

PART 10 - JOHN THE BAPTIST LIVED AND WAS FOUND IN THE WILDERNESS

Luke 1:80 And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Where did John live?

This is a very different picture to where we may have expected to find John the Baptist. What on earth is the greatest prophet of the old doing living in the wilderness? The wilderness is John's place of habitation.

I find the next passage in Matthew 11:7-15 extremely fascinating in relation to John being in the wilderness and declaring the eternal gospel in the wilderness.

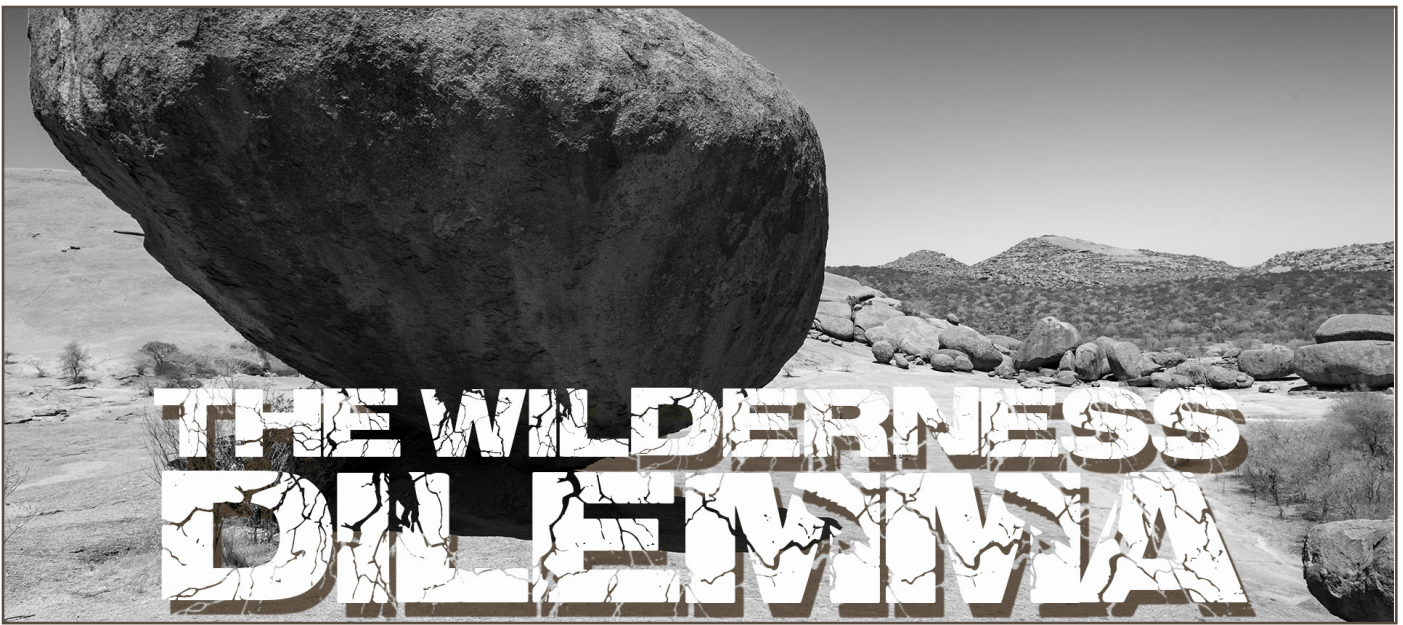
Matthew 11:7-15 As these men were going away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in kings' palaces! But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and one who is more than a prophet.

This is the one about whom it is written, 'Behold, I send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You.' Truly I say to you, among those born of women there has not arisen anyone greater than John the Baptist! Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and violent men take it by force. For all the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, John himself is Elijah who was to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

I love the question Jesus asks the crowds. "What did you go out into the wilderness to see?"

Jesus then lists a number of things. A reed shaken by the wind, or was it a man dressed in soft clothing? Those who wear soft clothing are in king's palaces, but what did you go out to see? Jesus is making a massive point about where His prophets, those who are His sent ones are found. What's even more incredible about all this, is John is not just any prophet, but the greatest prophet of the old, and he is found where?

Prophets of God do not live in king's palaces, wearing king's clothes and eating the food of kings. They are not found living and having their habitation in the man-made religious system and institution. They may from time to time visit and bring with them the Word of God, in the hope that all those whose



hearts and minds are institutional, will be set free.

They are in the desert, the wilderness, wearing clothing appropriate for the wilderness and eating food that's appropriate for the wilderness. This is where John was found and lived his life from. The food He ate and the clothing he wore, was supplied to him from the wilderness. There was nothing man made about where he lived, the clothes he wore or the food he ate.

Question for us all, what do you think all of this means for us?

One would have thought God would have set the greatest prophet of the Old Testament up in the flashiest temple, and this is where he would have lived from and given his powerful message of preparing the way for the coming Messiah. But no, this was the furthest from the truth. All the people who lived in the man-made religious institutions, would have to go out into the wilderness if they wanted to hear the Word of the Lord.

QUESTIONS

1. What is God communicating to us from this truth?
2. Why is it so easy to become an institutional follower?
3. What is the difference between living and being found in the wilderness as opposed to living and being found in the temple?
4. If the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, where are we found living and why?
5. What is preventing you from becoming a wilderness resident?