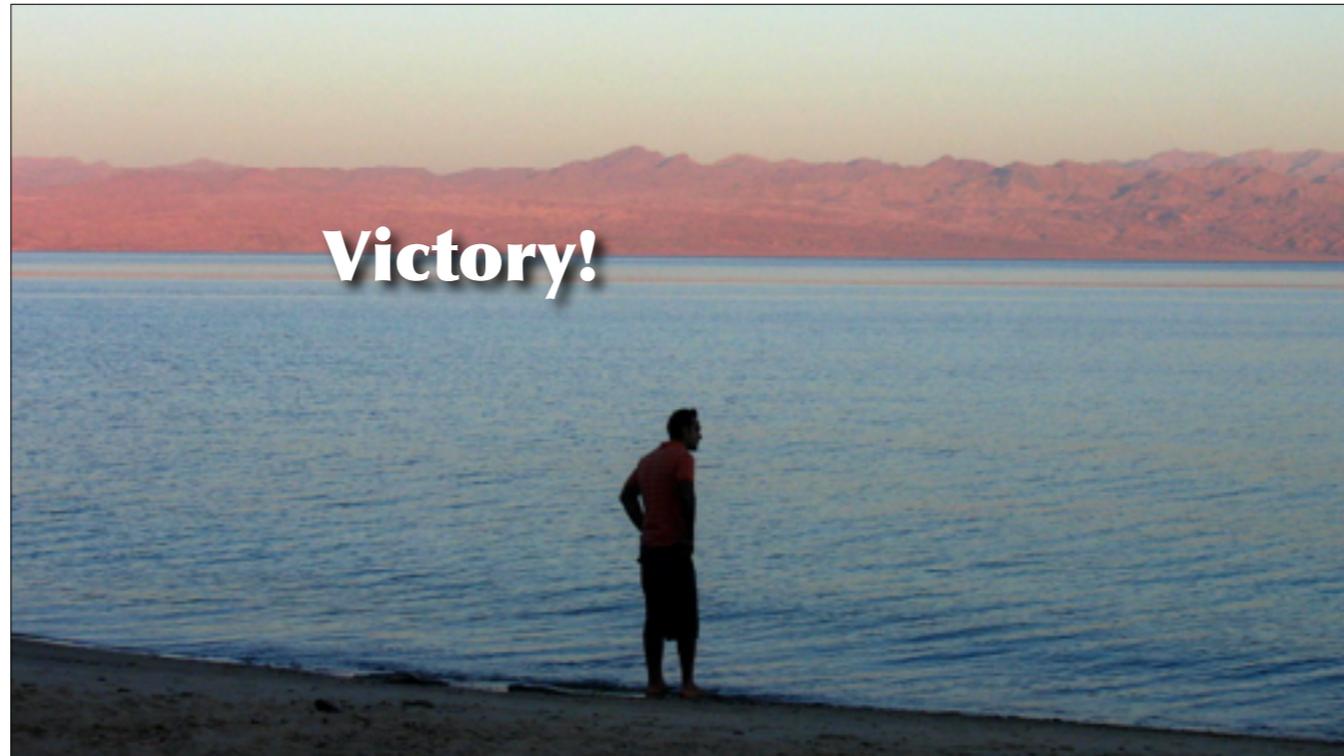




- Rescue from Slavery
- Exodus 2:23-25 (ESV) 23 During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. 25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.



- Exodus 13:17-18: When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, “Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt.” 18 But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.
- First indication that wilderness has a purpose. Not just wandering, not just punishment.



- Victory over the Egyptians
 - Praising God in Song
- And the next day, they turned toward the wilderness.
- Exodus 15:22 (ESV) Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and they went into the wilderness of Shur. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water.



- Exodus 15:22: Then Moses made Israel set out from the Red Sea, and **they went into the wilderness of Shur**. They went three days in the wilderness and found no water.
- Israel left Egypt rich, defiant, and dressed for battle.
 - But they quickly find that the journey doesn't make sense, it's dangerous, and they ask questions that challenge what God is doing.



- Why is God taking us through a wilderness before going to our new home?
 - His Sake
 - My Sake
 - The World's Sake



- Our Struggle
- Many of us are living hidden lives, desperate for help and deliverance
 - Mask: everything is okay
 - Reality: battling evil, feel like they're losing, tired
 - Prayed, pleaded
 - Gone to doctors (physical, spiritual): no real help, not any better



- Live in a desert, without an end in sight
 - Where is God?
 - grief, speechless, despondent
- What is God doing?
 - It wasn't supposed to be like this.



Often Christians

We are quickly exuberant, hopeful, triumphant

Settle in to live, expectations lowered: attend church (mostly), happy songs, and complacency

No longer fighting against darkness

No longer think my daily life matters in the big picture

Lesson:

Wilderness is not eternal, has limits

God is taking us home

God is leading us through this wilderness with purpose.

God hasn't abandoned us or given up on us



- Psalms 78:17-20 (ESV) 17 Yet they sinned still more against him, rebelling against the Most High in the desert. 18 They tested God in their heart by demanding the food they craved. 19 They spoke against God, saying, “Can God spread a table in the wilderness? 20 He struck the rock so that water gushed out and streams overflowed. Can he also give bread or provide meat for his people?”



- Psalms 78:21-22 (ESV) 21 Therefore, when the Lord heard, he was full of wrath; a fire was kindled against Jacob; his anger rose against Israel, 22 because they did not believe in God and did not trust his saving power.

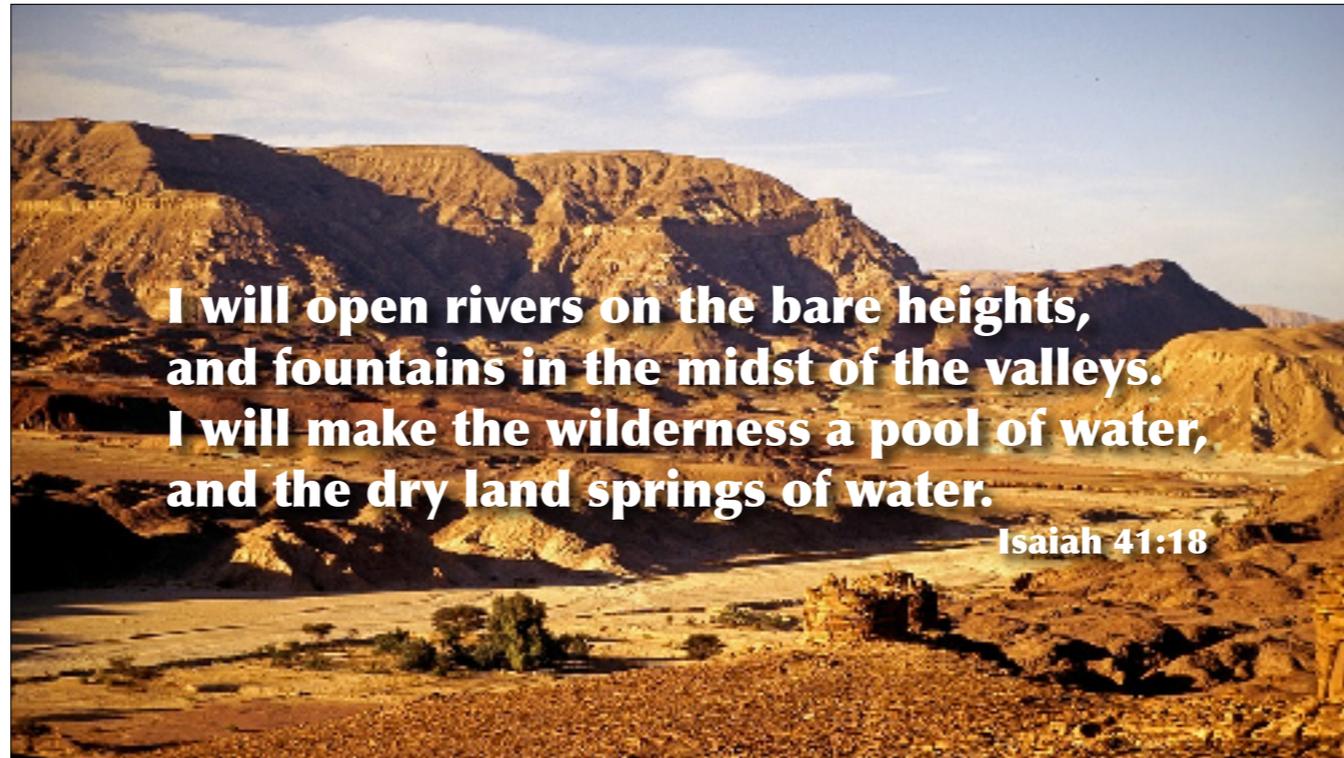


- Psalms 78:23-29 (ESV) 23 Yet he commanded the skies above and opened the doors of heaven, 24 and he rained down on them manna to eat and gave them the grain of heaven. 25 Man ate of the bread of the angels; he sent them food in abundance. 26 He caused the east wind to blow in the heavens, and by his power he led out the south wind; 27 he rained meat on them like dust, winged birds like the sand of the seas; 28 he let them fall in the midst of their camp, all around their dwellings. 29 And they ate and were well filled, for he gave them what they craved.

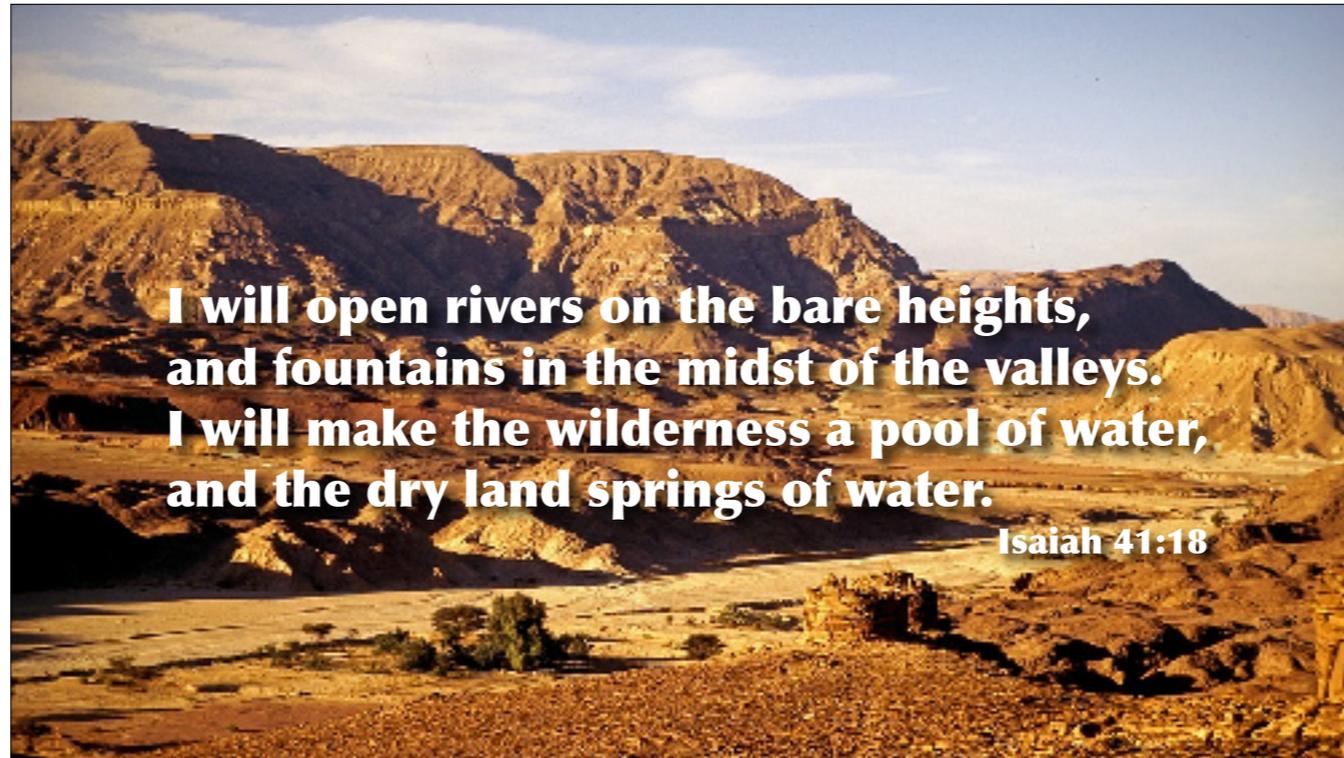


Can God spread a table in the wilderness?

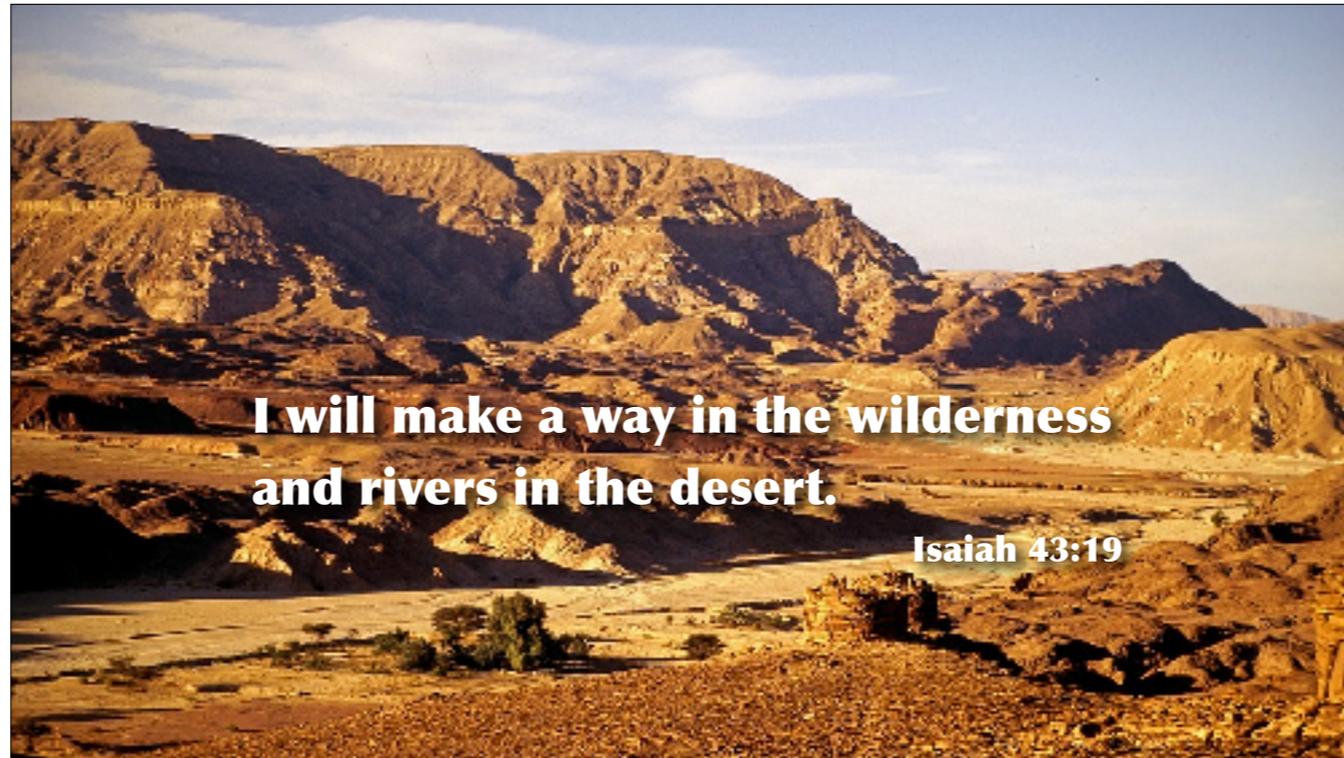
- Acts 13:17-18 (ESV) 17 The God of this people Israel chose our fathers and made the people great during their stay in the land of Egypt, and with **uplifted arm he led them out of it.** 18 And for about forty years he put up with them in the wilderness.
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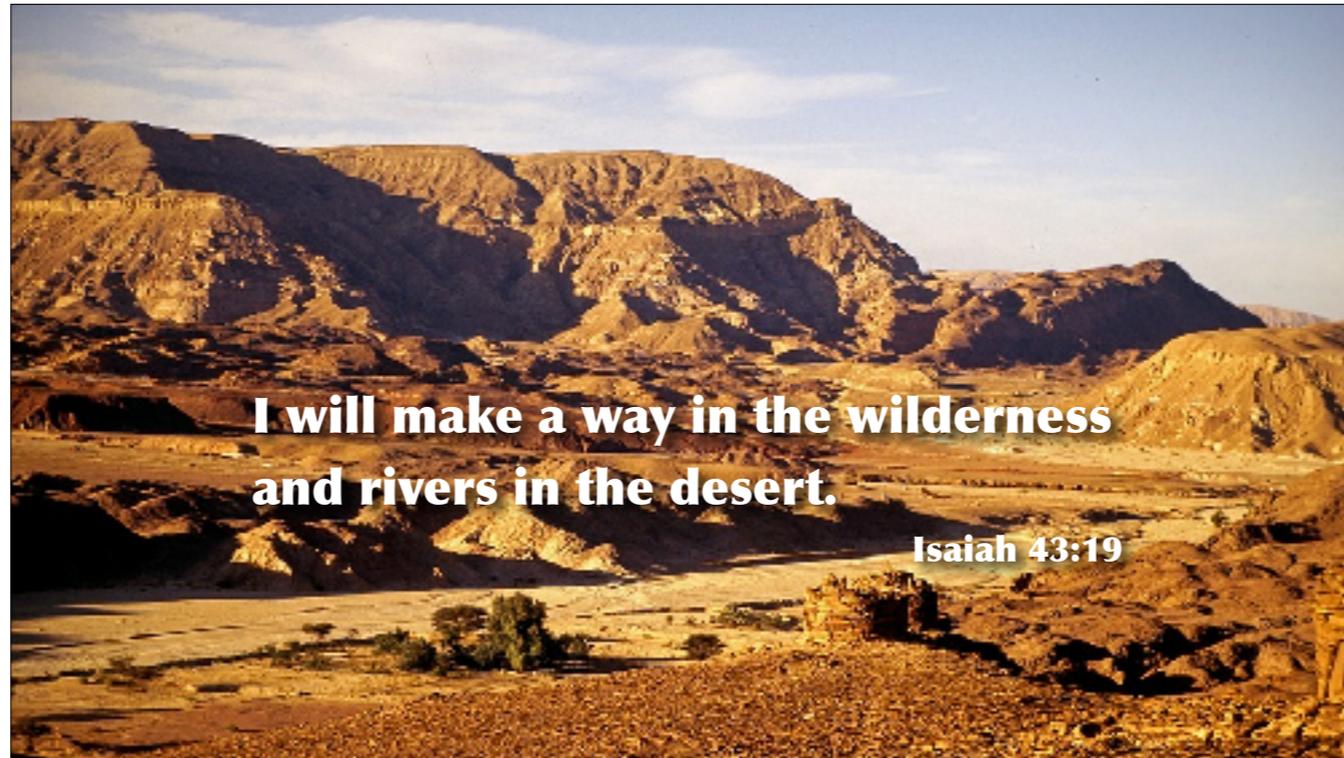
- Isaiah 41:17-20 (ESV) 17 When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them; I the God of Israel will not forsake them. 18 I will open rivers on the bare heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water. 19 I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and the olive. I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane and the pine together, 20 that they may see and know, may consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, the Holy One of Israel has created it.



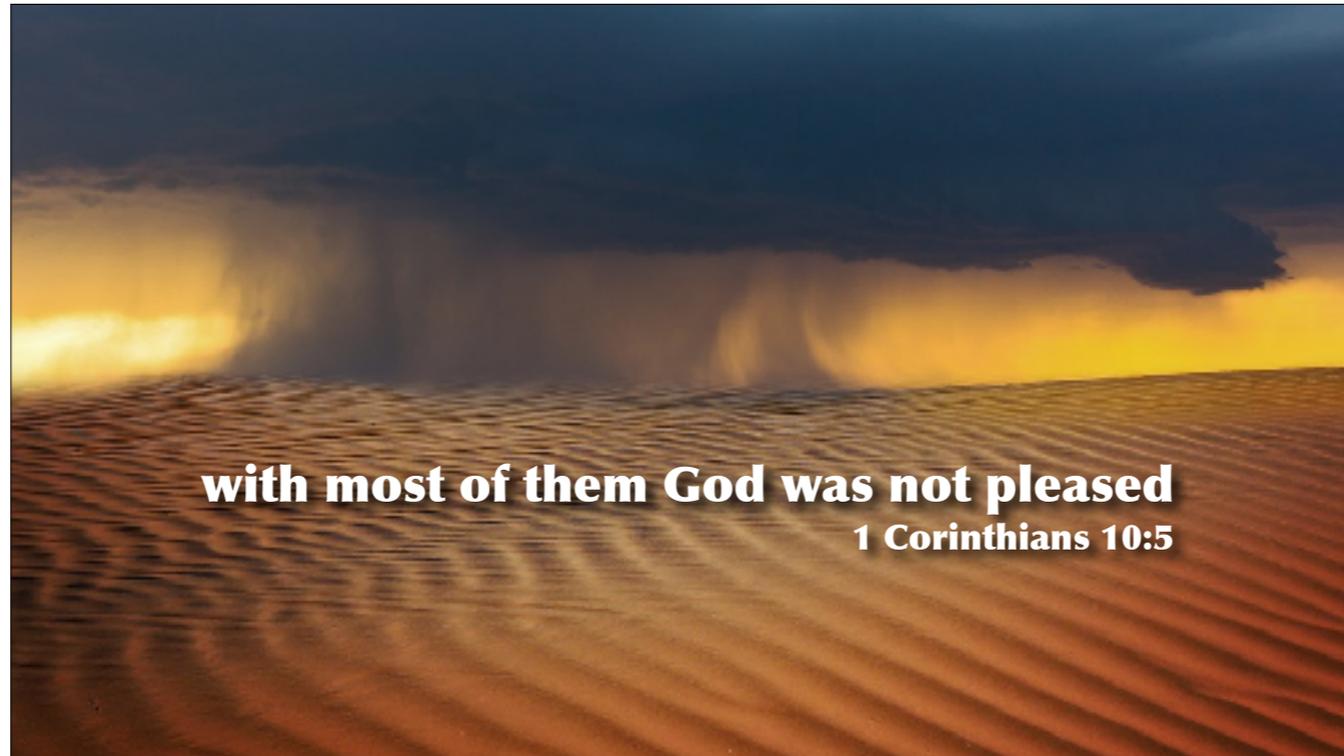
- They may see and know
 - Consider and understand
- Hand of Jehovah has done this
 - poor and needy seek water
 - God not forsake!



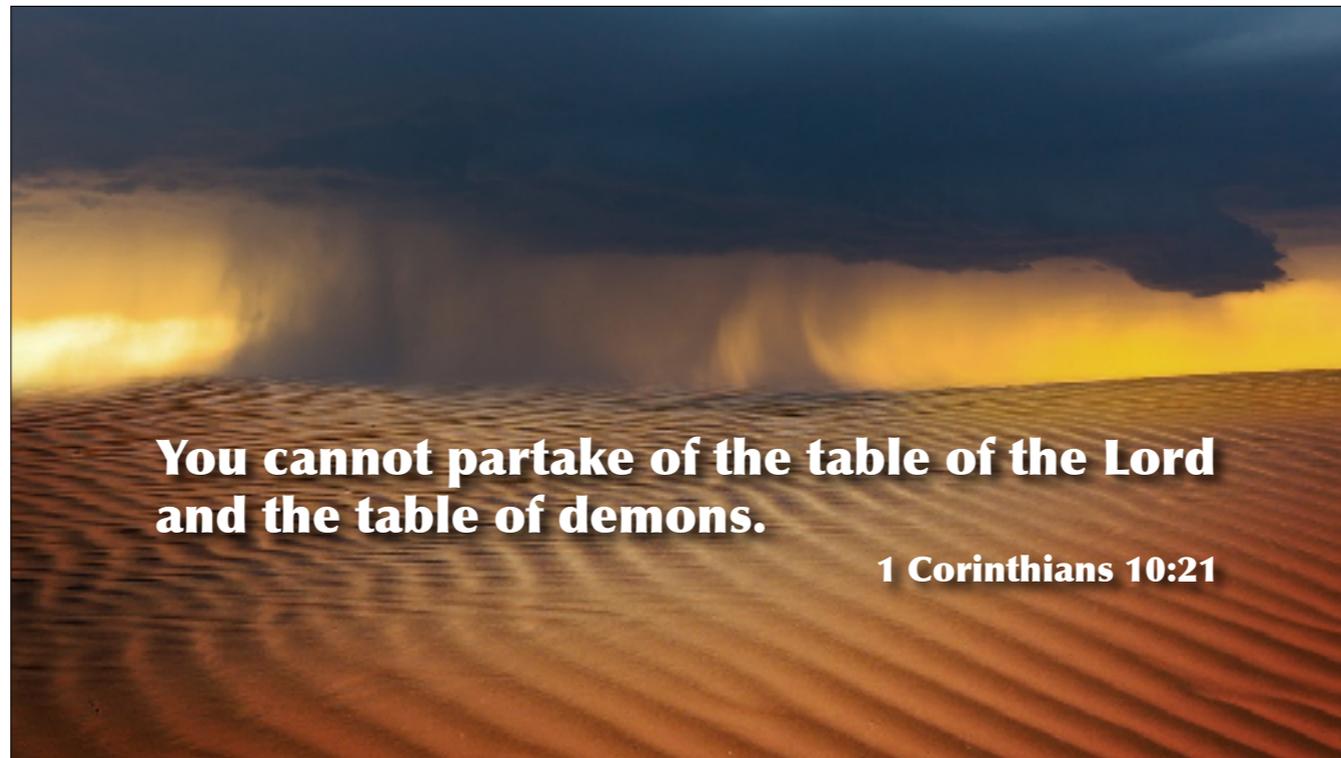
- Isaiah 43:19-21 (ESV) 19 Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. 20 The wild beasts will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches, for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, 21 the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.



- For our sake!
- 21 the people whom I formed for myself that they might **declare my praise**.



- 1 Corinthians 10:5 (ESV) 5 Nevertheless, **with most of them God was not pleased**, for they were overthrown in the wilderness.
- Hebrews 3:8: do not harden your hearts as in the **rebellion**, on the day of **testing** in the wilderness,
- Hebrews 3:17 (ESV) 17 And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who **sinned**, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?



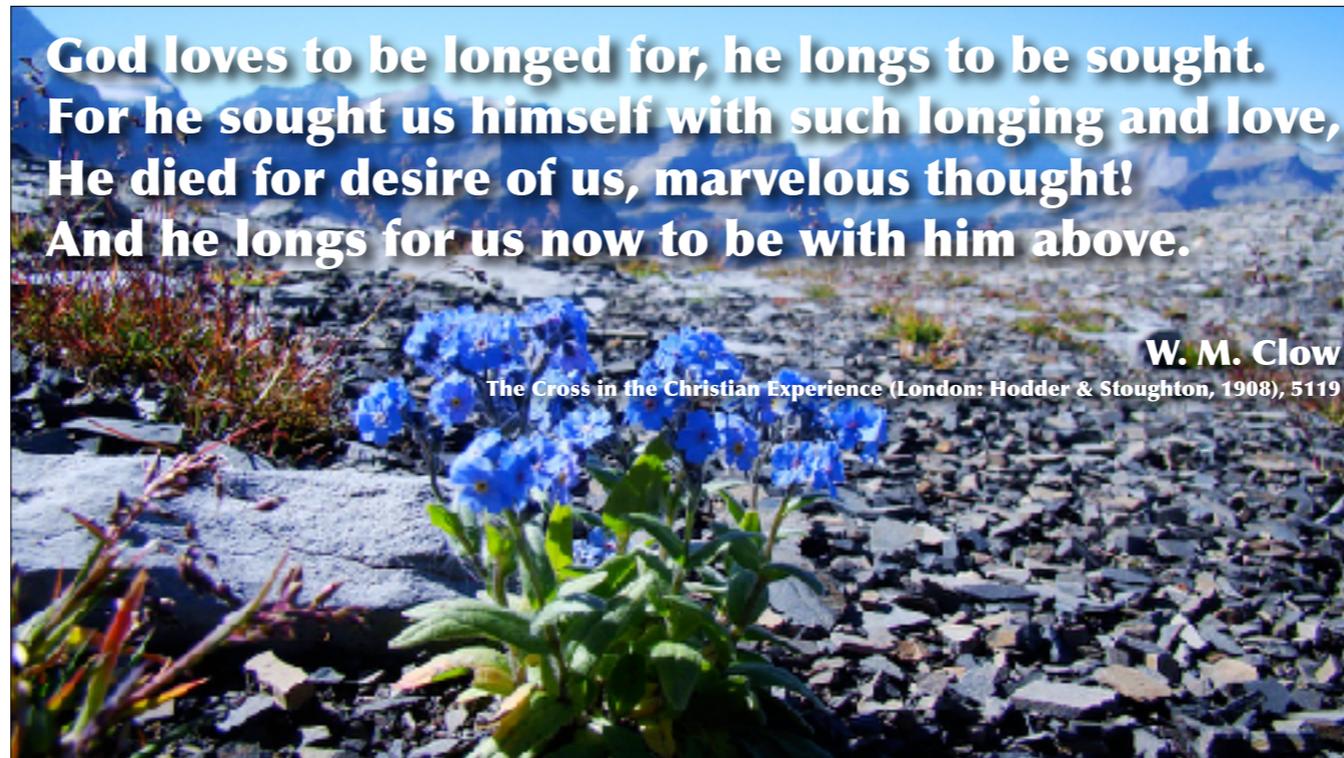
- 1 Corinthians 10:14-22 (ESV) 14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. 18 Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? 19 What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons. 22 Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?



- We Are Sent into the world by Jehovah
 - Like Father sent Jesus into the world
- Why are we in the wilderness?
 - His sake: help us to become his own people, heart



- Our sake:
 - lessons to learn to truly trust in God;
 - God will not forsake
 - Power: uplifted arm
 - The bread still has to be gathered, the miles must still be walked, the battles must still be fought.
 - praise Him
- World's sake: there's more to this world than just this world: better life.



- God loves to be longed for, he longs to be sought.
- For he sought us himself with such longing and love,
- He died for desire of us, marvelous thought!
- And he longs for us now to be with him above.
- W. M. Clow, The Cross in the Christian Experience (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908), 5119



- Psalms 23:5 (ESV Strong's) 5 You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20

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A Table in the Wilderness

Psalm 78:19

Synopsis: Lesson suggested, and borrowed from, Jim McGuiggan's *Celebrating the Wrath of God, Introduction*. When we realize that we must pass through the wilderness to get home, sometimes we struggle with our trust in God, our Redeemer. Yet, our Father is leading us through the wilderness on purpose: for His sake, our sake, and the sake of the world.

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”