

The Wilderness Journey

Part 3

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Duration	00:56:37
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/aeb005/the-wilderness-journey

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[00:00:00] Psalm 103, verse 7.

He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.

This psalm is part of the fourth psalm book, and maybe you know that these five books of the psalms go parallel with the five books of Moses. So this is the fourth book which would go parallel with the book of Numbers. And it is remarkable to see here that God made known his ways unto Moses.

We have seen that it was God's work to deliver his people from bondage.

First they realized the need for deliverance, and then God has introduced his deliverer. [00:01:02] He has shown the basis for deliverance. He has delivered them actually, and all speaks of the work of our Lord Jesus and his person. And then we have seen how it was in God's heart to bring them into the land he had prepared already long before for them. And in Deuteronomy 1 and 2 you can read that God could have brought them there in 11 days.

And then in chapter 2 we find that he said, now you have to go around this mountain long enough.

And actually it became 40 years. That was not God's fault, I say it reverently, that was the fault of the people. And there God's ways come in. And then we see that God's ways come out, or God reveals himself in his ways to his people to bring them into the good of his purpose, to introduce them really into the enjoyment of what is in God's heart.

[00:02:01] Now we have seen, first of all, Friday night, the facts of the wilderness journey. And it is really a very vast subject. And I am again impressed by the vastness of this subject. We have seen some lessons of the wilderness yesterday. And tonight I'd like to bring out, with the Lord's help, the fruit of the wilderness journey, the result of the wilderness journey. And this result is necessary in order to bring us into the enjoyment of God's purpose. We have seen that what was literally the case for Israel has a lesson for us, or has been given right for us, that we might learn from these things and that God would introduce us into his land, where the Lord Jesus is now. So we cannot speak about the land itself now, about the Lord Jesus who is in the glory, but we would be occupied tonight with God's ways.

[00:03:01] He made known these ways unto Moses.

What does that mean? That not everybody among the people of Israel did understand these ways. Moses, who was close to the Lord, he understood these ways. God revealed them to us. So may we now be as Moses, very close to the Lord, that he may bring out his ways to us, that he may show, as it were, what he has in his heart, his acts. You know, if you want or you don't want, you are subject to his acts. And many fell in the wilderness, as we have seen, but let us open our hearts and open our ears to know his ways.

Then another verse in the Psalms, Psalm 78, verse 19, where we have this question of unbelief.

[00:04:01] Psalm 78, verse 19, and they spoke against God, they said, is God able to prepare a table in the wilderness?

This was a question of unbelief.

But we, through faith, may say, yes, God is able to prepare a table in the wilderness. Where there is this dry land, we have seen no human resources available. God shows what is in his heart. God gives a table.

He wants to have fellowship with his people, of course, in the land, in his dwelling place, but he comes already to his people, where they are in the wilderness, to share with them what is in his heart, to feed them, that they may grow. That's the point. We hope to see this tonight, that God wants to have a people prepared to be introduced in the land, and therefore he gives them food, that they may grow. And how?

That they may learn from the Lord Jesus, that they may be formed after his image. [00:05:03] That is what we hope to see. And therefore I'd like to read a few verses, first of the Lord Jesus. Isaiah 53, verse 2.

For he shall grow up before him as a tender sapling and as a root out of a dry ground.

Here we find the Lord Jesus, the fruit of the earth. Here we find how this dry ground produced something. The Lord Jesus has been in the wilderness, and he was there in a perfect way. No failure, no mistakes, no fall, whatever.

[00:06:01] He was there perfect. And we can marvel only how he, as we have seen this morning, came down to become a man. How he grew up.

We find it in Luke's gospel in a marvellous way. In Luke 2 and Luke 3 especially, where we find how the Lord Jesus grew up. It was before God.

It was not before man in the first place. It was before God. How was God pleased to see there a fruit in the wilderness, a fruit which, as it were, reflected what was in God's heart. A fruit which answered completely to God's desires.

And then God showed it in Matthew 3 and Luke 3. Heavens were opened and God said, this is my beloved son. We have seen yesterday in Deuteronomy 8 that it is God's desire to have sons. Now he had one son in whom he found a perfect answer, and we find him here, a root out of a dry ground. That is what God produced in the wilderness for his own delight. [00:07:05] One man here on earth.

Now first in Mark 1, just to see the Lord in the wilderness, in Mark 1, there we find that the Lord Jesus was driven into the wilderness, verse 12, and immediately the spirit drives him into the wilderness.

And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts, and the angels ministered unto him. Here we find that after God has found his delight in his beloved son, he allows that [00:08:07] he was, and the spirit drove him into the wilderness. It was to bring out that God had here a perfect man.

And Satan, he comes to tempt him, but he has no result.

Forty days, that is full testing for the Lord. Forty days.

And he was with the people of Israel forty years. And he was with the wild beasts, that is what we find in Mark, with the wild beasts. How we find here the attacks of the enemy in the wild beasts. He attacked him from every side, as it were, but the Lord was faithful, the Lord was perfect, and so the angels ministered to him. And in Luke 4, we find, and I just referred to it, we will not read it, but in Matthew [00:09:01] 4 we find how the Lord was led by the spirit up to the wilderness. We find here in Mark we have seen that the Lord Jesus was driven by the spirit into the wilderness.

In Matthew we find how the spirit brought him into the wilderness. But then in Luke 4 we find that he was led in the wilderness, not into, he was led into the wilderness by the spirit, he was even driven there. But now he was led as a perfect man in the wilderness. Here we find the Lord Jesus in these forty days, he was full of the Holy Spirit. What a contrast with what we have seen in Israel yesterday. There was the flesh, here a man full of the Holy Spirit.

And he was led by the spirit in the wilderness, forty days. And here we find how the devil tempted him in connection with three things, in connection with the earthly things.

We need food, these are earthly things, but as we have seen yesterday, for Israel they [00:10:06] become objects, they use these things in independence on God, and so this became idolatry.

Satan can use earthly things, even the good things God gives here in this earth, that he may use them in independence, it becomes idolatry. The second temptation is in connection with worldly things. Satan uses also worldly things to make us fall.

And then in the third he can even use religious things, and that's the most dangerous form. People would use religious things, as we have even seen in Korah and his friends, and the flesh manifests itself, it's the most subtle attack.

And we find here that the Lord Jesus was perfect, he did not want to use God for himself. That's the point, you know. People want to use God, they pray in such a way that God has to come in according to [00:11:04] their will.

Now, that is pretension, that is something which is detestable in God's eyes. That is nothing of dependence, that is self-will.

The Lord Jesus shows how he is dependent in every way. So just these few examples, and then I'd like to turn again to a psalm, Psalm 91, where we see how perfect the Lord Jesus was, and again this

is in the fourth psalm book, remember, the fourth book of the psalms, where we find the Lord Jesus, how he was in perfect condition there, as we found him in Luke 4, and we find there all the points you find back in Psalm 90, that the people fell down in the wilderness, they were there under God's hand in government, but then in contrast to Psalm 90 we find in Psalm 91 the Lord Jesus, and it says – we could read the whole psalm, we have no time to do that now – what I [00:12:04] wanted to bring out is verse 6, for the pestilence that walks in darkness, for the destruction that waits at noonday, the Lord protected him. So you see how he was in the desert, surrounded by all these dangers, but he was perfect, because it says in verse 4, he shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shall thou find refuge. There is this perfect dependence, this perfect fellowship, we find in the Lord Jesus. What a marvellous example for us, because in Luke's Gospel we find the Lord Jesus as our model.

It is not that we can follow him as the king, like in Matthew, we are his disciples by God's grace, but in Luke's Gospel we find him as our perfect model we should follow. And here also in Psalm 91, we may follow him.

[00:13:02] Now this is our standard, as it were, and when we compare Israel's history we had yesterday and this perfect standard, we see the enormous difference.

And now it's in God's heart that you and me would follow this standard, that we would grow up, as it were, to answer to this standard.

We turn now to a verse in Exodus, now I would like to go with you through the experiences of the people of Israel and to see what God has wrought.

You know, we have seen the perfect standard, that is the Lord Jesus, and now we see that God in his ways with his people starts to work to bring out the same features in them.

That's what is in God's heart. Now first in Exodus 3, verse 1, the second part of verse 1.

[00:14:07] And Moses led the flock behind the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God to Horeb.

And the angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn bush, and he looked, and behold, the thorn bush burned with fire, and the thorn bush was not being consumed.

And Moses said, let me now turn aside and see this great sight, why the thorn bush is not burned.

Here we see what God has in mind. God wants to bring his people as a flock behind the wilderness, that is what is in his heart.

He wants to bring them into his very presence. Horeb speaks of God's presence.

It is God's mountain.

As we have seen in the wilderness, the wilderness becomes a place where man is nothing and God [00:15:06] is all.

Now God wants to bring his flock to that point, that they may recognize the greatness of God. That's Horeb, brought into God's presence.

And then we find here this flame of fire. The thorn bush would speak of our condition.

Through the fall we have come under the influence of sin. We have been placed under the power of Satan. And now we find here that God comes in the midst of the thorn bush. In ourselves there is nothing which would answer to God. In the flesh there is nothing to answer to God. But God comes and he dwells in the thorn bush. And that shows that God is going to work. And the thorn bush was not consumed. We might think, like when we read yesterday, that the people were strewn in the desert, [00:16:01] that everyone would be consumed. But what we find here is that God dwells in the thorn bush and that the thorn bush remains. So the holy God dwells in the thorn bush.

And then we find that in his presence all that is of the flesh is put aside, gradually. And then comes out the fruit of God, and we will see that in at least seven different trees in the Bible that we find that instead of these thorns there will be fruit for God. That is his marvellous grace. And therefore Moses says, let me now turn aside and see this great sight. May we all become impressed by this great sight to see that this holy God wants to dwell in the midst of such a people.

Then chapter 16.

We had not much time on Friday to speak on chapter 16 and we don't have much time either [00:17:01] now, but I would like to bring out now this point.

We see in chapter 16 two things at least.

We see the death of the Lord presented in the flesh which they receive to eat.

I would like to say this.

There was murmuring. We find here the second month and again we see how the people of Israel had to learn a lesson.

And then we find how the murmuring is stilled as it were by what God gives. He gives them flesh to eat in the evening. Verse 8.

Moses said when Jehovah gives you in the evening flesh to eat. The murmurings were stilled as it were in the death of the Lord Jesus. God found a basis as we have seen this morning, the death of the Lord, a basis on which he could deal with his people.

[00:18:01] A basis on which he can deal with us. He found this in the death of the Lord Jesus. And then we find a second thought. It gives food.

The death of the Lord Jesus gives food. We see it for example in Samson when he found this lion and killed it. And the very lion became the source of food. And so the death of the Lord Jesus has become a source of food. But now the second point in verse 8. And in the morning bread to the fool.

It's not only the death of the Lord Jesus which is brought in on which God can act now, but God wants to have a new generation. That's what we have seen yesterday. God wants to have this new generation in the wilderness. And how is this new generation to be formed? By feeding upon this heavenly man.

Instead of something of the flesh which is promoted, we see that God puts aside the flesh in the death of the Lord Jesus and he introduces the new man, the Lord Jesus.

[00:19:06] But he wants to have the Lord Jesus in his whole people so to speak. In other words, when the Lord Jesus was here on earth, then we find this heavenly man who came down from heaven, as we have seen in John 6, who answered perfectly to the desires of God's heart. And now God says, I want to have a whole company like that. He wants to have you and me in dependence upon God, doing God's will. He has given us a body in redemption to do the will of God. And now to realise this he gives us this new food, this manna, teaches us, as we have sung in the hymn, to teach us in the wilderness, this manna teaches us that we may learn from the Lord Jesus, who was always dependent, always obedient, always doing the will of God. So this is this new generation which comes out in the wilderness. This generation is formed in the wilderness. That's what we have here in Exodus 16, this new food prepares a new generation.

[00:20:10] Now I'd like to go to the book of Numbers again, just two verses in the book of Numbers.

Chapter 23, verse 23, that's very easy to remember.

That is one of the four prophecies of Balaam and we find in verse 23, for there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel, at this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, what has God wrought?

What God has wrought.

Now this is my point. The work of God in us.

We have seen in connection with the deliverance out of Egypt, it's the work of God for his [00:21:02] people.

It's the death of the Lord in the Red Sea for his people. But in the wilderness we see the work of God in us, to have this response, to have this new generation.

And when you keep this in mind, the work of God in us, then you will follow the whole line. We find then the work of God with us, I would suggest, in connection with the land. In the land God has a people which answers perfectly to his desires and he can share with them what is in his heart. So there you find the work of God, wisdom, as it were. We find the work of God in connection with the new creation, Ephesians 2, verse 10, we are his workmanship.

It's what God has wrought, nothing of the flesh, this new generation, what God has wrought. When you think of Jacob's life, it's mentioned here, Jacob and Israel, Jacob in the Old Testament, you marvel at God's grace, there you have discipline. [00:22:01] You could just place Jacob's life beside the wilderness experiences, just the same. Only Jacob is an individual in Israel in a collective way. And there comes out God's work. It's wonderful to see how God has much patience with Jacob. We would not have had so much patience, but it's good that God had so much patience because when he had so much patience with Jacob, he is going to have so much patience with me and with you.

And the result is that there is fruit for God. There was worship at the end of Jacob's life. How great this is, fruit for God, what God had wrought. So the work of God, we see it in us, in connection with

the new creation, this new generation, and you can find it in the New Testament. It is God's work what you find. Even in the Gospel, when there is a soul saved, it's God's work. When there is pastoral care or whatever, it is God's work, and we would like to see God's work. That's what is worth, full of worth in the wilderness, full of value. [00:23:06] Not the work of man, but the work of God, the new creation. Then in chapter 24 of the same book, we find, in verse 6, Numbers 24, verse 6, Like valleys are they spread forth, like gardens by the riverside, like aloe trees which Jehovah has planted, like cedars beside the waters.

Here we have already an indication of this work of God and the fruit, the result of this work. You find these aloe trees, and I think aloe speaks in a special way of the life which God introduces, it's life from above. [00:24:01] You find the Lord Jesus was anointed after his death with this cassia and aloe, and I think we find it also in Psalm 45, I would suggest it speaks of this new life which God introduces.

But cedars speaks of the victory, God has a victory in the wilderness. What a victory to have such a people for himself in the wilderness.

Now I'd like to go to the book of Deuteronomy. We have to go through many passages, and it is only a limited selection, but it helps us to understand God's ways, and to see that God is going to have fruit for himself. We could read the whole chapter, Deuteronomy 32, but I'd like to mention just a few verses in this chapter. It's a wonderful chapter, it is the conclusion of Moses' experiences in the wilderness. And by the way, when you read this chapter, Deuteronomy 32, you find the wilderness journey [00:25:04] as they went through it at that time, but when you read carefully, I think you see the whole history of Israel, even the last 2,000 years, you see the whole history of Israel, so I would say you find here the wilderness journey in the perspective of the whole history, and so you find also the wilderness journey of the Church, you find our wilderness journey. But what does it say in verse 4?

He is the rock.

We have seen that yesterday. But then it says, his work is perfect.

Now when we would come to that conclusion in our own souls, that God's work is perfect, that sums it up. God never makes a mistake.

We sometimes think God makes mistakes, but God never makes a mistake. His work is perfect.

His doings are perfect, but also the result of his work is perfect. And then again, his ways, you notice in verse 4, for all his ways, not only some of his [00:26:06] ways, all his ways are righteousness.

So in perfect harmony with what God is in himself, he is light, and his ways are righteousness, according to what God is in himself. And then a God of faithfulness. We have seen the unfaithfulness of the people, but what a faithfulness in God, without deceit. Jacob, full of deceit, God without deceit. And God wants to have Jacob as God is, without deceit. What a work of God. We would throw away such a piece. We would be like the potter in Jeremiah 18, who threw away that vessel. No. God, not.

And then in verse, as I said, we could read a whole chapter, but we have no time.

In verse 9, for Jehovah's portion is his people, for his heart, what does his people mean for [00:27:04]

his heart?

Jehovah's portion. And then Jacob, the lot of his inheritance, he could think also of the land. And then verse 10, he found him in a desert land.

Here we find God's compassion.

He found him. When you read Ezekiel 16, for example, you find how great God's compassion is.

And in the waste, hauling wilderness, we have no idea what the wilderness is really.

I think we have to learn much, what the wilderness really is. What a terrible place.

But how sweet it becomes when the Lord comes in, when he cares for us, when we realize his care, that this very wilderness, so terrible wilderness, becomes a sweet place. And it says he compassed him about, or he led him about. [00:28:01] Like we have read about the Lord Jesus, he was led by the Spirit, so he is going to lead us through the wilderness. He is going to watch over us.

What a care. Then in verse 10 at the end we read, he preserved him. We think again of this expression in Acts 13, where Paul said, he nursed them. What a care. As a mother would care for her baby, so God cared for his people. So God cares for you and me. Not only that, as the apple of his eye, not only as his child, as the apple of his own eye. You can imagine how great God's concern is for you. How great is his love.

And then we find how he refreshes us. I think our brother mentioned in his prayer, we need refreshment, that our strength is rebuilt as it were. That's what you find in verse 11, as the eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young. It's not pleasant for the flesh to be stirred up like this.

[00:29:03] It's not pleasant for these young eagles when they are thrown out of their nest. It's not a pleasant experience. But it is to make them grow, to make them dependent. And then we see he hovers over its young and spreads out its wings. So there's protection from above, there's protection from below. Takes them, bears them on its feathers. So even in every way there is total, complete care, complete protection.

And so it says in verse 12, so Jehovah alone did lead them. There's nobody else capable to lead the people of God. When we think of the Lord Jesus, our perfect pastor, like we find him in the New Testament, I often think, how is it possible? Such great people here on earth, how many children of God, and who would care for them? But there is one who would care for them. He will lead them, nobody else. He will lead them. [00:30:01] And no strange God was with him.

He made him right on the high places on the earth. You see how they grow, they become strong.

There was food in the wilderness, their strength, they become a big army as it were. And he ate the produce of the field. Now you can go on, you see how much food there becomes available, even in the wilderness. Honey, and oil.

And then in verse 15 we find how he is the rock of his salvation. We need daily salvation. Of course our souls are saved.

But like Paul expressed many times, we are totally dependent upon the daily salvation of the Lord. And that comes in here.

But what a contrast then in verse 20, for they are a perverse generation, children whom is no faithfulness. We have seen that. There was no response. So may the Lord help us through his spirit that we will give a response and that we will not be like this perverse generation who were, according to verse 28, a nation void of counsel. [00:31:07] They had no understanding. But we have seen Moses had understanding. God could share his ways with Moses. Oh, verse 29, oh that they had been wise.

You know, God is looking for wise men and women. And this is really what touches me, to see in the Bible how the ways of God come in. I hope to show that in Hosea.

We find it also in Psalm 107.

Again the fourth book of the Psalms, the last psalm of this fourth book, ends with this question, who is wise?

Oh, that they had been wise.

They would have understood this. So God wants us to be wise.

Like in the future remnant, Daniel 11 and 12, you find these wise, instructed disciples, these masculine, and you find them back in the New Testament. [00:32:02] In James 3, who is wise?

God wants us to be wise. Instead of using our tongue to hurt others, to use our tongue for this world, God wants us to use our tongue for him, for his world, where the Lord is, the wisdom from above. Oh, that they had been wise. What a wonderful subject this is. All this comes out in the wilderness. And then in verse 39, see now that I, I am he.

Again you see here, God is all.

We will not read it, but I'll just mention it, maybe you can read it at home.

You find some beautiful résumé, how can you say, put together, some summing-ups, like in Nehemiah 9.

When you read Nehemiah 9, it's really amazing to see in the day of recovery how Nehemiah [00:33:04] understood God's ways. There you have this answer in wisdom. Nehemiah was such a wise man. He understood these ways, and you find a review, that's the word I was looking for, a review of God's ways in Nehemiah 9. You find a review of his ways in Acts 7, and that's very interesting to read, but we have no time to do that now.

We have now had some lessons in the books of Moses, we had some in the Psalms, and now I'd like to turn to the prophets. This afternoon when we were talking together, we were speaking about the books of Moses, the revelation of God.

But in the prophets you find where there is deviation, how God brings his people back to himself.

And then it is marvellous to see that in God's ways, in the prophets, he brings his people back and there is this fruit in the wilderness.

Isaiah 32.

[00:34:07] And again, it's marvellous to see, as we have seen yesterday, how the Lord is brought in. The Lord Jesus is brought in, and that's the first thing you find in Isaiah 32. There he is presented as a king who shall reign in righteousness, but in verse 2, and a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind and covered from the storm.

Here is God's answer.

You are in trouble?

Look at him. He is a man who is a sure hiding place. And then as brooks of water in a dry place, that's the wilderness, but he is the remedy. He gives what we need, as the shadow of a great rock in a thirsty land.

Now, notice in verse 15, after the failure of the people, and as I said, it's not only [00:35:05] the 40 years' history, it is the history of the whole people and even the future history, but then God comes in again, until the spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest, and judgment shall inhabit the wilderness, and righteousness dwell in the fruitful field, and the work of righteousness shall be peace.

We have seen this righteous dealings of God in Deuteronomy 32, the result is peace. And then there can be fruit, you know, when there is no peace there cannot be fruit, there is too much agitation, but when there is this quietness, then there can be growth and fruit. And the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance, forever. And then we go on to chapter 35, where we find some other aspects of this work of God.

[00:36:09] The wilderness and the dry land shall be gladdened. Imagine, the wilderness and the dry land shall be gladdened, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose.

How wonderful!

How is this a work of God, to create something in a desert like this, a rose, a beautiful flower.

It shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and shouting. That is first for the glory of God. It's a triumph for God.

Then in verse 6, in verse 5 we find how the eyes of the blind are opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the lame man shall leap and the tongue of the dumb sing. 4. In the wilderness shall waters break out, and torrents in the desert, and the marriage [00:37:06] shall become a pool and the thirsty land springs of water. 5. In the habitation of wild dogs, where they lay down, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And then we find this highway, in other words, you find here the work of God, and there is joy as a result of the work of God. Now we go on to chapter 41, and now it becomes clearer, because in chapter 41, on the basis of the work of redemption and restoration, you see what God has produced in the meantime. In verse 18, I will open rivers on the bare heights.

So I will open rivers on the bare heights.

We should read verse 17 too, the afflicted and the needy seek water. You know, we have to become afflicted and needy, but then we have to find out that we [00:38:07] have no resource available in ourselves or in our surroundings. I Jehovah will enter them. You see again, only the Lord.

And then verse 18, I will open rivers on the bare heights and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness into a pool of water and the dry land into water springs. Verse 19, I will give in the wilderness.

In the wilderness, the cedar, acacia, myrtle, oleaster, I will set in the desert the cypress, pine and box tree together. Here you will find sevenfold fruit.

You find the cedar, which speaks of the dignity, the excellence really, but also the victory of this fruit.

I would suggest for us, God sees us in Christ, because all these things that we have seen [00:39:02] come out in Christ and God will reproduce this in us, victory, acacia, which speaks of the incorruptibility of this new man. We were speaking of the new creation, now God introduces this in the very wilderness where all these people fell down. He has this new generation and we find this acacia wood in the ark and many other vessels in the tabernacle, which speaks of this incorruptible wood, which speaks of this new order of man which God introduced. The myrtle you find in connection with restoration in Zechariah and I think would also speak of meekness.

Now how?

The Lord Jesus said, I am meek. So you see, his features come out now in this new generation. or oil tree, the work of the Holy Spirit, it comes out in us. And then three other things put together, I will set in the desert this cypress, pine and box tree together.

[00:40:02] There are three other aspects and you find them back in chapter 60 in connection with the house of God, but here they are put together. Now the flesh never likes others, we find much dissension, much conflict, but God in this work of his sovereign grace brings us together, like these brethren in Psalm 133. We would never have thought to bring these people together as we are here together, never. But God's able to do this, to bring us together, that is the result of his work.

Now we may move on, I found Isaiah is very rich in these things, but just two verses in Isaiah, in 55, verse 8, we have spoken of the ways of God and we find here in verse 8, for my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says Jehovah. [00:41:04] That's very important to remember.

God's ways are higher than our ways. And then we find the fruit of the work of God, it is here in connection with his word. We should not underestimate, we speak of the work of the spirit, but it is through his word in verse 11, so shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth.

We have seen the mouth of the Lord yesterday in Deuteronomy 8, it goes out of his mouth and this word produces this new fruit through the work of the Holy Spirit. And then you find in verse 12, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands, that is, all these trees we have seen, they join together for the glory of God. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, the thorn, exodus 3, there is now a

perfect tree for God's glory.

Instead of the nettle shall come up the myrtle, what a change. [00:42:03] That is God's work. The last portion in Isaiah 60, which confirms what I said before, that these three trees in chapter 41 refer to the sanctuary.

Just we read this verse in Isaiah 60 verse 13, the glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the cypress, pine and box tree together to beautify the place of my sanctuary. You know, this fruit that God produces in the wilderness is also seen in connection with his habitation, his sanctuary already in the wilderness.

Now I'd like just a few other verses to bear with me.

In Jeremiah 2, where we see that God wants to have a relationship of love, so it is not [00:43:09] only to produce this fruit, but God wants to have a relationship of love, perfect response. So not only fruit for him, but also response. And that's what we have in Jeremiah 2, verse 2, go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying this says Jehovah, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown.

Israel was holiness unto Jehovah, the first fruits of his increase. The first fruits, we have been talking about that this morning in connection with Numbers 25. God wants to have this first fruit for himself, and they went after him. There was a relationship of love, first love.

Then in Jeremiah 3, when I go to give him rest.

[00:44:16] You know, then in verse 3 you see this relationship of love. From God's side it was always perfect, eternal love. But here we find our side in verse 2, the people that were left of the sword. So those who were left, they found grace.

It's this new generation who found the grace of God in the wilderness, and they received rest. And they are brought into the rest, and that's what we will see in connection with the land. How great is God's grace.

Now when we go on to another prophet, I just mentioned this in passing, in Ezekiel you find also some passages in connection with the wilderness, and of course we cannot bring out all the passages. What I would like to do now is to show that there is fruit for God in the wilderness. [00:45:01] And the second aspect is this relationship of love which is established in the wilderness.

We will come to that now.

But in Ezekiel 20 you find another review of the whole history, and also the future history, and there you find how God will use the wilderness to bring them back. But we cannot read that now. I want to go on with Hosea.

So a few remarks in Hosea, and then we will close with some verses in Psalm of Psalm, in connection with this relationship of love. Now in Hosea, chapter 11, verse 1.

[00:46:01] When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.

And then in verse 3.

And I it was that taught Ephraim to walk.

How touching this is to see God's ways, how God teaches his people in the wilderness to walk. This implies growth.

God doesn't want to have little babies all the time, of course he needs to start there, but he wants them to teach, he wants that they would grow up, that they will become real sons, as we have seen yesterday. He took them upon his arms, you know, what a tender care. We have seen already this expression, he nursed them, he preserved them, and here you find his tender care. He took them upon his arms, but they knew not that I healed them.

[00:47:01] They didn't realize God's care. Verse 4.

In verse 4 you see two points. I drew them with bands of a man, with cords of love. I said in the wilderness there is not only fruit for God, but God is establishing this relationship of love.

I drew them. When you would study in the scriptures only this thought of the attraction, how God attracts us to himself, how the Lord Jesus attracts us to himself, it's a wonderful study. I drew them with cords of love.

And I was to them as they, and that's the second thought, to take off the yoke. They were under bondage, but also in the wilderness they placed themselves under the yoke of the law. The Lord Jesus wants to deliver his people in the wilderness, in the very wilderness of every yoke.

Why? He wants to feed us. That is what you have here. He took off the yoke on their jaws, and I gently caused them to eat. [00:48:02] I gently caused them to eat. When you would study alone this subject, how God provides food in the wilderness, we have seen the manna, but you can go on with many other things God provides in the wilderness to feed us upon Christ, Passover lamb for example, that's a rich study in itself. He gently caused us to eat.

So we have these two thoughts together, this idea of growing, and then the second thought is that he wants this relationship of love. That's what comes out in the wilderness.

Another verse, okay, verse 10, they shall walk after Jehovah. There you have the same thought as in Jeremiah. What happened in the past, the beginning of the history, journey, God will realise again in the future, and that's what happened in the Church history. First love, abandonment, but God brings them back in a remnant. The remnant is brought back to walk after him. [00:49:03] That's what happened in Philadelphia. That's what you find also in the future remnant. Now we go on in chapter 13, verse 4, yet I am Jehovah, thy God, from the land of Egypt, and thou hast known no God but me, and there is no saviour besides me. We have seen the need of daily salvation. Then verse 5, I knew thee in the wilderness, in the land of Drought.

So God knew them already then, but we see they rebelled.

Then in chapter 14, we find God's work again, and even the fruit is found from God.

Verse 4, I will heal their backsliding. You notice?

[00:50:01] There is backsliding, God will heal this. What a perfect grace. I will love them freely, everlasting love we have found in Jeremiah. I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.

Verse 5, I will be as the dew unto Israel. That speaks of God's sovereign grace. We find it in Exodus 16 already, the dew, this refreshment, it is a work of God's sovereign grace.

He shall blossom as the lily.

Another flower speaks of purity, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon, what a magnificent glory.

Verse 6, his shoots shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

They shall return.

You know, there is always the possibility to come back. They shall return and sit under his shadow, without his protection. They shall revive. You know, the work of God in reviving, as corn, and blossom as the vine. [00:51:05] It will be wine again, joy.

And then verse 8 and 9, Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols? We have seen the idolatry in 1 Corinthians 10. I enter him, and I will observe him, and I am like a green fir tree. There is fruit, everlasting fruit, green fir tree.

Why? From me is thy fruit found.

It's God's work. You see here the result? It's all from God. We have seen in Numbers 23, verse 23, here again. What God has wrought, from me is thy fruit found. And then, the end of this book, who is wise, and he shall understand these things. Are we wise, as Moses, to understand God's ways, intelligent, and he shall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right, again this righteousness, and the just shall walk [00:52:01] in them, but the transgressors shall fall therein. That's what we have seen in the history of Israel. So how is this an encouragement for us to take this up, to become wise? I would refer to James 3, in order to understand this better. Now just in closing, let's go back to Song of Songs, two verses only.

We have seen the fruit of God, Hosea 14, fruit worked by him, and we have thought of this relationship of love, as a result of the experiences of the wilderness. Now just two verses in Song of Songs. Verse three, verse six, who is this, she that cometh up from the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?

[00:53:07] Now this is wonderful. This is the result of the wilderness journey, not only fruit for God, but an established relationship with God, and we might say for us also with the Lord Jesus, that cometh up.

It is from the humiliation in the wilderness, as we have seen in Deuteronomy 8, but there is result for God, she comes up from the wilderness, like pillars of smoke. We can think of all the sacrifices, we have thought of some sacrifices this morning, let us meditate on these pillars of smoke, there will be

result for God. When we really meditate on the Lord's work, his sufferings, his death, there will be pillars of smoke.

Perfumed with myrrh, which speaks of the sufferings of the Lord, with frankincense, what he is for God.

Let's be occupied with what the Lord means for God, with all powders of the merchant. We have to pay something, you have to pay in order to get these powders of the merchant. [00:54:05] He is willing to sell, as it were, he is the true merchant, but the Lord wants us to do effort for that.

So let us put effort, spiritual effort, in the study of the word, that there may be something which is fresh and beautiful for him, these powders which he would sell us, and then the bride will be pleasant for him, and that's what we find in chapter 8.

You know, the Lord wants a response, as we have seen, and here is where we get this response. The end of the wilderness is that there is full response for him, but not only that, full communion, full fellowship. That is chapter 8, verse 5, the verse I want to close with, who is this that cometh up from the wilderness? Again this question. Who is it, leaning upon her beloved?

[00:55:03] Now, this is this relationship of love which is established in the wilderness. Where do you learn the Lord Jesus? When you are in heaven?

You learn him in the wilderness.

You learn the beloved here in the wilderness. You don't learn him to know in Egypt, absolutely not. You will learn him in the wilderness.

Now, this is to encourage us that we would lean upon him.

When we have seen all the dangers in the wilderness, what can we do? There is no resource in us. All resources are in him, so let us lean on him. Let us not lean on our own intelligence, as someone says in Proverbs 3. Let us lean upon the beloved, upon my beloved.

It is her beloved. It is not only the beloved, it is her beloved. So this speaks of this wonderful relationship, and that is the result of the wilderness journey. [00:56:04] And so may we close with this same desire, in verse 14, haste, or come, or break away, my beloved.

That we may say, come, Lord Jesus.