



*The Rock is a Youth
Ministry of Ascension
Lutheran Church*

In the Wilderness

Based on Exodus 15 & Luke 4:1-13

Jenna: **Allee (Microphone)**
Leeza: **Alleah (Microphone)**
Moses: **Michael (robe, staff, toothpick)**
Elaine: **Peri (cooler with two labeled bottles of water)**
Kramer: **Matthew (wild shirt, crazy hair)**
Jesus: **Mattias (dressed like Jesus)**
Devil: **Lauren (Red dress, Hostess cupcake & Pepsi, Stones)**
Newman: **Tobi (large character)**
George: **Austin (balding, plaid shirt)**

Setting: ***A reality game show entitled "Wilderness". The contestants are divided into two teams: Team Israelite and Team Jesus. The game show is hosted by Jenna & Leeza. ("In the Wilderness" music.)***

Jenna: **Welcome to the ESPN Classics episode of the oldest reality game show in existence, "Wilderness." I'm your celebrity guest host, Jenna Props...**

Leeza: **And I'm Leeza Givons. On "Wilderness", teams of average people are abandoned in the middle of some of the most unforgiving wilderness conditions on earth. They experience God-permitted challenges and every so often, we check in to see who's winning and who's losing.**

Jenna: **The game is simple: survive the wilderness, and at the end of the day, find out who will win**

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the prize of eternal life? The contestants we'll be watching in this episode—through the miracle that is ESPN Classics--are grouped into two teams.

Leeza: Team Israel is led by team captain, Moses. Team Jesus is led by, er, a, the Holy Spirit. Let's take a look at how Moses is entertaining Team Israel in the Desert of Shur.

Moses: So I look into the mirror, raise my staff, and God parts my hair right down the middle, cowlick and everything. *(Rim shot. Boos from crowd.)* Tough crowd. So what is it with Bagels anyway? *(Moan.)*

Elaine: Look, Mo, I don't mean to be a heckler, but we've been traveling for three days in this God-forsaken desert now, and people are starting to grumble.

George: The staff turned snake, the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea. That was all good for a while, Mo, but you gotta' get some new material.

Kramer: *(Appears out of no-where.)* Hey, any of you have anything to drink. I'm famished! I'm wastin' away to nothing, Mo! I'm skin and bone!

Elaine: He's right, Mo. You gotta' do something!

Kramer: Show me the water, Moses, show me the water!

Moses: *(Pulls out a tooth-pick to pick his teeth.)* Hey, take it easy, Elaine, George, Kramer. Remember how God delivered us at the Red Sea just three days ago?

George: Look, Mo, three days in a desert is a long time. We're talkin' ancient history.

Kramer: Yeah, what have you done for us lately, Mo?

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- Moses:** Hey, you have Marah's water. *(Points to Elaine's bottle of "Marah's" bottled water.)* What more do you want?
- Elaine:** What? This stuff? *(Makes gagging face.)* This stuff is bitter? Look at this *(points to label)*. What kind of slogan is this? "Marah's Bottled Water: Bitter is Better!" Better than what? This is worse than tap water! Where's the Evian water we had in Egypt?
- Moses:** Very well. *(Flicks tooth pick into ice chest.)* There. How's that?
- Elaine:** *(Picks up bottle labeled "ToMarah's Water" and reads label.)* "ToMarah's Water: Wood Sweetened." *(Takes a drink.)* Hey, this stuff tastes sweet...like grapes. How'd you do that?
- Moses:** *(Shrugs and points toward heaven.)* Like I told you before, it's not me. It's the Lord God.
- Kramer:** Say, not meaning to complain, but I'm really kind of partial to mango-flavoring. You don't have another magic toothpick, do you?
- Jenna:** And so we've witnessed the birth of the original fitness water. Miraculously, God provided exactly what the Israelites needed, when they needed it. Who's up next, Leeza?
- Leeza:** Now, we'll check in on Team Jesus. Following his baptism at the Jordan River, we find Jesus led into the desert by the Holy Spirit to encounter the devil himself.
- Devil:** *(Eating a Cupcake & drinking a Pepsi.)* So, tell me, Jesus, it's been forty days in the wilderness now, has it not?
- Jesus:** *(Nods.)* Say, where did you get that Hostess cupcake?

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Devil: Oh, this. No, it's Devil's food cake. *(Moan from all.)*

Devil: *(Kicks stone toward Jesus.)* Come on, if you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread. Then you'll be able to eat.

Jesus: It is written, "Man does not live on bread alone."

Devil: *(Points over audience.)* Look at this, Jesus. All the world is before us. I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours.

Jesus: Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only.

Devil: Say, whose kid are you really? You're nothing like those Israelites I tempted in the wilderness so many years ago.

Leeza: Well, looks like Team Jesus is holding up just fine, after not just 3 days, but 40 days in the wilderness.

Jenna: Let's check back with Team Israel again, Leeza. Where are they now?

Leeza: Well, you're not going to believe this, Jenna, but they're in the Wilderness or Desert of Sin.

Jenna: The Desert of SIN? Ha, ha. Very funny, Leeza. You're just saying that to boost ratings during Sweeps Month. Now where are they really?

Leeza: *(Opens her Bible. Jenna comes over to look over her shoulder.)* Look, right here in Exodus 16:1: "The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. In the desert the whole community

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grumbled against Moses and Aaron."

- Jenna:** Grumbled, huh. Well, then I guess we got the right team, all right. But I thought when we last checked in on them, they were at Marah. Now you have them moving from Elim to the Wilderness of Sin.
- Leeza:** Oh sorry, we skipped a verse that didn't seem too exciting. Right after the Marah episode there is a one verse reference to Elim: "Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water" – Exodus 15:27.
- Jenna:** Springs, water, palm trees. Sounds like a pretty nice place. I thought everything was hardship in the wilderness.
- Leeza:** To listen to people talk about their time in the wilderness— whether it's Israelites or Christians— you would think that everything was awful. Somehow we manage to overlook the nice stuff and move right on to the gritty episodes. Which brings us to our grumbling team in Sin—oops, I mean the WILDERNESS of Sin.
- Newman:** Knock, knock.
- Moses:** Who's there?
- Newman:** You're the one who talks to God. You tell me.
- Moses:** *(Rolls his eyes.)* Hello, Newman!
- Newman:** Hello, Moses!
- Moses:** What is it this time, Newman?
- Newman:** Well, Moses, we've been talking, and we noticed how we've been following you around in the desert 45 days now, and...

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- George:** Get to the point, Newman! We're starving here.
- Kramer:** *(Appears out of no where.)* Hey, anyone got something to eat. I'm starving!
- George:** Oh, If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt!
- Newman:** There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you...you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death.
- Moses:** In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him.
- Jenna:** So that is when the Lord began providing manna breakfasts and quail suppers for Team Israel, bread in the morning and meat in the evening.
- Leeza:** Interesting how Moses brought Team Israel into the desert to escape from Egypt in search of the Promised Land, and within days of their 40-year wilderness sojourn they were already searching for ways to return to the familiar comforts of their bondage in Egypt.
- Jenna:** But in their search for their beginnings, the comforts of Egypt, God provided the way to their future. In their search for escape from the wilderness, God consistently provided new, unanticipated, unexpected better ways to trust in him.

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- Leeza:** So the primary lesson of the wilderness was not so much the destination of the promised land, but whom they needed to trust to get them there safely.
- Jenna:** That brings us back to the even better example of Team Jesus in his wilderness journey. The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. *(To Devil & Jesus.)*
- Devil:** So, Jesus, if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully; they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."
- Jesus:** Do not put the Lord your God to the test.
- Jenna:** So, ultimately, in quoting from Deuteronomy 6:16, Jesus would not repeat the sin that Team Israel committed in the desert that extended their 40-DAY journey into a 40-YEAR journey. He would not put God to the test.
- Leeza:** Although Jesus directed those words at the devil, they could have just as well been directed at Team Israel or even Team Christian today. Those last words, "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" are good ones for all of us experiencing our own episodes of the "Wilderness" today.
- Jenna:** But rather, in our Wilderness episodes, every person should learn that the Exodus or way to holy ground isn't so much a PATH to our desires, as it is a PERSON... God's ultimate trail guide, Jesus.
- Leeza:** Well, that's about it for this week's episode of Wilderness.
- George:** Hold it, hold it! You can't end it like this! What

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kind of a reality game show is this?

Elaine: Yeah, don't we get to vote someone off the island or something?

Krammer: And where is the prize? Don't we get a prize?

Jenna: Oh yes, well, now that you mention it, I guess we should tell the viewers who won the prize and who lost. Lezza?

Leeza: Jesus, as you know passed this wilderness test at the start of his ministry, and went on to pass three more years of tests, including the ultimate test of crucifixion. Today, he sits at the right hand of God, his Father, in the heavenly realm.

Jenna: The Children of Israel, of course, went on to endure 40 years of tests in the wilderness, with only two survivors reaching the promised land.

Group: Only two?

Leeza: So, would you like to know their names?

George: Winners, schminners. We're all among friends, here. Right?

Elaine: Yeah, we don't really need to know how it ends.

Krammer: I'm outta' here. *(Team Israel begins exit.)*

Newman: I'm starved. Anyone got anything to eat.

George: I've got some manah I collected yesterday tucked away in jar in my tent.

Newman: *(All begin to exit.)* Say, you don't know where I could score some Hostess Twinkies and a Pepsi, do you?

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Jenna: **So join us next week when Team Christian has their opportunity on the next episode of "Wilderness." ("In the Wilderness" music.)**