

In the Wilderness, B'Midbar by Jennifer Ross

Have you ever found yourself wandering in a place in your life that is dark, foreign and foreboding? Maybe it's troubles with finances. Maybe its family or health issues. And considering current economic times it could be everything rolled into one. And you are struggling to make sense of this place that seems to have no long-term relief in sight.

As believers we tend to fall back on soothing verses from Scripture to comfort our pain. King David's songs (psalms) are a good first stop. Paul's words about the LORD not giving us more than we can handle is a good one, too. Isaiah is a candy store of wisdom and reassurance. But if we just stop...be still...and go to the beginning of GOD's Word, the Torah, we find a reward not of sympathy, but of power.

Let's start with a point of reference: Deuteronomy 8:2-3

And you shall remember all the ways which Adonai your God has caused you to go these forty years in the wilderness, in order to humble you, to try you, to know that which is in your heart, whether you will keep His commandments or not.

And He has humbled you and caused you to hunger and caused you to eat the manna which you had not known, even your fathers had not known, in order to cause you to know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Adonai.

Midbar, the Hebrew word for wilderness, is indeed a physical place. But don't miss this...because **it** has a **Divine purpose**. I am pleading with any of you who, like me, have found yourselves in the Wilderness, to take heed of this truth. As we journey together we will see just how intentional GOD is.

We will see how relevant to our current circumstances these words found in Deuteronomy are; and we will see the Spiritual Truth that lies within.

The LORD says:

“You shall remember...”

The word ‘remember’ in Hebrew is *zakar*. It’s not like an *“Ooops, I almost forgot!”* kind of remember. *Zakar* is to remember in the sense of recording something. It is a point of time designed for a deliberate response.

GOD remembered Noah in the Ark and *caused* a wind to blow the waters away. He remembered Rachel and *opened up her womb*. And when it was time, He remembered the Israelites in Egypt and *delivered* them. Think of the moment He called you and you *responded by accepting Yeshua to reign over your life*. That was a moment when GOD remembered you.

If He has remembered *us* by our redemption (just like the Israelites)... what exactly is it that He wants us to remember?

“all the ways which Adonai your God has caused you to go”

I am redeemed. I hold fast to the sacrifice of my Savior, Yeshua. I serve my King Messiah with the full assurance of my inheritance. I’m not ashamed to tell people WHOM I serve, regardless of *what* they serve. I strive to live a Holy life and since both my husband and I lost our jobs, I haven’t complained or moaned. I just keep trying to make ends meet trusting in the LORD. In fact, I find myself consoling others who are worrying about me.

Regardless of how positive my attitude sounds... something is wrong. Do you see it? Do you see the problem? If you look closely... the problem is found in one, tiny, seemingly insignificant word... and that word is ‘I’.

My vision has been out of focus. It's not about me! **It's about GOD!** It's not about what *I* am enduring. It's about what **He is doing!** The path I have been marching down has led me here and if I turn and look at my steps, I need to record them. I need to record the steps I took that were pleasing to my GOD...and the steps I took that disappointed Him. After careful scrutiny, I must then react accordingly.

I need to stop thinking about GOD rescuing me out of this wilderness... and start thinking about the path He is leading me down. I have to stand firm (*believe*) in the truth that He led me here according to the plan and purpose He set for me.

So let's look a little deeper with clear vision to SEE just what GOD's intentions are as we *walk in the way in which He has caused us to go.*

'in order to humble you'

We have studied *anav* (humble) before. To have a character of *anav* is to be like Moses, in complete submission to GOD. No pride. We are in the wilderness to be humbled. Perhaps we just got too comfortable receiving His blessings and foolishly allowed the adversary to sneak in. Perhaps we thought we were living a life of humility, but the very fact that we *think* we are humble...is pride; a '*wolf in sheep's clothing*' if you will.

In my humility, the LORD is showing me the truth between what is necessary and right according to His system; and what is foolish and wrong. I've been wrestling with my own wickedness as He brings me low. He is stripping away any level of security I had in this world (on all fronts) and reminding me I am not of this world. After bringing us so low, we are ready for the next step.

'to try you'

Another way to say this is "*to test you.*" 'Try,' 'test,' or

'tempt'... the LORD is going to allow our enemy to have some fun with us. Whether you call him the 'destroyer'...or the 'deceiver'...or the 'adversary'...or one of his many other names, he is roaming the earth, to and fro, seeking those he can devour.

For any of you who doubt it, Satan not only has access to an audience before the LORD (read the book of Job)...but the evil that he is...was created by GOD.

that they may know from the sunrise and to the sunset I am the LORD and there is none else; forming light and creating darkness; making peace and creating evil– I, the LORD, do all these things. Isaiah 45:6-7

The LORD has led us into the Wilderness exposed and confused. He knows our shortcomings. He knows our weaknesses. And He allows our enemy to tempt and entice our flesh. Be aware of your sinful nature... and guard against it.

When we are feeling low...it's easy to fall victim to something that makes us 'feel' better. The enemy will throw all kinds of things at us to tickle our senses and give us a false sense of comfort and security. The ways of the enemy haven't changed. He will try to cause us to question GOD...or lift ourselves up with the false idea that we don't need GOD...or even worse, He will try to cause us to doubt GOD. And GOD is watching.

***'to know that which is in your heart,
whether you will keep His commandments or not'***

He's looking to see if we truly love Him. The key is to know Torah! Torah shows us what sin is. If we recognize sin, we can then choose to obey Him and resist the enemy's games. Holding to His instructions, especially in hard times, shows our true nature. Are we only striving to be Holy when things are going well? When it's easy? Or do we stand firm as everything around us crumbles?

WE HAVE TO IDENTIFY SIN IN ORDER TO DEFEAT IT!

As the enemy tests you...test the test. Test it against the Word of GOD... for the Word is your weapon...and the enemy can't stand against it. We know that the battle is the LORD's, but just like Joshua leading the Israelites into the Promised Land, we are called to engage the enemy head on, empowered by the LORD.

So here we are, humbled and tested. But another dimension to this wilderness experience is at hand. The LORD continues in Deuteronomy 8:

'caused you to hunger'

We've talked before about 'peeling the onion,' so yes, it is literal hunger. Peel away some layers and hunger represents a general aching. We ache for comfort. We ache for security. We ache for what we've lost. We trust the LORD yet still struggle with the aches of our flesh none-the-less.

In my personal walk, more than ever, I've ached for GOD to reveal Himself to me in this Wilderness. And with every step I take I'm gaining a clearer vision of Wisdom & Understanding, Humility & Love.

And you know what? He has been feeding me...

'and caused you to eat the manna which you had not known...'

In Exodus 16:3 the Israelites are complaining about being hungry. They say to Moses and Aaron: ***"Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt in our sitting by the flesh-pots, in our eating bread to satisfaction. For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill all this assembly with hunger."***

A few days before this, they were singing and dancing glorifying the LORD for His majesty and salvation. They were praising Him for destroying their enemy and now, in the

wilderness, they are aching for what they had. They were aching for the 'good' parts of their lives back in Egypt.

And the LORD told Moses ***"Behold I AM! Bread will rain from the heavens for you. And the people shall go out and gather the matter of a day in its day, so that I may test them, whether they will walk in my Torah or not."***

The bread the LORD rained on them was called *manna*. In Hebrew, *manna* means 'what is it' (Ex: 16-15) because it was something the Israelites had never seen before. And GOD designed it so they only took what they needed each day. You can read on in Exodus and find that the Israelites who didn't trust and tried to take more than a day's share were found to be disobedient to His instructions (Torah). In GOD's economy, intentional disobedience equates to not loving Him.

I lost my job and after several months of searching, a job I *wasn't* searching for... fell in my lap. I accepted, no questions asked, anticipating with full assurance GOD was fixing my problem. Immediately after I started, I doubted that was the case at all!

This job has put me in a place I jokingly refer to as 'my own personal Nineveh'. Like Jonah, who resisted the call to go to Nineveh, once I saw the reality of where I was, I fought against it. In fact, every time I had a good reason to quit...and I was prepared to do just that...the problem would disappear. The LORD wasn't going to let me leave.

Let me explain. At my new job I am surrounded by evil. I'm not quick to judge so when I say 'evil' it is a real darkness that permeates the air. Every day I feel dirty... and the pay is substantially less than the bills. Yet again, we see the focus on me and not on GOD. I sound like the Israelites complaining to Moses, don't I? Can any of you relate to what I am saying?

As I struggle with the monetary issues of this world, the LORD has been doing a work in me that is absolutely amazing. I am working as a front-desk clerk at a motel and He has put people who desperately need to know Him right in my path. Management, co-workers and guests alike, all day long I deal with people who are lost; people who call *my wilderness* 'home'.

I've come to terms with the fact that the Spirit has led me here and go to work wielding my weapon: the WORD of GOD. I open it at the front desk for all to see and go about my tasks.

You are the light of the world; a city situated on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under the grain measure, but on the lampstand; and it shines for all who are in the house. So let your light shine before men so that they may see your good works and may glorify your Father in Heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

Now the focus is not on me...it's on His work through me.

I have drawn my weapon in several situations and GOD, in His Faithfulness, has seen me through. It's amazing how people who don't walk according to GOD change when you bring GOD into the picture. I'm not talking about preaching, no, no, no. But if you love Adonai, Elohim with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength (which He is leading you into the wilderness to judge) He rises and reveals Himself. Your words, your methods, your attitude...all of it...should reflect His Power and Glory. ***"Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing to you, LORD."* Psalm 19:14**

As always, to GOD be the victory!

Something else He is feeding me is the understanding of true and unadulterated love between the children of GOD. In my pride, I was always the one to give...the one to comfort. But

in my humility, I have been the recipient of that love. At first, I was hesitant, relying on the LORD's instructions to 'trust not in man.' I have learned, however, the truth of love when GOD expresses it *through* His servants.

The LORD has used others to comfort me not only in the physical; but most importantly, spiritually. Speckled throughout the wickedness that surrounds me are points of light. A gentleman I met on the phone of our Holy Land Marketplace (*blessings of mercy and peace to you, Tom*) has been used by the LORD to teach me His love.

I had a Divine Appointment with a bill collector (*blessings of mercy and peace to you, Brandon*). I call it 'Divine' because I could have reached anyone on the phone that day. But Brandon was the one to take my call. As we spoke he told me, in his words, "*Something* is telling me to help you." I was overwhelmed. Not by the fact that this company was willing to work with me...but by GOD's Presence in our midst! Brandon and I talked about the LORD and His work in both our lives.

It is so beautiful to edify one another! The love shared between true believers is pure and complete! Our Spirits leap inside when we come together! I prayed for Adonai to reveal Himself to me in this Wilderness...and He has...through others. The LORD is feeding me with what I've never truly known. I thought I knew it. But I hadn't lived it. I'm living it now and in His mercy, I'm learning why.

'in order to cause you to know that man shall not live by bread alone, but man shall live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of Adonai'

I've had several opportunities to bring this up... and now is the time. Those of us in the wilderness, take heart, because this is a shared experience with Messiah Himself.

The Wilderness is a requirement for the redeemed. The LORD

has designed it that way. Not only for the Israelites redeemed from Egypt, but for all who have joined themselves to Israel and are grafted in by the blood.

John 1:1- ***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with GOD, and the Word was GOD.***

John 1:14- ***And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us. And we beheld His glory, glory as of an only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

Yeshua was GOD in the flesh and His flesh had to be redeemed. He went to John the Immerser (a voice *from the wilderness*— Isaiah 40) and after the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, was led into the wilderness. **Matthew 4** (or Mark 1...or Luke 4)

Then Yeshua was led up into the wilderness by the Spirit to be tempted by the Adversary. And having fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he hungered.

And coming near to Him the Tempter said, if you are the Son of GOD, speak that these stones may become loaves. But answering, Yeshua said "It has been written 'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of Adonai."

Yeshua battled the enemy using Deuteronomy (all three times He was tested if you read further)! All knowledge, all truth, all wisdom is found in the Word and the Word lives and breathes through Old Testament Scripture. The New Covenant writings merely confirm what had already been written before Yeshua walked this earth. We are co-inheritors of His Promise and being in the Wilderness proves we are on the right path and proves GOD is taking special interest in us.

Some of you have already experienced the Wilderness and were brought out into a better place. I encourage you to remember humility.

Some of us are there now. My encouragement is to absorb the Word and put it into action. Be comforted by the knowledge that our Savior and all Israel endured the Wilderness, too. Empowered by the Word, walk as a witness of the Living God using His instructions as your stepping-stones. And take every step with diligence, prayer and joy knowing in your heart the LORD is near. Watch with renewed vision as He molds you on the Potter's wheel and refines you in the fire; all this to do the good work He purposed you for! AND TRUST THAT IT WILL ALL BE OKAY ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE.

CHAZAK! CHAZAK! V'NITCHAZEIK!

(Be strong! Be strong! And may we be strengthened!)

To all of you... mercy and peace in the name of Yeshua.

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