

## Three Years in Arabia

Texts: Act 9:17-25; Galatians 1:11-18

Those whom God uses mightily have benefitted by the wilderness.

### I. THE WILDERNESS IS THE PLACE WHERE THE STRAIGHT PATH IS FOUND.

Consider John the Baptist. Matthew 3:1-3: "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

### II. THE WILDERNESS IS THE PLACE WHERE THE DEVIL IS DEFEATED.

Consider our Lord. Luke 4:1: "And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness...." In Luke 4:2-13, Jesus was tempted with three temptations. I John 2:16: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." All three temptations were soundly defeated by our Lord through His genius welding of the Sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:17).

### III. THE WILDERNESS IS THE PLACE WHERE GOD COMMUNICATES WITH HIS SERVANTS.

- Moses:

Galatians 4:25a: "For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia...." Exodus 19:20: "And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up."

- Elijah:

I Kings 19:8: "And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God. I Kings 19:11-12: "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."

As soon as the scales fell from Saul's eyes and he was baptized, this new Paul immediately began to testify in the synagogues throughout Damascus. This was the biggest turnaround since the resurrection of our Lord and Savior! The very institutions that were welcoming Saul to arrest and take the lives of the Christians are now receiving the Gospel from the former "enemy number one" of the Christian church! And now the unbelieving and offended Jews in Damascus conspire to take the life of Paul. This new firebrand for Christ narrowly escapes death. Acts 9:25: "Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket." You might say, Paul had become "a basket case." Although I

say this in jest, Paul affirmed in I Corinthians 4:10a: “We are fools for Christ’s sake....”

#### IV. THE WILDERNESS IS WHERE CHRIST PERSONALLY DISCIPLED PAUL.

Galatians 1:17, 18: “Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.”

F. B. Meyer said, “Month after month he [Paul] wandered to and fro, sharing the rough fare of some Essene community, or the lot of a family of Bedouins; now swept upwards in Heavenly fellowship, and again plunged into profound meditation. Deeper than all was God’s work in his soul. Grain by grain his profound self-reliance and impetuosity were worn away. No longer confident in himself, he was henceforth more content to be a slave of Jesus Christ. We all need to go to Arabia to learn lessons like these.”

##### A. Arabia freed Paul from the fear of man

Galatians 1:11, 16; Galatians 2:9-14; I Thessalonians 2:4

##### B. Arabia is where the Lord Jesus Christ personally tutored Paul.

Galatians 1:12

##### C. Arabia is where the burdens of Paul’s past life were lifted.

Galatians 1:14, 15

Philippians 3:8: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”

##### D. Arabia is where Paul found his purpose in life.

Galatians 1:15

Paul understood clearly that what God was revealing to him was as verbally inspired as was the writings of the Old Testament prophets. I Thessalonians 2:13: “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.”

Peter was later impressed with those things taught to Paul by special revelation. II Peter 3:15, 16: “And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

## CONCLUSION:

While in the wilderness of Arabia, Paul was surrounded by the deep swirling sand beneath his feet. Above him, Paul would behold the deep, limitless azure blue sky by day and the beautiful nights when the stars would appear like diamonds with the velvet purple background of space. But the most outstanding of all, Paul would go long periods of time alone with only the manifested presence of Christ Himself as his sole company. With this in mind, Let's talk about what happens when we are alone with God.

(1) There is none with whom we can compare the Lord.

Isaiah 6:1, 2; Isaiah 46:5: "To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like?"

(2) The pristine holiness of God is revealed.

Isaiah 6:3-7; I Peter 1:15,16: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

(3) Outside interference is removed and the voice of God becomes clear.

Isaiah 6:8; Revelation 1:10: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet."

-Pastor Pope-