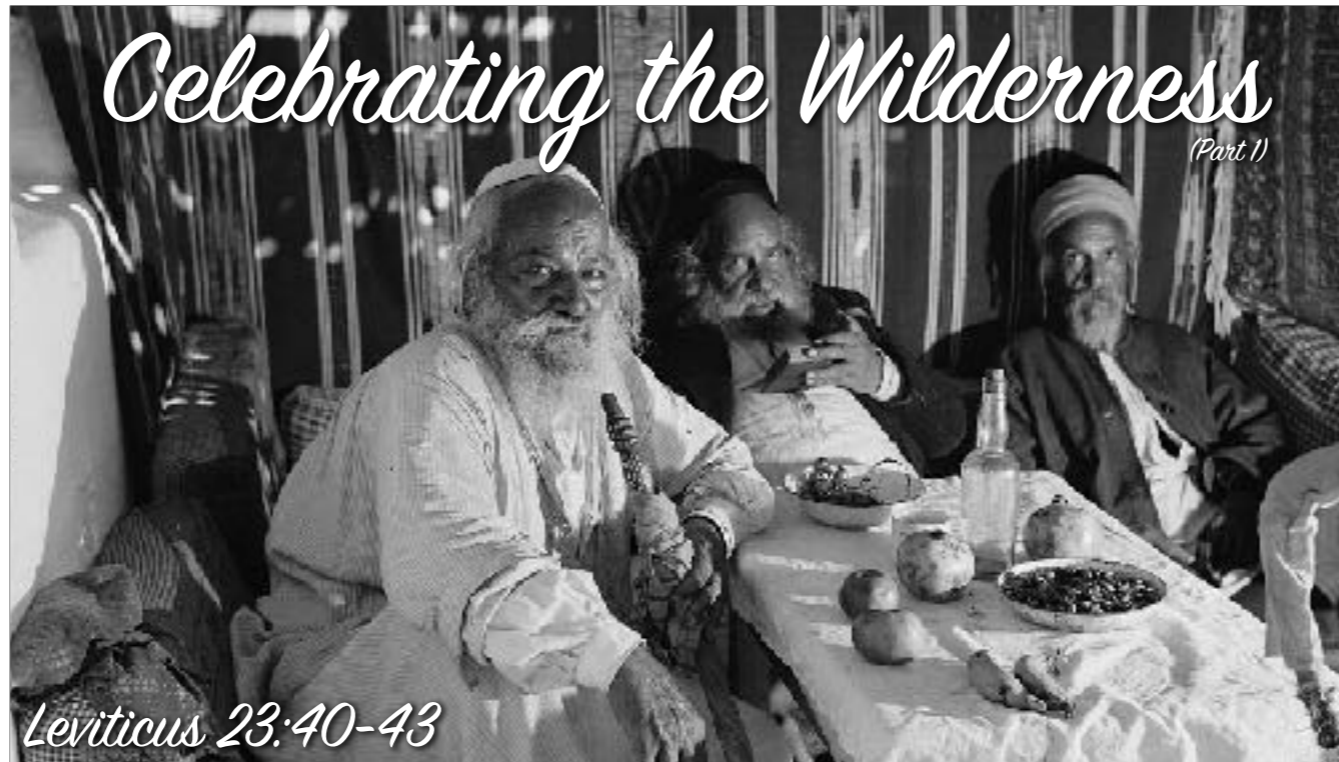
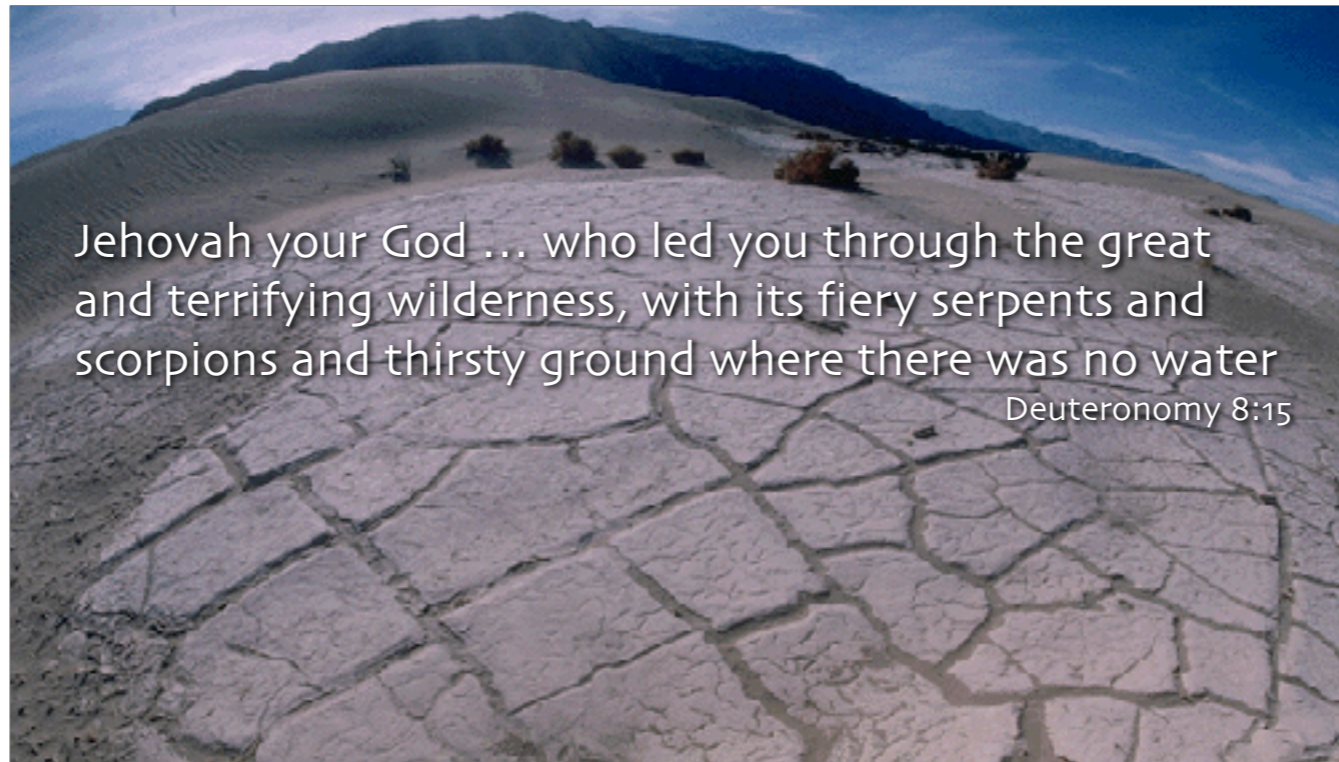


- Leviticus 23:40-43

- And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook,
- and **you shall rejoice** before the LORD your God seven days.
- 41 You shall **celebrate it as a feast** to the LORD for seven days in the year.
- It is a statute forever throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

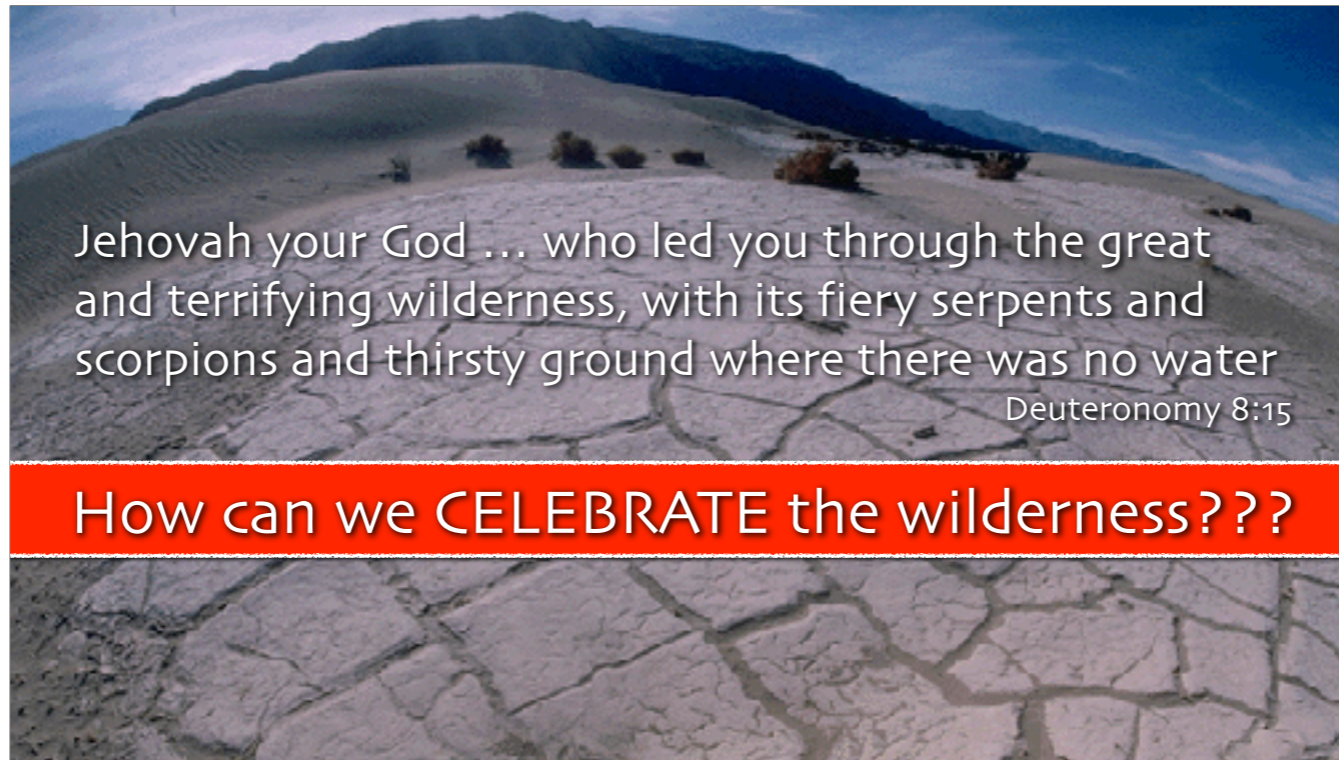


- 42 You shall dwell in booths for seven days.
- All native Israelites shall dwell in booths,
- 43 that your generations may know that **I made the people of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt:**
- I am the LORD your God.”



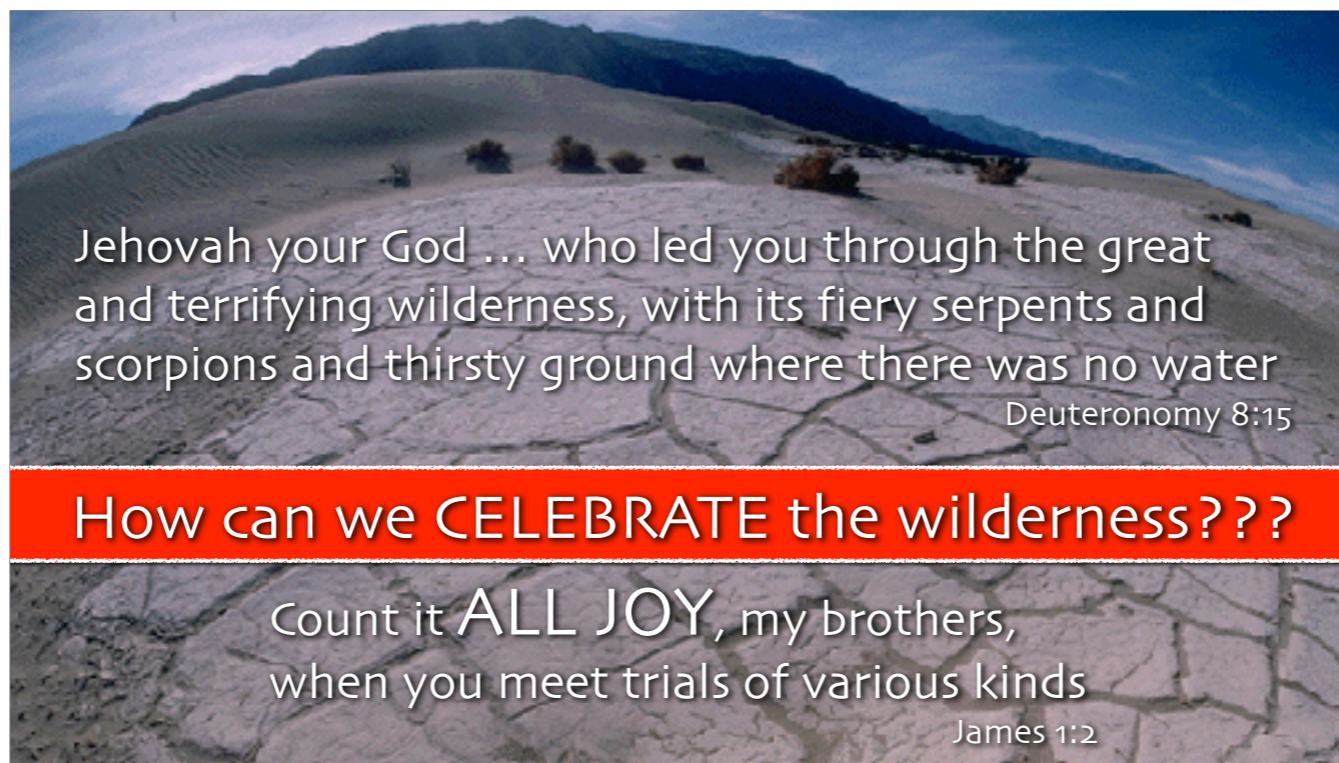
Jehovah your God ... who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water  
Deuteronomy 8:15

- Deuteronomy 8:15 who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water,



- How can we celebrate the wilderness?
  - dangerous
  - enemies
  - long
  - tiring
  - death
  - want to go home





Jehovah your God ... who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water  
Deuteronomy 8:15

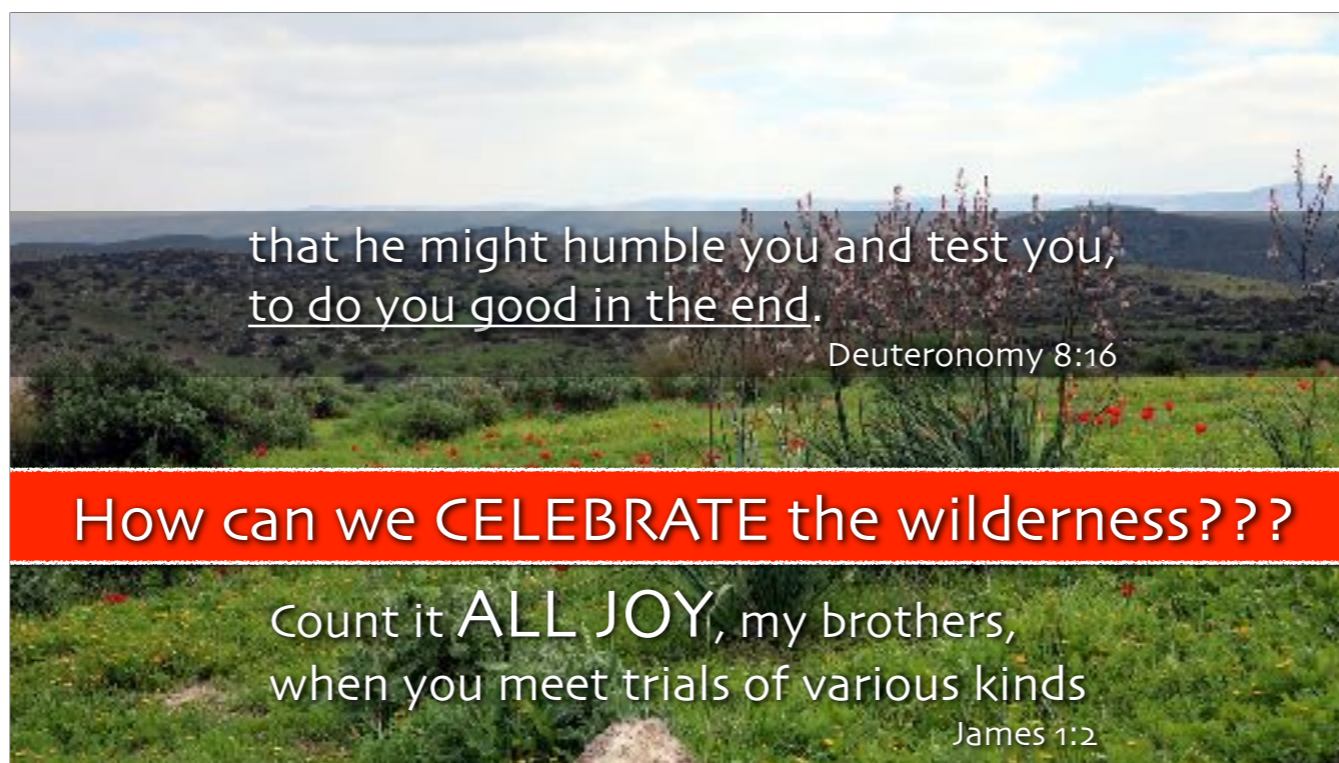
How can we CELEBRATE the wilderness???

Count it ALL JOY, my brothers,  
when you meet trials of various kinds  
James 1:2

- James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,
  - Is this just nonsense?
  - Or is this just a pious sounding platitude intended to make us feel better?
- 1 Peter 4:12-14 (ESV) 12 Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13 But **rejoice** insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

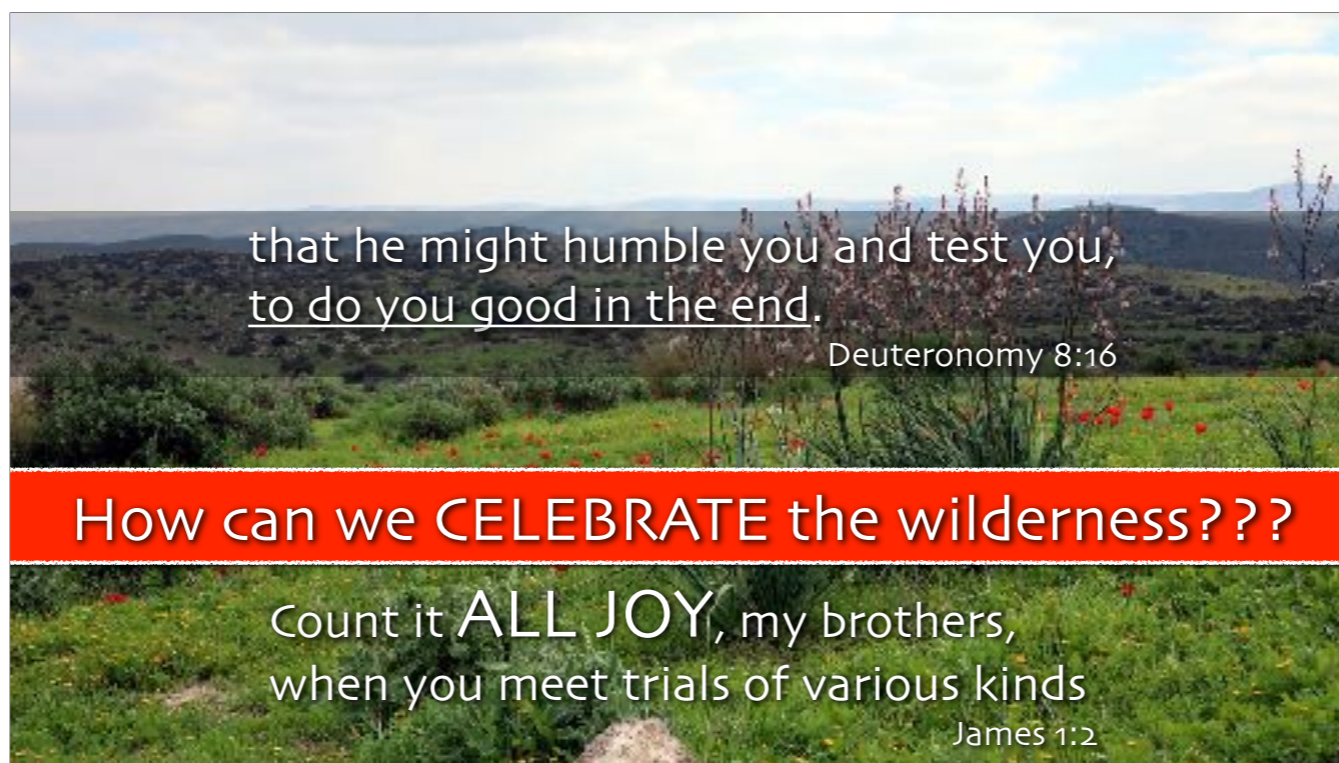


- But it's not just that God led them to that place. He used it.
- Deuteronomy 8:2-3 (ESV) 2 And you shall remember the whole way that the LORD your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness,
  - that he might humble you,
    - testing you to know what was in your heart,
    - whether you would keep his commandments or not.
  - 3 And he humbled you and
    - let you hunger and fed you with manna,
- Deuteronomy 8:16 that he might humble you and test you, **to do you good in the end.**



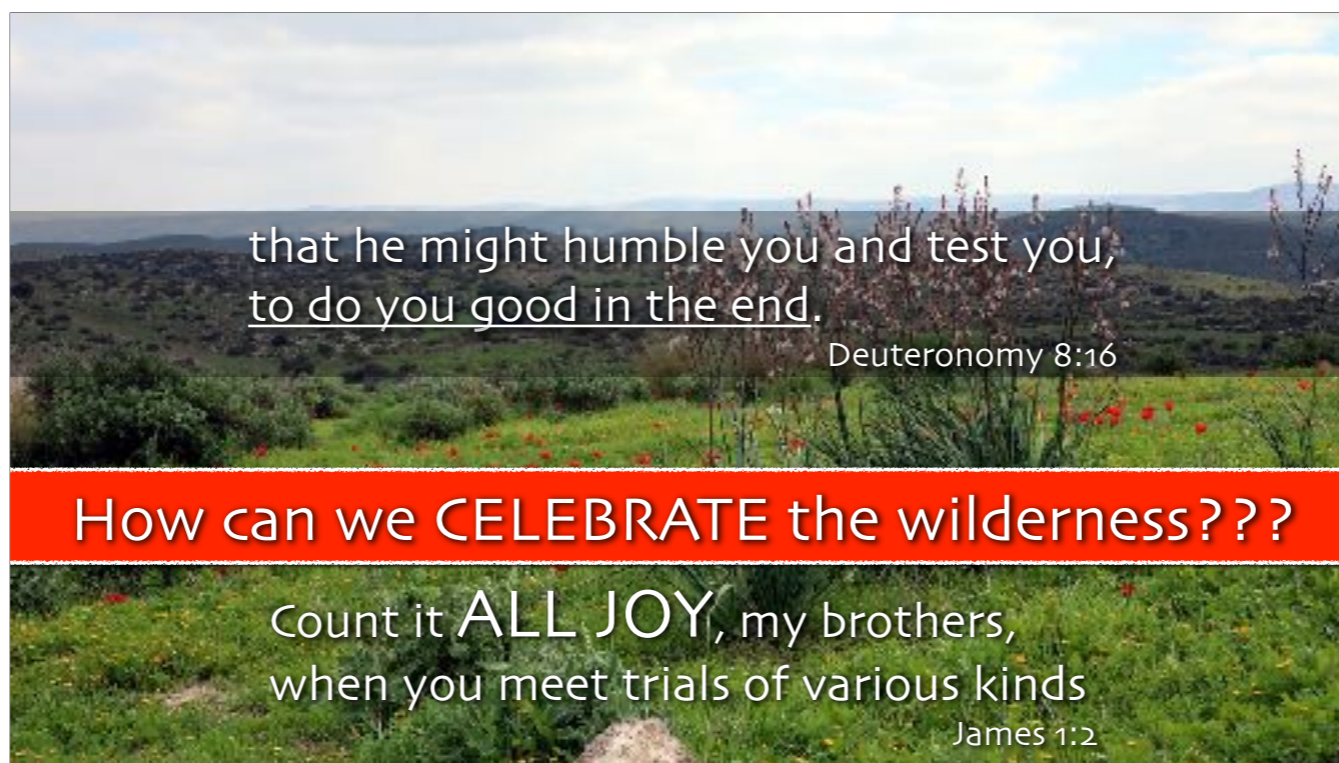
- Deuteronomy 8:16 that he might humble you and test you, **to do you good in the end.**
- In thinking about the wilderness, we must consider carefully how we think of the God who leads us through the wilderness.
  - This challenges us to reconsider the who and the why of the wilderness.



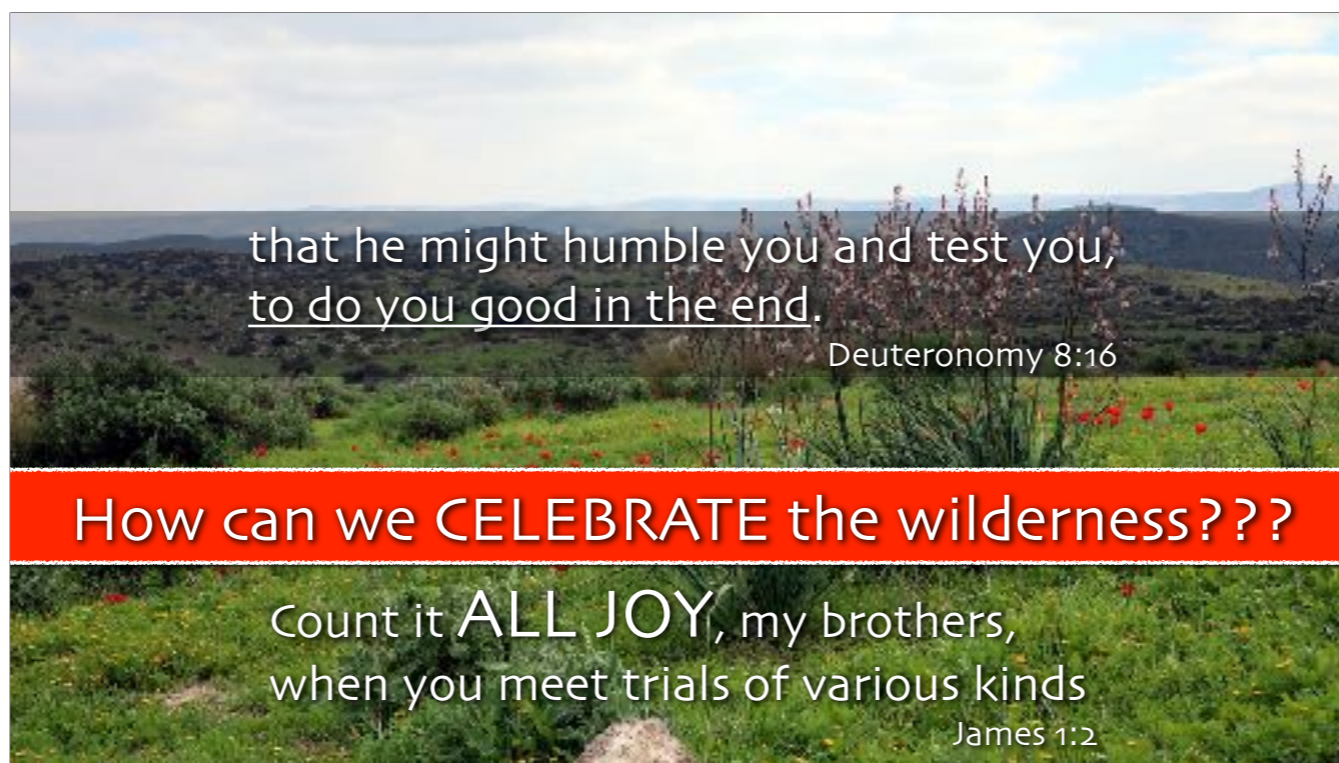


- The Israelites often struggled with how they perceived God and his purposes
  - Deuteronomy 1:27 And you murmured in your tents and said, 'Because the LORD hated us he has brought us out of the land of Egypt, to give us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us.
  - They were often shaking their fists at God, questioning everything that happened, questioning him:

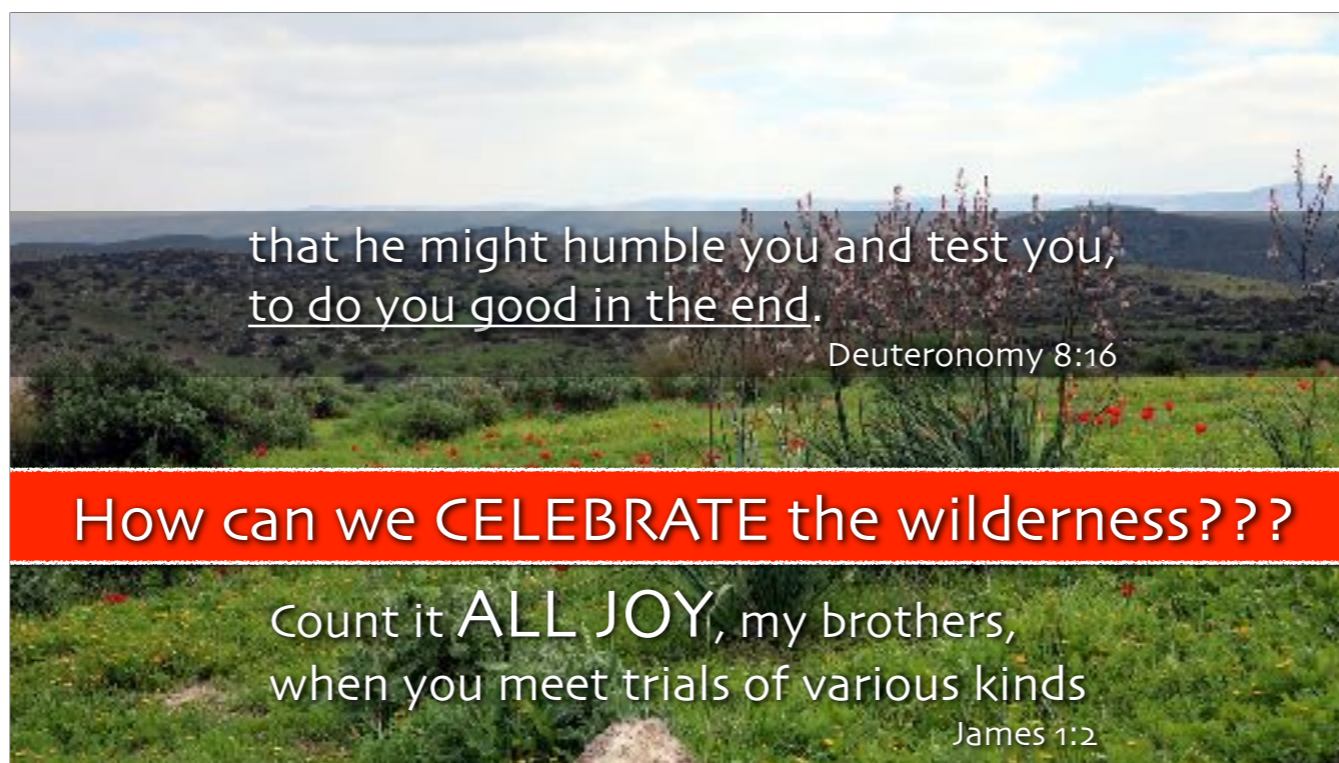




- They questioned his ability to care for them in the wilderness even after he had proven himself. He gives them water and they ask
  - “Can God spread a table in the wilderness?” (Psalm 78:19)
- He brought us to the wilderness to die.
- He brought us to the promised land to die.

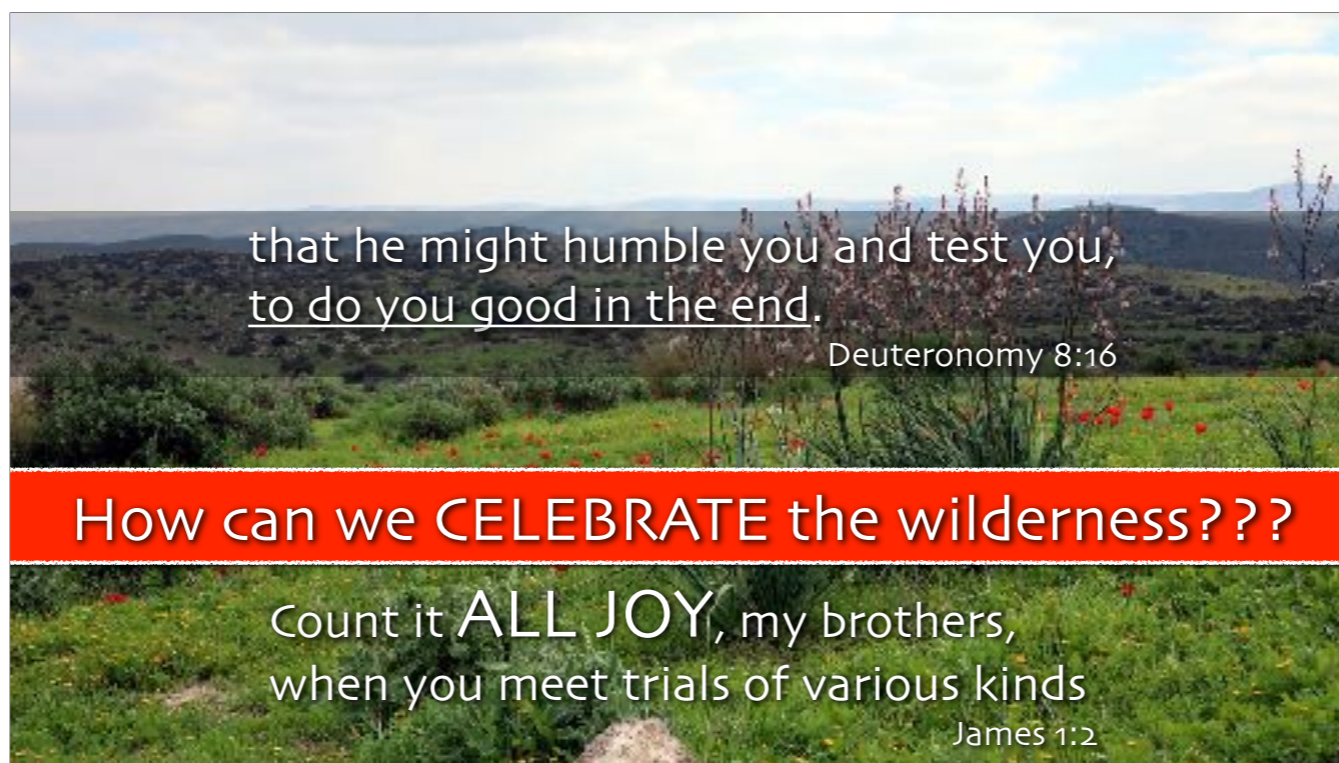


- What Jehovah did ... he did for their good and to do them good in the end.
  - And that's hard to hear and hard to accept.
  - But the whole point of this was to bring them to the land He promised to Abraham.
  - He is being faithful, and saving his chosen people.
  - This is much bigger than just individuals through the wilderness.
    - Promise and purpose and people



- When we consider this, it reminds us to think noble things of our God and Father
  - Our God is committed to the redemption of all: that all would be saved.
    - (sometimes we forget the scope because we tend to individualize salvation predominantly)
  - And so when God's plan to save humankind seems severe, and wrathful,
    - We choose to remember **WHAT** he is doing and **WHY** he is doing it.
  - Even He knows the pain ... allowing his son to suffer on earth, and suffer in death so that we could be saved.





that he might humble you and test you,  
to do you good in the end.

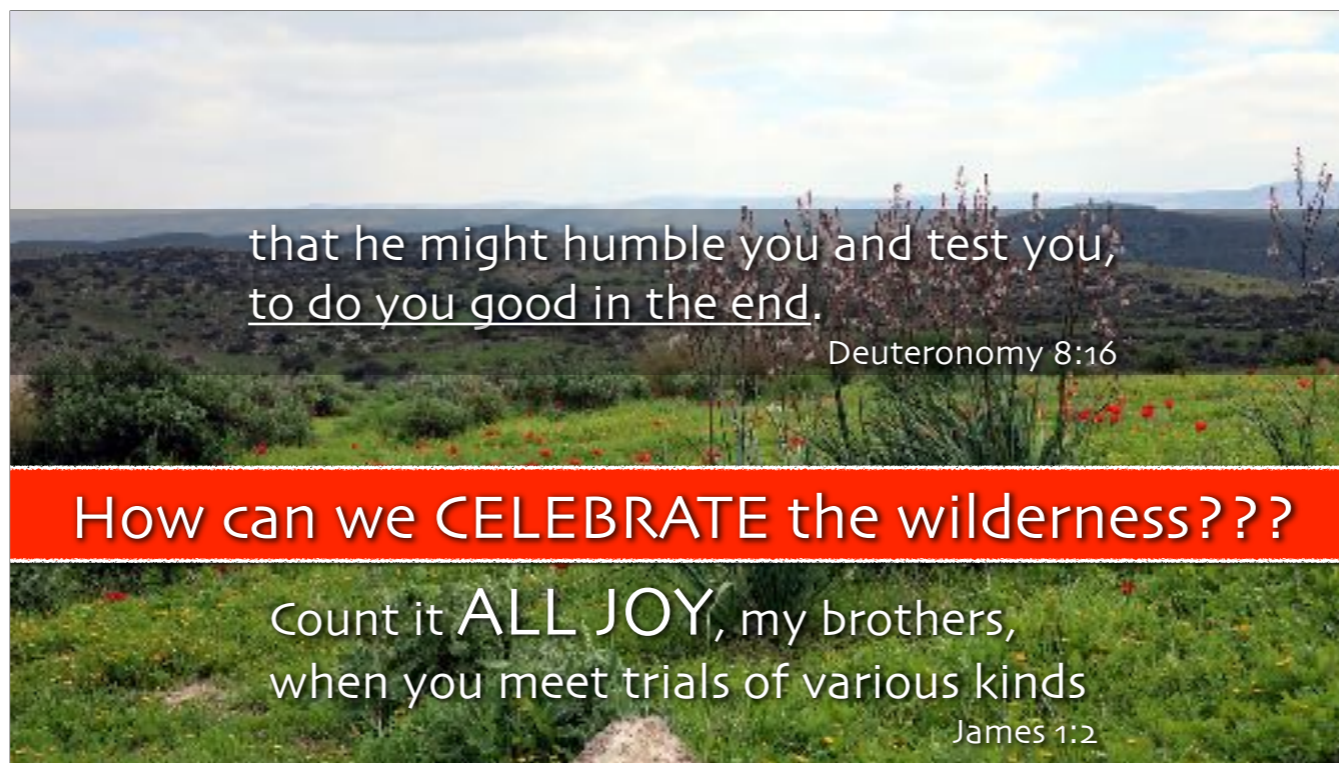
Deuteronomy 8:16

How can we CELEBRATE the wilderness???

Count it **ALL JOY**, my brothers,  
when you meet trials of various kinds

James 1:2

- So we choose to think of God differently (non-obvious)
  - We won't join the peevish deserters who serve God as long as they see him as the best meal ticket in the universe.
  - We won't become one with those who sneer, one of the abusive godless who rant and rave because their personal cherished dreams came to nothing.
  - We won't take our seat with the scoffers or make other gods our lords.
  - We won't let the bitterness turn us back to "better times" or places
  - We won't be confounded by expectations I have of God that he doesn't meet.



that he might humble you and test you,  
to do you good in the end.

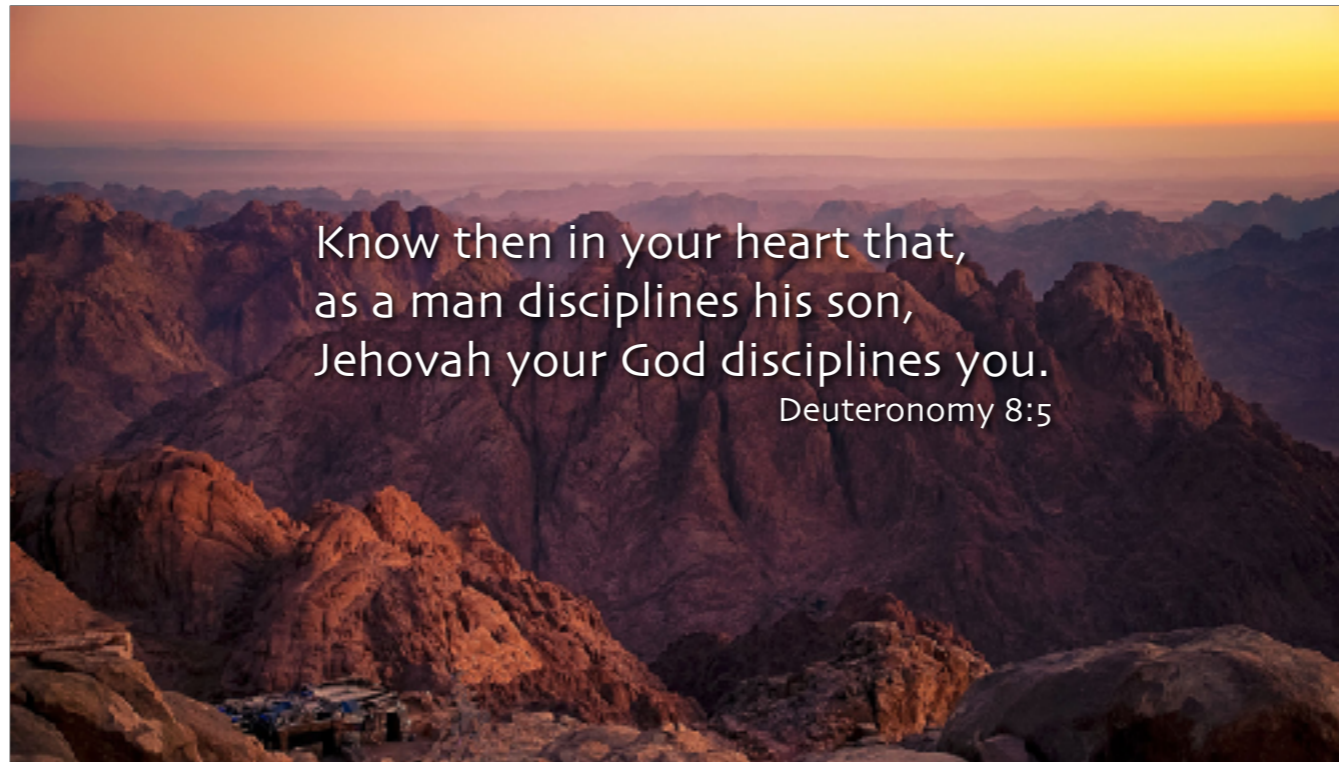
Deuteronomy 8:16

How can we CELEBRATE the wilderness???

Count it **ALL JOY**, my brothers,  
when you meet trials of various kinds

James 1:2

- There are hard things God must do for our good, just like we do for our children.



Know then in your heart that,  
as a man disciplines his son,  
Jehovah your God disciplines you.  
Deuteronomy 8:5

- Discipline as sons ... how far does that go?
- Deuteronomy 4:36 Out of heaven he let you hear his voice, that he might discipline you. And on earth he let you see his great fire, and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire.
- Deuteronomy 8:5 Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you.

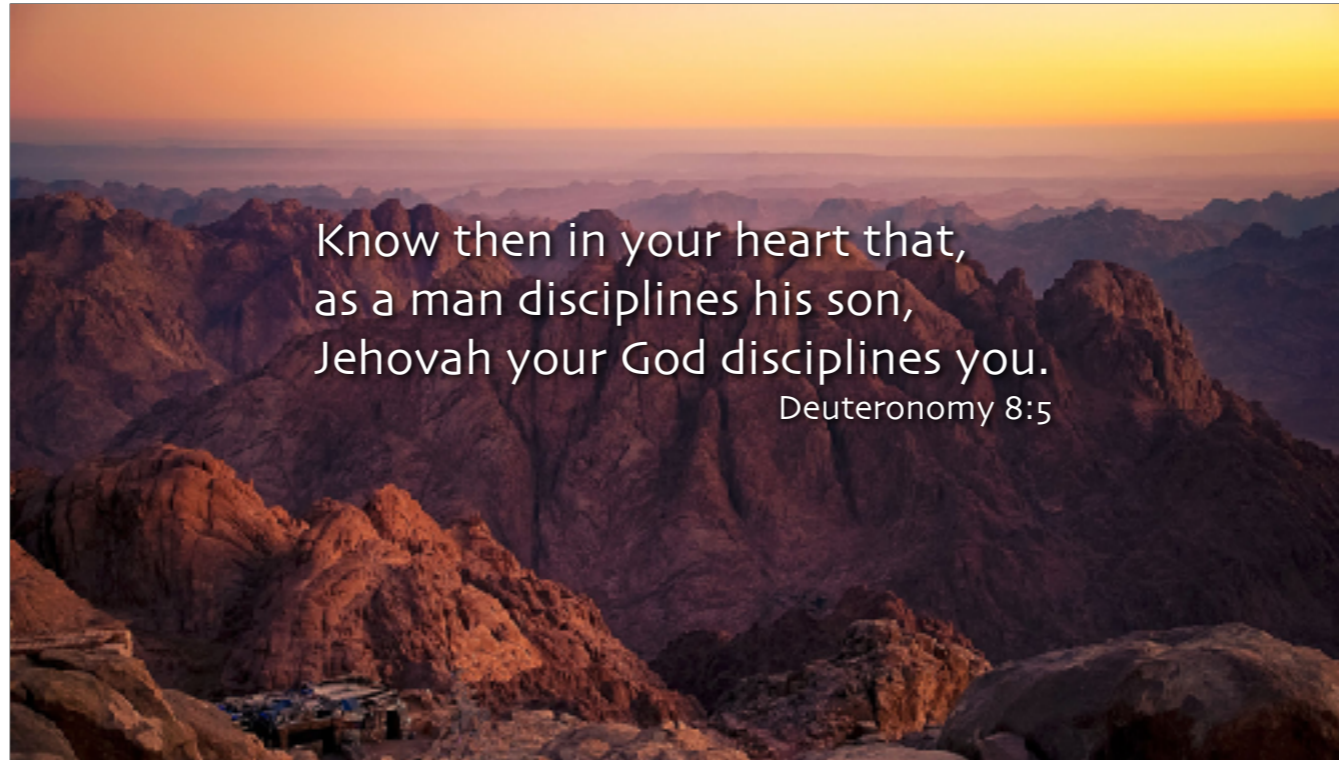




- Deuteronomy 11:2-7: 2 And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it),
- **consider the discipline of the LORD your God,**
  - his greatness,
  - his mighty hand and his outstretched arm,



- 3 his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land,
  - 4 and what he did to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots,
  - how he made the water of the Red Sea flow over them as they pursued after you,
  - and how the LORD has destroyed them to this day,
- 5 and what he did to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place,



- 6 and what he did to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben,
  - how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel.
- 7 For your eyes have seen all the great work of the LORD that he did.





- For numerous reasons God's people were glad that the wilderness was a part of their past.
  - And remember, it wasn't only those guilty of apostasy and unbelief who endured the pain and privation of the wilderness.
  - Along with the guilty there were the guiltless whose hardship was vicarious, whose pain existed because they were part of a nation that was punished for its crass unbelief.
  - The curse of the wilderness fell on the guiltless as well as the guilty.



- Can we only celebrate the wilderness when we are past it?
  - We all know examples of disciples who have rejoiced while overwhelmed by trouble.
  - Friends who we have seen go through suffering and death.
    - And some of those have been able to rejoice in the Lord
    - And we watched them with wonder as they keep on: trusting, hoping
      - They don't deny the struggle, the pain, the weariness, the tears
      - They don't blame God, though they may wonder Why? and How long?



- There's an understanding that the wilderness is not our home,
  - And that our God is doing working to save us from the curse of sin
  - Redemption is at work in the world.





- That redemption is much greater than just me.
  - John 1:29 (ESV) 29 The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
  - John 3:16-17 (ESV) 16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.



- John 4:42 (ESV) 42 They said to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.”
- John 12:47 (ESV) 47 If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.
- 1 John 2:2 (ESV) 2 He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- 1 John 4:14 (ESV) 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.



- How do we comfort those whose suffering is severe and prolonged?
  - What happens when these worthy saints do have moments where they are overwhelmed?
  - They don't need criticism, or reminders
  - Maybe just a hug and some silent affirmation.





- Leviticus 23:40-43

- And you shall take on the first day the fruit of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook,
- and **you shall rejoice** before the LORD your God seven days.
- 41 You shall **celebrate it as a feast** to the LORD for seven days in the year.

You shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days.  
You shall celebrate it as a feast to Jehovah

Leviticus 23:40-41



- Celebrating the wilderness

- Why would Jehovah want the people to remember all the trials of the wilderness?
- It certainly requires some effort because it's not obvious.
- But it was through the wilderness that Jehovah brought them to the land He promised them.
  - While there were hardships: Jehovah was with them throughout the journey
  - He cared for them, provided, and lead them.
  - He disciplined them when they strayed. Punished them when they didn't believe.

You shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days.  
You shall celebrate it as a feast to Jehovah

Leviticus 23:40-41



- Celebrating the wilderness is not really about the wilderness.
  - It's about the God who leads through the wilderness.
  - Will you believe in him and rejoice in him?
  - Are you willing to look beyond your own difficulties and see that God is working on a much larger scale than just you?
- Ultimately, in Jesus we have the victory over death (the curse) and our hope of eternal life assured.
  - But there's still the journey through the wilderness for us.



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

2 Corinthians 5:20

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## Celebrating the Wilderness - 1

Leviticus 23:40-43

Synopsis: Why would Jehovah command Israel to celebrate the journey through the wilderness? The wilderness is not just about the trials, but also teaches us about who our God is and helps us to understand his wrath.

Lesson borrowed from Jim McGuiggan's book: Celebrating the Wrath of God: Reflections on the Agony and Ecstasy of His Relentless Love, Chapter 9: Celebrating the Wrath of God.

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