What not to do in the wilderness

Lessons from Exodus



WHAT NOT TO DO IN THE WILDERNESS

Lessons from the Exodus

The wilderness was supposed to be a place of preparation, not a place of permanent residence. Yehovah had delivered Israel from Egypt, demonstrated His power, given them His commandments, established His covenant with them, and promised to lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey.

Yet an entire generation died in the wilderness without ever receiving what had been promised to them.

Why? What did they do that was so offensive to Yehovah that He refused to allow them to enter the land?

The answer is especially important because the New Testament specifically tells us that these things were written as warnings for us.

Consider the typology

Have you ever wondered why the account of Israel's exodus from Egypt and their forty years in the wilderness was preserved for us in Scripture? Just as Jacob's wrestling with Yehovah has profound significance for those of us who have come out of Babylon and found ourselves wrestling with His truth against the religious traditions and theologies we've inherited, so does Israel's journey through the wilderness.

Their story is not only a historical account of a people who wandered through the desert thousands of years ago. It is a warning, an example, and a lesson for every one of us who has begun this journey of leaving behind what we once believed to be true. Like Israel, we've come out of a system that shaped the way we think, the way we worship, and the way we understand Yehovah. But coming out is only the beginning. We still have to unlearn what we brought with us.

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1 Corinthians 10:11

"Now all these things happened to them (Israel) as examples, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come."

We must learn these lessons because Israel's failures in the wilderness were recorded for our warning. It is not enough to just come out of Babylon. That's the easy part. We need to understand where they went wrong, and what we must do differently to avoid repeating their mistakes. Otherwise, we risk repeating the very same mistakes that kept an entire generation from entering the Promised Land.

REMEMBER

Deuteronomy 8:2

"And you shall remember that Yehovah your Elohim 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."

THIS IS WHY YOU'RE HERE

So, before we even begin, we need to ask ourselves a few questions about who we are RIGHT NOW

Am I embracing the humbling?

Am I enduring the tests with faith?

Am I making my heart known to Him?

Am I keeping His commandments or not?

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Hebrews 3:16–19

For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all (Israel) who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

did not obey

unbelief

=

Numbers 14:22–23

because all these men who have seen My glory and the signs which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have put Me to the test now these ten times, and have not heeded My voice, they certainly shall not see the land of which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who rejected Me see it.

Yehovah brought Israel into the wilderness to test what was in their hearts, but Israel turned around and put Yehovah to the test. And what He called testing, they turned into an occasion for rebellion. Even more significant is that Yehovah connects their testing of Him with their rejection of Him.

HOW DO WE TEST AND REJECT?

Numbers 14:11

*“Then Yehovah said to Moses: ‘How long will these people **reject Me**? And how long will they **not believe Me**, with all the signs which I have performed among them?’”*

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2. They complained about what Yehovah provided

Exodus 16:2-3

Then the whole congregation of the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the children of Israel said to them, "Oh, that we had died by the hand of Yehovah in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat and when we ate bread to the full! For you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger."

They remembered the food but forgot the bondage

As a result, they began to accuse the Most High of evil. These were the same people who had cried out for deliverance! But now, just a short time after their exodus, they're talking about Egypt as though it was a wonderful place where their needs were always met.

When the wilderness becomes uncomfortable, the things we once recognized as wrong can begin looking attractive again. We start remembering the friendships, the fellowship, the familiar routines, the nostalgia of the pagan holidays, and the sense of belonging. And before long, we begin questioning whether leaving was really worth it.

Psalm 78:17–19

"But they sinned even more against Him By rebelling against the Most High in the wilderness. And they tested Yah in their heart by asking for the food of their fancy. Yes, they spoke against Yah: They said, 'Can Yah prepare a table in the wilderness?'"

WELL, CAN HE?

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We have all left the institutional church because of our new convictions about Scripture that HE revealed to us.
In other words HE TOOK YOU OUT, just Israel was taken out of Egypt.

For years, we had an established community, predictable routines, familiar relationships, and maybe even a livelihood connected to that institution.
Now those things are gone. And suddenly, the future feels very uncertain.

But what if Yehovah is teaching us to be faithful with what He's given us TODAY without demanding that He reveal everything about tomorrow?

HOW WILL THAT BILL BE PAID? HOW AM I GOING TO MAKE ENDS MEET? WHAT IF I CAN'T PAY THE RENT?

WHAT IF THE MONEY RUNS OUT? HOW AM I GOING TO FEED MY FAMILY? WHAT IF I GET SICK?

WHAT IF THE DOCTOR'S REPORT IS BAD? WHAT IF I LOSE MY HOUSE? WHAT IF I FAIL?

ALL OF THIS

Is nothing more than WHAT IF YEHOVAH DOESN'T COME THROUGH FOR ME?

This is unbelief and thus a rejection of Him

You must pass this test by being faithful for TODAY. Trust that He will provide your needs TODAY

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4. They tested Yehovah by questioning whether He was among them

Exodus 17:1-7

Then all the congregation of the children of Israel set out on their journey from the Wilderness of Sin, according to the commandment of Yehovah, and camped in Rephidim; but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people contended with Moses, and said, "Give us water, that we may drink." So Moses said to them, "Why do you contend with me? Why do you tempt the Lord?" And the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses, and said, "Why is it you have brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" …..So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

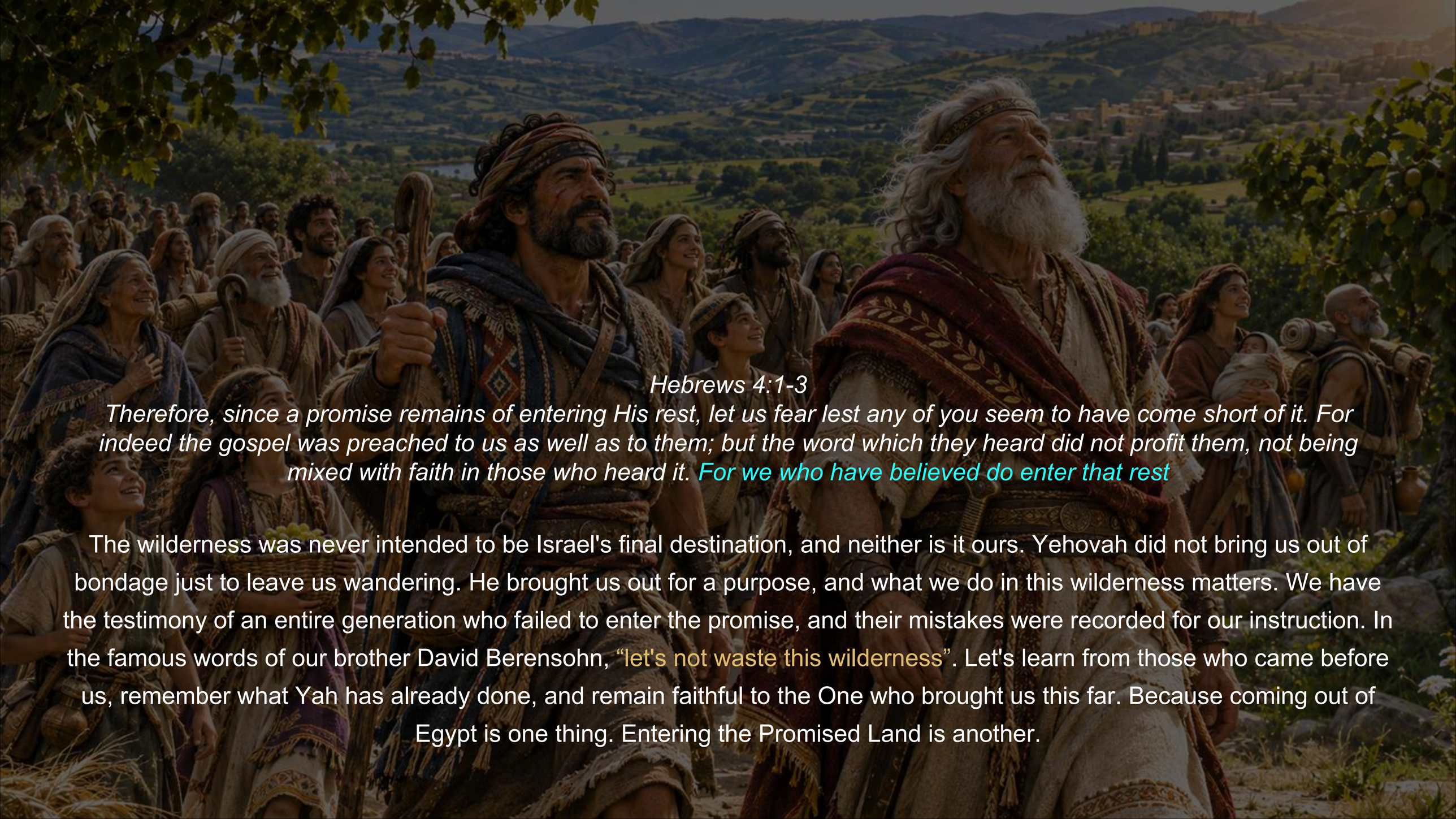
They had seen the plagues in Egypt. They had walked through the Red Sea. They had witnessed the destruction of Pharaoh's army. They had received manna from heaven. They had experienced the cloud by day and the fire by night.

And now they're asking whether Yah is even among them!

Their present circumstances had become more convincing to them than everything Yehovah had already demonstrated.

We cannot forget what He has already done! Consider everything that had to happen in your life to awaken you to His truth and bring you to where you are today. Only you know the miracles. Only you know the doors He opened, the obstacles He removed, and the circumstances that brought you to this place.

NEVER measure Yehovah's presence in your lives by the condition of your circumstances. You must pass this test!



Hebrews 4:1-3

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest

The wilderness was never intended to be Israel's final destination, and neither is it ours. Yehovah did not bring us out of bondage just to leave us wandering. He brought us out for a purpose, and what we do in this wilderness matters. We have the testimony of an entire generation who failed to enter the promise, and their mistakes were recorded for our instruction. In the famous words of our brother David Berensohn, “let's not waste this wilderness”. Let's learn from those who came before us, remember what Yah has already done, and remain faithful to the One who brought us this far. Because coming out of Egypt is one thing. Entering the Promised Land is another.