

A SERVANT IN THE WILDERNESS

WILDERNESS - Greek word defines this as “an uninhabited place; desert; place of desolation”

1. The Earth, and the present world order, is a spiritual wilderness; Deut. 32:10; 1 John 5:19
2. The wilderness experience includes many trials and tribulation; John 16:33. The number 40 is associated with a “probation time” in the wilderness; Jonah 3:4; Hebrews 3:8-9
3. Israel was in the wilderness 40 years before they could enter the Promised Land; Deut. 8:1-3
4. Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days before He entered His public ministry; Mark 1:12-13
5. After His death, and before Jesus ascended into Heaven, for 40 days, He instructed His disciples (who would be severely tested) of things pertaining to the Kingdom of God; Acts 1:1-3

CANAAN is the Promised Land; Gen. 12:5; Exodus 3:8; Deut. 6:23; Jer. 32:22

1. Canaan is not Heaven; it is the reality of the spirit-filled life and blessings of God’s Kingdom.
2. Canaan represents God’s promises and it speaks of our inheritance in Christ; Ephesians 1:3
3. God’s people must “drive out” the wicked inhabitants (evil spiritual influences) of the land; Deut. 7:1, through spiritual warfare; Eph. 6:10-17. They must overcome the obstacles; Rev. 21:7

The Wilderness Preparation

1. The wilderness experience is a testing time, designed to turn God’s people from their rebellious ways and carnal appetites, to embracing the will of God; Deut. 8:2-4; Psalm 78
2. Time spent in the wilderness includes times of crisis, seclusion and brokenness. In this environment, God’s desire is that His servant will be led to the place of “full surrender”.
3. God’s call upon His servant’s life invades his “comfort level”; the “props” that he has depended upon and activities that have kept him continually occupied are stripped away.
4. Worldly appetites lose their strength; desire for power, fame and success loses its grip upon God’s servant. Idols are exposed; selfish motives and ambitions are revealed; 1 Cor. 12:2
5. God’s servant must be emptied of self, through the power of the Cross, so that the will of God can fully operate. The emptying of self makes room for the fullness of God; Eph. 3:19; 4:13
6. God’s servant will suffer; he must be proven, disciplined and “made weak” in his own strength, prior to becoming strong in God’s strength; 2 Cor. 12:9; Hebrews 5:8
7. Self-reliance is shattered and replaced with total reliance in God to meet every need.
8. Servants become messengers. God will bring his servant to his “wit’s end” over and over again, by allowing adversity and devastating experiences to break in upon him; Psalm 38
9. Hardship, separation and persecution will prepare him to become a faithful, courageous “herald”. The “fear of the Lord” will replace the “fear of man”; Jer. 1:17-19; Prov. 29:25
10. As the Lord’s prisoner, he is placed in an environment of confinement and solitude; as a bondsman, he learns to, and delights in doing, his Master’s will; Genesis 40:15; Ephesians 4:1
11. There are wild beasts and creatures in the Wilderness; Deut. 8:15; Mark 1:13
 - a. God’s servants become stronger in each battle as they prevail; 1 Sam. 17:34-37; Ex. 23:29
 - b. Our present warfare is preparing us for greater conflict ahead; 2 Sam. 21:18-22; Rev. 19:14
12. There is supernatural guidance and direction given in the Wilderness; Num. 14:14; Ps. 78:52
 - a. God’s servants learn to watch, to “follow the Cloud” of His presence; Exodus 13:21-22
 - b. They listen for the trumpet to alert them; Num. 10:2, 5, 6; 1 Cor. 14:8; Rev. 1:10; 4:1
13. God furnishes a table for His servants in the Wilderness; Psalm 78:19
 - a. There is a table prepared for communion and fellowship with Him; Ps. 23:5; Rev. 3:20
 - b. There is divine supply and supernatural provision; Deut. 2:7; 8:16; Ps. 78:20-29

- 14.** God's messengers will "taste and see" some things before they can speak:
- a. "Take it and eat it" (scroll, the book, the Word of God); Ez. 3:1-3; Jer. 15:16; Rev. 10:8-10
 - b. They first "eat it" and then they "speak it"; it is sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly (they digest and absorb some difficult words!); Ezekiel 3:4; Ps. 119:103; Matthew 28:20
 - c. The book is "spread out" before them; they can read (decipher) that which is written "within" (hidden meanings and truth) and "without" (the obvious, surface meaning); Ezekiel 2:9-10
 - d. God allows His messengers to taste some "unpleasant" things: bread which comes out of "man" (the old nature) and "beast"; it has a strange smell and taste; Ezek. 4:9-15; Lev. 10:1
 - e. The dealings of the Lord, and the revelation of His glory, births compassion in His messengers; they see their true condition before God and can identify with His people; Is. 6:5-8
- 15.** God's messengers are "the message"; Haggai 1:13; Ezekiel 4:1; 2 Corinthians 3:2
- a. Joseph was called to the throne (to rule); he was abandoned by his brothers, thrown into a pit in the wilderness, was sold as a slave and taken to Egypt; Gen. 37:22-28; 39:1
 - b. Jacob spent time alone in the wilderness, running away from relatives. It was there that his name was changed to "Israel" after he wrestled with an angel; Gen. 32:24-32
 - c. Moses heard God's voice, received his call, while alone in a desolate place; Ex. 3:1-10
 - d. Elijah was depressed, on the run, when the Lord came and instructed him; 1 Kings 19:1-18
 - e. David fled from Saul and found refuge in a cave in the wilderness with other "misfits" of Saul's kingdom (these became his mighty men); 1 Samuel 22:1-4
- 16.** John the Baptist's preaching was in the Wilderness; Matthew 11:7-9
- a. The voice in the wilderness (Elijah ministry) is "outside the camp"; Matthew 3:1-12
 - b. The forerunner's ministry is seen before the "face of Jesus" is seen; it prepares "the way of the Lord"; Malachi 3:1; Luke 1:76
 - c. He is clothed with "camel's hair": his messages "prick" the flesh; Matthew 3:4
- 17.** God's people either emerge from the Wilderness victorious, or they die there, never entering into their land of promise; Hebrews 10:1-11
- 18.** When God's servant comes out of the Wilderness, they are cleansed, broken, chastened and purified if they embrace the dealings of God, and if they respond appropriately.
- 19.** The COMING OUT OF the Wilderness portrays the one who has forsaken the "wandering, worldly life" and their union with Christ has begun; Song of Solomon 3:6
- a. This includes coming out of the confinement of the Pentecostal realm, an in-part realm of mixture, into the Most Holy Place (gifts can operate apart from obedience and godly behavior).
 - b. They are like "pillars of smoke": their lives are as a burnt offering unto God.
 - c. They are "perfumed" with myrrh (the principle of the Cross and its suffering) and frankincense (the principle of worship and intercession).
 - d. They possess the "powders of the merchant": they have "sold all" for the Kingdom. The Lord is the Merchant, Who enriches His people with the "fragrant virtues" of truth and grace.
- 20.** There is also a COMING UP FROM the Wilderness, of one who is now "leaning on the beloved"; Song of Sol. 8:5. This is a description of the union of two who have become "one":
- a. The individual who began as a "keeper of goats"; Song of Sol. 1:8, is now "one" with Him. She (the Bride) is the "choice one" and His desire is toward her; Song of Sol. 6:9; 7:10. This is a picture of marriage and intimacy with Christ.
 - b. She is "sealed" and transformed. God's goal for His people is to bring them from the state of being a "forgiven sinner" to becoming a "life-giving spirit"; Song of Sol. 8:6-14

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