

CHAPTER II

The Wilderness Experience

Everything in the Word of God, especially in the old covenant, is a shadow of what you and I will experience in Christ. There are no meaningless details in God's word. When God has something new for you He will lead you out into the desert. Desert experiences are painful, but they are also productive. God deals with you in the desert. He brings you to that place where you have no one else to turn to.

God will lead you, as He led Israel, through the wilderness. You will pass through Gilgal. The cloud by day and the fire by night will be taken away from you. The manna will be taken away from you. You will have to stop living by what you can see. All the things you depended on all your life will be stripped away. Gilgal is the place where you have to start living by faith and not by sight.

Next, you will pass through Bethel, the place of wrestling with God. Bethel is where God wrestled with Jacob. The moment you start living by faith, God will make things a little harder for you. He'll start pulling away from you. He wants you to pull him back; to wrestle with Him. He's strengthening your faith muscles. When God pulls away from you, He's testing you. He wants you to grab on and tell Him, "You're not going Lord. You promised you would never leave me or forsake me. You're not going." He wants you to grab on to Him and His promises and hold on. He took away the cloud. He took away the fire. He took away the manna. And now He's leaving. You will no longer feel His presence.

Copyright © 1998 by Bob Havey All rights reserved

Every day the battle to hold on to God will get harder. There will be days you feel as though His presence has left you forever. At Gilgal, God took away what you can see. At Bethel He will take away what you feel. When your wrestling match with God comes to an end; when you can no longer base your relationship with God on feelings, He'll lead you to Jericho.

When you get to Jericho, you will face Satan himself. He will ask you, "Did God really mean what He said to you?"

You won't see anything. You won't feel anything. You'll have to put all your faith in God's word. That's all you'll have left. Jericho will be the darkest moment of your life. No one will be with you. You must face Jericho alone.

When Jesus went through his wilderness experience and was tempted by Satan, He was alone. He was at His weakest point. Tired. Hungry. Satan showed up to tempt Him and Jesus used the only thing He had left. The Word of God. He could have said, "I'm the son of God." He could have pointed to the miracles He had performed. But all He said was, "It is written...." He stood on the Word of God.

When you reach Jericho, nothing any man has said will matter. None of your experiences will matter. The testimonies and the stories and the tapes and the books won't matter. All the sermons you've heard won't matter. The pastor or the Bible teacher you have depended on for encouragement won't matter. The only thing that will matter is the Word of the living God that is inside of you. That's all you'll have left.

At Jericho, every demon in hell will show up. Everything you've ever said; everything you've ever done; all your faults; all your weaknesses; all the things you have forgotten will come back to you. Your only protection will be not what you see; not what you feel; but what you

Copyright © 1998 by Bob Havey All rights reserved
know. What you know about God's word. That's all you'll
have.

If you can make it through Jericho you will come to Jordan. You cannot reach Jordan without going through Jericho.

When Joshua lead Israel through the Jordan River, the Bible says the waters of the Jordan split when the feet of the priests touched the water. Israel followed Joshua and the priests into the Promised Land.

When you are first born again you follow others. You depend on a pastor or a church or someone else's spirituality; someone else's faith to get you through. You follow them into the Promised Land.

Each time God has something new for you; a new anointing on your life; He takes you back across the Jordan and into the wilderness and you must make the entire journey again.

But this time you'll have no one else to depend on; no one else to follow.

This time you will have to follow Him.

And if you make it; if you can reach Jordan; God will bless you beyond your greatest expectations.