

Remember This Scriptural Prayer When You Feel Stuck in Your Spiritual Wilderness

For most Christians in the Western world, wandering in the desert for 40 years is not a familiar experience. We never have to live off manna. Drinking water is rarely beyond reach. And we already live in a land of richness, “flowing with milk and honey.” And yet, the story of the children of Israel still resonates in our hearts as we embark on a sometimes-exciting-sometimes-treacherous spiritual journey.

In his book *The Priestly Prayer of the Blessing*, Warren M. Marcus opens up about his ‘wilderness experience’: “I myself wandered through my own desert, being subject to the influence of the world, my own fleshly desires, and the constant assault by the enemy of my soul, Satan.”

For Christians, being in the wilderness may not mean being deprived of food or water. Instead, our deserts can be when we are subjected to temptation and we experience feelings of isolation, insecurity and aimlessness. We are deprived of encouragement and conviction. Our spiritual walk suffers an emotional drought as we suddenly face trials and tribulations.

These seasons of struggle are also recorded in the Bible. Jesus Himself spent forty days in the wilderness where He was tempted by Satan. When Elijah fled from Jezebel into the wilderness, he cried out, “‘It is enough! Now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers'” (1 Kings 19:4b). The story of Job is one of intense testing: “‘Look, I cry out concerning wrong, but I am not heard; I cry aloud, but there is no justice'” (Job 19:7).

When in the wilderness, we may feel as though God has abandoned us. But Marcus writes on God’s desire to bring us

back to Him. Of his desert experience, Marcus says, "The one true G-D of Israel was consistently pursuing me. G-D sent many witnesses, circumstances, and supernatural occurrences to bring me out of the place where I had come to the end of myself."

He describes being raised Jewish but the reality of God's presence was not tangibly felt at the synagogue. He recounts seeing the motion picture epic *The Ten Commandments* at 8 years old and feeling amazed at the bigger-than-life God speaking to Moses from the burning bush.

But weeks later at the synagogue, the rabbi said, "'The Torah is full of wonderful stories with great moral course, we don't take these stories literally.'"

Although deflated at the time, Marcus continued to be moved by the reality of a powerful, just, loving, and relational God. His book *The Priestly Prayer of the Blessing* expounds on the Lord's blessing found in Numbers 6:24-26:

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you; the LORD lift His countenance upon you, and give you peace."

It was this blessing that God first proclaimed over the rebellious children of Israel. The high priest Aaron was to say it every day to place God's name—His holy character, His power and His authority—supernaturally upon the Israelites. Marcus calls it "the greatest prayer of grace ever given to mankind" as it is tightly packed with the many ways that God provides unmerited favor.

"It was to this rebellious, imperfect people, the children of Israel, that the one true G-D gave this supernatural prayer, the priestly prayer of the blessing, for them to experience His reality in a personal and powerful way," Marcus says.

He emphasizes how nothing we can do will render us deserving

of this blessing. Even when we wander in the wilderness, whether we are resisting temptation or falling into it, God still pursues a relationship with us as our loving and gracious Father.

This article is based on The Priestly Prayer of the Blessing (Charisma House, 2018) written by Warren M. Marcus. Marcus is a Messianic Jewish believer and an avid student of the Bible, specializing in the Jewish roots of Christianity. He is ordained as a Spirit-filled evangelist in the Southern Baptist denomination. He serves as vice president of Sid Roth's Messianic Vision Inc., where he oversees the production of the weekly It's Supernatural! TV show. Marcus has also produced The Great North American Revival DVD series and the award-winning animated children's series SuperBook and Flying House. He also produced the highest-rated religious TV special of all time, Don't Ask Me, Ask God, featuring Michael J. Fox, Ned Beatty and others.