



May 19, 2023

### **God of the Wilderness**

Warm hellos friends, brethren, co-workers, spiritual family, and scattered children of God from here on the Gulf Coast. My wife and I pray and hope this finds you doing well, and that again your week has been blessed.

For those of you who know me well, it will come as no surprise to you that I enjoy music. I like various types and have learned to appreciate what each genre has to offer. I also, in spite of what many conservative Christians would say, still find certain songs on Christian Radio Stations to be uplifting and encouraging. Some I may not prefer simply due to their focus and the words. In my office quite often I'll have SiriusXM's streaming station "The Message" on. There is a specific song by Shaylee Simeone entitled "God of the Wilderness" that is on my "I like list". I listen to the words carefully with each song an artist presents.

Interestingly, you and I are often referred to as "*fellow travelers through the wilderness*".

Those who have traveled the road through the difficulties and tests in the wilderness of this present world are likened to pilgrims who are strangers living in and passing through a hostile world looking forward to a new land of new hope with positive promises (Heb. 11:13). Of course you and I have entered that journey also.

If we look at the events that ancient Israel experienced as they moved from Egypt to Sinai and arrived around there at the time of the feast of Weeks, we see the mention of *traveling through the wilderness*. (Ex. 13:18; Ex. 14:11; Ex. 15:22; Ex. 16:1; Ex. 17:1; Ex. 19:1) It appears that the wilderness years were extended when the generation that left Egypt rejected God and His instructions. Moses reminds the children of those who left Egypt about the lessons to be learned from the journeying through the wilderness. "*And you shall remember that the LORD your*

*God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not." (Deut. 8:2)*

Moses acknowledges that there were difficult circumstances that they had to face and endure such as *"fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty land where there was no water"* (Deut. 8:15) Moses also reminds those who were looking to enter the promised land that the LORD provided for them in ways that delivered them after being tried and tested such as God's provisions *"who brought water for you out of the flinty rock"* (Deut. 8:15) and *"fed you in the wilderness with manna"* (Deut. 8:16). God allowed events to take place and challenges to arise because of being in the wilderness, as He had a goal and a long term purpose in mind, *"that He might humble you and that He might test you, to do you good in the end"* (Deut. 8:16).

What did God have to say about the legacy of Abraham and the reason for the LORD's determination to bless his descendants? *"because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws."* (Gen. 26:5) These experiences which the called out children of Israel and their children underwent are recorded for us who have been called out from this present world. The record of them is preserved for us to contemplate and learn from. The same reasons for the tests and assessments mentioned above applies to us now and to those who have traveled the road that Abram journeyed on down through the ages.

The apostle Paul, the learned disciple of Gamaliel and knowledgeable student of the Scriptures, gives the following analysis, *"Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted."* (1 Cor. 10:6) You'll recall that the lust escalated and erupted into the "golden calf" episode. They so desired to quickly return to the practices and influence of Egypt from which God had called them out of. In their hearts and actions they returned to Egypt instead of travelling forward on the path to the destination God had set before them! They did not follow the example of faithful Abraham. The apostle Paul continues, *"Now all these things happened to them as*

*examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall." (1 Cor. 10:11-12)*

I fear today way to many professing "Christians" and even many within the Body of Christ have forgotten this scripture. Some have become way too comfortable with where they are, and how they worship Him.

We must be always vigilant for the "*days are evil*" (Eph. 5:16). The apostle Paul reminds us, "*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come*" (2 Tim. 3:1). It seems every day brings more news about evil events, tragedies, and horrific actions that are part of days in which we live. The apostle Peter picks up on this same theme of likening us to pilgrims seeking that special homeland. "*Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul.*" (1 Pet. 2:11) We must remember, that same God, "The God of the Wilderness" is still very much alive and active, and available for each one of us to live in and help us as we move forward in this life...always looking to the promise of Him coming again and yes, a new world! God speed that day!

Arms up friends! Our sincere prayers and thoughts are with you daily. Thanks in advance for your heartfelt prayers for us.



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