



Revelations & Reflections Newsletter
(June 21, 2006)

IN THE WILDERNESS

What does the wilderness experience mean for me, Lord?

As I was studying this morning, I was looking for the scripture that talks about choosing life and not death. I was reasonably sure it was in Deuteronomy, but not sure where, so I set about hunting for it. As I did, I discovered something I heard long ago, but needed a refresher in. The wilderness has a purpose. Even if we look back to **Exodus 3:18** (NIV), when the Lord God is first talking to Moses about liberating the Israelites from Egypt, He says for Moses to tell Pharaoh, "The Lord our God of the Hebrews has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God." Thus, the original intent for leaving the bondage of Egypt was to "offer sacrifices to the Lord."

God goes on to tell Moses all the things that will happen when he returns to Egypt, and in **Exodus 4:22-23** (NIV) God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh, "²²This is what the Lord says: Israel is my firstborn son, ²³and I told you, 'Let my son go, so he may worship me.'" Interestingly enough, the KJV uses the word "serve" instead of worship, so I looked up the original word to see what it means. Amazingly enough, it's a prime root that means "to work." It has so many more meanings and inferences than that, that I won't even go into right now, but one of those meanings includes "worshipper." We can even look back to the story of Abraham when he was going to sacrifice Isaac in obedience to God (**Genesis 22**). In this story we find that Abraham "and the lad will go yonder and worship (v5 KJV), so in this we see sacrifice, obedience, and worship linked together in one act.

So, where are we? There are three distinct things I see in all of this.

1. God brought them out of Egypt to sacrifice to Him (Exodus 3:18).
2. He brought them out of Egypt to serve/worship Him (Exodus 4:22-23).
3. God was apparently looking for obedience in the process (Genesis 22:5).

The part I found to be really good is the scripture I was looking at this morning:

Deuteronomy 8:2-4 (NIV): ² Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. ³He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your fathers had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

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⁴Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. ⁵Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you. ⁶Observe the commands of the Lord your God, walking in His ways and revering him."

So, back to my original point. There is a purpose for the wilderness:

1. To humble us
2. To test us to know what is in our hearts
3. To know if we will keep His commands
4. To cause us to hunger
5. To reveal something new to us
6. To teach us to rely on the Word of God
7. To provide for us
8. To discipline us.
9. To teach us to obey Him
10. To teach us to revere (fear) Him

There is so much more in this waiting to come alive, now is not yet the time. However, before I go, I want to leave you with the scripture I was actually looking for when all of this began.

Deuteronomy 30:19 (NIV): "This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live."

I pray what the Word and the Spirit of God has revealed thus far will touch your heart and strengthen your spirit! May His grace, His mercy, and His peace be upon you today!

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