

THE PATHFINDER

#296.18

WHO SHALL ASCEND UPON the MOUNTAIN of DESOLATION?



"Now Moses...led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to **the mountain of God**, even to ***Horeb**, And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was." **Exodus 3:1, 20:21.**

***Horeb:** Hebrew: "cho^hre^hb, *desolate*, or *to make desolate*."

He was called out of Egypt to a place that was very abrasive. Everything about it was like a huge grain of Sinai's sand, yet out of that grinding irritation was formed a beautiful desert pearl.

It was not an easy thing for him to leave the luxury of Pharaoh's palace to live in desolation for forty years, yet it was necessary to build and polish him for that to which he was called. I am reminded of a vision and song a dear friend of ours had that spoke of such polishing:

The Pink Stone



One day a small pink stone sang to me.
He said, what you see is not what I shall be.
I met the Savior long ago.
And He has changed me, don't you know.

For I've been washed in the soft sands of time.
I've been cut, I've been polished, and I've been shined.
Yes, I've been washed in the soft sands of time.
I was once as black as I could be.
Adam's sins were passed on down to me.
I was rough and I was stained, Yet I longed to be set free.
We're His sons in the making, You and Me.
For I've been washed in the soft sands of time.
I've been cut, I've been polished, and I've been shined.
Yes, I've been washed in the soft sands of time.

We've been cut from the mountain, you and me.
And someday, God will set creation free.
I'm not yet what I was meant to be.
For in the end, I'll be pure white, don't you see.
For I've been washed in the soft sands of time.
I've been cut, I've been polished, and I've been shined.
Yes, I've been washed in the soft sands of time.

— Daryl Bates Chesser

This unique man was God's precious stone wash and polished in Sinai's sands of time. He was God's elect, chosen and reserved for a purpose, and likewise with all those who find themselves exiled to the searing desert of the same sands of time.

As it was with Moses, God's called ones are shut in, sealed, and reserved on the backside of the desert. They are acquisitions of high value, and He is making them around Himself, arraying Himself with the priceless jewels of His Kingdom.

This marvelous work of weaving us around His person is taking place in *His dark pavilions*. While the natural man will avoid such processings whenever possible, God's chosen draws near. We read of such an account in Exodus: "And the **people stood afar off**, and **Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.**" ***Exodus 20:21***.

Many may draw back from such a foreboding presence, but it is not strange that the elect are attracted to it. There is something deep within that compels them to advance. At the portals when the white-heat of the furnace of affliction is felt upon their cheeks, as with a moth drawn to the flame, they move ever closer into the devouring flames.

As terrible as it may be — in this chamber of fire — is where mysteries unfold and are spun into living gold. It is here that the Weaver's shuttle is ever pounding, compacting, and joining together His flaming threads, making, as it were, a coat of many colors. In this pavilion of darkness, we come to know what it

is to be a part of the woven Body by which Christ clothes Himself.

He spins our frames out of the same heavenly substance from what He is, the fire of His Father and our Father. From flaming threads He weaves His celestial robe.

At this very moment, He is *shaping us around Himself*. It is one thing to be *clothed upon by Him*; but another for Him to be *clothed upon by us*. Indeed, we are the fine cloth, the cloud, that covers Him by day and the fire by night. His person may be hidden; but His presence is seen in this many-membered body.

Although reserved for a time in God's celestial archives — *His treasure, His Peculiar ones*, if you please, *His Sons*, will not be hidden forever. For *such a time as this* they are called to be removed from the back burner. It is at such a time as this that they will come forth in the good works for which they were called and chosen.

Joshua and the younger generation were led out of the desert when the time came, and so will these *refined ones*. It is their *destiny*. Until the day of their appearing, they abide in the fearful *Mountain of God, Horeb*, where He is making His coat of flaming splendor, the bush that burned but was not consumed.

"Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock **to the backside of the desert**, and came to **the mountain of God, even to Horeb**. And **the angel of the LORD appeared** unto him **in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush**: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, **I will now turn aside**, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And **when the LORD saw that he turned aside** to see, **God called unto him out of the midst of the bush**, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. And He said, Draw not nigh hither: **put off thy shoes** from off thy feet, for **the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.**" *Exodus 3:1-5*.

God has called to us from the bush of His flaming body of saints. We have heard its blazing voice in sermons, exhortations, and prophecies, and His burning bush was never consumed!

Dear friends, do we know who that burning bush of many leaves might represent? Since God speaks from it, and the apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:14 the body is made of many members — it is you and me, and the rest of His ministers that are flames of fire!

What a wonderful thought! The idea of coming to *the Mountain of God* has stood in the forefront of our dreams. From atop its lofty peaks we see ourselves reigning with the King of kings. Such majesty, such glory, such splendor, and unrestrained power, the envy of any sound-thinking creature. Yet there seems to be something amiss in this verse.

Mount Horeb? The Mountain of God? Surely not! We thought there was only one mountain deserving of that classification — *Mount Zion* and possibly two counting *Mount Hermon*. We had not taken Mount Horeb into account since it is located in the south-central region of the Sinai desert. Nevertheless, it is called *the Mountain of God*, and whether we have known it by name or not — most of us have scaled its rocky slopes.

Horeb is a mountain one would have never imagined containing *holy ground*. It yields little pleasure

to the natural man. The name even says the same, meaning *desolate*, or *to make desolate*. Its location also suggests anything other than goodness. It is a hostile mountain on the back side of nowhere in the southern extremities of the Sinai desert.

If we were to name *a Mountain of God*, it would not be called *Desolate*. We would select something more like *Abundance*, *Plentiful*, *Overflowing*, *Rich*, *Fertile*, and then place it in a more beautiful, hospitable, and accessible region of the earth. But *Desolation*? That sounds strange when we consider the priceless treasures to be had in *anything that pertains to God and His kingdom*.

Those called to *sonship* know the benefits of the cross in their lives; yet it seems that some may not grasp its full impact and potential. I believe, however, we will see much of it in *God's Desolate Mountain* called *Horeb*.

When hardships come which are designed to bring desolation to our own natural way of thinking and doing things, we generally rivet our attention to the dire circumstances rather than the glory of the burning bush that God planted. While we are being made desolate, God's glory begins to break forth. Fire is kindled upon us, and we endure without being consumed.

Desolation may flood our souls while fire appears on all sides, let us be sure to know that all is well. That which we are in Him will not be destroyed. We will remain, and it is from there that He not only reveals Himself but also speaks.

If Moses had been so caught up by the desolation of that mountain, if his focus had been on how terrible things were — he would have neither turned aside to see why the bush was not consumed, nor would he have heard the voice of the Lord that came from the midst of it.

The dilemma with many today is that they have difficulty in taking their eyes off their problems long enough to see the glory at hand. They know they are up against a mountain; but they don't realize it is *the Mountain of God*. If they should turn aside and venture toward the fire in its midst, they will no longer fail to recognize that *the place in which they stand is holy ground*. When they turn toward the light of revelation, their *desolation* will not be viewed as an obstacle to be avoided, nor will they curse it or think it is the work of the devil. But rather, they will see it as something lifting them into the heavens, raised up by God for their good.

We all must know that the glory we seek is found in the very place we try to avoid. The voice for which we long often comes from there. Our carnal reasoning may object. Our instinct is to run, yet let us turn our focus aside to see Him and hear His assuring voice.

Those desolate places are by no means pleasant, but let us not be overwhelmed by them. Let us turn, ascend, and see what awaits us. Paul and Silas left us worthy testimonies.

They were in prison, a most dreadful and desolate place. However, as it was with Moses, they *saw beyond that desolation*. They turned aside to see the burning bush. They were praying and singing praises unto God!

Their focus was not on the natural circumstances of their imprisonment, but on *the fire of God within those circumstances*. It was after they had turned aside from their midnight hour and looked beyond the veil of human suffering that the prison's foundation heaved and broke apart.

Paul and Silas were most likely an aggravation to the other prisoners. Imagine, during such a desolate and hopeless situation for everyone there, these two were praying and singing and shouting hallelujahs until midnight — no one could sleep.

At the darkest hour when everyone else could only see the awfulness of everything, these two crazies compounded everyone's problems; but they were looking to something wonderful in it all. They peered deep into the unseen realm, and when their Spirit-filled voices penetrated every soul, ***ALL the prison doors were opened!***

When Paul and Silas' voices were heard rising in praise, the earth shook. There was ***A GREAT EARTHQUAKE***, and they were all made free, even the jailer! Complaining about the *unfair* things that had befallen them would not loosen their chains — it was looking beyond those temporal conditions and praising God that did it.

Although the severe shakings would appear to be destroying people's lives, they work quite the opposite. They open the way into the Holy of holies. The old man will lose his life, this we know; but the new man will be raised up and renewed day by day.

Not one soul of these will be lost as the veil is removed from their eyes. Furthermore, before it is over, not even the prison keeper will be lost. There is a time when the gate keepers of religious orders will also be freed from their place of darkness and evil communications.

The ecclesiastical leaders of all the churches will cry out for mercy and be saved. Self-serving men of worldly governments will likewise seek and find salvation. The hard-pressing bosses in the work places will be released from corruption as they come to the knowledge of the truth. The intolerant husbands, wives, and children who subvert and hold captive those around them by their selfish powers will be saved. All will have their foundations shaken. Their evil chains will be broken, veils rent, and they will come to know the freedom of Christ's life and His infinite love.

Let us again hear from one of our friends who knew from experience the glory that is birthed from the midnight hour. He also spoke of Paul and Silas:

"There is an ongoing, unfolding revelation given to those who look into the unseen. While multitudes are taken up with the temporary shadows, there are those who look beyond the darkness, beyond the afflictions, and see the Light that shines ever more. They look beyond the chains that bind. They see Christ's liberty and are joined to it.

"It was at midnight that Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises, until even the prisoners heard them. Suddenly there was an earthquake, and every man's bands were loosed. Paul and Silas were not looking at the bondage of the prison — they were looking into the unseen, to behold the liberty of the spirit, and it became their reality. It would have been easy to focus in on the stripes laid on their backs, and they

could have counted their bruises from the beatings endured. They could have taken note of how dark it was at midnight. But they were not looking at the things seen, but into the realm of the unseen, and thus were made partakers of its victory.

"Thank God, the inward man is renewed day by day. The trials, the afflictions, the pressures of life can so fill our consciousness that we cannot see beyond the temporal. But all the negatives, distressing as they might be, are **WORKING FOR US** while we are looking at the unseen. Simultaneously, while the testing is in progress, it is **WORKING FOR US** positive things.

"Loss is temporary — and when we look beyond the loss, and behold in Christ that all is gain, we cannot mourn the passing of the temporal for the joy that is set before us in the age-abiding. Let us march to the drummer beat of **LOOKING AT THE UNSEEN**, for there are victories that await us beyond all that we can ask or think. Yes, *'I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my Salvation: my God will hear me.'* (Micah 7:7). Praise God!" — Ray Prinzing, *Letters of Truth*, No. 285).

Although "*looking to the Lord*" is something we all say is a good thing to do during times of need, it is often difficult for some to put into practice. A person can become overwhelmed by the problems and cares of the day — everyday. And it seems an impossibility to take their eyes off the circumstances long enough to see anything of God. Jesus can be sitting in their very midst, and rather than being their strength in time of need, He is a burden to them. They are often much like a child who is always distraught and disturbed over the slightest discomfort and : "*Why, why, and again, why would God allow this when He could prevent it or fix it?*" The truth is, in many cases — it is not broken and doesn't need fixing.

People who are snared by this defeated mind-set remind me of something our dear brother, Ray Prinzing, who also wrote along these lines. Again we quote from his seasoned insight:

"Martha had a sister, Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word. 'But Martha was **cumbered** about much serving...' Cumbered — the Greek word is 'perispao' meaning: to drag all around, to distract with care. She was so loaded down with emotions and attitudes and feelings which needed to be dealt with and set in proper order while dragging those feelings and attitudes into every relationship. **Martha COMPLAINED and WHINED even to Him whom she had received into her house.**

"So Jesus answered her, '**Martha, thou art CAREFUL and troubled about many things.**' Anxious about her serving, distracted by the multiplicity of things to get done — things pulling in all directions, things that clamor for attention. She wanted to do it all just right, and cried for 'help' from Mary, so it could all be done according to Martha's own schedule and standard. Martha also was '**TROUBLED**' with these things. Greek, 'turbazo' meaning: to be in a tumult. Comes from the root word for a 'crowd,' and speaks of being agitated or disturbed in mind. Thus it blends in with the already given 'TAKE THOUGHT.' What distresses we endure when our minds are filled with a TUMULT OF THOUGHT. So many voices to be heard, and once you give heed to them they rush on and on like a broken record, over and over again, until it wearies you, and you would like to just be able to push a TURN OFF button, and silence the noise.

"Then Jesus said one more thing to Martha, 'One thing is needful: and Mary had chosen that good part...' What was that one thing? TO GIVE ATTENTION TO THE WORD WHICH HE WAS SPEAKING. (*Mary had turned aside to see the burning bush, and heard what He had to say*). Yes, 'He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches (*called out*).' (Rev. 3:3). HE is speaking that which

would calm every troubled heart. It is a word which sets us free — free from being FULL OF CARE, free from worry.

"In His parable of 'The sower and the seed,' Jesus said that some of the seed fell 'among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.' Then He went on to explain that the ones sown among thorns are those who hear the Word, 'Then the CARES AND ANXIETIES of the world, and distractions of the age...' (Mark 4:19, Amp.) 'creep in and choke and suffocate the Word, and it becomes fruitless.'

"There is so much negativity around us these days. Every news cast, every paper, even religious magazines, all stress the doom and despair of the times. Their outlook, being conceived by the carnal mind, does not radiate hope and cheer. Yet Jesus said, 'BE OF GOOD CHEER,' because He has already overcome the world. If there are wars and rumors of wars, they are still under His control. The fact is, 'The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will, setteth up over it the basest of men.' (Daniel 4:17). Certainly He rules in His kingdom.'

"How we need to ever be on guard, lest we allow our minds, emotions, etc. to become distracted with the turmoil of this world, for its CARES, pressures, evil, etc. will choke the life of the new order which He would bring to fruition within us. We are making a transition into a new age. Current upheavals in every fragment of society speak of the death-throes of one order, and the birth-pangs of the new that shall emerge in due time, *and please know that we are called for a time such as this*. This is a travail that has become worldwide. Praise God, when HIS DIVINE ORDER has been established in us, and all the distractions are removed, we shall find that we have received both the King and His kingdom within — and we will enter **a new realm of life and victory**. Only God can take us from the state of being 'full of care' to where we are anxious over nothing..." (*Ray Prinzing, Letters of Truth, No. 276*).

As for that **new realm of life and victory**, permit me to share one of three experiences I had awhile back:

While in bed one morning with my eyes closed, and after awaking from a good night's sleep, I was awed by what I had slipped into. It was clear that although I was still in bed and awake, I was also in a vista of trees, grass, flowers, mountains, and streams; yet all this was outside our bedroom where these things had never existed. It was amazing that distance was not a factor during this time. The blades of grass, petals of flowers, and pebbles upon the mountain slopes and meadows 50 miles away could be seen as clearly as those in my immediate presence. Everything was perceived in such a brilliant, bright array of colors and with infinite detail. I was one with it all and had never known such peace. This was not a dream, since I was fully awake, and neither was it a vision. It was a dimension of reality I had never known.

After several minutes of flowing in this sublime bliss, a thought invaded my mind, and I wondered: "*How long can I remain in this state of being?*" This was my undoing; for it was like a light switch had been turned off, and I was back to what I had formerly thought was *the real world*. Everything was dull, drab, boring, and lifeless in comparison. I could still vaguely picture in my mind what I had seen and experienced, at least enough to write these few words about it; but there was no way visualize it clearly or get it back.

For the first time, I realized what a lowered state in which we exist, and how impossible it is to form

an accurate image in our minds close to the realm of life that is already in each of us that is awaiting the hour to be released. What I had experienced came from within. It had been there for how long, I do not know; but it was and is still there. It is in each of His called and chosen, and it is in this, that we will in due season move and have our being totally in Him while our feet are still on earth.

This is only a small portion of what is in store for the firstfruits, so let us not be impatient while we heed what Jesus said about the evil that will precede it:

"Take therefore no **thought** for the morrow: for the morrow shall take **thought** for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." **Matthew 6:34** (KJV). And "...Do not **worry** about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring **worries** of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today." **Matthew 6:34**, (NRSV).

Those lacking understanding can be distracted by the desolation of the moment and fail to see *the Glory*. Hopelessness will pervade as they stumble onward.

The *meek*, however, will not lose hope; for they know their Lord Jesus. They know His patience, His mighty working power, and saving grace in the midst of the most seemingly futile situations. He does not cast aside these dear ones whose focus is on Him rather than the outward desolation that *Mount Horeb* presents.

With anxious anticipation they await the hour when their distress is turned into laughter and *they lift their voices and sing about the majesty of the LORD*. **Isaiah 24:14**. We look to the day when *Martha's cry* will no longer be of sorrow and lamenting, but will be of *joy, of rejoicing, of victory, of freedom*. Moreover, such triumph comes upon seeing the glory of the Lord in the fire rather than the desolation that *God's Mountain* brings upon the carnal soul.

Not only they, but we too, and all who have known the *barren* and *desolate* places of Sinai, will hear the reverberating call: "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the **desolate** than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD." **Isaiah 54:1**.

In the midst of *stunned, numbing, devastation*, the word **desolate** in the above verse speaks that there is cause to rejoice. The promise is clear. The once barren Kingdom will birth untold numbers of children into it. Upon the rocky slopes where the hollow pain had engulfed our souls, the face of God is seen! His vibrant, life-giving voice is heard! **Praise Him for HIS HOLY MOUNTAIN — that MOUNTAIN of DESOLATION, that MOUNTAIN Called HOREB! For such a time as this are the called, prepared, chosen, and sent according to His purpose. They are His SONS, HIS PECULIAR PEOPLE that HE WILL DISPLAY to the GROANING CREATION!**

Do you sense it? Do you hear it? Do you see it? I thought so!

Elwin R. Roach

The Pathfinder • PO Box 4004 • Alamogordo NM 88311-4004