

The Study of Joshua

"It's Time To Leave the Wilderness"

Joshua 1: 1 – 8

The Purpose of the Wilderness

The book of Joshua is a book about new beginnings and fresh starts. After the Israelites initial failure to enter the Promise Land, God allowed them to remain in the wilderness for forty years. This was a time of cleansing and purging for the emerging nation. **QUESTIONS:** According to **Duet 8:2**, what was God's purpose for the Israelite's wilderness experience? Considering the purpose of the wilderness as mentioned in Deut 8:2, how does the following verse further establish that premise?

READ: Num 32:11-13 **QUESTIONS:** Was it somehow easier for the younger generation of Israelites to "wholly" follow after God than it was for their parents and grandparents? Does wisdom necessarily come with age?

For some, with age comes greater caution about things in life. In some ways such caution is wise, but in other ways this cautions changes into worry, fret and ultimately fear and fear is a mortal enemy of faith. **Romans 10:17** tells us that "faith cometh by hearing (*the word of God*)." Then, if faith is a result of hearing the word of God, would doubt and fear be a result of not hearing the word of God. **READ Num 13: 30 – 33.** **QUESTIONS:** What affect did the testimony of these 10 spies have on the congregation of Israelites? What was the end result of those whose mind was contaminated by the testimony of these 10 spies? How can we protect our minds from being contaminated with such negativity and fear?

Unlike Moses, Joshua was born and raised as a slave in Egypt and no doubt personally witnessed the cruelty of Pharaoh's slave pits and harsh overseers. **QUESTION:** How might this experience make him a different type of leader than Moses? Now, in chapter one of the book that bears his name, in order to reach his destiny in God, Joshua must arise and step out of the wilderness and move into uncharted territory. There are specific times and seasons in our life when God calls us into new dimensions and new levels and if our discernment is not sensitive to that moment or if our faith is not up to the challenge we will miss that season and perhaps lose that opportunity entirely. **QUESTION: READ I Cor 2:14** Is everyone capable of recognizing these seasons of divine impartations?

Remember Where We Came From

Before we consider our departure from the wilderness let us reminisce about how we got here. Joshua's journey, like ours began in bondage. God used the blood of a lamb to cover Joshua from the death angel and usher him out of bondage into salvation. It must be understood, that even though Joshua was in the wilderness, he was free from his previous life of bondage. However, simply being free from bondage was not the same as living in the promised place that God had prepared for him.

READ John 8:36 **QUESTION:** Is it possible to "free" but not "free indeed?" Certain prisoners gain privileges that afford them the opportunity to walk freely at times and in specific areas of the penitentiary – but are these prisoners truly free? Every child of God has been saved from the penalty or bondage of sin that is what grace does for us! However, it is the work of the Holy Spirit that guides us through the wilderness experience that tests and prepares us for where God desires us to truly dwell.

READ Matt 4:1 QUESTION: Who actually led Jesus into the wilderness? What was the purpose of Jesus going into the wilderness?

Is This Your Season Of Departure? READ: I Chron 12:32

1 Chron 12:32

And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment. KJV

Issachar was one of the twelve sons of Jacob whose offspring was blessed with a specific spiritual gift of discerning times and seasons. These men were divinely empowered with an ability to determine what actions would produce prosperous outcomes and which actions would not. **QUESTION:** In this grace dispensation, how may we gain such divine wisdom into our times and season in God? **READ James 1:5** Along with the utility of prayer, the text identifies several other factors that may be indicators that it is time for you to leave the wilderness and move into your promises of God.

Those You Depended On Are No Longer Able to Assist You. READ Joshua 1:1

The first verse of chapter one of Joshua informs us that Moses is dead. Moses had been Joshua's leader for forty years! He had witnessed miracle after miracle at the hands of Moses and now he was gone! **QUESTION:** What are some of the impacts that the death of Moses would have had on Joshua? The fact was Moses had led Joshua as far as he could and it was time for Joshua to step up. **READ Acts 3:2.** **QUESTION:** How far did the people carry this lame man? One indication that it may be time to leave the wilderness appears when people you once depended on can no longer provide for you in the manner you have become accustomed.

Your Resources Dry Up READ Joshua 5:12

That bread that God so miraculously provided from heaven was no longer waiting for them to simply pick up and eat each morning. **QUESTION:** Why is it often necessary for God to allow our resources to dry up in order to get us to move into our season of transition? **READ I Kings 17: 7 - 9 QUESTION:** How does this story further illustrate our point?

You Have A Word From God READ: Josh 1:1-2

Joshua didn't have Moses, he didn't have his staff, he didn't have any more manna, but Joshua had a "word" from God! In this modern age of Christianity it would appear that we no longer put much stock in hearing from God. We want to hear from parking lot prophets, tea leaves and palm readers - but the voice of God is not readily sought among many Christians. Some might even question whether God still speaks to his people in this dispensation.

READ: 1 Kings 19: 10 - 13 QUESTIONS: How might the noise and constant distraction of our society help to dull our senses to the voice of God? How can we as saints of God correct this potential disconnection from hearing God? *"My Lord he calls me by the thunder, the trumpet sounds within my soul, I ain't got long to stay here."*