

Open: Story

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 - They had been subjected to worldly, paganistic doctrine.
 - They had known bondage for so long that it had turned from chains to security.
 - They had made their own towns and graveyards to bury their dead.
- Now after 430 years of Egyptian rule, they are on their way out.
 - They had seen the plagues of Israel.
 - They had seen the Egyptians supply them with all their needs as they left.
- As God promised, after nearly 430 years, Moses led the Jews on a mass exodus from Egypt.
 - Moses led the people as God directed; and as we see in **vs. 17**, God didn't lead them North through the land of the Philistines.
 - Going through the land of the Philistines would, on the surface, appear to have been a logical choice, the easiest path, and by far the quickest route to the doorstep of Canaan.
 - They could have avoided the Red Sea and the heart of the Great Arabian Desert.
 - They would've had civilizations to trade with for the various items they would have needed.
 - They could have had a pretty coastal view, instead they have a sandy view as far in any direction as the eye could see.

Tran:

- It is obvious why following God into the wilderness would have been a difficult adjustment.
- There will be times in life when you will see a seemingly easier path, but it is important to understand that there is not path easier than obedience to God. **"What Is the Purpose of the wilderness?"**

I. **What was the purpose of the wilderness? God was teaching us to have Faith in Him.**

- *"The journey isn't about the destination, it's about the relationship that's established along the journey."*

- A. God wanted to show His children that He is all they **needed**. **Ps. 81:10** *"I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."*
- i. They wanted the leeks and garlic..... God wanted to give them milk and honey.
 - ii. They wanted plenty of water God wanted to be their water.
 - iii. They wanted the dainty meats of Egypt..... God wanted to be their satisfaction.
- B. God wanted to show us, that in Him and in Him alone, they could find **liberty**. **II Peter 2:13-19** *"And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; [14] Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: [15] Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; [16] But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. [17] These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. [18] For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. [19] While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage."*

C. God wanted to show His children that He had their **best** interest in mind. **Jer. 29:11-14** *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. [12] Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. [13] And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. [14] And I will be found of you, saith the Lord: and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all the nations, and from all the places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive.”*

i. A life of Faith is not always the easiest, but it is always the most fulfilling.

ii. For every struggle there is a grace that is more abundant than my need.

iii. There are blessings in struggles and victories that are a result of battle if we are willing to trust that

God not only wants what is best for us; but that he can deliver the best to us His way in His time.

D. Too many Christians are looking back at what they left in Egypt, and they miss the **present blessings** God has to offer.

▪ Carnal man can only dream of things half as good as those things that God has promised to give the obedient child of God.

a) They forgot the bondage but remember the physical pleasure.

b) God had to wean them off their tastes for worldliness and teach them to enjoy the things He had to offer them.

c) God had to take them out of their comfort zone and teach them to rely on Him and teach them to rely on Him for every need, not just when situations were out of their control.

➤ *“If we follow Him the pillars will stay.”* – **Ex. 13:22**

II. **What was the purpose of the wilderness? God was teaching us the formula for Pleasing Him.**

A. There had to be a time of **instruction** before they had **victory** in Canaan. **Lam 3:27** *“It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.”*

i. They were not ready to face the struggles of Canaan. With every victory there must first be a struggle, and in every struggle, there are things we need to know to be successful. (Character, Faith, Dependence)

ii. Everyone wants victory in Canaan, but many will reject the teaching that will give them victory.

a) These are those who wash out of bootcamp.

b) These are those couch quarterbacks.

c) These are those living room coaches.

➤ *“Without instruction what should be victory for the child of God could turn into defeat for the child of God.”*

B. For 430 years they had been indoctrinated by the paganism of Egypt. God **cannot** be pleased by paganistic behavior and worship.

i. Had to give them the 10 Commandments.

ii. Had to teach them the importance of Morals.

iii. Had to teach them the importance of human life.

iv. Had to teach them what to do when in disagreement.

a) God did not lead them through the Land of the Philistines because they would have got more confused and mixed up in their paganism.

b) God was teaching them the importance of waiting on Him.

c) Don't get so excited about leaving Egypt that you miss the training in the wilderness.

- “God had to prepare his people to live in the promise land; just as much as he had to prepare the promise land for his people.” – **Lev. 26**

III. **What was the purpose of the wilderness? God was teaching us to fret not in God's plan.**

A. The children of Israel would face many great trying battles. God wanted to teach them that **if** His plans are followed, then things will work out for the best.

- i. He had to train them to set aside their own **logic** and take up the mind of Christ. **Prov. 3:5-7** “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. [6] In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. [7] Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil.”
- ii. He had to teach them to **trust** in His ways because His ways are higher than their ways. **Is. 55:7-11** “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. 8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. 10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: 11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

B. **if** the Christian can't learn to trust God with the simple things, then the big victories will never come.

- **Matt. 6:25-26; 30-33** “Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? 26 Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? [30] Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? [31] Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? [32] (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. [33] But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

2 Peter 1:3

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:”

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