



Lesson 39 – In the Wilderness

For nearly forty years the children of Israel are lost to view in the obscurity of the desert.

- 1) What did Moses have to say about it?

Deuteronomy 2:14-15 And the space in which we came from Kadeshbarnea, until we were come over the brook Zered, was thirty and eight years; until all the _____ of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the LORD swore unto them. For indeed the hand of the LORD was against them, to destroy them from among the host, until they were _____.

During these years the people were constantly reminded that they were under the divine rebuke. In the rebellion at Kadesh they had rejected God, and God had for the time rejected them. Since they had proved unfaithful to His covenant, they were not to receive the sign of the covenant, the rite of circumcision. Their desire to return to the land of slavery had shown them to be unworthy of freedom, and the ordinance of the Passover, instituted to commemorate the deliverance from bondage, was not to be observed.

- 2) Had God forsaken them?

Deuteronomy 2:7 For the LORD thy God hath _____ thee in all the works of thy hand: he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness: these forty years the LORD thy God hath been with thee; thou hast _____ nothing.

- 3) What Hymn of the Levites was recorded by Nehemiah?

Nehemiah 9:19 Yet thou in thy manifold _____ forsookest them not in the wilderness: the pillar of the cloud departed not from them by day, to lead them in the way; neither the pillar of fire by night, to shew them light, and the way wherein they should go.

Nehemiah 9:20-21 Thou gavest also thy good spirit to _____ them, and witheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst. Yea, forty years didst thou _____ them in the wilderness, so that they lacked nothing; their clothes waxed not old, and their feet swelled not.

- 4) What was God doing for them in the Wilderness?

Deuteronomy 8:5 Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his _____, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee.

Deuteronomy 8:2 And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to _____ thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.

Deuteronomy 8:3 And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by _____ only, but by every _____ that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.

The wilderness wandering was not only ordained as a judgment upon the rebels and murmurers, but it was to serve as a discipline for the rising generation, preparatory to their entrance into the Promised Land.

- 5) Did God love them?

Deuteronomy 32:10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the _____ of his eye.



Isaiah 63:9 In all their affliction _____ was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and _____ them all the days of old.

Yet the only records of their wilderness life are instances of rebellion against the Lord. The revolt of Korah had resulted in the destruction of fourteen thousand of Israel. And there were isolated cases that showed the same spirit of contempt for the divine authority.

6) What was one of those examples afore mentioned?

Numbers 24:10-11 And the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian, went out among the children of Israel: and this son of the Israelitish woman and a man of Israel _____ together in the camp; And the Israelitish woman's son _____ the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses...

One of the mixed multitude that had come up with Israel from Egypt, left his own part of the camp, and entering that of the Israelites, claimed the right to pitch his tent there. This the divine law forbade him to do, the descendants of an Egyptian being excluded from the congregation until the third generation. A dispute arose between him and an Israelite, and the matter being referred to the judges was decided against the offender after he cursed God.

So terrible was the crime that there was felt to be a necessity for special direction from God. The man was placed in ward until the will of the Lord could be ascertained. God Himself pronounced the sentence.

7) What became of it?

Numbers 24:15-16 And thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel, saying, Whosoever _____ his God shall bear his sin. And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to _____, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death.

By the divine direction the blasphemer was conducted outside the camp and stoned to death. Those who had been witness to the sin placed their hands upon his head, thus solemnly testifying to the truth of the charge against him. Then they threw the first stones, and the people who stood by afterward joined in executing the sentence.

There are those who will question God's love and His justice in visiting so severe punishment for words spoken in the heat of passion. But both love and justice require it to be shown that utterances prompted by malice against God are a great sin. The retribution visited upon the first offender would be a warning to others, that God's name is to be held in reverence. But had this man's sin been permitted to pass unpunished, others would have been demoralized; and as the result many lives must eventually have been sacrificed.

8) What was another of the stories from that day?

Numbers 15:32-34 And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that _____ sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in _____, because it was not declared what should be done to him.



Soon after the return into the wilderness, an instance of Sabbath violation occurred, under circumstances that rendered it a case of peculiar guilt. The Lord's announcement that He would disinherit Israel had roused a spirit of rebellion. One of the people, angry at being excluded from Canaan, and determined to show his defiance of God's law, ventured upon the open transgression of the fourth commandment by going out to gather sticks upon the Sabbath.

During the sojourn in the wilderness the kindling of fires upon the seventh day had been strictly prohibited. The prohibition was not to extend to the land of Canaan, where the severity of the climate would often render fires a necessity; but in the wilderness, fire was not needed for warmth. The act of this man was a willful and deliberate violation of the fourth commandment, a sin, not of thoughtlessness or ignorance, but of presumption.

9) What happened?

Numbers 15:35-36 And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones _____ the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and _____ him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.

The sins of blasphemy and willful Sabbath breaking received the same punishment, being equally an expression of contempt for the authority of God.

Though God may not now punish the transgression of His law with temporal penalties, yet His word declares that the wages of sin is death; and in the final execution of the judgment, it will be found that death is the portion of those who violate His sacred precepts.

10) What did Ezekiel have to say about this time?

Ezekiel 20:13 But the house of Israel _____ against me in the wilderness: they walked not in my statutes, and they despised my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them; and my sabbaths they greatly _____: then I said, I would pour out my fury upon them in the wilderness, to consume them.

11) What did God ask them to do?

Ezekiel 20:19-20 I am the LORD your God; _____ in my statutes, and keep my judgments, and do them; And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a _____ between me and you, that ye may know that I am the LORD your God.

During the entire forty years in the wilderness, the people were every week reminded of the sacred obligation of the Sabbath, by the miracle of the manna. Yet even this did not lead them to obedience. Though they did not venture upon so open and bold transgression as had received such signal punishment, yet there was great laxness in the observance of the fourth commandment.

12) Did they truly learn what God was trying to teach?

Ezekiel 20:22-23 Nevertheless I withdrew mine hand, and wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted in the sight of the _____, in whose sight I brought them forth. I lifted up mine hand unto them also in the wilderness, that I would scatter them among the heathen, and _____ them through the countries;

Such was their neglect of the Sabbath during the forty years' wandering, that though God did not prevent them from entering Canaan, He declared that they should be scattered among the heathen after the settlement in the Land of Promise.



13) What happened as the forty years wandering was completed?

Numbers 20:1 Then came the children of Israel, even the whole congregation, into the desert of Zin in the first month: and the people abode in Kadesh; and _____ died there, and was buried there.

Here Miriam died and was buried. From that scene of rejoicing on the shores of the Red Sea, when Israel went forth with song and dance to celebrate Jehovah's triumph, to the wilderness grave which ended a lifelong wandering, such had been the fate of millions who with high hopes had come forth from Egypt. Sin had dashed from their lips the cup of blessing.

14) What was the story of their journey?

Psalms 78:32 For all this they sinned still, and _____ for his wondrous works.

Psalms 78:34-35 When he slew them, then they sought him: and they _____ and enquired early after God. And they _____ that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.

Yet they did not turn to God with a sincere purpose. Though when afflicted by their enemies they sought help from Him who alone could deliver.

15) How awesome is God?

Psalms 78:37-39 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant. But he, being full of _____, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his _____. For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

The very God we serve today is the same that we read of in the Old Testament. Jesus said in John 8:58 ***"Before Abraham was, I AM"*** God is patiently waiting for us to get the message that He knows better than we what is best. The Wilderness was a place for God's people to learn to trust God in a place where there is nothing to provide but God. Are you wandering today? Won't you let Him lead?

Can you see God knows what is best?

Would you like to live in the Promised Land in Peace?

When is it time to do what God asks?