

PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3-21-1905

An Overview of Wilderness Survival from an End-Time Christian Perspective

by Jim Buller

Based on the conclusions of the study in the last issue, (see box below), let's see what wilderness survival *looks* like from an end-time Christian perspective.

Conclusions from **The Prophetic Description of Our End-Time Wilderness Experience:**

1. There are two phases to our flight —Matt 24:15-16, Luke 21:20-21, 5T 464-5
 - ① to the country in response to the “National Sunday Law” —5T 464-465, CLiv 9-10
 - ② to the wilderness in response to the “Death Decree” —Rev 13:15, GC 626
2. “Flee” means GO! —Matt 24:17-18
 - whether we are ready, or not; or whether we have a place to go to, or not
 - therefore, if we are going to *prepare*, we must do so *before* it's time to flee
 - we need to be prepared to leave it all behind —Lk 17:32, EW 56-57
3. We will be fleeing during the time when we are *not be able to buy or sell* —Rev 13:17
 - so most likely we will be fleeing *on foot*
4. “Flee” means to *move fast & travel light* —possibly before angry mobs —EW 56-57
 - we will only be able carry the most basic equipment
5. We will be fleeing to places God has prepared for us, rocky fortresses and caves in “the most desolate and solitary places” —Rev 12:6, 14, Isa 33:16, GC 626, UL 327
 - we have a strong tendency to flee to where we *feel safe*, so we need to learn to feel safe in the deep wilderness; and not be like Lot —Gen 19:18-19
6. We will “*associate together in companies*” or be in groups —GC 626, Mar 270
7. We will “not have another message upon definite time” —7BC 971
 - therefore, we need to plan on staying indefinitely; which means:
 - ① any equipment we bring needs to be *durable*
 - ② anything we bring, we need to be able to *maintain* in the wilderness
 - ③ we need to know how to *replenish our supplies from nature*
8. We will be living by God's promises —DA 121-122, MH 200, Ja 1:2-31 / Cor 10:13
 - which means: *trusting wholly in God* **and** *doing all that is in our power to do*; this would include preparation —EW 56-7, PP 95, ST 2-27-1879, PP 290, Ed 117-8, SC 123

Take a look at the picture below. What do you see? Most people say they see general things like: “trees,” “bushes,” “rocks,” and “a creek.”

Now, let’s suppose we could take a native who lived in this area three to five hundred years ago, before any European contact, and have him look at this same scene, and ask him the same question. What would he see? Most people say he would see things like: “home,” and “all the things he needs to survive.” Notice the difference between the way we typically view nature, and the way the native looks at it.

Let’s ask one more question along this line. What does God see when He looks at this scene? Most people say that He would see: “beauty,” or “all the things He created.” But think for a moment, God didn’t create everything to just *be there*, as beautiful as it might be; He created each thing to *interact* in some way with the other created things around it. So God would also see the *interaction* of “all the things He created.”

When He created Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden, He didn’t just put them there to wander around and look at all the “beauty,” He put them there to interact with all the other things in the garden. As they lived their lives, doing all the things they did, they



were *a part of nature*. In other words, God created humans to be a part *of* the ecosystem, not *apart from* it. This was God’s original plan; and it is worth noting that after the “restoration of all things,” we will be back in the garden again.

So, when God looked at this scene several hundred years ago He would have seen the native people interacting with the rest of nature as they went about their lives getting the things they needed to survive, similar to the way each of the birds or animals interact with nature —as a part of it.

Unfortunately, modern man does not see himself as a part of nature. However if we are going to go to stay indefinitely in the wilderness, this is the way we need to approach it. We need to learn to “look” at the wilderness more like the native people did. For the natives, going out into the wilderness was like going to the shopping mall, the grocery store, and the hardware store all rolled into one; it wasn’t a scary foreign environment, or only a beautiful place where we “just look but don’t touch.”

Notice this quotation from *The Ministry of Healing*, page 200. “The mountains and hills are changing; the earth is waxing old like a garment; but the blessing of God, which spreads for His people a table in the wilderness, will never cease.” The statement that these blessings “will never cease,” means they are *still there*. In other words, the same blessings that have provided for God’s children —the native peoples— for thousands of years, as they “lived off the land,” are still there; and *will still be there* for us. Just because we may not know what these blessings are, or because we don’t know how to make use of them, does not mean they aren’t there.

To help us understand, let's look at this from another angle. Suppose we were to take the same native we talked about earlier, and place him in our living room, *he* would probably have a hard time surviving—at least at first. He wouldn't *know* he could turn on the faucet to get a drink of water, or that he could open the refrigerator, or cupboard, and get something to eat. He wouldn't know how to use the bathroom, or bed, or how to do many of the other things we don't even think of as we go about our day to day lives. (By the way, I've heard some *interesting* stories along this line about native people missionaries have brought into their homes.) The problem is, the native doesn't know how *our* "survival system" works. So, in the same way that we might have trouble "surviving" in the wilderness—where the native would get along just fine—the native would have trouble "surviving" in town—where we are able to do alright. We have each been raised in a different "survival system." As we grew up, each of us were taught how to get the things we needed from the "system" we were raised in. So just as the native could *learn* to live in our homes, we can also *learn* how to get what we need from nature.

So, let's analyze our necessities. Listed below are the Survival Priorities. These are the things we need, (not counting air) to stay alive. It would be a good idea to memorize these priorities.

Survival Priorities

1. Shelter
2. Water
3. Health Concerns—such as safety, sanitation, and hygiene
4. Fire
5. Food

Shelter is first because within a few hours we will probably need shelter from something. If nothing else, it will probably get colder after the sun goes down and night sets in. We may also need shelter from rain, snow, the sun, or wind. Water is second, because under most conditions we *could* make it into the next day without water. Food is last, because we *could* survive a couple weeks without food—although we may not feel very good about it. Health Concerns is in the middle, because we *always* want to stay safe and healthy. Even at home, if we were to get injured or sick our situation gets worse. Fire is also in the middle, as it may be needed: in connection with the Shelter for warmth and light, to purify Water, for cooking Food, or for making tools.

The order of this list is significant, because it is *really important* to do first things first. This is *especially* true at the *beginning* of a survival situation, as there is so much that needs to be done, and it will be difficult to do things after it gets dark. We *must* therefore, concentrate our efforts on doing the most important things first, and not waste time on non-essentials. Some things will just *have* to wait.

Expanding on the Survival Priorities, we get a list of equipment item categories that provide us with these priorities. For lack of a better term, we will call this expanded list "Survival Priority Equipment." Regardless of where people are living around the world, these are the categories of "equipment items" that humans need to stay alive. Different cultures have come up with different solutions to each of these categories,

based on their particular situation and the available resources. When thinking about our long-term survival, we need to consider each of these equipment item categories. “Tools” are included here, because although they are not something that we need directly, they enable us to get the things we need more easily and efficiently.

Survival Priorities	Survival Priority Equipment
1. Shelter:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clothing & Footwear ● Bedding ● Roof & Walls
2. Water:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water Bottle
3. Health Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hygiene Items
4. Fire:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fire-Starter & Fuel
5. Food:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food ● Cook Pot & Utensils
Tools:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cutting & Chopping ● Digging ● Cordage ● Containers

As noted earlier, for thousands of years God has provided for many of His children from only the things of nature, so we *can* get everything we need —everything on this list— from nature.

But just before we take a look at how this might be done, let’s introduce a concept called “naked survival.” “Naked survival” doesn’t mean taking off one’s clothes and running around naked in the woods. The term is meant in the same way it is used in Job 1:21 which says, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I will depart.” It is all about having nothing. For practical purposes “naked survival” means being in a survival situation with just the clothes we have on, and nothing in our pockets. So, let’s place ourselves in a “naked survival” situation and see what we could do. (As you read through the next four paragraphs, also notice the progression of how one thing helps us to get another.)

We will start with Shelter since it is the first priority. To build a “wicki-up:” poles could be placed all around a tripod frame; then covered with about a one foot thick layer “debris,” (leaves, pine needles, dried grass, moss —whatever is available), leaving a “smoke hole” at the top; then some additional poles or pieces of bark would be laid against the debris to help keep it in place. Inside the shelter, several additional arm-loads of debris would be spread out next to the walls to make a “debris bed,” and a small fire-pit made in the center. A large piece of bark, or whatever else we could make work, would be used as a door.



From a hard, fine-grained rock we could chip off a sharp flake to use as a stone Knife. The fibers from certain plant stalks, or the inner bark from many trees, could be cut off and separated, then twined to make Cordage. With the cordage we could weave some long leaves, grass stems, or stalks together to make a mat-like Blanket. Using the stone knife we could also carve a Digging Stick that is useful for such things as: digging

edible roots, a pry-bar or mallet, leveling the inside of the shelter, digging a hole to go to the bathroom in, and making a fire pit. (We would want to Fire-Harden the digging stick, but first we'll have to make fire.)

With the stone knife again, we could carve a fire-drill set, which might also use some cordage, and possibly the digging stick as a hand-hold. After gathering and making a tinder bundle of fine shredded material, and some sticks for kindling, we could use the fire-drill to make Fire. With the fire we could burn off a short section of a log; then placing some hot coals on one side of it, alternately burn and scrape out a Bowl. This would give us a container that will hold Water. By heating small, (half fist-size), rocks in the fire, and placing them in the water, (being careful to stir them around so they don't burn a hole in our bowl), we could Boil the water to purify it. This same "hot-rock boiling" method would also enable us to cook Food.

To make a Toothbrush, we could cut and peel a willow twig, smashing one end with the digging stick for the "brush." For a Hair Brush we could cut and peel a handful of thin twigs, and tie them together in a bundle with some cordage. Certain plants can be smashed to give us Soap. Ashes from the fire, (after they have cooled), could be used for Deodorant. For Containers, to keep and carry things in, we could weave a basket; or carve a "shuttle," and net together some more cordage to make a netted bag.

While doing all this it is important to keep in mind that we *could* do a lot of damage to nature. However, it is not necessary to destroy nature in order to get what we need from it. In the beginning God gave Adam and Eve the job of taking care of the garden, (see Genesis 2:15), and by extension, as their children we still have this same job. Unfortunately, people have not always followed God's plan, and we have pretty much trashed the planet. This is one reason there is a declaration made in heaven just before Jesus comes which, among other things, states that "the time has come," "to destroy those who destroy the earth," (see Revelation 11:18). God still cares about the things He has created.

Actually, it is possible to do all the things we need to do to survive and still leave nature better than we found it. But we need to have a "caretaker attitude," rather than just being a "careless taker," or feeling that we need to *conquer* the wilderness. By thinking about how our activities will affect our surroundings we *can* make a positive impact. For instance, if we have to cut a green branch to make something we need, we can take it from an area that needs to be thinned or pruned, rather than just using the first good branch we find.

Hopefully, you can see how all our needs could be provided from nature. But, you probably also noticed that it would take a lot of *time*, and *energy* to find, gather, and make all these things —much more than a couple hours before dark on the first afternoon of a survival situation. In fact it would probably take several days! So, let's explore another line of thinking.

Let's say, in our "naked survival" situation, we were *extremely* fortunate. On that first afternoon, by working as a group, we were able to build a shelter, get water from a nearby creek, and gather a few wild edibles we found along the way. From stones we found in the creek bed, we were able to make stone knives, carve a fire-drill set, and build a fire.

The next morning however, we decided it would be better to move our camp. Maybe we wanted to find a better place, or be closer to some food sources, or move deeper into the wilderness. Would we take our stone knives and fire-drill set with us? Or would we leave them behind and make new ones when we got to our next campsite? —of course, we would take them! We *may* not be able to find the right materials to make new ones. Besides, we know this fire-drill set works, and the time it would take for us to gather and carve another set could be used to make some of the other things we need. We would undoubtedly also bring along any food, or other useful items and raw materials that we could carry in a practical way. So ... if we *would* carry things with us in an *actual* survival situation, *why not bring some of these useful items with us in the first place!?!*

But, before we talk about what things to bring with us, we need to recognize that some people have concerns about what Jesus said in Matthew 24:17-18. “Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.” Is Jesus telling us in these verses that when our time comes to flee we should, “Drop everything and run?” Some think He is. If so, then we should not worry about bringing anything with us, and just focus on learning “naked survival.” But, let’s look at these verses a little closer. Ellen White comments on them in *The Spirit of Prophecy Vol. 4*, page 27, which says,

“When the warning sign should be seen, judgment was to follow so quickly that those who would escape must make no delay. He who chanced to be upon the housetop must not go down through his house into the street; but he must speed his way from roof to roof until he reach the city wall, and be saved "so as by fire." Those who were working in the fields or vineyards must not take time to return for the outer garment laid aside while they should be toiling in the heat of the day.”

Let’s picture a Christian living in Jerusalem at this time. One day he goes out to work in his field. As the day wears on and gets warmer, he takes off his coat laying it out of the way at the edge of the field. He continues working, and a little later hears a commotion up by the city. Looking up, he finds it is surrounded by the Roman army. Jesus’ words flash into his mind, “When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies ... let those in Judea flee to the mountains.” (Luke 21:20-21.) But in the split second before he flees, he thinks about his coat. It’s going to get cold that night, and it would be really nice to have. But ... it is laying at the edge of the field nearest the city, and he also remembers Jesus said, “Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.” So, he must flee without it. He just set himself up for “naked survival.”

What else could have happened? Suppose the armies had surrounded Jerusalem while he still had his coat on. Would it have been alright for him to take it? Or suppose he happened set it down on the far edge of the field, would it have been OK to pick it up as he ran past? If he had been working with some kind of cutting tool would it have been alright for him to take that too?

Let’s re-read these verses to see what Jesus *did* said. “Let no one on the roof of his house go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get his cloak.” What Jesus is saying here is, “*Don’t go back!*” He did *not* say, “Drop

everything and run!” This is an important difference! It *is* OK to take things as long as we, *Don’t go back*.

Possibly the reason we interpret these verses to mean, “Drop everything and run!” is because of the way we were taught to do fire drills in grade school. It is simply much easier to teach a bunch of kids to, “Drop everything and run!” than it is to *prepare* and train them to “Don’t go back.” This possibly sheds some light on why Jesus said what He did in these verses. An unprepared person could at least escape with his life.

Also, looking at what Jesus said as a whole, we find that He isn’t telling us we *should* have to leave without taking anything. A little later in the same narrative He tells us to, “watch!” and “be ready!” so that the day *doesn’t* come upon us unexpectedly. (See Matthew 24:42-44 and Luke 21:34-36.) A look at history also shows us there was really no reason why a Christian back then would have had to flee without even his coat, unless he simply *wasn’t paying any attention* to what was happening in the world around him—if he was neglecting to “watch” and “be ready.”

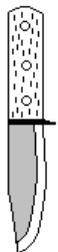
Therefore, it *is* OK to prepare, and get ready for when we will have to flee. If we are wise, part of this preparation will involve putting together a survival kit of basic necessary items, and being sure we know how to use them. If we don’t, we will be setting ourselves up for “naked survival.”

So, let’s take another look at the list of Survival Priority Equipment, as these are the things we should base our survival kit on. In a survival situation lasting indefinitely, any of these items we did not have, we would need to gather and make from nature.

Survival Priorities Survival Priority Equipment

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Shelter: | ● Clothing & Footwear |
| | ● Bedding |
| | ● Roof & Walls |
| 2. Water: | ● Water Bottle |
| 3. Health Concerns | ● Hygiene Items |
| 4. Fire: | ● Fire-Starter & Fuel |
| 5. Food: | ● Food |
| | ● Cook Pot & Utensils |
| Tools: | ● Cutting & Chopping |
| | ● Digging |
| | ● Cordage |
| | ● Containers |

Some of these things, such as a digging stick, and cordage, are usually fairly easy to get from nature, others are not. But even though some of these things may be easy to make, in some cases what we could bring from civilization would be notably superior. A steel knife is a good example of this. If we can find the right kind of rock, it *is* fairly easy to make a stone knife, but for most cutting jobs a steel knife would work better and be easier to use. In addition, a good steel knife is relatively inexpensive, easy to carry, and if taken care of, will last indefinitely. In an actual survival situation, it would be one of our most valuable possessions. Our “Most Valuable Possessions” therefore, would be any of the Survival Priority Equipment items which we had brought with us that: ① would be superior to what we could make



from nature, or ② would be difficult to make in the wilderness. We should *definitely* include these items in our survival kits. They have been underlined on the list below.

Survival Priorities Survival Priority Equipment

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Shelter: | ● <u>Clothing & Footwear</u> |
| | ● <u>Bedding</u> |
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| 2. Water: | ● <u>Water Bottle</u> |
| 3. Health Concerns | ● Hygiene Items |
| 4. Fire: | ● <u>Fire-Starter & Fuel</u> |
| 5. Food: | ● Food |
| | ● <u>Cook Pot & Utensils</u> |
| Tools: | ● <u>Cutting & Chopping</u> |
| | ● Digging |
| | ● Cordage |
| | ● Containers — <u>Pack</u> |

There is one more group in this list that is also worth noting. These are things that get used up as we use them. In a survival situation that lasts indefinitely, no matter how much we may have in our survival kit, eventually everything we brought would get used up. For example: after we drink all our water, it's gone; we can't really re-use toilet paper; when starting our fire, the tinder and kindling get burned up, and the fuel-wood burns as we keep the fire going; and after we eat the food we have, it's gone. In each case, even though we may have an initial supply of these items in our survival kit, we will need to get more. Therefore, we should be sure to learn how to replenish, from nature, our supplies of: water, hygiene items, fire-starting materials, fuel-wood, and food.

Which equipment items to put together in a survival kit, is a whole topic in itself; and this issue is already long enough. So we will close with a few notes on the Survival Priority Equipment, Survival Kits, and equipment items in general.

- Your clothing and footwear may pretty much be limited to what you are wearing, so be sure to choose wisely!
- As noted earlier, cordage is one of the easier items to get from nature. But it is also easy to carry some in your survival kit, which will save you a lot of time. In fact, just a few of these items can save you *days* in a survival situation!
- But, don't get carried away adding items in your survival kit. If you are not careful it will get big and heavy really fast. Remember from the conclusions of the previous issue that "flee" means move fast and travel light. Your kit should be light weight and compact enough that you will be willing to carry it on an afternoon hike where you are *not* planning to spend the night.
- Studying survival "messes" with your values—in a good way. For example, usually a tinned can would just be trash. But in a survival situation, it would be one of your "Most Valuable Possessions." Having one would save the time of making a wooden bowl, and it would be *a lot* easier to cook in—especially if a couple holes had been poked in the upper edge and a wire "bail" attached to it. It would be relatively easy to carry as it

doesn't weigh much, and other items could be placed inside it, which would minimize its bulk.

- There is a certain amount of trade-off between skills and equipment. For example, although a person who *has* the skill to make fire with a fire-drill may carry some type of fire-starter, it is not as important for him to bring one along as it is for someone who *does not* have that skill.
- Because the Survival Priority Equipment is what people everywhere need to survive, and because your home *is* your "survival system," you probably already have all these items around the house —although they may not be the best for wilderness use. For example, you have your clothing and bedding, a shower curtain *could* be used as a shelter tarp, you probably already have *some* type of water bottle, fire-starter, cook pot, knives, cordage, bags (if nothing else use your pillowcases), and you have food and hygiene items. Until you can get items better suited for wilderness use, it might be a good idea to make a list of what to quickly pick up in a "grab and go" situation.
- Don't just put a kit together and feel secure. Regularly go hiking with it. By taking it along you will have the equipment to "play" with things you find along the way and thus develop your skills. Let the goal of your outing be to interact with nature and practice your skills, not just to get to some destination and back.
- Sabbath is "prime time" to get into nature. "The Sabbath bids us behold in His created works the glory of the Creator. And it was because He desired us to do this that Jesus bound up His precious lessons with the beauty of natural things. On the holy rest day, above all other days, we should study the messages that God has written for us in nature." *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 25-26.
- The chief message in nature is God's love for us. "Nature and revelation alike testify of God's love. Our Father in heaven is the source of life, of wisdom, and of joy. Look at the wonderful and beautiful things of nature. Think of their marvelous adaptation to the needs and happiness, not only of man, but of all living creatures." *Steps to Christ*, page 9. Notice that we are not just pointed to the wonder and beauty of nature as evidence of God's love. We are also told to consider how the things of nature meet our needs. Practicing wilderness survival *can* be a very spiritual experience, because through it the Father can show us His love in a practical way.
- Seize the opportunities God gives you to prepare. "God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them. The openings of Providence must be quickly discerned and eagerly seized upon." *Testimonies for the Church Vol. 5*, page 321.
- You can learn a lot at home, and in your own backyard. Remember: If you can't make it work in your own backyard on a sunny afternoon, you won't be able to get it to work up on the side of a mountain, in the dark, when it is raining!
- However small it might be, do *something* each day to be more prepared.

"A prudent person foresees danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes blindly on and suffers the consequences." Proverbs 22:3.