

Fake News Series:
"Fake News About The Wilderness"
GFC
November 26, 2017

INTRODUCTION:

QUESTION: What comes to mind when you think about a "wilderness experience"?

- A place where there is a **LACK OF FOOD**
- A place where there is a **LACK OF WATER**
- A place where God has **ABANDONED** you
- A place God uses **TO PUNISH YOU.**

Exodus 13:17-18 (NLT)

¹⁷ When Pharaoh finally let the people go, God did not lead them along the main road that runs through Philistine territory, even though that was the shortest route to the Promised Land. God said, "If the people are faced with a battle, they might change their minds and return to Egypt." ¹⁸ So God led them in a roundabout way through the wilderness toward the Red Sea.^[a] Thus the Israelites left Egypt like an army ready for battle.

GOD USES THE WILDERNESS TO:

- PROTECT US from things we are **NOT YET READY FOR:**
- TO TRAIN US to **LEARN VALUES AND ESTABLISH PRIORITIES**
- **TO EQUIP US TO BECOME DISCIPLES AND THE ARMY HE SEES US AS!**

NOTE:

OUR CHRISTIAN CULTURE HAS DISTORTED THE GREAT COMMISSION. JESUS CHRIST DID NOT COMMISSION US TO MAKE CONVERTS. HE COMMISSIONED US TO MAKE DISCIPLES!

Matthew 28:19-20 (NLT)

¹⁹ Therefore, go and ***make disciples*** of all the nations,^[a] baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ ***Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands*** I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

THE MISSION TO MAKE CONVERTS IS THE SAME AS TRYING TO PROMOTE GETTING BABIES BORN IN ALL THE NURSURIES WE CAN BUILD. BUT IF THESE “NEWBORNS” NEVER GROW UP AND GET TRAINED TO ACHIEVE THEIR PURPOSE AND DESTINY, WHERE WILL THE DOCTORS, LAWYERS, ARCHITECTS, POLICEMEN, FIRE FIGHTERS, PASTORS, MISSIONARIES AND EVANGLISTS COME FROM?

NOTE:

THE DEVIL IS NOT INTIMIDATED BY THE NUMBER OF “BABIES” BORN INTO THE KINGDOM OF GOD. HE IS TERRIFIED BY THE NUMBER OF TRAINED SOLDIERS THAT ARE BUILT UP INTO A MASSIVE, STANDING SPIRITUAL ARMY FOCUSED ON TRANSFORMING THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD INTO THE KINGDOM OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST!

KEY:

WHEN GOD BRINGS YOU TO A ‘WILDERNESS DETOUR’ REALIZE THAT HE IS GETTING READY TO TRAIN YOU TO TAKE POSSESSION OF YOUR PROMISED LAND, NOT KEEP YOU FROM IT!

1. MANNA: LEARNING TO EAT IN THE WILDERNESS: (EX. 16:4)

Exodus 16:4 (NLT)

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Look, I’m going to rain down food from heaven for you. Each day the people can go out and ***pick up as much food as they need for that day.*** I will test them in this to see whether or not they will follow my instructions.

- They needed to GATHER THE BREAD DAILY – just enough for the day.
- If they gathered more than their daily portion, it turned to WORMS
- They needed to do this EVERY DAY; EARLY IN THE MORNING

NOTE:

THIS WAS NOT TO LET THEM THINK THAT GOD WAS A STINGY GOD. HE DID THIS SO THAT THEY WOULD LEARN TO KNOW THAT *MAN DOES NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD!*

- HE WANTED THEM TO BE TRAINED TO SEEK HIS WORD IN THE MORNING FIRST THING! (MATT. 6:33)

- HE WANTED THEM TO LEARN THAT THEY COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT A WORD FROM GOD DAILY!
- HE WANTED THEM TO LEARN THAT THEY COULDN'T LIVE OF YESTERDAY'S LEFT OVERS, BUT DETERMINE TO SEEK OUT 'FRESH BREAD' DAILY FROM HEAVEN.

NOTE:

HE WANTED TO TRAIN THEM TO SEEK HIM OUT DAILY AS IF THEIR VERY LIVES DEPENDED UPON IT. HE WANTED THEM TO LEARN ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE UPON HIM AND HIS WORD.

(ILLUSTRATE: HOLOCOST SURVIVOR ON TRAIN EATING A SANDWICH)

2. LEARNING WHERE TO FIND WATER IN THE WILDERNESS: (EX. 17:6)

Exodus 17:6 (NLT)

⁶ I will stand before you on the rock at Mount Sinai.^[a] Strike the rock, and water will come gushing out. Then the people will be able to drink." ***So Moses struck the rock as he was told, and water gushed out*** as the elders looked on.

- WATER is essential to our survival.
- We can live 3 weeks without food.
- We can only live 3 DAYS without water!

Psalms 105:41 (NLT)

⁴¹ He split open a rock, and water gushed out to ***form a river*** through the dry wasteland.

- This wasn't a ONE TIME DEAL
- This happened REGULARLY when they needed water to live

1 Corinthians 10:4 (NLT)

⁴ and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ.

NOTE:

THEY KEY HERE IS NOT JUST HAVING WATER. IT WAS HAVING "LIVING WATER"! THAT IS, MOVING WATER LIKE A RIVER!

THE LESSON:

GOD DOESN'T WANT US TO BRING OUR OWN WATER SOURCE THAT WE'VE STORED UP FOR OURSELVES. HE WANTS US TO LEARN TO

DISCERN THAT OUR ONLY TRUE SOURCE OF LIVING WATER COMES FROM HIM AND HIM ALONE! THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE!

A LESSON FROM JEREMIAH:

Jeremiah 2:13 (NLT)

¹³ “For my people have done two evil things:

They have abandoned me—

the fountain of living water.

And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns
that can hold no water at all!

- **GOD WANTS TO HAVE A LIVING RELATIONSHIP WITH US**
- **HE WANTS US TO DEPEND ON THAT LIVING RELATIONSHIP FOR OUR VERY SURVIVAL**
- **HE IS THE LIVING GOD, NOT A DEAD, DEAF AND DUMB IDOL OF THE NATIONS AROUND US**

HIS AIM IS THAT WE KNOW THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER; AND THAT WE HAVE THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER WELLING UP FROM OUR INNER MOST BEING!

- **JESUS IS THAT ROCK; THAT FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATER.**
- **WE AREN'T FOLLOWING A DEAD, TRADITIONAL, RELIGIOUS FIGUREHEAD!**
- **WE ARE FOLLOWING THE LIVING WATER IN A LIVING WAY.**
- **THE LIFE THAT IS IN HIM IS INTENDED TO BE IN US!**
- **THERE IS NO SUBSTITUE; AND NO CISTERN WE CAN DIG BY OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING THAT CAN SATISFY!**

John 7:38-39 (NLT)

³⁸ Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ***‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’***^[e] ³⁹ ***(When he said “living water,” he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him...)***

NOTE:

IN THE ‘WILDERNESS’ OF RELIGION, GOD WANTS US TO DISCERN AND DISCOVER BY EXPERIENCE THAT LIVING WATER THAT COMES FROM JESUS CHRIST... THE ONE WHO BAPTIZES WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND FIRE!

3. LEARNING TO DESIRE HIS PRESENCE MORE THAN HIS PROVISION:

- The Israelites COMPLAINED about FOOD in the presence of the Pillar of fire and cloud
- They COMPLAINED about WATER in the presence of the Pillar of fire and cloud
- THEY ACTED LIKE HE WASN'T WITH THEM BECAUSE THEY ONLY KNEW HIM BY WHAT HE PROVIDED FOR THEM!

Psalm 103:7 New Living Translation (NLT)

⁷ He revealed his **character** to Moses and his **deeds** to the people of Israel.

- The people gauged whether God was with them by His PROVISION
- MOSES KNEW HE WAS WITH THEM, BECAUSE HE MET HIM FACE TO FACE...

NOTE:

THERE IS A RELATIONSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP WITH THE FATHER THROUGH CHRIST THAT IS AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE WHO WANTS IT. MOSES SPOKE WITH GOD AS A MAN SPEAKS WITH HIS FRIEND.

Exodus 33:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴ The LORD replied, "I will personally go with you, Moses, and I will give you rest—everything will be fine for you."

¹⁵ Then Moses said, "***If you don't personally go with us, don't make us leave this place.***"

Exodus 33:11 (NLT)

¹¹ Inside the Tent of Meeting, ***the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.*** Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, would remain behind in the Tent of Meeting.

- LEARNING THE PRESENCE OF GOD IS TEACHABLE and TRANSFERRABLE!
- ALL JOSHUA'S CAN LEARN IT FROM THEIR MOSESES!

NOTE:

AN ENTIRE GENERATION MISSED CANAAN BECAUSE THEY REBELLED AGAINST GOD IN DISBELIEF! LET'S NOT HARDEN OUR HEARTS AS THEY DID....

4. LEARNING TO DEFEAT THE DEVIL IN THE WILDERNESS:

- ISRAEL was trained to become a standing army in the wilderness
- They would need to know WARFARE in order to DEFEAT THE GIANTS in the land of Canaan
- Our **final illustration** comes from the NEW TESTAMENT:

THE SCAPEGOAT:

Leviticus 16:8 (NLT)

⁸ He is to cast sacred lots to determine which goat will be reserved as an offering to the LORD and which will carry the sins of the people to the wilderness...

DAY OF ATONEMENT:

- TWO ANIMAL SACRIFICES WERE SELECTED
- ONE was selected FOR THE LORD – sacrificed and blood sprinkled on Mercy Seat
- THE OTHER was selected as the Scapegoat – this one was LED INTO THE WILDERNESS, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN
- THE FIRST LAMB ATONED FOR OUR SINS AND TRANSGRESSIONS
- THE SCAPEGOAT ATONED FOR OUR SINFUL NATURE

A POWERFUL REVELATION:

- AT JOHN'S BAPTISM – Jesus is called THE LAMB OF GOD which takes away the sins of the world
- The NEXT SCENE – is HE IS LED OF THE SPIRIT **INTO THE WILDERNESS**
- **THERE HE DEFEATS THE DEVIL USING THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD!**
- JESUS ATONED FOR ALL OF OUR SINS AND THE SINS OF THE WHOLE WORLD
- HE ALSO ATONED FOR OUR SINFUL NATURE AND WE CAN RECEIVE A NEW ONE WHEN WE BELIEVE IN HIM – NEW BIRTH
- WE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS INTO OUR WILDERNESSES TO LEARN TO DEFEAT THE DEVIL WITH THE WORD OF GOD JUST AS HE DID!

CLOSE:

THE SCAPEGOAT COMES BACK FROM THE WILDERNESS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND PROCLAIMS THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM IN WORD AND DEED!

Luke 4:14 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹⁴ Then Jesus returned to Galilee, *filled with the Holy Spirit's power*. Reports about him spread quickly through the whole region.

THE WILDERNESS IS DESIGNED BY GOD TO BE A PLACE WHERE WE:

- **LEARN TO LIVE BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM GOD'S MOUTH**
- **LEARN TO BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO SATISFY OUR THIRST**
- **LEARN TO ESTABLISH A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD FACE TO FACE**
- **LEARN TO DEFEAT THE DEVIL WITH THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT AS JESUS DID**

PURPOSE OF 'WILDERNESS TRAINING SCHOOL':

TO RECOGNIZE THE TRUE 'DESERT' –

- **LIVING IN THE COMFORT OF CANAAN W/O WORD = DESERT**
- **LIVING IN RELIGIOUS COMFORT W/O SPIRIT = DESERT**
- **LIVING IN PHYSICAL COMFORT WITHOUT PRESENCE = DESERT**

NOTE:

GOD USES THE WILDERNESS TO CULTIVATE DESPARATION IN US FOR HIS WORD, HIS SPIRIT AND HIS PRESENCE!

WHAT FOLLOWS? GOING IN THE POWER OF THE SPIRIT TO PROCLAIM THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM!