

Trials of Correction

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Going to the Desert

It has been said that spiritually there is a major difference between the Northern and Southern parts of Israel. The suggested difference is that in the north, where the climate allowed a much greater amount of crops, vegetation, and comfort was where most of the physical and problematic events occurred. This would then be compared to the south and the more dry and barren landscape where most of the spiritual events occurred. I am not sure if this holds up to be true in every instance in Scripture, but for many that I can recall in my mind it does seem like the Almighty works with people and what is happening in their hearts and minds when they are in the wilderness or desert.

This has been true of our journey. We have been on the road for almost two years and we have gone to the desert, quite literally, a few times now. Each time our Heavenly Father has been correcting us on issues that needed to be dealt with.

Flat Tires in Death Valley

Probably the most memorable time is when we went to Death Valley National Park in California. We were there in the winter time so the temperatures were cooler. This is a remote area with rugged and sometimes dangerous roads to travel. At the start of our journey, the Almighty made it possible for us to have a Ford Explorer and a pop-up camper for our use. When we received them we did not know just how well suited these were for our needs in traveling. However ... we had grown too comfortable with them. We did not realize just how much we were depending on the vehicles for our care rather than seeking the One Most High. I think we even commented that we would not be able to go to some of the places we were traveling if it were not for having that type of car. That is wrong ... if the Almighty wants us someplace He can make it possible and it does not depend upon the vehicle we have. It was a form of idolatry though I did not realize it at the time.

One day we were led to travel through Titus Pass which is, at times, a narrow winding dirt road going through the mountains that parallel death valley. There was one point in particular that was narrow, steep, and slippery and which put my driving skills and the vehicles 4-wheel drive to the test. At one point, I just stopped the vehicle and we prayed for safety. This was our warning. At the moment we recognized where our true help comes from but it was not enough to change what had become a mindset about the vehicle.

The next day we were led to go to the interior of Death Valley down to the playa. This is a far away place where relatively few go to. While there, we had a tire get low. I tried adding air to it and driving, but it was leaking too fast. I had to put our spare on. This was unexpected because we had 60,000 mile class E tires with only 20,000 miles on them. We continued on our way and were going to go back to our campground. Just before leaving the border of Death Valley National Park, another tire blew out. We were about 40 miles from the nearest town. We finally started realizing how unusual this was and wondered if we were doing something wrong. We then realized we had been depending on the car rather than the

One Most High. We repented.

We were able to get a cell phone signal by climbing just a little ways up from the road using the 911 system. Over the weeks prior to this, we had received some extra money ... Father prepared us for this event as it just covered the towing, a hotel, and two new tires for the car. It was a rough experience, but I am glad He is training us to stay close to Him.

A Fallen Canopy in Arizona

Sometimes people look back at the generation of Israelites that wandered through the wilderness and wonder why they doubted so much. They had witnessed the plagues of Egypt and yet they forgot how the Almighty cared for them. They would complain, be fearful, or think they somehow knew what was better than the One Most High. I sympathize with them because I have seen how quickly I can follow that same pattern.

Several months after Death Valley, we were below the White Tank Mountains outside of Phoenix, Arizona. It was still early summer and the temperatures were over 100 degrees much of the day. We were just beginning a series of tent camping and purchased a canopy to use over the picnic table for protection. It was somewhat comfortable in the shade. Within a few days I made the comment that I did not know how we could be in that location if we did not have that canopy. Oops ... there was depending on our equipment again. Immediately a strong wind came up. I grew up in Ohio and have a good feel for what a 25 mph wind feels like. I have experienced gusts up to about 50 mph. This seemed stronger. As I reached around me to hold down the items flying off the picnic table the canopy frame buckled, bent, and came down. This time I recognized immediately what I had just said and we repented quickly.

Over the following months I have been more careful not to rely on our equipment. Perhaps these were needed lessons because the Almighty's provision has come in different ways during this time. Yet it has always been there. HalleluYah!