

Thorns in the Desert - Part 1
Joseph Herrin (04-23-09)



The Father continues to bless me with great fellowship among the saints as I travel across the nation. For the past couple days I have been staying with Randy and Kathy Furman in the desert outside of Kingman, Arizona. Randy and Kathy are true Christian pioneers. They have been following the leading of the Spirit for many years and were led to purchase 40 acres of desert land where they have been building their own home stick by stick. They have chickens, turkeys, peacocks, and gardens. Their water is trucked in as they do not have a well, so conservation is a necessity.

Things that are taken for granted by a majority of Americans are precious in the desert. This fact is itself a great parable. Yahweh took a nation out of Egypt many years ago to teach them to value what is truly important. A people who fed on flesh and knew the abundance of the Nile River's waters learned to appreciate the Bread of heaven and the water from the rock.

I Corinthians 10:3-4

All ate the same spiritual food; and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ.

Yahweh has led a forerunning group of saints into wilderness places in order to produce in them that which is precious. These ones will in turn serve as guides and ministers to a larger remnant who must shortly embark upon the same journey. The purpose of the wilderness is declared by Yahweh in the following Scripture.

Deuteronomy 8:2-3

And you shall remember that Yahweh your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds

from the mouth of Yahweh.

I have been greatly blessed to take walks across the land around the Furman's home. As I have, the Spirit has been speaking to me parables of the desert. I have noted that nothing grows very tall in the desert. This is due to the scarcity of water. Yahweh said that He let the Israelites know thirst that He might humble them. A lack of water humbles even the plants of the desert.

The word *humble* comes from the same root as the word *humus*. Humus is soil, and the word humble speaks of that which is lowly, that which is close to the ground. A person is at times referred to as "down to earth," indicating that he/she is not proud or extravagant, but they are humble and manifesting good sense. Humility truly is good sense in God's eyes.

James 4:6

Therefore it says, "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

Below is a picture of a Juniper tree. I placed Kathy's walking stick next to it to demonstrate the scale.



A tree of 15 feet height would be considered tall in such an arid land. You will not find the proud and stately sequoia in the desert. They require far too much water and a cooler climate. The desert produces that which is humble, and it is for this reason that Yahweh will lead His remnant through a wilderness experience in coming days. He must have humble sons and daughters, for this is the character of His dear Son.

Isaiah 53:2-3

For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, and *like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him.* He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

Christ is compared to a plant growing out of parched soil. Such plants are not stately in form, nor are they majestic. They are humble, and so too was the Son of God.

Will not the Father use the same experiences to shape all those sons and daughters who are destined to be conformed to the image of Christ? Will He not let them know desert times when their flesh is not satisfied, and the appetites are not fulfilled? He will teach His remnant to be content to live only for His will and pleasure, finding their satisfaction in doing the will of the Father.

I have had the pleasure of meeting with a number of saints whom I know have been learning the contentment of little. These are not the stately, impressive men and women that the church parades across their stages, full of the success and possessions of the world. They have no outward appearance that men should desire them. Yet in the eyes of God they are exceedingly precious.

An hour is at hand when God will raise up a body of humble sons and daughters. They will be exceedingly precious in His sight, though scorned by the world and a worldly church. They will be trained in the same way that God trained the Israelites many years ago. Yahweh will lead them to depart from Egypt which serves as a symbol of the world. They will be directed to put aside an appetite for fleshly things and to feed on that which comes from heaven.

Many will find the adjustment hard. Some will cry out for flesh to eat, remembering the things that they once had in days of abundance when they lived in the world and were not walking as aliens and strangers as God intended. Most Christians have been in the world and embracing all its values, but God in His mercy will lead a remnant out that they might embrace His values. He greatly esteems humility and obedience.

I pray that those who read this blog might heed the call of God. When the Spirit woos you to lay aside all attachment to this world, may you find the courage and desire to obey. Many will refuse to come out of Egypt. They will find the path God chooses to be too lowly and will despise it even as the world viewed Christ and His life in the same way.

The Son of God had no castle. He had no glorious home or great possessions. He walked as a vagrant and a pilgrim across the land. He sought only to do the will of the Father. So too must all seek the same goal if they are to be numbered among the overcomers on that day.

Thorns in the Desert - Part 2
Joseph Herrin (04-24-09)



Pin Cushion Cacti

The Father has been speaking much concerning the days ahead and what they hold for the saints of God. There is a wilderness experience appointed to Yahweh's people. Yahweh has for varying periods of time been leading a forerunning people through a wilderness to humble them and teach them His ways as His character is formed in them. These must now go through a second wilderness experience in order to lead forth a called out remnant through similar experiences where their flesh is reduced in order that the life of Christ might come forth within them.

The Spirit of Christ has been testifying that what is to occur is after the pattern of Moses who led the Israelites through the wilderness. Moses first spent forty years in the wilderness to be humbled. At the end of this period Yahweh appeared to Moses at the burning bush and commissioned him to lead forth the people of God through a similar forty year period.

Much can be discerned from the account of this event. What was recorded was written for the benefit of the saint today.

I Corinthians 10:11

Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

One thing that comes forth clearly in the account of Israel's departure from Egypt to journey in the wilderness is that although the people were suddenly taken from Egypt, Egypt was still in their hearts. Egypt is symbolic of the world. Egypt was a land that appealed to the flesh. There was abundant water and food and a very sensual society. There was much that appealed to the flesh of man, and we see that when the Israelites were faced with the alternative of a wilderness experience that they often considered that it would be better to return to Egypt and submit to being enslaved once more.

Nehemiah 9:16-17

"But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly; They became stubborn and would not listen to Your commandments. And they refused to listen, and did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt."

Time and again we read of Moses contending with a stubborn people whose fleshly appetites led them to be very surly and often rebellious. It took forty years to reduce this carnal people to the place where they were willing to obey Yahweh without grumbling or complaint. Although the generation of God's people above the age of 20 all died in the wilderness (except Joshua and Caleb), all those 20 and below were shaped and transformed by the experiences of the wilderness and were prepared to enter into their inheritance.

Similarly, it will be those who are more childlike who will pass through the wilderness ahead successfully, while those who are proud, willful and set in their ways will find that they will either die in the wilderness or return to world, forsaking the God who called them.

Those who enter into the wilderness will find that there are many thorny things growing there. Many of the people of God will manifest great fleshliness and will give into complaint, murmuring and even angry and hostile words and actions at times. This will necessitate that the mature among them exercise much humility and patience, understanding that God was very patient with them and they should manifest the same grace toward others.

Although Moses was declared by God to be the humblest man upon the face of the earth, we often read of him "waxing hot" in his anger as he encountered the stony hearts of the people of God. There is a further refining that God's pioneers must experience as they go through the wilderness a second time. They will learn to bear the burden of Yahweh who contends daily with a stubborn and rebellious people who are slow to learn His ways and to submit to His will. This will lead to a deeper understanding of the heart of the Father, and this Father's heart will be formed in them.

The way will certainly be thorny, for the plants of the desert symbolize those people who grow in wilderness places. One must be careful in all their dealings with life in the wilderness.



Beaver Tail Cactus



Shin Daggers



Prickly Pear Cactus

When one has a close encounter with the thorny things that grow in the desert, it is advisable to not respond with haste. To respond too quickly to some barb will result in injury and further entanglement. One should instead slow down, carefully consider the matter, and then take calm and measured steps to avoid unnecessary pain and suffering. A soft answer turns away wrath, and a man of humility and peace will be gentle when another desert dweller manifests personal barbs and seeks to jab at him with words or actions.

When all is said and done, Yahweh will have exposed many stony hearts in the desert. They will be removed from the flesh of man even as rocks arise from the sparse soil of the desert.



Yahweh will then replace the stony hearts with a heart of flesh, and beautiful things will arise in wilderness places.

Ezekiel 36:26-27

“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

Those pioneers and explorers who have gone before their brothers into a wilderness experience should anticipate that they will have to deal with many people in coming days who have not yet been refined by the wilderness. The wilderness will humble many, but until humility comes there will be an abundance of thorns in the wilderness. Let us ask Yahweh for His grace that we might manifest the fruit of His own humble and patient character.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days.

Note: All pictures were taken on Randy and Kathy’s Furman’s property in Arizona.