

WILDERNESS, A PLACE FOR TEMPTATION



(Luke 4)

Then YAHSHUA, full of and controlled by the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led in [by] the [Holy] Spirit for during forty days in the wilderness, where He was tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they were completed, He was hungry (Like 4:1,2). The devil came to YAHSHUA at the point of His need – hunger. Forty days and nights without eating can starve

the body and lead it to death, that is, for some people, depending on their health factors. Forty days is long enough time for the body to have used all the resources it had to be sustained. YAHSHUA, as a man, was subject to the weakness of a human body, but not to man's sinful nature. He was led to the wilderness by the Holy Spirit to be tempted in preparation for the ministry He was going to fulfill. Like us, He was also subjected to temptations, and to the extent of sufferings that we experience. So after fasting forty days and forty nights, His obvious need of that moment was hunger. Hunger and thirst in the desert are something hard to overcome without having knowledge of how to survive in such environment which lacks everything that benefits the body. The Bible does not say if He went without water however, I assume so. Whatever the situation, He went hungry after forty days.

The tempter came to YAHSHUA when He felt hunger; when His body was weak. In the case of the two brothers, Esau and Jacob, Esau's hunger caused him to abandon his rights of a first son, for a bowl of lentil soup. He fell into temptation because he was shortsighted on the present and he did not value the future. As a result, he lived in a spiritual wilderness, lacking love and forgiveness, and passing it on to his generations to this day. Unlikely Esau, YAHSHUA resisted all temptations, even when at the point of being very hungry. Satan conveniently showed up to tempt Him. His first temptation was directed to YAHSHUA'S physical need-hunger. Satan tempted him to transform the stones into bread. But YAHSHUA definitely did not need the help of Satan to do that, for He Himself was the Bread, the sustainer of life. He then used the sword of the Spirit and fought Satan by saying, It is written, Man shall not live and be sustained by bread alone but by every word and expression of God (vs.5). The devil, however, continued with his temptations, hoping for YAHSHUA to fall into his evil and deceitful ways, in spite of knowing Whom He was. In his defiant way, he offered YAHSHUA the world and all it had in return for His worshipping of him. Imagine YAHSHUA, Who is the sole expression of the glory of God, the Creator of and Sustainer of all living thing, the Upholder and Sustainer of the universe, bowing down to the father of lies, and deceiver! That is an absolute absurdity. Satan's desire to be like God never diminished and he made clear to YAHSHUA of that, when he suggested YAHSHUA to worship him. That constitutes a prideful and arrogant attitude only Satan could express in the fullest meaning of the word. YAHSHUA, once again put him in his place by fighting him with the Word of God- the sword of the Spirit: It is written, You shall do homage to and worship the Lord your God, and Him only

shall you serve (vs.8). But the devil was not finished, and this time, he tempted YAHSHUA with doubt. "If You are the Son of God" cast yourself down from the gable of the temple where he had taken Him. The devil well knew the purpose why YAHSHUA had come to earth. He wanted to see YAHSHUA gone by all means before He went to the cross. He knew that only through the cross He was going to pay the price for humankind's redemption. Satan dared this time to tempt YAHSHUA with verses from Psalm 91: 11-12 It is written, Satan said, He will give His angels charge over you to guard and watch over you closely and carefully; and on their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone (Psalm 91:11-12). YAHSHUA close his temptations by rebuking him: You shall not tempt the Lord your God (verse 12).

Moses lived most of his life in the desert. From the time he was forty until his death at 120 years of age. He not only faced it physically but also spiritually when leading the rebellious nation of Israel to the Promised Land. He himself failed to enter due to the stubbornness of his people against him, causing him to express his anger in a manner that displeased God. As a result, he was denied the entrance to the Promised Land, after forty years of wandering through the wilderness, in that case. Hagar, Sarah's servant, ran away from the presence of her mistress and found herself in a wilderness where there was no water. Thirsty and hungry, she prepared herself and her son to die, when suddenly, the Lord came to her and provided her with water. That will be true for us, too when we go through our spiritual wilderness, if we do not faint and fall into the temptation of giving up. When the wilderness shows up in our lives, many temptations will come with it. Because we often measure God's love for us by His answering of our prayers, many of us lose faith in Him while in the wilderness. When that happens, we then enter into a spiritual desert, empty of God. Day after day we suffer spiritual starvation but can't discern the nature of our problem for blaming all on God. In our vulnerability, Satan comes with all kinds of temptations. They come in different forms and shapes. Because we can't discern the spiritual enemies of our soul, we fall prey to his schemes. Dehydrated, we totter without understanding, to another temptation, falling into them all the time. Although difficult for all, the spiritual wilderness is a place to be strengthened. If YAHSHUA had promised heaven on earth for the believer, He would not have said, In the world you will have tribulation and trials and distress and frustration; but be of good cheer! For I have overcome the world (John 16:33b). YAHSHUA went through all kinds of wildernesses while here on earth. One of them was before His trials while in the

Garden of Gethsemane when the devil came to tempt Him the second time. There, He was tempted to give all up. Meanwhile, He felt depressed and suffered the anguish of His soul. But thank God, He conformed His will to the will of His Father and salvation came to all who received and will receive Him. The wilderness is the place where we must surrender our will to the will of the heavenly Father, for He is deeply concerned not only for our physical being but much more for our spiritual growth. In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind; He knows the way that I (we) take. When He has tried me(us), I (we) shall come forth as refined gold (Job 13:10; 23:10). That was the attitude of Job when he was taken to the worst wilderness one cannot imagine.

The way to salvation is through YAHSHUA; the way to sanctification is through the wilderness, while God breaks and molds us to conform us to His Son. To take one day at the time it is all we must do, while we face the uncertainty of the wilderness, for we should know Who holds our future. He not only holds our future, but He has written in His book all the days of our lives. He is in control of all the details that shape the lives of His saints. Nothing goes unnoticed. When going through the wilderness, remember the words of the Apostle Paul: No temptation has overtaken you and laid hold on you that is not common to man. But God is faithful and He [can be trusted] not to let you be tempted and tried and assayed beyond your ability and strength of resistance and power to endure, but with the temptation He will also provide the way out, that you may be capable and strong and powerful to bear up under it patiently (I Cor. 10:13). Because Paul experienced God's faithfulness in the many wildernesses, he had to go through; he understood well the meaning of these words given to him. We all need to go through the wilderness, in order to learn how to fight temptations and be victorious.

THINK ABOUT IT!