

LESSON 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF ANCHORS

“Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction.” (1 Corinthians 10:11)

Divine Arrangement

1. The wilderness is part of God’s physical creation; it is also part of His divine arrangement as applied to Christian experiences. Any critic can relegate these times of dryness, distress, and difficulties in Christian experience to Satan or to disobedience.
2. Human logic can easily arrange Scripture to suit itself. However, the Paul applies them as the wilderness experiences of Israel to the Christian experience.
3. The entire setting of “*these things*” which “*happened to them*” is in the wilderness (verses 1-10). Two significant verses (12 and 13) relate the success of Christian living to understanding, learning, and applying the lessons of the wilderness.
4. In the first of these two verses, Paul gives warning to one who is already standing, “*Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall*” (v.12) he would of necessity have to be standing in order to fall. The term “*thinks he stands*” does not refer to the one who is deceived in believing that he is standing while he really is not. He is standing.
5. To those who are standing in a victorious Christian life, Paul gives warning to pay attention to what he is saying. Many believers learn nothing from experience of Israel in the wilderness. Paul plainly indicates that without this learning there is the possibility, if not the certainty, of falling from victorious living.
6. Understanding and learning from the failures of others bring us into an awareness necessary for the success we desire in our Christian life. Jesus warns us of unawareness in Luke; “*Take heed to yourself, lest at any time your heart be overcharged with surfeiting (dissipation), and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unaware.*” (Luke 21:34)
7. Paul echoes this warning; “*While they are saying peace and safety! Then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*” (1 Thessalonians 5:3) “*Suddenly*” is from the same Greek word used in Luke 21:34 (translated “unaware”). The meaning is “unawareness,” as the woman is not aware of her moment of delivery until the birth pangs strike.

8. The second significant verse immediately following Paul's reference to Israel's wilderness experiences is known by memory by most believers. *"No temptation has overtaken you but such as it common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it."* (1 Corinthians 10:13)

9. In its context, this verse relates to the experiences of Israel in the wilderness as related and applied to our Christian walk today. Many believers have failed to recognize and therefore understand the lessons and purposes of the wilderness. As a result, some of these believers, if not most of them, continually fall in victorious Christian living.

10. It is the hope these lessons will aid in preventing failure, and bring those already in failure out of it into in victory.

Out of Egypt

1. "Out of Egypt" is a term used among believers to indicate a born again experience and/or deliverance from this present world's philosophies. The believers should remember that once one comes out of Egypt he is headed to the wilderness. As soon as the children of Israel came out of Egypt; *"they took their journey from Succoth, and encamped in Etham, in the edge of the wilderness,"* (Exodus 13:20)

2. The Israelites left slavery, but they also left pleasant things. Egypt was a pleasant land. It is often referred to in parallel to *"pleasures of sin"* (Hebrews 11:25), that parallel certainly applies

3. But there is an opposite parallel of Egypt's lushness, which is a believer's life of great blessing and joy. When God's people left Egypt they left a land of pleasant greenery, *"a well watered land."*

4. About 500 years prior to Israel's exodus from Egypt, and prior to Sodom and Gomorrah's destruction, the lushness of the Jordan Valley was compared to Eden-like Egypt. *"And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the LORD like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar,"* (Genesis 13:10)

Eden Always?

1. A newborn babe in Christ finds that they are in the garden of the LORD, well watered everywhere. Their spiritual and physical senses are dramatically touched by spiritual water and greenery. Their spiritual taste buds have experienced the goodness of the Lord. They, in their elation, is totally unaware that they are on his way to the wilderness.

2. Egypt, to whatever it is likened, is tasty. The children of Israel left the land which produces great tasting melons. The best watermelon I ever ate was in Egypt. The Israelites, once in the wilderness, longed for those melons along with other foods of flavor. *"We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onion, and the garlic."* (Numbers 11:5)

3. That which is behind the Israelis and that which is ahead of them are in great contrast to each other. The people leave a land of pleasant greenery. Now they are on their way to a place of stark contrast, a land in which none of their comforts and palatable delights are found. They are on their way to the Wilderness of Etham.

4. Our beginning in God is delightful as the goodies of Egypt. We have the pleasurable sense of God's closeness and His unusual and frequent manifestations. All this is a prelude to our journey to the wilderness, to the land of stark contrast. But we are happily unaware of that which lies before us.

Four Anchors

1. Who would ever think that anchors would be needed in the wilderness? There are floods in the wilderness have turned over vehicles and taken human lives. But the floods for which we need anchors are of another kind. We can be drowned in the wilderness by distress and discouragement.

2. The need of four particular truths, which I will refer to as anchors, is not apparent to most who are on their way to the wilderness for the first time. Unawareness was the case as it related to the physical aspects of my first experience with the wilderness of Mauritania.

3. I was not aware that within ninety minutes in the wilderness I would need water. So I took no water, and suffered dehydration for it.

4. These four truths are very important. These anchors will save us from drowning in despair; they will save us from dying. Less serious, they will spare us many headaches and heartaches.

5. If we have something which will hold us in difficult times, it becomes a tremendous benefit in our lives a real lifesaver. Remember the Angel stood before Paul in the ship that night and said to him, "*Fear not, you will appear before Caesar;*" (Acts 27:24) storm or no storm. By this time the sailors had lost all hopes of being saved. "*And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was taken away*" (Acts 27:20), but the angel gave Paul hope and he passed it on to others. Yet a danger was feared: "*fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks*" (Acts 27:29)

6. In our progress into Gods, in our spiritual journey. There should be a concern about falling upon the rocks, and making shipwreck of our lives. There are dangers. The children of God faces them daily. This is why Paul urges us to take heed in 1 Corinthians 10:12.

7. We should be concerned when we are standing, concerned enough to take heed to the Word of God, to the things of God, to the Spirit of God, and to the leading of God.

8. We should take heed so that we are able to prevent ourselves from falling upon the rocks. Let us avail ourselves of the anchors God has provided for us.

9. These four anchors from the ship in which Paul traveled kept that vessel from possible destruction during the long and difficult night. They may have saved the lives of those sailors, soldier, and prisoners who were aboard ship with Paul. They probably enabled Paul to fulfill the words of the angel to him, to fulfill the will of God. They will certainly do as much for you.

10. These four anchors I have for you are four truths found in the Book of Exodus , and relate to Israel's first trip into the wilderness. These can become the four anchors which you might cast, and will hold you from being dashed upon the rocks during the lashing storm.

11. Any storm in our life can last a long time, months or even years. God expects us to endure the storm. *"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier (sailor) of Jesus Christ."* (2 Timothy 2:3), *"Endureth afflictions"* (2 Timothy 4:5), *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation,"* (James 1:12), *"He that endureth to the end shall be saved."* (Matthew 10:22) The anchors are designed to help you endure.

12. The Israelites move out from Egypt. They camp in Etham at the edge of the wilderness. At this point we will begin to pick up the anchors. May we allow the Holy Spirit make them a part of our lives.