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Wilderness Survival

FOR

CHRISTIANS

Learn to:

- Use survival techniques to stay alive
- Understand basic navigation
- Find enough water and food
- Signal for help and get rescued

Yahshua the Messiah

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Follower and Student



Wilderness Survival for Christians

Joseph Herrin (04-01-2010)

There stands between you and Yahweh's intended destination for you a journey that must be experienced. The path to your inheritance in Christ leads through a wilderness. Although this wilderness may include time spent in a natural wilderness area, and trials of a physical nature, such as finding food and shelter, the wilderness is primarily spiritual. The pattern with God is "first the natural, then the spiritual."

I Corinthians 15:46

However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural; then the spiritual.

In the Old Testament we read of Yahweh leading His people through a natural wilderness. This journey was recorded by Moses. The physical wilderness that the Israelites journeyed through as they left behind centuries of slavery in Egypt touched their bodies and their souls. The souls of the Israelites found their journey as barren and desolate as the Wilderness around them. Yahweh ever uses the natural experiences of life to impact the soul of man as He labors to promote the development of spiritual men and women.

Deuteronomy 8:2-5

And you shall remember all the way which Yahweh your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that Yahweh your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.

I can say with confidence that a very real wilderness experience lies ahead of the people of God. It has always been God's method to perfect His sons through trials and testing, but the present generation has largely spurned such things. They have fed on lies, deceiving and being deceived by one another. Today's Christians have been told that Yahweh wants to bless them materially, to make them fat on all the things of Egypt (the world). They have been encouraged to live their best life now by preachers of prosperity and ease.

Yahweh is about to vomit many of these lukewarm Christians out of His mouth. A remnant, however, will accept His invitation to follow Him through a difficult wilderness way. Many who begin the trek will not finish it. Some will die spiritually in the wilderness, their hearts having turned back to Egypt.



For the past eleven years the Father has been leading me through a wilderness experience. I have written of this journey in the book *Evidence of Things Unseen*.

In 1999 the Father spoke through a young woman in the church of which I was both a member and a minister. He said, “I am about to lead some of you through some very difficult experiences. These experiences are to prepare you for the days that follow after them.” I have walked in the fulfillment of these words. I have been led through wilderness ways, often without companion or friend. I have been very much like Moses when he fled Egypt at the age of forty to spend four decades tending the flocks of his father-in-law Jethro.

Like Moses, these experiences were intended for my development as a son. They served to humble me, and to teach me Yahweh’s ways. Many things that were once a large part of my life fell by the wayside. Some things simply cannot be carried in the wilderness. They are burdensome and make the journey too difficult. This was a lesson the pioneers learned as they traveled west across America in the 1800s.



When God calls a people to surrender all, and to follow wherever He would lead them, they must begin to make decisions about what must be kept, and what must be left behind. In my case, these decisions were thrust upon me. If I followed the leading of Christ I had to leave home, vehicles, furnishings, and many years of accumulated possessions behind. Yahweh provided no means for me to continue to hold onto these things.

Many pioneers heading to the American West started off with too heavy a load. This placed a strain on the wagon, and on the animals pulling it. In soft, wet, or rough ground, the wagon would become stuck. Many goods were abandoned along the way. Some cast away pianos, china cabinets, and other things they considered inseparable. When their forward progress was brought to a standstill they had to evaluate what things were truly essential. Things that were not absolute necessities were thrown to the wayside.

I am reminded of Paul's words to Timothy as he instructed him about the proper attitude towards the goods of this world.

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.

People of God, eleven years ago I had a large house on nearly an acre of land in town. I had a household of goods. Our closets were full, as was our garage. We were overloaded with the goods of the world. This encumbrance prevented us from following the Father wherever He would lead.

The Father led me to a radical departure from the life I had been living. He instructed me to quit my job as a computer professional and to follow Him. I anticipated keeping most of my worldly goods, but the Father had other plans. He began to strip us of many things accumulated through years of indulgent living. Christians in America have little concept of how materialistic their lives are.

As God begins to lead a greater number down wilderness pathways they will quickly learn that they are able to do with much less. Some will try to carry the maximum amount possible.



About a year after the Father directed my family to follow Him wherever He would lead us, He had brought us to a place where everything our family of four owned would fit into a 28-1/2 foot long motorhome. There was tremendous liberty in this. We could go wherever the Father directed. We were not held back by our possessions.

Many have criticized me for leading my family to such an experience. In the mindset of American culture, including the American church, such Spartan living strikes many as cause for reproach. I am persuaded, however, that a great many in the days ahead will be brought by the Father to choose whether they will follow Him and leave the world behind, or cling to the things of the world.

Luke 14:33

"So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

If you are to survive your wilderness experience you need to let go of the things of this world. Some will make foolish decisions as they seek some way to hold onto possessions that have taken hold on their hearts. Their journey will be far more laborious because they started off trying to carry too much with them.



Covetousness is not the only motive for clinging to the things of this world. Fear also plays a part. It is very difficult to willingly make ourselves vulnerable. Despite the fact that practically every Christian has recited the Lord's prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread...", there are few who relish the thought of looking to God to provide for them day by day. The natural man feels insecure when he does not have a large supply of food and material goods laid aside to help him meet the needs of the future.

Yahweh had to deal with this lack of trust among His people when He led them into the wilderness. He promised them that every day He would provide their necessary food to eat. Yahweh sent His people the manna of heaven. The Israelites would find it on the ground every morning. Yahweh, knowing well the fears resident in the soul of man, assured them that the manna would be

there every day. He told them to only gather enough for one day.

Exodus 16:4

Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day's portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction."

The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church and told them that all the things that the Israelites experienced in the wilderness were written for their instruction (I Corinthians 10:11). Paul said that the Israelites were types of the church. Yahweh must test His people today, and perfect them through similar methods. Without faith it is impossible to please God, yet this faith is not natural to the Adamic man.

The wilderness is designed to take a people who are carnal (fleshly) and transform them into spiritual beings. Let us not think too lightly of the tests that the Israelites faced. What would your response be to God sending you forth into a wilderness place where there were no stores, no growing grain, and no animals to eat? What if He did so with only one day's supply of food? Would you go forth boldly? If you are like me, you would experience great anxiety, and have to battle daily with worries and unbelief.

This was certainly my experience in 1999 when the Father led me to quit my job and I had a wife and two children for which to care. We were soon brought to extremities. Our money ran out and our stored food was consumed. When the cupboards were bare I experienced great fear. I knew the Father had directed my path to this walk, and I could not turn back. How potent were my fears. I was tormented by them.

At the time I was encouraged by a message I heard preached where the speaker said that sometimes we have to "do it afraid." I knew that if I turned back that the Father would be greatly displeased.

Hebrews 10:38-39

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.

I do not know that I would have responded much different than the Israelites when they first began to receive the manna. They disobeyed Yahweh by

gathering more than one day's supply. That which was left over bred worms and became rancid (Exodus 16:19-21). For forty years He would give them only one day's supply of food at a time. He was teaching them to trust in Him.

Exodus 16:35-36

And the sons of Israel ate the manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate the manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

People of God, one of the first things you will have to deal with as the Father leads you to your own wilderness experience is this matter of letting go of the things of this world. You will discover precisely how much covetousness and fear is a part of this fallen flesh in which we dwell. To survive the wilderness you will need to buffet your body and keep it in subjection. The greater the faith you manifest in Yahweh, the easier the way will be before you.

Those who seek to hold onto the things of the world will hesitate in following the Father's leading and suffer for it. Others will encumber themselves with too many things, and their way will be made burdensome. It is those who will freely lay aside all, and commit their lives to the Lord, that will find the way made much easier. Those who enter the wilderness must not make emotional decisions predicated upon either lust or fear. They must quiet their souls that they might hear clearly the voice of the Spirit of Christ. They must do precisely what He instructs them to do.

Psalms 131:2

Surely I have composed and quieted my soul; like a weaned child rests against his mother, my soul is like a weaned child within me.

I am observing the lives of some who at this very season are having the goods of the world stripped from their hands. They would in no way freely depart from these things. Their unwillingness to obey has led God to deal with them through very stern measures, even to bringing them to homelessness and imprisonment. It is not necessary for the Father to deal with His people so forcefully if they will attend to the still, small voice of his Spirit.

Psalms 32:9

Do not be as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding, whose trappings include bit and bridle to hold them in check, otherwise they will not come near to you.

If we will attend to the voice of God, He will not have to jerk our heads around to get us to comply with His desire for us. If we prove stubborn and unresponsive, it is truly a merciful thing that He would not abandon us, no matter how harshly He must deal with us to bring us to a divine correction.

It was not necessary for Lot to enter Sodom as a wealthy man and leave with only the clothes on his back. He hesitated. He would not depart even when his soul was vexed day after day by the sin he saw all around him (II Peter 2:7). When Yahweh sent angels to bring him out Lot hesitated again. The angels had to grab Lot and his family by the hands and lead them outside the city. Lot's family lost everything. Their way was made much harsher due to their hesitation. Lot and his daughters ended up sleeping in a cave. Had he departed earlier he could have had his tent and some things that would have made his experience less painful.

What was it that kept Lot in Sodom when the time came to depart? Lot was attracted to ease and worldly abundance. When Abraham asked Lot to depart from him for their possessions had become too great to abide together, he invited Lot to choose for himself which way to go.

Genesis 13:10-11

And Lot lifted up his eyes and saw all the valley of the Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere - this was before Yahweh destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah - like the garden of Yahweh, like the land of Egypt as you go to Zoar. So Lot chose for himself all the valley of the Jordan...

People of God, our natural tendency is to choose a path of ease, to select for ourselves the way that is the most comfortable and appealing to the flesh. It is easy to grow dependent upon such comforts, and it is with great difficulty that we will let them go. Lot should have gotten the message when Sodom and Gomorrah were conquered by foreign kings, and he and all his possessions were taken captive. Abraham had to raise an army to deliver his kinsman, yet Lot returned to Sodom for it was comfortable to him.

Are you able to heed the voice of God when He speaks to you to come out of Sodom? Or does natural affection for the things of the world keep you rooted? Will you get up quickly and depart when the Spirit says to do so? Will you lay aside all the things of this world that you have accumulated and take with you only what the Spirit directs you to carry? Or will you hold onto as much of the world as possible?

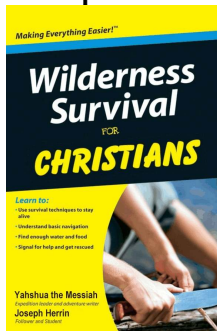
Beginnings are very important. If you know that a wilderness experience is coming to the people of God (the Spirit testifies that it is coming quickly), would you not want to be as prepared as you might possibly be? Some have been hearing the Lord instruct them to get ready for years now. They have accepted willingly the reduction of their worldly goods. They have moved to smaller homes, or given up homes altogether to dwell wherever the Father has directed them. Many have simplified their lifestyles. They have learned to eat less food and healthier foods. Some have been riding bicycles, or walking, instead of driving everywhere.

By accepting these things now from the Father, they have been acclimating themselves to those radical changes that the Spirit is testifying are to come to America and many other places.

People of God, lighten your load now while you can. Reduce your dependence upon that which you have stored up in the bank, or in your pantry. Be willing to look to the Father for your daily bread. Where He leads, follow. What He says, do. In the coming days, you will be very glad that you did.

Wilderness Survival for Christians - Part Two

Joseph Herrin (04-02-2010)



Though None Go With Me, Still I Will Follow

The first post in this series spoke of the necessity of lightening one's load to begin a journey into the wilderness. Knowing what to take, and what to leave behind is a critical matter. It is also necessary that those going into the wilderness make decisions concerning WHO to take, and WHO to leave behind.

When Christ declared what was required to be a disciple, He spoke of personal relationships. Even as He said that no man could be a disciple who did not give up all his possessions, He also said no man could be a disciple who did not give up all his relations.

Luke 14:26-27

"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. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Unless you are an orphan, an only child, unmarried, and without offspring, there is some relative of yours named in the list above. Christ declared that a disciple must subjugate all worldly relationships to one's relationship to God the Father. Christ is our pattern man. He ever lived to do the Father's will. Where the Father said go, He went. What the Father said to do, He did. He spoke only the words the Father gave Him to speak. He lived to do the will of the Father.

You can well imagine that such a complete commitment to doing the Father's will is a very rare thing in the earth today. Should a man or woman make such

a commitment, presenting themselves to God with complete abandonment, they will find that they have few traveling companions. Those who are closest in relation, even father and mother, brother, sister, wife, and son, and daughter will rarely ever have the same commitment. This lack of agreement will lead to separation.

Amos 3:3

Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?



The disciple of Christ must follow God the Father as Christ did, or they are not truly a disciple of Christ.

Matthew 10:24-26

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the disciple that he become as his teacher, and the servant as his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!"

What I want you to understand is that going into the wilderness is a physical metaphor for following Christ. God has spoken through means of this parable throughout the Scriptures.

In the Old Testament we see the Israelites departing from centuries of bondage in Egypt on the night of the first Passover. Having applied the blood of a lamb to the doorposts and lintel of their home, they were passed over by the death angel. That same night they departed from Egypt. Guess where they went? The people of God went into the wilderness where they spent the next forty years.

Look at the pattern here. Passover and the blood of the lamb are types and shadows of salvation through the blood of Christ. When we apply the blood of Christ to our lives we are then expected to surrender to be led of God's Spirit IMMEDIATELY. The Israelites were commanded to eat the Passover meal with their loins girded, sandals on their feet, and their bags packed. They were to be ready to depart from Egypt immediately.

Few Christians in this generation have ever entered into this immediate surrender, for it is not taught today. Most Christians are fed falsehood that says they can continue to be directed by their own soul, and to seek things for self. They receive a twisted gospel that presents God as someone at their beckon call, rather than the Christian being completely surrendered to Yahweh's will.

Our Father will not allow this condition to go on forever. As He did in my life, He hemmed me in, and brought me to a place of decision. He revealed to me that I had not ever come to a full surrender to be led of His Spirit. He told me that I could not go any further with Him, and would instead begin to regress spiritually, unless I made a full surrender to be led of His Spirit in all things.

To me, this was like staring at the face of my own death. I knew if I made such a radical, total commitment, that my heavenly Father could require anything and everything of me. He could lead me anywhere, and ask me to do anything. My mind imagined many things that were terrifying.

It should strike a discerning Christian as a travesty that a professing believer in Christ could spend decades of his life avoiding this moment of "counting the cost" of discipleship. It is to be our starting point, but many never give it consideration. Some spend their entire lives evading the issue, engaging in denial that there is anything further required of them as a Christian. Such ones end their lives in spiritual barrenness, bereft of the inheritance that belongs to the overcomers who die daily, and take up the cross. They live a life of strange delusion where they are persuaded that they will have the same

reward as those who gave all in their pursuit of the Father's will.

Galatians 6:7-8

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Between the time I was baptized at the age of ten, and the year 1999, a span of 28 years, I gave obeisance to Yahweh only in part. Much of my attention, indeed the majority of it, was focused upon pursuing things that originated in my soul. It was a merciful thing that the Father did not leave me in this condition, for I would have suffered great loss on that day when I stand before Him.

Self-direction is the condition of all men until they surrender to be led of God. As soon as we surrender, our Father is sure to lead us into a wilderness experience, for this is the path to be trod by all who would arrive at the promised land of their spiritual inheritance. As the Israelites embarked on a wilderness journey on the same night that they applied the blood of the lamb to their doorways, just as surely will the Father lead all who will be led of His Spirit into a wilderness experience.

Because there are so few who have made a full surrender, all true disciples are confronted with a lonely walk.



It is a rare thing for more than one member of a household to commit fully to following Christ. Such a statement seems unreasonable to many professing believers, for they can name a great many families in which all, or most, of the members express belief in, and devotion to, Christ. I am not speaking of a confession of Christ, or even a sincere devotion. I am speaking of discipleship, which is a complete surrender. Remember, Christ is the pattern man. How many Christians do you know who are following God into places their soul detests, and which cause their flesh to recoil in terror?

I have shared in numerous writings that there are divisions among the saints. The people of God are compared to a temple built of living stones. The Temple had three sections, the Outer Court, the Holy Place, and the Holy of Holies. Christ spoke of disciples who brought forth 30, 60 and 100 fold. There were three feasts, each associated with a harvest, these being types and shadows of the three resurrections of mankind. I have written of these things in many places, particularly in the books *The Remnant Bride*, and *Christ in You - The Hope of Glory*. I encourage you to read them if you do not understand these matters.

Even as a professing believer will find himself divided from the world when He comes to Christ, so too will the saints find themselves being divided from one another. The 30 fold will accept a certain level of commitment, and bear fruit accordingly. The 60 fold will embrace a further more costly obedience which the 30 fold will shrink back from. The 100 fold will cast all over into the hands of the Father. They will be the grain of wheat that falls into the ground and dies and bears much fruit. These will find that the 30 and 60 fold believers will not walk with them into the fiery furnace.

These things are foreshadowed in the layout of the Tabernacle of Moses. The entire nation of Israel, the redeemed of the Lord, had access to the Outer Court. Only one tribe, the Levites, could enter the Holy Place. Only one man, the High Priest, could enter the Holy of Holies.

The Levites could walk among the other tribes of Israel in the Outer Court, but eleven tribes could not follow them into the Holy Place. There was a turning back, for the cost of admission was much higher. The High Priest could walk among the entire nation in the Outer Court, and among the tribe of Levi in the Holy Place, but he walked alone when he entered the Holy of Holies.

How far do you want to go with the Father? If you require a lot of companions

you will not proceed very far as a disciple of Christ. When you demonstrate a willingness to follow Christ into a complete surrender, to let go of all worldly possessions, to walk through any experience no matter how painful, you will find that mother and father and wife and brother and sister and son and daughter and friends will shrink back. If you agree to go only if they go then you will not go far at all.

There is a reason that Yahweh required Abraham, the patriarch and forerunner of His called out people, to take his son Isaac and sacrifice him on an altar unto Him. Abraham is the father of faith. He is a type of those who are pleasing to the Yahweh. All are called to lay their most beloved relatives on an altar. Sometimes God will give them back to us in this lifetime, but not always. We must be content to accept the will of the Father.



People of God, those who embark upon a wilderness journey must take consideration at the start concerning what they will take with them. It is not possible to carry too much of the world's goods with us. It is just as necessary to consider WHO will walk with us.

The fully surrendered saint need not initiate any division between himself and others. They need only commit to following Christ wherever He leads. It will soon become apparent who is willing to follow. Some will turn back quickly. Some will go along for a time before halting. Only the smallest remnant will go all the way to stand with the overcomers on Mount Zion.

Jeremiah 3:14

And I will take you one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion.

This pattern is once more seen among the Israelites who departed from Egypt. Egypt is a symbol of the world. Out from the world God calls a people. The entire nation went into the wilderness. Yet only two men above the age of twenty entered the promised land. Why? They alone were willing to follow Yahweh when He showed them the giants they would have to face.

This story is very telling. Yahweh was displeased at the complaints of the people. True, there were giants in the land. True, these giants were stronger than the people of God. But God promised the Israelites that He would fight for them, and Yahweh is bigger by far than the greatest giant. Only two men reckoned on Yahweh fighting for them.

Joshua and Caleb were not disqualified by the unbelief and complaint of the rest of the nation. Their entry into the land was delayed, but God spared their lives when all others from their generation perished. No wilderness survival manual could be complete without pointing out the reason for their continuance. Their experiences were written for the benefit of today's saints, upon whom the end of the ages have come (I Corinthians 10:11).

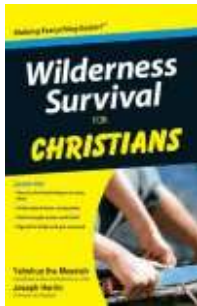
Joshua and Caleb were willing to follow Yahweh where others refused to follow. They spoke words of faith where others spoke words of unbelief and complaint against God. Joshua and Caleb honored Yahweh by their obedience and their words. They did not shrink back from the challenges to which Yahweh led them. These two men survived the wilderness because they loved not their lives even unto the death, and they considered Yahweh faithful who had given them the promise.

If you would survive your own wilderness experience you must be committed to following God even if no others go with you. You must not falter in obedience to God because others are unwilling to face the giants in the land. Though all others should refuse to go with you, you must set your face as flint to do all the will of Yahweh.

Those who died in the wilderness had lots of companions. Those who made it through did not.

Wilderness Survival for Christians - Part Three

Joseph Herrin (04-06-2010)



Wilderness Entry Point



If you were about to enter into a wilderness experience that a vast number of people had attempted before, an experience in which only a remnant survived, would you not want to study the lives of those who perished, and those who survived, that you might be prepared?

There are a great multitude of Christians who will perish in the wilderness. They will not enter into God's rest. They will fall short of possessing the glorious inheritance that could have been theirs.

In the Old Testament record of Israel's journey through the wilderness. We

are told that out of a group of 600,000 men above the age of twenty, there were only two who made it through the wilderness and entered into the promised land. These two were Joshua and Caleb.

It should be sobering to all Christians to consider that the events that occurred in that generation of Israelites who departed from bondage in Egypt is a parable of the experience all the saints of God are to pass through. We too have been purchased by the blood of a Lamb while living in Egypt (the world). We too are to depart in haste, having removed all leaven (sin) from our households. We are to be led of the Spirit in all our journeys, even as they were led by the pillar of fire and the cloud.

The apostle Paul declares to the church that they too should fear lest they fall short of entering into God's rest.

Hebrews 4:1-3

Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. For we who have believed enter that rest, just as He has said, "As I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest."

I do not observe among Christians today any fear of being disqualified by God from entering into their inheritance. The church has been lulled to sleep by the monotonous drone of endless preachers who proclaim a gospel of ease and comfort. Neglected is the message of the disciple's cross. Scorned is the doctrine of suffering, perseverance, and self-sacrifice. And like the ten virgins who were sleeping when the bridegroom returned, so too will the majority of the church be fast asleep at an hour when they should be watchful and alert.

Let me remind you of that which I have shared already. Even as the Israelites on the night of the first Passover were led immediately out of Egypt into a wilderness journey, there is such an experience appointed to everyone who comes to Christ for salvation. If you are to be numbered among the overcomers in Christ and have not surrendered to be led of His Spirit wherever He would lead, then you will soon be brought to this place of complete abandonment to the will of God.

Luke 14:27

"Whoever does not carry *his own cross* and come after Me cannot be My disciple."

Our cross is simply a surrender of our will to God. He will lead all His obedient sons and daughters on a path of His choosing. All are required to surrender their will, their dreams, and their plans, for they have been bought with a price and are no longer their own. It is the Father's will to lead all through a wilderness experience.

This wilderness experience has been depicted in various ways. Christ called it the "narrow path."

Matthew 7:14

"For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it."



I have written elsewhere that the word translated as “narrow” is in many other places throughout the New Testament rendered as “afflicted.” This is what the word means. The path to life is an afflicted way. The Israelites found the path to the promised land to be an afflicted way. Yahweh tested them in many ways before they arrived at their destination. He wanted to prove what was in their hearts.

Deuteronomy 8:2-4

And you shall remember all the way which Yahweh your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. And He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh.

The apostle Paul declared that everything that the Israelites experienced serve as examples of the things Christians will also face. We also must be tested, and a great many will fail the test.

I Corinthians 10:1-12

For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and all ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness. *Now these things happened as examples for us*, that we should not crave evil things, as they also craved. And do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. *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.*

This message of testing is nowhere found in the church houses of prosperity today. It has been replaced with a message of self-indulgence. Christians are told to pursue their best life now. They are told to pursue both God and mammon. The shepherds, and the flocks they feed, love it to be this way. Who wants to hear a message of enduring difficulties when there is another gospel being proclaimed? Yet only one of these paths leads to life. The vast majority have chosen the broad way that leads to destruction.

The patterns of the Old Testament agree with the plainly spoken words of Christ. Only a remnant are at this time being saved. The vast majority of those who name the name of Jesus Christ/Yahshua the Messiah are following a path to destruction.

Matthew 22:11-14

"But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw there a man not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, ' Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ' Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' *For many are called, but few are chosen.*"

Over half a million men received the call to leave Egypt and enter into the land flowing with milk and honey. Yet only two men of that generation did so. Are the percentages much different today? It is necessary that YOU look to the examples given in Scriptures to determine why so many failed, and so few succeeded. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat its mistakes.

You will most assuredly be required to pass through a wilderness experience. It is your choice whether you end up a corpse there, or pass through it to enter into your inheritance. Look at the following Scripture with an eye open to discern what the difference was between the overcomers and the corpses.

Numbers 14:22-32

Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs, which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice, shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it. But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it... And Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who are grumbling against Me? I have heard the complaints of the sons of Israel, which they are making against Me. Say to them, 'As I live,' says Yahweh, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing,

so I will surely do to you; your corpses shall fall in this wilderness, even all your numbered men, according to your complete number from twenty years old and upward, who have grumbled against Me. Surely you shall not come into the land in which I swore to settle you, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun. Your children, however, whom you said would become a prey - I will bring them in, and they shall know the land which you have rejected. But as for you, your corpses shall fall in this wilderness.”



What did Israel do to incur this judgment from Yahweh? We read that they grumbled against God; they tested God's patience; they did not listen to His voice; they spurned Yahweh; and they spoke words of unbelief.

In order to learn from their example we must be very practical. What is it that Yahweh is calling His people to do today? He is calling them to cease from their own works that they might ever live to do His will. This is Sabbath rest, ceasing from our own works.

Hebrews 4:9-12

There remains therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God. *For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.* Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall through following the same example of disobedience.

Do you not want to fall in the wilderness? If you do not, then you must cease

from your own works as God rested from His. This was the pattern of Christ. Six times in John's gospel Yahshua testified, "I never do anything of My own initiative. I only do the will of the Father." Yahshua is our pattern man. Did He not begin His ministry by being led into the wilderness by the Spirit? This was a parable of that which all who would follow Him must do. We must be led of the Spirit through our own wilderness experience. In this place we too will be led to buffet our bodies and rule over our appetites. In this wilderness place we too will be tempted by the devil. Christ was victorious, and so too may all be who have been born again of His Spirit.

This then is the entry point into your own wilderness experience. You must surrender to be led of the Spirit.

Luke 4:1-2

And Yahshua, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and *was led about by the Spirit in the wilderness* for forty days, being tempted by the devil.

Romans 8:14

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

We do not choose our own wilderness experiences. Nor will everyone experience identical circumstances. Yet the common experience of all is that they are being led of the Spirit wherever they go.

It should seem incredible that there could be so many Christians today who have never faced this moment of decision. The churches and preachers have not told them what is required to be a disciple of Christ. There is never any warning from the pulpits today to count the cost before confessing Christ as Savior AND LORD. Consequently, the path to life is seldom ever attained. The

afflicted path is not considered. The way to life has been hidden by generations of neglect.

Matthew 16:24-26

Then Yahshua said to His disciples, *"If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it."*

Look at the message of these words that are seldom proclaimed today. To arrive at the destination that Christ has arrived at, to stand with the overcomers upon Mount Zion, a man must deny himself; he must take up his cross; he must be willing to lose his life. This is the only way to follow Christ, for these are the things He did.



Here then is the great point of entrance to the wilderness. Will you surrender to the will of another, even the will of the One who gave His life for you? Will you trust Him with your life, not shrinking back from anything He would ask of you? You may have many fears. You may experience perplexity, and suffer

the loss of many things. Can you do so without complaint? Will you follow when others are shrinking back?

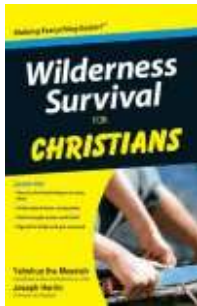
We have a Savior who knows our frame and our weaknesses. He took upon Himself the form of sinful man. He was tempted in all ways as we are, yet without sin. He knew all the emotions of this flesh. He was rejected by His people. He was misunderstood by those closest to Him. Though He walked among multitudes He was alone with His Father.

We have a sympathetic High Priest who will stand with us in all things. Nothing can separate us from His love. He is inviting you to cast your life over into His hands without any reservation. He has promised you an afflicted path, but He has said He will walk it with you.

There is truly a fellowship in His sufferings. All He is asking is that you trust Him, and follow Him freely. This is where the journey begins.

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 instructed 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.

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.



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.

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

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.

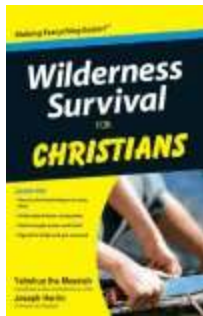
We too are seeking to enter into the land of our inheritance. Our Savior has promised us that He goes to prepare a place for us. We will one day receive many glorious things, but on our journey to that destination we should travel very lightly through this world. We are aliens and strangers here. This 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.



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 forward 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 disciple 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 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 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 persecuted.

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.

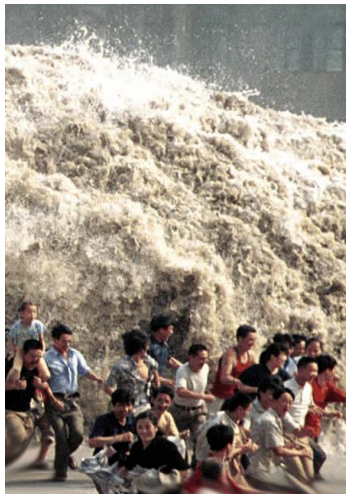
Hebrews 3:7-11

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.

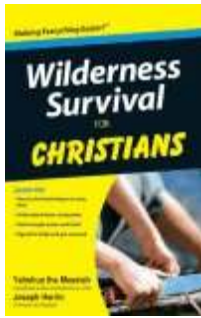
Matthew 24:37-40

"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 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 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.” 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 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.

As I was gaining an understanding of this aspect of the disciple's walk I wrote two articles at the time that some may find helpful

A Spectacle Before Spectators

The Silence of the Lambs