

Psalm 81

Author: Asaph

Asaph pens a hymn for the holiday. The Feast of Tabernacles is the time of year when the Jews come from all over the nation of Israel to gather in Jerusalem. Their purpose is to remember and revel in God's abundant blessing. This is one of seven festivals God instructed His people to celebrate and occurs each fall.

Read Leviticus 23:41-43.

Why was the holiday called The Feast (Festival) of Tabernacles?

The Israelites lived in temporary living quarters as they journeyed from Egypt to The Promised Land. In addition to celebrating God's abundance, they also celebrated His deliverance from slavery. They experienced God's provision and protection every day they lived in temporary tents.

Read Numbers 14:26-34.

How long did the Israelites live in temporary tents?

For forty years God's chosen people, the people He loved, had to live and die in the wilderness. Even in the temporary living quarters of the wilderness God did not stop caring for His beloved Israel. Yes! God can be experienced in the wilderness.

Temporary Tents

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1

Who also lives in a temporary tent?

Paul instills in the believers in Corinth a confident hope of a future heavenly body. This same future belongs to all who have faith in God through His Son Jesus. This news is so glorious to one who experiences the aches and pains of their aging tent.

So the future is bright and glorious with the promise of experiencing eternal life, with a new never aging, sagging, or sick body, but what about the here and now? Can we experience God in the here and now of temporary tents? The answer is a resounding yes!!! He provides for and protects us just as He did His beloved Israel.

The Wilderness Experience

It is God's greatest delight to share the journey of the wilderness experience of our temporary home. His intent is to provide everything we need. The only thing He wants from us is to want Him.

Read 2 Peter 1:3.

What has God provided for our wilderness experience?

Through His divine power, God has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of Him. The key to taking hold of the truth in the first part of 2 Peter 1:3 rests upon commitment to the last part. Our knowledge of God is found in our experience with Him.

Often we equate knowledge of God only with the study of His Word. Hear me clearly; from one who adores the ancient words, studying them is not the only way to gain knowledge of God. Studying will give mind knowledge, experience gives heart knowledge. We need both.

Dictionary.com defines *experience* as knowledge or practical wisdom gained from what one has observed, encountered or undergone. Experiential knowledge of God is established when we trust God even when we don't understand Him. During the wilderness times of life we can experientially know God through this providence, provision, and protection.

Providence

Read Exodus 13:17.

God knew the Israelites may grow weary and want to return to Egypt. How did His provision keep them from war?

Provision

Read Exodus 16:4.

How did the Israelites experience God's provision?

Protection

Read Exodus 14:21-28.

How did the Israelites experience God's protection?

As we wander in the wilderness we discover God does not abandon His children. Through life's toughest times God displays His mightiest power. In our wilderness time we meet God personally. Experiential living with the living God makes tent dwelling bearable and temporary wilderness travel passable.

When the wilderness passes and deliverance occurs, our memory bank will be full of God's providence, provision, and protection. The memories will cause celebration and praise. We can have our very own Feast of Tabernacles, reminiscing and passing along God's faithfulness to future generations.