

EXODUS STORIES FROM THE DESERT

Part 1: “The Debrief: Why the 40 Years?” (Deut 8:2-5)

Jay Hohfeler



Shepherds with their flocks at the foot of Mount Sinai about 1900
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TEST OF THE DESERT

Life in a spiritual desert is an extended period of time without relief

DESCRIPTION	
Charles Swindoll...<i>Life of Moses</i> Examples: ○ Caring for the aged over an extended period of time without relief ○ Confinement ○ Extended period with no end in sight: ○ Ill health ○ Personal pain ○ Hardship ○ Heartache ○ Loss of a loved one by death ○ Broken romance ○ Divorce ○ Moving where you know no one; away from all the ones you love ○ Failure at school or work ○ Boring, thankless job ○ Place of: ○ HEAT ○ BARRENESS ○ UNPRODUCTIVITY	Paul E. Miller...<i>A Praying Life</i> We come face-to face with our inability to: ○ Live ○ Have joy ○ Do anything with lasting worth ○ Life is crushing us

Remember the Lord Your God

8 “The whole commandment that I command you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to give to your fathers. ² And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. ³ And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

⁴ Your clothing did not wear out on you and your foot did not swell these forty years. ⁵ Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you.

² And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness,

v2 To humble you

"It is doubtful whether God can bless a man greatly until He has hurt him deeply."

A.W. Tozer

The Root of the Righteous

v2 To test you, to know what was in your heart

Old Native American saying: *"A tree is best measured...when it's fallen."*

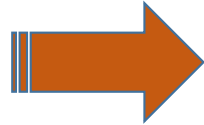
CRUCIBLE

heat-resistant container used to melt metals—in order to purify it. Once liquefied, impurities rise to the surface and can be skimmed off.

Tools of the Desert

- Days without water
- Days without food
- Threats from enemies
- Discomfort in the wilderness
- Obscurity
- Prolonged timeframe

Revealed in their hearts



Distrust of Him

Bitterness

Fear

Hatred

Suspicion

Insecurity

**The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold,
and the LORD tests hearts.**

Proverbs 17:3

v3 let you hunger and fed you with manna, which you did not know, nor did your fathers know

HOW GOD WORKS

Charles Swindoll...Life of Moses

- The "School of Self Discovery"
- Strips us from:
 - the things that keep us from hearing God
 - the things we normally cling to for comfort
- A place:
 - where God speaks
 - of preparation

GOD'S TOOL

OUR HEART

Obscurity	<i>Removes</i> →	Pride
Time	<i>Removes</i> →	Fear
Solitude	<i>Removes</i> →	Faulty Crutches
Discomfort	<i>Removes</i> →	Resistance

Paul E. Miller...A Praying Life

- We slowly:
 - Give up the fight [yield]
 - Stop caring about what people think of us
 - Realize that what used to be important (brought us life) no longer matters; after a while we notice our real thirsts
 - Realize we are helpless (crucial for prayer)

God makes sure:

- Our idols die for lack of food
- He gets our attention because He's the only game in town
- A channel begins to open between Him & us
- The best gift of the desert is God's presence.
 - When driving, we turn off the radio just to be with God
 - Without realizing it, we have learned to pray continuously

Principles

How God used the desert to teach and form Israel:

- God Himself was their provision
- His presence mattered more than abundance
- Hardship created a new appetite for Him

More...

- God deliberately allowed Israel to experience hunger so they would learn dependence on Him
- Prosperity can dull our awareness of God
- The wilderness teaches us that God, Himself, is the greatest gift, more than the gifts He provides.

Elisabeth Elliott
Keep A Quiet Heart
(paraphrased)

Deuteronomy 32

**“He found him in a desert land,
and in the howling waste of the wilderness;
he encircled him, he cared for him,
he kept him as the apple of his eye.**

**¹¹ Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
that flutters over its young,
spreading out its wings, catching them,
bearing them on its pinions,**

**¹² the LORD alone guided him,
no foreign god was with him.**

**he encircled him, he cared for him,
he kept him as the apple of his eye.**

Job 23:8-10

⁸ “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there,
and backward, but I do not perceive him;

⁹ on the left hand when he is working, I do not behold him;
he turns to the right hand, but I do not see him.

¹⁰ But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

Something painful happened to me. This is how I met it. I was quiet for a while with the Lord and then I wrote these words for myself:

1. He brought me here. It is by his will I am in this straight place. In that fact, I will rest.
2. He will keep me here in his love, and give me grace to behave as his child. Then, He will make the trial a blessing--teaching me the lessons He intends me to learn, and working in me the grace He means to bestow.
3. In His good time, He can bring me out again. How and when, only He knows.

I am here:

- By God's appointment
- In His keeping
- Under His training
- For His time

V. Raymond Edman
In Quietness and Confidence

Article 12 of The Westminster Confession of Faith reminds us just how breathtaking it is to be a child of God:

“All those justified...enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God...”

- ✓ *have His name put upon them*
- ✓ *receive the spirit of adoption*
- ✓ *have access to the throne of grace with boldness*
- ✓ *are enabled to cry, “Abba, Father”*
- ✓ *are pitied*
- ✓ *are protected*
- ✓ *are provided for*
- ✓ *chastened by Him as by a father*
- ✓ *yet never cast off*
- ✓ *but sealed to the day of redemption*
- ✓ *inherit the promises*
- ✓ *heirs of everlasting salvation*