

Your “Wilderness” time – and it’s connection to *Shavuot*, or Yahweh’s PENTECOST

May 27, 2012

By Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

Summary:

Yahweh’s Pentecost 2012 may be past now, but don’t miss this teaching. If you ever feel like you’re in a kind of wilderness, take heart from this message. Father often puts His children into a wilderness for His divine reasons and revelations. Find out more here in this Pentecost-related teaching. The wilderness you may be in may be for your good, by Yahweh’s providence.

.....

Shalom and welcome, my brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, whom I call Yeshua – welcome to Light on the Rock.

[Note: I recommend hearing the audio as you follow along with the transcript. There are nuances and other things in the audio that are not in the transcript.]

Do you ever feel like you’re in a spiritual wilderness? Or am I the only one? I know Biblically I’m not the only one. You might be in a wilderness and just haven’t thought about it. But what I mean is that sometimes you feel like you’re out there, all alone, in the desert, in the wilderness.

By this definition:

- Joseph – son of Jacob – was in his “wilderness” while he was in prison in Egypt, away from his family. His very own brothers had sold him into slavery. Some of his brothers will do that again in the coming years.
- Moses -- a man of great military exploits in Egypt – was reduced to leading sheep in the back hills of Midian’s wilderness for 40 years.
- John the Baptist was a voice crying out in a wilderness. You’ll find many in the Scriptures who found themselves there. So if you feel like you’re in a spiritual wilderness, take heart!

Why would I say “take heart”? Because Almighty God knows it, sees it, and may have even put you and me there. If we put ourselves there, Yahweh can make all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).

So today we’re talking about your personal wilderness, why it’s going on, and what could happen for you in that personal wilderness time. I hope it gives you hope and helps you get through the feeling of loneliness.

In a wilderness –literally or figuratively – you don’t want to be alone, a loner.

It’s a dangerous place, and one could at least go for help, or show people who did what where, and so on. Normally, by yourself, a wilderness is a very dangerous place. Heat

exhaustion, lack of water, lack of food, and lack of creature comforts – so being truly *alone* in a desert time of your life is *not* recommended!

Better to have a buddy to do things together. Better yet, invite Yahweh to be with you during your wilderness times of your lives. I'm just saying, even if you don't attend with an organized church group, at least seek to be with some people at some level. The safest place in a herd of sheep is to be right in the middle of the herd – most of the time.

Having said that, sometimes we have to leave the masses of people and step out by ourselves if that is what it takes to obey Yahweh, to be pleasing to Him, and to seek His face and His blessings. But I'd rather be alone with Yahweh, in a wilderness, than with a large church of 700 or more – but be in the middle of their political discussions, petty everyday chatter like the weather, NASCAR results, or cronyism, or heresy and false teachings! Who needs all that?

So Yahweh may have even led you to the Desert – so He can reveal Himself to you!

The Exciting Meaning of the Hebrew word “Midvar” – translated “wilderness”

We've just finished observing Pentecost. We counted the days to *Shavuot*, Feast of Weeks – or at least I hope you did, because we're told to do so. Either on the very day of Pentecost, or very close to the very day, something amazing happened. And where it all happened is even more amazing.

Exodus 19:1-20

In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came to the **Wilderness** (Hebrew “*midbar*”) of Sinai. 2 For they had departed from Rephidim, **had come to the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness.** So Israel camped there before the mountain.

3 And Moses went up to God, and **Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob,** and tell the children of Israel: 4 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. 5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine. 6 And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel."

Time out: the last place anyone would expect to have a revelation of Yahweh, to hear Yahweh, to understand Him better – would be a wilderness!

But this is the setting for Exodus 19-20 -- the wilderness. Remember that the root for *midbar*, which is translated as “wilderness” here, is “mouth”. It comes from the same root as *m'daber*, which means “to speak”. **So the very root of the word for “wilderness” means “to speak”.**

And look who's speaking! Yahweh called to Moses *in the wilderness* from the mountain. In the place that has the root meaning of “to speak”, God spoke!

In Hebrew, every letter has a “word picture” – kinda like old cuneiform, or Egyptian pictographic writing. So Aleph, for example, has a picture of an ox’s head, depicting strength. A **Dr. Frank Seekins in Arizona** was the first one to see and understand this, at least in these modern times. Even the average Hebrew-speaking Jew on the street in Tel Aviv will be totally unaware of this.

So what’s the word picture for “*midvar*” – translated “Wilderness”? When you break down the Hebrew letters and look at the word picture for baMidvar (Translated “the wilderness”), we get....”Door to my son (Child)”. Wow! Wow! The wilderness is seen as the PORTAL, the DOOR to my Son. When I heard Dr. Seekins explaining this, I had so many “ah-hah!” moments going on in my brain. How exciting.

So the first thing we see here, is that Yahweh can even come to a wilderness and there speak and reveal Himself. One can hear God speaking in the wilderness!

Let me put it another way: any who didn’t go with Israel to that spot, at that time, in the wilderness – missed this moment of seeing this incredible display of having an audience with the Creator!

So don’t feel bad about a desert or wilderness time in your life. I’m going to show a lot more examples before we’re done where Yahweh reveals Himself so many times in the wilderness – not just in the cities, not just in the lush valleys or scenic mountain tops. It may well be that you and I will look back at the tough times in our lives, “our wilderness times”, and realize in was in those moments that we felt Yah’s presence in our lives. (Yah is the short form of YHVH, the personal name of the living God.)

I just need to also say this: I feel strongly in my heart that this message is going to resonate with someone out there. *I feel led to give this message for someone I have never met yet but who is praying for this very message.* Without going into details, I’ll just say I couldn’t give any more sermons until this one was posted on my website. So whoever you are out there: I hope this helps you. I’d love to hear from you if you feel this message was just designed for you.

Now let me hasten to add this: sometimes we have to be still, quiet and listening to hear God reveal Himself – as many times Yahweh will speak in a whisper.

Or not seem to be present at all, when in fact there’s so much evidence He IS in everything happening. The **story of Esther is a classic case.** The word “God” (Elohim) is not even used one time in that whole book. It’s like its making the case that even though we aren’t seeing Him or hearing Him or talking openly about Him, He is here with His people. So hearing God speak in our wilderness takes many forms. I might suggest you hear my 3-part sermons on “Hearing God’s voice” which you will find on this website.

Let’s finish reading Exodus 19 since this chapter and the next 15 or so chapters were all about things happening right before, during or after Pentecost. Let’s pick it up in verse 7 now since we read the other verses already.

7 So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which Yahweh commanded him. 8 Then all the people answered

together and said, "**All that Yahweh has spoken we will do.**" [The nation's first "I do".] So Moses brought back the words of the people to Yahweh. 9 And Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever."
So Moses told the words of the people to Yahweh.

10 Then Yahweh said to Moses, "**Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes.** 11 **And let them be ready for the third day.** For on the third day Yahweh will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12 You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. 13 Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain."

14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and **they washed their clothes.** 15 And he said to the people, "Be ready for the third day; do not come near your wives."

OK, time out again. Let's notice a few things here.

- **When we come before God, let's be washed physically and spiritually.** In this case, He's getting ready to be betrothed, or maybe even marry, the nation of Israel. The called-out ones (ekklesia) make up "the Israel of God" today and we should be washed as well. Yahweh wanted His bride to smell nice and clean, and to have on clean wedding garments. Remember the story in Matthew 22, about the Wedding supper and how the King found someone without a proper wedding garment on? When we come before the Almighty on Sabbath, I really think we need to be coming with clean clothes and be presentable to the King of the Universe. Even more importantly, our hearts and minds should be clean and washed in His word and in repentance.

That's why we get baptized – the mikveh (sometimes "mikvah") – and why that is done in flowing water, never stagnant water. Why? Because flowing water was to depict our sins and our dirt being washed away. I know He's also our Abba, our Father, but He's also your Creator and Almighty God. I feel uncomfortable with people coming in old dirty blue jeans and slippers and stained T-shirts. How is that respectful to our Master? What does that say about our heart, our attitude? I don't think we need to wear a coat and tie personally, but at least be clean and respectful and prepared in body and spirit to meet your Creator.

- I believe this might directly picture the fact that we have to take off our garments and be given **new** wedding garments, without spot or wrinkle. Remember Ephesians 5? That's what it says His Bride will be without spot or wrinkle. No stains. No "spots". HE does that in us and lets us practice His way, His life a lot, but time IS running short. The clothing represents our lives. We are to cover ourselves with Him.
- **THE THIRD DAY: They were to be ready for Him to come to earth and be with them on the 3rd day.** And remember all this was happening in

BaMidvar, the Wilderness, with the word picture “Door to my Son” and with a root word that means “to SPEAK”. So it was in the wilderness where Yahweh came to earth to speak to His children.

Now what about this concept of being ready to meet Him on the 3rd day? I’ll say more in a second. Let’s pick it up at **Exodus 19:16.**

16 Then it came to pass **on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain;** and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because Yahweh descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice. 20 Then Yahweh came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain. And Yahweh called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

So a lot going on here:

1. **THE wilderness is so often when we can come and hear the very voice of God, in front of our own mortality and make some course changes. It’s in the wilderness where Yahweh is revealing Himself to His once rag-tag group!**

- **This was all happening on the 3rd day in the morning.** Most believe it was right at 9 a.m., the same time there was a mighty rushing wind, tongues of fire and a great noise on Pentecost in Acts 2. In Exodus 19, Yahweh comes down on the 3rd day. We know that with our Master, a day is as a thousand years (2 Peter 3:8). When did Jesus die on the tree? How long ago in days? A day for a thousand years? It was slightly under 2,000 years ago, right? How many days is that if it’s 1000 for a day? Almost TWO DAYS since He was crucified. Yahweh said to be prepared for the 3rd day.

Yahweh descended on the 3rd day of the 3rd month. Many believe that year it was Pentecost. Is our King once again going to return on the 3rd day? We are now coming near the end of the 2000 year marker since His resurrection -- 2 DAYS in God’s terms – since Yeshua died in 30 AD or some of you feel 31 AD. We will soon be in the 3rd millennium, the 3rd day since all that, which starts in about 18 or 19 years. Just thinking out loud, that’s all.

Hosea 6:1-2

Come, and let us return to Yahweh;
For He has torn, but He will heal us;
He has stricken, but He will bind us up.
2 After two days He will revive us;
On the third day He will raise us up,
That we may live in His sight.

We are the body of Yeshua. He was resurrected at the end of the 3rd day, *on* the 3rd day. We just read, “After two days He will revive us; on the 3rd day he will raise us up, that we might live in His sight.”

Is it possible we are getting very near to the first resurrection of the body of Messiah, of His Bride? **Is it possible that once again Yeshua will come down – perhaps on Pentecost again – this time to bring His wife to her homes He’s prepared in Heaven?** If you haven’t heard the sermon I gave last year **“I Go Prepare a Place for You”** – it’s all about this concept. Go hear it and check it out. My friend Jeff is going to post a similar sermon he gave last year on this website soon.

Or, perhaps the resurrection will be on the day of firstfruits, when the complete fulfillment of the remainder of the Body of Christ ascends to heaven to be accepted by the Father, just as the Head of the Body of Christ did in John 20:17. We don’t know. We’ll have to wait and see. But if we are resurrected just after Passover, and then ascend on Firstfruits day, and then we can literally be counting the 50 days to Wedding on Pentecost. How exciting that could be.

I’ll state again: I don’t know. I’m just thinking out loud. Nobody else I know of is saying anything like this (the First Fruits Day), so perhaps I’m all wet. Either way, we know the coming of our Master is near and we need to be washing our clothes, so to speak, and preparing to meet Him. I speak about the way we’re living, washing our LIVES.

So I have thought for years and years now, that the Wedding Supper of Christ and His Bride, the called-out ones, will be in heaven, officiated by God the Father.

Where else could you have the most incredible wedding this universe has ever seen? Where else? We’re told in **Matthew 22:1** -- “A certain king put on a wedding for His Son...”. The Son who is getting married is Yeshua, Jesus Christ. That King is God the Father. Has to be! And where is God the Father? Absolutely, in heaven.

But in the meantime, the physical run-through, the dress rehearsal if you will, was being played out ...where? *In the wilderness!* This could happen in your wilderness too, if we would open our hearts and minds to our Father and to our Savior more often.

One more thing: it says they heard a LOUD SHOFAR, the TRUMPET.

The Shofar broken down in its Hebrew word pictures is this: “the Prince’s mouth, or voice”. Again, “**Shofar**” – **the ram’s horn** blown on this day from heaven -- has a word picture when you take it’s letters and what they picture, to depict – **“the prince speaks”**. You won’t get this unless you look at the letters in Hebrew for Shofar. Just 2 of the letters mean prince, and one letter means “Speaks” but together, it becomes the one word for “shofar”.

If you look up the Hebrew for “the sound of the trumpet”, some translations say “the VOICE of the trumpet”. The Hebrew for that word can be translated either “sound, voice”.

The shofar I believe could have been, perhaps, I say “perhaps”, the voice of God, as a trumpet.

COMPARE to **REVELATION. 1:10**

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind me a GREAT VOICE, as of a trumpet (Shofar)".

So remember these built-in word pictures:

- Wilderness (**baMidvar**) – **door to my son**
- **Shofar (Trumpet, ram's horn) – the Prince speaks**

The ram's horn, by the way, is very special in Hebraic thought ever since Abraham got the reprieve from having to sacrifice Isaac by seeing a ram locked into a THORN bush by its horn, by its shofar, if you will. It's a symbol of Yah's providence and answered prayer.

On this original Pentecost, Yahweh was making the rag tag band of ex-slaves a holy nation, by cutting the covenant with them. (Covenant has the Hebrew meaning "to cut"). It was in the wilderness where Yahweh came to be with his people and revealed Himself. In the wilderness. He then gives them His Torah, his instructions, His law of Love. If you want to understand Yahweh, understand His way, His Torah. It's a law of love for God first, and then love for man.

Another interesting point: in Hebrew word pictures, **the word for "Love" is Ahav in Hebrew**. It's very interesting when broken down. In Hebrew love is "ahav". Has an Aleph = the Father, the first, the strong one. The second letter is an open window, meaning "to reveal". So in Hebrew word pictures, the word for "love" – ahav – has the meaning of "The father revealed". God is love (1 John 4:7), so indeed love is what He is, **"the Father revealed"**.

Exciting, eh? I think it is. I so appreciate the work our Father gave to **Dir. Seekins** to bring out these Hebrew word pictures out. I can't wait to deliver a whole teaching on it.

The TEN COMMANDMENTS HEARD ON PENTECOST

THEN, on this very day, the day of Shavuot/Pentecost, **Yahweh spoke while all the people stood. I will ask you to respectfully stand and hear the words of Yahweh** as He spoke the most important TEN of all Yahweh's commands. In Rabbinic tradition, his voice was seen as fire circling the camp and going all around the mountain, and the mixed multitude heard the "10 Words" (10 commandments) in their own languages.

In fact, to this very day, devout Jews read the 10 commandments every Pentecost, along with the book of Ruth. **So – please stand** and give respectful hearing to our Creator's words:

Exodus 20:1-19

And Elohim (God) spoke all these words, saying:

2 "I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 **"You shall not make for yourself a carved image** — any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under

the earth; 5 **you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.** For I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 **"You shall not take the name of Yahweh your God in vain,** for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8 **"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Yahweh your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 **"Honor your father and your mother,** that your days may be long upon the land which Yahweh your God is giving you.

13 **"You shall not murder.**

14 **"You shall not commit adultery.**

15 **"You shall not steal.**

16 **"You shall not bear false witness** against your neighbor.

17 **"You shall not covet** your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

You may now sit down. Thank you.

So my FIRST POINT is take heart in your wilderness, as it's in the wilderness where Yahweh so often revealed Himself in the past. ***IT'S A PLACE OF REVELATION.*** God SO often is heard speaking to His children – in a wilderness. So often we don't grow as fast and as deeply when everything is going easy, when there's no trial, no hard times to get through, no wilderness period. It's in our wilderness times of our lives where we so often begin to comprehend and see God, and hear Him in our hearts. These are times of growth and maturity.

Others who experienced God being revealed to them, while they were in their "desert":

- **MOSES** – Yahweh revealed in the burning bush (**Exodus 3**)
- **ELIJAH** fled to Mt. Sinai (also called Horeb) when fleeing from Jezebel, after he had killed hundreds of the priests of Yahweh (Baal means "lord"). (See **1 Kings 19:1-9**) The people were listening to those false priests instead of the true priests of

Yahweh. It was in that wilderness that Elijah had further encounters with God, this time in a still small voice.

- **John THE BAPTIST** – Father revealed who the Messiah was, with the dove and so on. He had to spend much of his life in hiding, as the Jewish religious leaders were afraid John could lead an uprising.
- **John the Apostle** – probably felt abandoned and useless being left on a small Greek island called Patmos. But what happened there in HIS wilderness?

Revelation 1:1-3

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show His servants — things which must shortly take place. And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John, 2 who bore witness to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, to all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written in it; for the time is near.

Talk about a revelation in your wilderness. John LITERALLY got revelation!

- Even to the Egyptian slave, a nobody to everyone else, was a somebody to her Creator. I speak of – HAGAR. Be turning to Genesis 16 and let's read it.

This is the story of a “nobody” back then, an Egyptian slave named Hagar. She and Sarai had just about come to blows, so Hagar “ran away from home”. She ended up by herself in the wilderness, destitute, alone, rejected. She probably saw no one, felt alone... and look what happens.

Genesis 16:6-8

6 So Abram said to Sarai, "Indeed your maid is in your hand; do to her as you please." And when Sarai dealt harshly with her, she fled from her presence.

7 Now the Angel of Yahweh found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, by the spring on the way to Shur. [That implies the Angel was looking for her and knew where she was. When *you* feel all alone, look up. He knows you're there – and knows you're alone. Listen. You may hear Him speak too, at least to your heart. If He can know when a sparrow dies, He knows all about you and what you're going through.]

8 And He said, "Hagar, Sarai's maid, where have you come from, and where are you going?"

You can read from there.

It happens again to Hagar in Genesis 21. I find it interesting that these revelations of God are not coming to Sarah or Lot – but to a Gentile slave. So you who are Gentiles, take heart! He sees and hears you too! And this particular passage has to do with Ishmael. So any of you who are descendants of Ishmael, especially you in Saudi Arabia and the Arab peoples, yes, the God of your father Abraham – and his God was Yahweh – can hear and see you too. This is in no way to take away from my Jewish brothers, but all of us are children of God and inheritors of the covenants made with Abraham, when we come to Christ (Gal. 3:26-28). The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is not anti-Arab!

I will give a sermon soon about Edom, and yes there are some harsh words for Edom, but there are harsh words even for the “chosen people” when they stray! So let’s start coming together as one in Messiah, regardless of who we are.

Gen 21:14-21 I find this to be a very tender moment

14 So Abraham rose early in the morning, and took bread and a skin of water; and putting it on her shoulder, he gave it and the boy to Hagar, and sent her away. Then she departed and wandered in the Wilderness of Beersheba. 15 And the water in the skin was used up, and she placed the boy under one of the shrubs. 16 Then she went and sat down across from him at a distance of about a bowshot; for she said to herself, "Let me not see the death of the boy." So she sat opposite him, and lifted her voice and wept.

17 And God heard the voice of the lad. Then the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said to her, "What ails you, Hagar? Fear not, for God has heard the voice of the lad where he is. 18 Arise, lift up the lad and hold him with your hand, for I will make him a great nation."

19 **Then God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water.** And she went and filled the skin with water, and gave the lad a drink. 20 *So God was with the lad;* and he grew and dwelt in the wilderness, and became an archer.

So we see Yahweh or his angel communicating with a slave girl – now freed with her son – in a desert. *Ask Him to open your eyes too, to see His providence in your life, even while you are in your wilderness.* If you are feeling like a Hagar, alone and in a wilderness, ask the God of Abraham to reveal Himself to you somehow. He may do so in a number of ways. He may be using this very sermon to reveal Himself to you, to use me as a messenger to tell you – “Hey, I see you, I know you, and you’re going to be OK”. I just felt I had to say that just then. Whoever you are out there is supposed to be hearing this, hear it.

So the wilderness is interesting – because of its desolation. Dirt, sand, a few shrubs, rocks. We might be tempted to call it “this God-forsaken land”. But in fact, isn’t it interesting that it was in the wilderness where Yahweh revealed Himself to the rag-tag band of ex-slaves and made them a nation. It was in the wilderness, at Pentecost season, when He covenanted to be their husband-Protector, and they covenanted to be His people. It was in the barren wilderness where they heard God’s voice. It was in the wilderness where the barren spot was transformed into holy ground! It was in the desert when Yahweh came down from heaven and gave His people His law, the Torah. (Remember that Torah – though translated “law”, really is the entire set of teachings from Yah, of His way, his mind. It really just means teaching.)

But are you hearing this? It was in the wilderness where Yahweh appeared as cloud, thunder, smoke and fire and with the trumpet of God, called “the first trumpet” in some circles, and spoke to His people. Here in the wilderness He spoke to Moses, to Elijah, to Hagar. To so many. And now, yes – He speaks to you.

Another side point, I heard this first from Mark Biltz, a pastor in Tacoma Washington, that **one reason the Almighty gave His Torah in the wilderness, is that the**

wilderness is ownerless. No one owns it. It's a "no-man's land". His law is ultimately for everyone and anyone.

The wilderness experience was SO important to the Israelites, that one of the reasons, perhaps the main reason the Israelites were to dwell in booths during Sukkot – or the Feast of tabernacles – was what? **Leviticus 23:43** – “that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt. I am Yahweh your Elohim.”

Yahweh wanted Israel to remember their wilderness experience and lessons and their daily interaction with Him via the cloud by day and the fire by night.

SO now one more thing: remember the revelations THEY got while in the wilderness was really for OUR admonition (**read 1 Cor. 10:11**). So the wilderness revelations are ongoing, continuing, for thousands of years after the fact. We're *still* learning from what they learned in their wilderness. Yah is still speaking to us by their wilderness lessons!

So though we can tend to think of the wilderness as a terrible place of death, it's a place also of revelation of and from our Father and our King.

2. WITH GOD, THE WILDERNESS CAN ALSO BE A PLACE OF REST AND REFRESHING.

You've all heard the story of the miracle by Yeshua of multiplying the loaves and fishes and feeding the many five thousand with 5 loaves and 2 fish. What you may not remember, is that in one of those cases, He was initially actually trying to get away from the hubbub, the hectic coming and going and non-stop pressure.

Know when you need to just stop and get away for a while. Know when maybe Yahweh is “making you lie down in green pastures” when you would not have lied down by yourself. Sometimes HE is the one making us stop so we don't end up having a stroke or heart attack”. Or maybe even the stroke or heart attack IS one way He's making us stop for a while – and stop and think.

Mark 6:30-32

30 Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. 31 And He said to them, **"Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while."** For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat. 32 So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

But alas, the crowds went on around and met him on the other side. Yeshua has mercy on them and feeds them. But before they were fed, He was actually trying to give his disciples a break! I really believe it is in the quiet moments away from the hubbub when we can clear out the fog in our heads. I hope you have a quiet retreat you can go to, to focus on Yahweh.

3. THE WILDERNESS IS OFTEN THE PLACE OF PROTECTION AND SAFETY

I'll keep this section short. We're back on more positive things about this wilderness you're in. I recently gave a whole sermon, earlier in 2012, on The Place of Safety. Listen to that. In Revelation 12, it is referred to as a wilderness.

Revelation 12:13-15

13 Now when the dragon saw that he had been cast to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male Child. 14 But the woman was given two wings of a great eagle, that she might ***fly into the wilderness to her place***, where she is nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent.

In that sermon, I wanted to focus on the fact that our ultimate safety is in our Rock, our Petra (Greek) or Sela (Hebrew) who is Yahweh himself. But Rev.12 seems to be referring to the place where He keeps us safe as a wilderness area. By the way, that hardly sounds like heaven – for those of you who believe in the pre-tribulation rapture, which I don't. We are gathered up to meet Christ in the air *after* the Tribulation (Matthew 24:29-31)

Matthew 24:29-31

29 "**Immediately *AFTER* the tribulation of those days** the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 30 **Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven**, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31 **And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect** from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The wilderness was often where men and women of God went when they were being pursued, or needed respite, or a break. That's where Hagar went. She would rather take her chances in the wilderness than with Sarah.

- **Moses** fled from Pharaoh to Midian, which was largely wilderness. It was there that 40 years later he had his encounter with Yahweh and the burning bush. It was in the wilderness, where he was protected and where he heard God's voice.

Exodus 2:15

15 When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

- **David** often hid from Saul in the wilderness of En Gedi (I've seen it, near the Dead Sea) (**1 Sam. 24:1**)
- **Elijah** fled from Jezebel's threats to the same Mt. Sinai that Moses was familiar with (**1 Kings 19:1-9**)
And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, also how he had executed all the prophets with the sword. 2 Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time." 3 And when he saw that, he arose and ran for his life, and went to **Beersheba**, which belongs to Judah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the **wilderness**, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

5 Then as he lay and slept under a broom tree, suddenly an angel touched him [in the wilderness], and said to him, "Arise and eat." 6 Then he looked, and there by his head was a cake baked on coals, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 And the angel of Yahweh came back the second time, and touched him, and said, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you." 8 *So he arose, and ate and drank; and he went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights as far as Horeb [same as Mt. Sinai}, the mountain of God.*

9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the **Word of Yahweh came to him, and He said** to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

- Paul was 3 years in Arabia (**Gal. 1:17-18**) being taught personally by Yeshua – possibly either in Petra or more likely the true Mt. Sinai area
- John the Baptist preached in the wilderness (Matthew 3:3)
- Yeshua went up to the wilderness **"to be tempted/tested** by the Devil" (Matt. 4:1)
- The coming of the end time Elijah will be one preaching in the wilderness – perhaps that is either a literal physical wilderness – or a spiritual one. We are yet to hear a future voice in the wilderness.

So perhaps, if you feel like *you're* in a spiritual wilderness, perhaps you're being protected from some of the spiritually lazy attitudes out there, or the false doctrine, or same ol'/same ol' teaching with no growth in understanding, or from temptations and sins that could lure you when in a group.

4. The Wilderness -- PLACE OF BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE

Who would ever consider having their wedding, or even marriage proposal, in a wilderness? And yet that is exactly what Creator God did! We read of the fact that He asked his Bride, the nation of Israel, to wash her clothes (her wedding garments, if you will) and He would meet them on the 3rd day (**Ex. 19:7-8**). In Ex. 24:1-8 we can read of their "I do" in what was basically the marriage covenant, or as some believe, the betrothal agreement. Either way, my point is not to argue between marriage or betrothal –but to make the point it happened in the wilderness.

The event was a very special one in Yahweh's memory – at least the start of it. The Gold Calf incident really, really hurt Him, just like you'd feel if you were to find your sweetheart you had just proposed to – in bed with another man. That's what Israel did to Yahweh after all He had done for her, the deliverance from Egypt, the Red Sea crossing, destroying the pursuing Egyptian army, providing manna, covenanting to be their Protector, Provider and Husband – and then they do the Gold Calf. But the start was a nice memory:

Jeremiah 2:2-3

2 "Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says Yahweh:
"I remember you,
The kindness of your youth,

The love of your betrothal,
When you went after Me in the wilderness,
In a land not sown.
3 Israel was holiness to Yahweh,
The firstfruits of His increase.....

Do you hear the heart of Yahweh here?

In **Ezekiel 20** – be turning there-- the Eternal Living God explains further the history of what happened, and what is yet to happen. He explains how He feels about all the paganism in our modern worship, though we put the name Christ on to it, and how He is going to punish modern day Israel and send the Israelitish nations into captivity, scattering them around the world.

Remember I believe that the nation called “Israel” in the middle east is really just the modern remnant of the southern Kingdom of Judah after Solomon’s death, the 12 tribes became 2 nations: the 10-tribed northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom called Judah. Yes, we’ll talk about it later, but Judah and Israel actually warred from time to time against each other. Anyway, the northern 10 tribes I believe strongly are modern day USA, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand – modern day Ephraim and Manasseh. The other tribes scattered into what are now mostly northwestern European countries.

We’ll read Ezekiel 20 next. Where it says in your Bible “Yahweh God” –there, the Hebrew takes the form of Adonai –my Master, and the word translated “God” is not YHVH but something closer to what YHVH said to Moses on the mount in Exodus 3 – “I am who I will be”. It comes out spelled more like Yehowih, instead of YHVH. So that’s what I’ll say.

Ezekiel 20 recounts some initial problems even beyond what we read in the book of Exodus, about the time Moses was trying to convince Israel to trust Yahweh. Read it for yourself in Ezekiel 20:5-9. I think what you read there explains why Israel had to go through the first three plagues with Egypt. Yah had to get their attention too! Let’s pick up at Ezek. 20:10.

Ezekiel 20:10-14

10 "Therefore I made them go out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11 And I gave them My statutes and showed them My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them.' 12 Moreover I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, that they might know that I am Yahweh who sanctifies them. 13 Yet the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they did not walk in My statutes; they despised My judgments, 'which, if a man does, he shall live by them'; and they greatly defiled My Sabbaths. Then I said I would pour out My fury on them in the wilderness, to consume them.

Then it goes on to explain how they rebelled in the wilderness, how they had to be punished, then brings it up to our day as a prophecy. Remember when Ezekiel was writing this, the 10 tribes had long before gone into captivity already. Let’s continue in Ezek 20:29.

Ezekiel 20:29-38

29 Then I said to them, 'What is this high place to which you go?' **So its name is called Bamah to this day.**""[I didn’t make that up! “Bamah” means “high place”]

30 Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says Adonai Yahweh (Yahweh GOD): "Are you defiling yourselves in the manner of your fathers, and committing harlotry according to their abominations? 31 For when you offer your gifts and make your sons pass through the fire, you defile yourselves with all your idols, even to this day. So shall I be inquired of by you, O house of Israel? As I live," says Adonai Yahweh, "I will not be inquired of by you. 32 What you have in your mind shall never be, when you say, 'We will be like the Gentiles, like the families in other countries, serving wood and stone.'

33 "As I live," says Adonai Yehowih (Yahweh GOD), "surely with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out, I will rule over you. 34 *I will bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you are scattered*, with a mighty hand, with an outstretched arm, and with fury poured out. 35 **And I will bring you into the wilderness of the peoples**, and there I will plead My case with you face to face. 36 Just as I pleaded My case with your fathers in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will plead My case with you," says Adonai Yahweh.

37 **"I will make you pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant;** 38 I will purge the rebels from among you, and those who transgress against Me; I will bring them out of the country where they dwell, but they shall not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am Yahweh.

Again, all this happens in the wilderness!

"I will make you pass under the rod". What does that mean? Listen—this is encouraging: This is referring to what shepherds would do as they brought their sheep back into the keep, the fold, each night. One by one, they let the sheep back in, and they would visually inspect each one to be sure they were OK. It's a very loving statement.

Let's read one more about the betrothal in the wilderness.

Hosea 2:14-20

'Therefore, behold, I will allure her, I will bring her into the wilderness and speak comfort to her. 15 I will give her vineyards from there, And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; She shall sing there, As in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

16 "And it shall be, in that day", says Yahweh, "That you will call Me 'My Husband,' (*Ishi in Hebrew*) And no longer call Me "Ba'ali" - 'My Master (My Lord, or my Baal),'

17 **For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,**

And they shall be remembered by their name no more.

19 **"I will betroth you to Me forever;** Yes, I will betroth you to Me
In righteousness and justice,

In lovingkindness and mercy;

20 I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, And you shall know Yahweh.

And all that happens in the wilderness. You can try to explain when and where that was, or will be, or was it talking about Mt Sinai –or a future event – but the point stands: the wilderness can't be so bad if our King proposes to, is betrothed to, His Bride there.

And did you notice? Baal means “lord”. He wants us referring to Him as our Husband, our King, our Yeshua – but many call him “Lord” instead. His name is “YHVH” – most commonly believed to be pronounced Yahweh or Yahovah – **but not “the Lord”**. If you haven’t heard my 2 sermons on the name of God, please go back a few months and hear those. They’re 2 very, very important sermons.

Yes, He IS my “lord” – my master, but His name is “Yahweh”, and I call him “Father”, “Abba”, and His Son I call “My beloved” or by His name Yeshua.

So gotta end now. So you’re in your own form of wilderness. By yourself. No big church group. That may be a good thing. Maybe you have MS, or have had a stroke. Maybe Yahweh is protecting you from what might be happening in your life without that. I don’t know. I just know that a desert is a rough place.

But to change metaphors for a second, remember that **the 2 leavened loaves of WHEAT which were presented/raised on high on Pentecost, came from sheaves that had to be beaten on the threshing floor**, then the wind blew out the chaff.

We have to be beaten down, humbled, shed the chaff in our lives, so the Wind (the Holy Spirit – which even Yeshua said is like the wind – John 3) can blow away what is worthless, the chaff, in our lives. Only the good can remain. Paul uses a different metaphor yet of wood/hay and stubble having to be burned off, leaving only the gold and silver in our lives. Of course “our lives” now means the life of the Messiah being lived in us, living HIS way, by HIS power. You and I are to no longer live, but let HIM live in us, in Christ, in God (**Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20**). It’s HIS righteousness, not ours from careful law keeping – that’s what Paul clearly teaches in **Philippians 3:9-11 and Romans 4 and 5**, over and over and over.

God often uses our wilderness times of our lives to beat the chaff out of our lives. My brother likes to say, meaning it literally, “to scare the hell out of us.” But as we’re being beaten to remove the husk, the chaff – the kernel of wheat is not enjoying the beating so much. But God has a purpose. In the end we’re going to be beaten down, refined, purified, and made ready for a future we can’t even imagine. The Wilderness – the *bamidvar* – is all part of that. In the wilderness we hear God’s voice. Remember *midbar* has a root that is related to “speak” or “mouth”. It’s in the wilderness times of our lives when we hear God **speak** to our hearts. And remember what I said in the beginning, that the word “*midbar*” (wilderness) has a Hebrew **WORD PICTURE** of “door to my son (child)”.

Your wilderness is our PORTAL to Father, and He to us. It doesn’t get any better than that!

That’s away from the clutter and distractions of the city, of daily life. “The Weapons of Mass Distraction” that Satan sends our way to waste our time on Facebook, on twitter, on email, on texting, on data, and more data – until we have no time for God. Yes, I use Facebook, but limit my time on there so I’m not taking away from time with my Beloved King.

When we are wasting our time on things that matter little -- is when the wilderness time is most likely to be sent our way!

The wilderness, where He is revealed. The wilderness, where we are protected. The wilderness, where we are fed and provided for. The wilderness, where we will be betrothed. It's not so bad, then, is it?

I'll end with that. If you feel this has helped you, and might help others, tell them about this site. Share it. There's no charge. I'm still curious about those of you in South America that I feel in my heart really need this. I don't know why that is pressing so heavily on my heart. Whoever you are, I hope you got what you needed. Don't be shy to email or contact me. I'd love that. Yahweh bless you in your wilderness experience and may you hear Him speak to your heart.

Until next time, this is Philip, your brother in our Messiah asking for blessings, peace and shalom to all of you as you walk in *His* light. Until next time.... Shalom and joy!

www.LightontheRock.org