water at that speed is a phenomenal achievement.



SS United States in Her Glory Days

Even as the nation of America is an odd mixture of material opulence and military might, the SS United States offered both luxury, as well as being designed for rapid transformation into a military transport ship.



A Dining Hall on the SS United States

The U.S. government underwrote \$50 million of the \$78 million cost of construction for this ship, reserving the right to commandeer the ship in a time of war. In its heyday the ship transported the rich and famous. President John F. Kennedy, Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, Salvador Dali, Prince Ranier of Monaco, and many others crossed the Atlantic on this vessel. Yet, its design was such that in a single day it could be converted from its normal passenger capacity of 2,000 to military use to transport 14,000 servicemen at a time.

The United States in the 20th century has been renowned the world over for her prosperity. She has been known as the land of opportunity where a man could change his fortunes quickly, arising from poverty and obscurity to fortune and fame at record speed. America has been viewed as the land where a Horatio Alger story could come true. At the same time, she has become famous for her ability to quickly transform into a military might whose power was awesome to behold. Admiral Yamamoto who led the Japanese assault on Pearl Harbor gave voice to America's ability to transform herself when he stated, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve."

Wikipedia provides the following information on the ship.

By the late 1960s, the market for Transatlantic travel by ship had dwindled. Queen Mary had been retired in 1967 and Queen Elizabeth in 1968. United States was no longer profitable. While United States was at Newport News for annual overhaul in 1969, the shipping line decided to withdraw her from service, docking the ship there. After a few years, the ship was relocated to Norfolk, Virginia. Subsequently, ownership passed between several companies. In 1978, the vessel was sold to private interests who hoped to revitalize the liner in a time share cruise ship format. Financing failed and the ship was put up for auction by MARAD. In 1979, Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) was reportedly interested in purchasing the ship and converting her into a cruise ship for the Caribbean, but decided on purchasing the former SS France instead. During the 1980s, United States was considered by the US Navy as a troop ship or a hospital ship, to be called the USS United States, but this plan never materialized.

In 1984, the ship's remaining fittings and furniture

Wilderness Survival For Christians

were sold at auction in Norfolk. Some of the furniture was installed in Windmill Point, a restaurant in Nags Head, North Carolina. Following the closure of the restaurant in 2007, the items were donated to the Mariners' Museum and to Christopher Newport University, both in Newport News, Virginia.[21] One of the ship's propellers is mounted at the entrance to the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum in New York City. Another propeller is mounted on a platform near the waterfront at SUNY Maritime College at Fort Schuyler, New York. Across the Long Island Sound from SUNY Maritime College, a third propeller is mounted at the United States Merchant Marine Academy and is used as a teaching aid for merchant mariners. The fourth propeller is mounted at the entrance of the Newport News Mariner's Museum. In 1992, a new consortium of owners purchased the vessel and had her towed to Turkey and then Ukraine, where she underwent asbestos removal in 1994. The interior of the ship was almost completely stripped during this time. No viable agreements were reached in the US for a reworking of the vessel, and in 1996 United States was towed to her current location at Pier 84 in South Philadelphia.

[S o u r c e :
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SS_United_States]



Interior Decay of Ship

What a parallel we see in the stripping and gutting of this ship in recent decades. Even as America has

shipped her once vaunted manufacturing industry overseas, so too did the SS United States have her massive engine and propellers removed. Even as the world's greatest creditor nation has become history's greatest debtor nation, so too do we see the stripping of all the signs of wealth and opulence from this once glorious ship. A ship that once possessed the world speed record had to be towed like a derelict barge to her present berth in Philadelphia where she has languished, rusting away, and falling into a further state of decline.



Corridor Inside the SS United States

It seems part of the parable that this ship, bearing the name of the nation that was born in Philadelphia, should come to rest there. Philadelphia is itself a city in decline. Poverty and crime are rampant. The city's infrastructure is falling into decay. A recent article online bears the following headline:

Philadelphia, 5th Largest City in US is Effectively Bankrupt; Mayor Holds Closed Meeting With Wall Street to Discuss Asset Sales

[S o u r c e :
<http://globeconomicanalysis.blogspot.com/2013/04/philadelphia-5th-largest-city-in-us-is.html>]

Reading the article above is sobering. Philadelphia, like the SS United States, is a symbol of the nation. The caretakers of the SS United States have been attempting to "re-purpose" her as a floating ho-

Parables Bookshelf

tel/museum/restaurant/shopping/entertainment complex. The effort has been going on for years with no one willing to sign on to the massive financial obligation. America's economy is in freefall. Unemployment is rampant. Record numbers are receiving government food stamps, and other benefits to survive day to day. The nation is annually accruing trillions of dollars in additional debt. The wealth and prosperity of the nation are no more than a thin veneer tenuously attached to a rotting infrastructure.

The various articles discussing the dilemma of this ship, which needs \$60,000 every month just to pay for her berth, and would require an estimated \$150 million to \$300 million to renovate, have read like apocalyptic headlines for the nation.

Sending Out an SOS. Historic Ship Struggles to Stay Afloat.

<http://video.foxnews.com/>

Historic ship in Philly short on funds, time

<http://news.yahoo.com/>

Saving the SS United States

<http://www.cbsnews.com/>

Rust in peace: SS United States faces the scrap heap

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/>

On this May Day, those with ears to hear, and eyes to see, can discern the MAYDAY signal being sent out from the ship of state known as the United States. Even though the nation's leaders deny, and obfuscate the truth in a manner similar to the captain of the ill fated Costa Concordia after it struck an underwater reef, the ship is sinking. It will not stay afloat much longer.

Heart4God/Parables



Bringing hidden things to light...

Parables Bookshelf

P.O. Box 804

Montezuma, GA 31063

Websites:

Heart4God

www.heart4god.ws

Parables Blog

www.parablesblog.blogspot.com

Heart4God/Parables
P.O. Box 804
Montezuma, GA 31063

«AddressBlock»

Parables Bookshelf — Series 2.18.2

Bible Word Search—People and Places

M	E	D	I	N	A	H	I	M	R	A	C	R	M	N
I	B	L	P	H	U	V	A	H	N	K	F	A	O	R
P	U	E	B	N	A	L	M	I	E	A	H	H	L	F
P	Y	B	T	I	C	E	U	Y	B	S	S	H	J	A
U	O	A	R	H	L	S	L	B	U	R	T	A	R	S
M	B	T	I	L	L	H	L	H	E	A	H	E	R	I
B	Z	E	I	G	P	E	A	G	R	Z	L	H	L	M
Z	L	H	N	P	O	C	H	H	E	I	T	A	U	E
T	S	E	T	J	H	H	P	E	C	P	T	P	A	O
U	I	M	R	A	A	E	L	S	M	H	W	L	H	N
T	E	M	A	N	H	M	R	S	P	I	E	I	S	W
H	T	A	N	E	S	A	I	A	Q	O	B	Z	Q	U
H	T	O	J	A	B	E	N	N	H	N	M	Z	I	Z
S	H	U	A	H	T	Z	H	A	R	E	S	A	A	B
R	E	H	C	E	B	H	A	M	M	A	H	S	R	R

ARELI	NAPHTALI
ASENATH	NEBAJOTH
BECHER	OMAR
BENJAMIN	PHALLU
BETHLEHEM	PHUVAH
BILHAH	POTIPHERAH
CARMI	REUBEN
CHEZIB	SERAH
DINAH	SHAMMAH
EPHRATH	SHAUL
ERI	SHECHEM
GERSHON	SHILLEM
HUSHAM	SHUAH
JAHZEEL	SIMEON
MALCHIEL	TEMAN
MANAHATH	TIMNATH
MANASSEH	ZEBULUN
MEHETABEL	ZILPAH
MIBZAR	ZIPHION
MUPPIM	