

us into a more intimate relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ.

This article (chapter 1) is sent out free of charge, with the prayer that it will be a blessing and encouragement to all who read it. It may be freely copied in its entirety and sent to family and friends as far as it will go.

Should you, however, wish to acquire this book or the full End Times series for yourself, it may be ordered from Magda Du Plessis. She can be contacted at the following address:

Email: dieboomzas@gmail.com

Cell number: (+27) 823213236

FOREWORD

Hosea 2:14 *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, bring her into the wilderness, and speak kindly to her.”*

The wilderness is generally a place one wishes to avoid. If it has to be, then at best some might condescend to tolerate it. But ‘desire it’ ... ‘long for it’ ... ‘embrace it’!?

Yet it is in the wilderness that we hear the most passionate words of kindness imaginable. This book is written to encourage and give direction to individuals and nations in times of deep turmoil.

It is evident from Scripture that there will be difficult times ahead. We are in a time of confrontation with evil which can only escalate as we move closer to harvest time – as we have already seen from previous studies.

The last 2000 years have had continual waves of turmoil, as seen in the wars and famines and also in the persecution of Christians. However, we are moving into a *“time of Jacob’s distress”* (Jeremiah 30:7), and an escalation of earthquakes, wars, famines and pestilence as we near the end.

Jesus told us that when we see these things happening, we should,

Luke 21:28 *“Straighten up and lift up your heads, for your redemption is drawing near.”*

2Tim 3:1 *“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come ...”*

2 Tim 3:14 *“You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of ...”*

2 Tim 3:16 *“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for correction, for training in righteousness;*

17 *“That the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”*

We should not wait for difficult times to get to a tsunami level before we find intimacy with our Heavenly Father. Now is the best time.

Some of the chapters of this book are adapted from messages of encouragement that I had sent to farmers in Zimbabwe at times when things were extremely difficult.

The message of this book is not written lightly or frivolously. My wife and I have been involved in ministry to many people who have suffered immeasurably - people who have either personally, or had close family or friends who have been attacked or robbed and tortured or murdered.

We have personally also been through considerable suffering, having been attacked in our home, robbed of all our valuables and many other deliberate acts of sabotage and violent hatred against our person. I have been stoned and threatened with knives and imprisoned on false charges. We have had to flee from our home, leaving our farm and everything behind. We therefore understand and sympathise with people who are suffering in any way.

Living through those difficult times in Zimbabwe, with our faith resolutely placed in the Lord, has given us the firm assurance of our Heavenly Father’s faithfulness. Things have never gone the way we wanted – according to our carnal

desires. Yet through it all, our every need has been supplied, and our love for our Lord intensified.

Each of these particular chapters describing certain events in Zimbabwe, and our reaction to such, are indicated by the date of the original message, together with a brief description of the prevailing situation at the time. I trust that the description given, and YHWH's intervention will be of encouragement to the reader.

As much as these negative things are naturally terrifying, this is not a time to fear. It is a time to stand strong; a time to grow in faith. It is a time that encourages an intimate love for Jesus like no other situation can do. It is an exhilarating time.

Chapter 1

The PRECIOUS DESERT

As we study end times Scriptures, it is impossible not to notice warnings of difficult times to come. It is therefore important for us to prepare ourselves mentally and spiritually for the real possibility that each of us might at some stage need to face things that are beyond our control or comfort zone. Hence the Bible gives ample teaching and examples of people who went through desert experiences, to show us how to cope with such. It presents both victories and failures, so as to encourage as well as warn of potential stumbling blocks.

Probably the most profound desert experience anyone has even been through must be the 40 years which Israel spent in the wilderness with Moses as their leader. There is much that we can learn from these passages of Scripture. Let us start with Moses' speech at the end of this 40-year period.

Deut 8:2 *"You shall remember all the way which YHWH your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, **that He might humble you**, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not.*

3 *"He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that He might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of YHWH.*

4 "**Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years.**

5 "**Thus you are to know in your heart that YHWH your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.**"

This passage reveals that Israel's desert experience was not a haphazard bad luck of the draw. It was purposely ordained by YHWH to build character and faith into the nation. Whilst they were slaves in Egypt, they still had it too easy. The Nile river was a reliable source of water for their gardens and they had no lack of food or water.

They were living in the best part of the land. Consequently, they had no real need to use their faith to trust YHWH for anything beyond their daily needs. They had also become used to complaining about the slavery aspect, so their hearts were full of negative bitterness. YHWH needed to get that negativity and self-reliance out of their hearts.

Hence the 40 years in the wilderness! They had to be brought into a place of absolute dependence upon YHWH. It was a battle all the way. Moses had a torrid time. They were being disciplined – not because YHWH hated them but because He loved them. People find it difficult to associate *discipline* with *love*.

We find that a wilderness experience is used again and again as a process of moulding the lives of those whom YHWH calls to special service. A quick look through the list of heroes of faith as listed in Hebrews chapter 11 will quickly reveal that their growth to heroism did not come easily.

As much as we read of great acts of conquered kingdoms, performing acts of righteousness, and obtaining promises, we also read of other actions which were potentially terrifying. Daniel being thrown to the lions and his three friends being cast into a furnace – for their persistent faith in YHWH.

Whilst these whom I mentioned experienced miraculous deliverance, we read of others who went to death without seeing the miraculous intervention of YHWH on their behalf – yet still believing.

Heb 11:35 *“... Others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection;*

36 *“and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.*

37 *“They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated,*

38 *“(men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.*

39 *“And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised,*

40 *“Because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they would not be made perfect.”*

So what was the purpose of all that suffering? It was a much greater picture than what they could imagine.

These great men and women understood the preciousness of the desert – the moulding of the greater purposes of YHWH through their own obedience, even if it meant suffering and death.

It is in this seemingly terrible desert that something precious is created – which can come in no other way. David discovered this in the years that he had to flee for his life from King Saul.

He, David, had been anointed by the great prophet Samuel, to be the king of Israel. Yet now he was fleeing for his life. He could easily have thrown in the towel and rejected Samuel's prophetic word as fake. Yet he hung on, by faith, in the face of extreme adversity. He was busy being trained by YHWH to become king. His first and most important lesson – to seek intimacy with YHWH beyond all else.

Psalm 63:1 *“A Psalm of David, when he was **in the wilderness of Judah**. O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; **my soul thirsts for You**, my flesh yearns for You, **in a dry and weary land where there is no water**.*

2 *“Thus I have **seen You** in the sanctuary, to **see Your power and Your glory**.*

3 *“Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise You.*

4 *“So I will **bless You** as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.*

5 *“My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with **joyful lips**.*

6 *“When I remember You on my bed, I **meditate***

on You in the night watches,

7 *"For You have been my help, and in the shadow
of Your wings I sing for joy.*

8 *"**my soul clings to You;** Your right hand
upholds me."*

It is in the desert that David develops a passion for YHWH and His Word. Many Psalms are dedicated to this longing of his heart. When the heart is squeezed by the pressure of the desert experience, love for YHWH oozes out irrepressibly.

Psalm 42:1 *"As the deer pants for the water brooks, **so my soul pants for You, o God.***

2 *"**My soul thirsts for God,** for the living God;
when shall I come and appear before God?"*

3 *"**My tears** have been my food day and night,
while they say to me all day long, 'Where is your
God?'"*

4 *"These things I remember and I **pour out my soul within me.** For I used to go along with the
throng and lead them in procession to the house
of God, with the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a
multitude keeping festival.*

5 *"**Why are you in despair, o my soul?** And why
have you become disturbed within me? **Hope in
God,** for I shall again praise Him for the help of
His presence.*

6 *"O my God, **my soul is in despair within me;**
therefore I remember You from the land of the
Jordan and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount
Mizar.*

7 *“Deep calls to deep at the sound of your **waterfalls**; all Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me.”*

The centre portion of this famous Psalm is often overlooked or minimised

Psalm 23:4 *“Even though I walk **through the valley** of the shadow of **death**, I fear no evil, for **You are with me**; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*

5 *“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You have anointed my head with oil; my cup overflows.”*

David had experienced the presence of the Spirit of YHWH walking with him in the deepest of his trials, even when facing death itself. Yet, in spite of this, he could have a feast – while the enemies look on helplessly - and his cup was overflowing with joy. Only a desert can produce victory of that magnitude.

Chapter 2 “The little people” will follow next week ...