

Recap of 4/2 study:

Wilderness Testing to Strengthen Trust

Exodus 16:1-20

In a barren wilderness where food and water are almost impossible to find, Israel faces the threats of starvation and dehydration.

- God uses these challenges to test them, inviting them to trust him more than ever before.
- How can God use challenges in your life to test you, so that you can trust him more than ever before?

Israel's Wilderness Transformation

- Deut 8:1-20

As the Israelites face scarcity in the wilderness, God teaches them that life flows not from their own hands, but from God's word.

Deut 8:1-20 NASB

¹ “All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, so that you may live and increase, and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers. ² And you shall remember all the way which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, in order to humble you, putting you to the test, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.

Consider -1

When God first leads the Israelites out of Egypt, he does not take them directly to the promised land.

- If He had taken them by a direct route, they would walk for approximately 1-2 weeks, then face immediate war and likely run straight back to Egypt.
- So instead, God leads them by a longer route through the wilderness (Exod. 13:17-18).
- On this journey, he wants to transform them from an enslaved people driven by fear into a free people driven by confidence in God's love and his faithfulness to preserve life.

³ And He humbled you and let you go hungry, and fed you with the manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, in order to make you understand that man shall not live on bread alone, but man shall live on everything that comes out of the mouth of the LORD. ⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. ⁵ So you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. ⁶ Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.

Consider - 2

In Deuteronomy 8, as Moses addresses Israel before he dies, he reminds everyone that the wilderness hunger they faced was not a random hardship but part of God's design to teach them.

- By guiding them into a place of extreme need and then meeting them there to provide for them, God revealed that true life depends on trusting his words enough to follow his instruction.

⁷ For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of streams of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in valleys and hills; ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines, fig trees, and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey; ⁹ a land where you will eat food without shortage, in which you will not lack anything; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

Consider - 3

The wilderness becomes a training ground for life with God, shaping the Israelites into a people who trust God's voice rather than relying on their own strength.

- As they prepare to enter the garden-like abundance of the promised land, Moses warns them: Prosperity can lead to forgetfulness.
- Once they are well fed and comfortable, they might forget the one who rescued them from slavery, provided for them in the wilderness, and led them into the promised land, attributing their success to their own actions.

¹¹ “Be careful that you do not forget the LORD your God by failing to keep His commandments, His ordinances, and His statutes which I am commanding you today; ¹² otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, and you build good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and your flocks increase, and your silver and gold increase, and everything that you have increases, ¹⁴ then your heart will become proud and you will forget the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery;

¹⁵ He who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions, and its thirsty ground where there was no water; He who brought water for you out of the rock of flint. ¹⁶ In the wilderness it was He who fed you manna which your fathers did not know, in order to humble you and in order to put you to the test, to do good for you in the end. ¹⁷ Otherwise, you may say in your heart, 'My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth.'

¹⁸ But you are to remember the LORD your God, for it is He who is giving you power to make wealth, in order to confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And it shall come about, if you ever forget the LORD your God and follow other gods and serve and worship them, I testify against you today that you will certainly perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the LORD eliminates from you, so you shall perish, because you would not listen to the voice of the LORD your God.

Consider - 4

Moses wants the people to remember that every good gift ultimately comes from God's hand.

- The wilderness tests do not harm them; they transform them into a people who can enjoy God's garden-style gift of abundance because they have come to see and trust the true source of true life.

Reflect

How does Israel's wilderness journey reveal that true life is found not in abundance itself, but in trusting the one who provides it?

Relevant Scripture to Consider

- Deut 6:10-19

Next week preview:

David Hides and Learns in the Wilderness

1 Samuel 23: 6-14; 1 Samuel 24: 1-7

God could have made David king immediately after his anointing, but instead, David spends years in the wilderness as a fugitive.

- How does this season of waiting and testing prepare David for ruling as king?
- Have you ever sensed a time of waiting and testing to prepare you for something God has revealed to you?

Today's Source:

[The Wilderness in the Bible | Israel's Wilderness Transformation](#)