

Psalm 107:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

Analysis

This verse begins the first of four rescue scenarios. 'They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way' describes lostness and desolation. 'Wilderness' (midbar, מִדְבָּר) is uninhabited wasteland. 'Solitary way' (derek yeshimon, דֶּרֶךְ יְשִׁימָן) means a desolate, pathless place—emphasizing both physical and existential lostness. 'They found no city to dwell in' means no habitation, no security, no home. This describes the literal experience of exiles journeying home and Israel's wilderness wandering, but also represents spiritual lostness—humanity wandering without God, seeking home but finding none. Augustine's 'our hearts are restless until they find rest in Thee' echoes this condition.

Historical Context

This scenario may describe exiles traveling through dangerous, barren regions returning from Babylon. It also echoes Israel's 40-year wilderness wandering (Psalm 105-106). The image of wandering seeking a city appears in Hebrews 11:10, 13-16, where the patriarchs sought 'a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' The 'city to dwell in' ultimately is the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21-22), the eternal home for God's redeemed people.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. In what ways do people today 'wander in wilderness' seeking purpose and home?
2. How does the longing for 'a city to dwell in' reflect the human need for God?
3. What does the New Jerusalem represent as the ultimate fulfillment of finding a dwelling place?

Interlinear Text

ל א מ וָשׁ ב ע יְרֵ זֶה בְּיִשְׁמָן וְיַ בְּמִדְבָּר פָּעָז
They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way no city to dwell H3808
H8582 H4057 H3452 H1870 H5892 H4186

מִצְאָה:

they found

H4672

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 32:10 (Parallel theme): He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.

Numbers 14:33 (Parallel theme): And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcases be wasted in the wilderness.

Ezekiel 34:6 (Parallel theme): My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.

Ezekiel 34:12 (Parallel theme): As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

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