



Come and See!

Week of June 7, 2026

The Word...

Moses said to the people:

"Remember how for forty years now the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert, so as to test you by affliction and find out whether or not it was your intention to keep his commandments. He therefore let you be afflicted with hunger, and then fed you with manna, a food unknown to you and your fathers, in order to show you that not by bread alone does one live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the LORD"
(Dt 8:2-3, 14b-16a).

Pondering the Word ...

"Remember how for forty years the LORD, your God, has directed all your journeying in the desert." I can't help but imagine there were those in the crowd thinking to themselves, "God has been *directing* us all this time? As we have almost starved and died of thirst and been bitten by snakes and scorpions and stumbled and wandered around for years in circles!? Really? I think God's Positioning System needs a major GPS update!"

I also wonder about Moses' explanation that all the suffering the people encountered was God testing to see whether they would be faithful. Don't you think God would know that ahead of time?

Here are two ways to consider this: "*The verb, 'to afflict' ('inah') [in this context] means 'to try.'* It is also the verb used for what God does to Abraham in the story of the Binding of Isaac. In both cases, either this is a God lacking the absolute foreknowledge ascribed to the deity by later theology, or the trial is essentially a means for man to show his mettle" (Robert Alter, *The Hebrew Bible, The Five Books of Moses*, p. 647, adapted). Or "*Theologies of God testing humans are common today. YHWH here, however, is not the prosecutor, but a parent who trains the Hebrews in the desert so that they can meet the challenges of surviving in a new land. [It is also about gratitude.] A lifestyle of gratitude does not plead for blessings wanted, but acknowledges blessings received.... Sin is to forget—to become arrogant and self-reliant*" (Don C. Benjamin, Ph.D., *The Jerome Biblical Commentary for the Twenty-First Century, Deuteronomy*, p.344, adapted and abridged).

Living the Word...

Do you wonder if God is really directing all your journeying? Or, if God sends suffering our way to teach us or "test our mettle?" There are a host of different theologies and views of the Divine's role in our lives—a subject for treatises and dissertations and those more scholarly than me. And frankly, no one knows or will know anyway. God's role in our lives is a mystery. But, as I write this on a glorious late spring day, even in the face of some daunting things on the horizon, * the emotion of gratitude rings loud and true. Let's always remember the familiar words of Meister Eckhart: "*If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.*" Use today to give thanks for all the blessings you have been given on your journey—even those wrapped in packages that were difficult to open!

Personal Reflections and Ideas ...

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*In a few weeks, I will be having major surgery that requires me to take a hiatus from writing—the first time since I began in 2009! I don't know how long my recovery will be, but I may try to resurrect some things from years' past. I humbly ask for your prayers.

Mon, Jun 8: *"The LORD will guard your coming and your going, both now and forever"* (Ps 121). The Spirit is gifting me with humor this week. I recall a joke from my youth: After returning from a church service that featured a sermon on the passage, 'We are made from dust and unto dust, we will return,' a young boy comes racing down the stairs from his room. He breathlessly exclaims to his parents, "Well I don't know but I just looked under my bed and someone's either comin' or goin'!" 😊. **Provision: We are made from love and unto love we will return.** Take deeply to your heart the words, "The Lord will guard you, now and forever." Be at peace.

Tue, Jun 9: *"You are the light of the world... Just so, your light must shine before others"* (Mt 5:13-16). Not everyone's light shines in the same way. Some are bright and held high for all to see. Others are targeted, like a flashlight, leading others through the dark. Still others are subtle, a flickering candle providing serenity and peace. But it's the first phrase that's most important: *"You are the light of the world."* Each one of us is called to be light. **Provision: What kind of light are you called to be?** If we are called as a bright light, let's make sure we don't turn into a blinding one, obscuring what others need to see (read: it is not about us). And let's remember the most important thing about being a light is the energy source. Batteries that are spent, flames that are low on fuel... these are not of much use. Make sure you are always plugged into the Light of the World.

Wed, Jun 10: *"They multiply their sorrows who court other gods"* (Ps 16). *No one answered, and no one was listening* (1 Kgs 18:20-39). **Provision: What "other gods" do you court?** We all have 'em. Money, prestige, fame; the latest fashion trend, physical beauty; busyness, our kids' achievements. The psalm doesn't say we worship other gods, but we court them, nonetheless. They will never be able to answer our needs. They cannot listen to the deep desires of our souls. Do these other gods add to your sorrows? Let God lead you on the path to life.

Thu, Jun 11: *There were in the Church prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Symeon, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who was a close friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul* (Acts 11:21-26, 13:1-3). Manaen (or Manahen, whose name means "consoler") is thought to have been a foster brother of Herod the tetrarch: Herod Antipas who murdered John the Baptist and was complicit in Jesus' crucifixion. They played and grew up together. They likely studied scripture together (even though Herod the Great and his sons were considered "marginal" Jews). Manaen heard something from the prophets that Antipas didn't hear. **Provision: Be a consoler.** Picture the two old friends meeting up again. I imagine most of us have childhood friends or family whose paths have led in an opposing, even antagonistic direction. If Manaen is true to his new-found faith, he does not judge or condemn, even if Antipas still stands firm in his belief. Being a consoler is not just about soothing the spirits of one person who is grieving; it is about being a consoling, peaceful presence in the world. Be a consoler.

Fri, Jun 12: *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves"* (Mt 11:25-30). Many people, me included, find this passage difficult. "Jesus' yoke is easy?! Sure doesn't seem that way to me!" But it leads us back to Wednesday's reflection and the "other gods" we court. Jesus' meekness and humbleness isn't about being a push-over. It's about simplicity and single-mindedness. **Provision: "Will the one thing."** Kierkegaard wrote that the definition of a saint is the one who can will the one thing. But the paradox? We can't "will" surrender. We can, however, pray to be open to the grace of surrender by simplifying, letting go of other gods that complicate our lives. Let's ask for that grace today.

Sat, Jun 13: *Elijah threw his cloak over him. Elisha said, "Please, let me kiss my father and mother goodbye, and I will follow you. Elijah answered, "Go back! Have I done anything to you?"* (1 Kgs 19:19-21). The Spirit ends this week with more humor: I can't help but hear Elijah saying to Elisha, "TAG! You're IT!" (Forgive my irreverence!) Elisha could have answered, "No, I don't want to be 'IT.' I don't want to be running around, trying to chase all these people down to get them to behave. I like my nice life just the way it is." Elijah understands all too well (1Kgs 19:4). He gives Elisha time to let go of all the things that hold him back from his call and his destiny. **Provision: "The desert ammas and abbas... saw that worry, tensions, pride, greed, fear, and a desire for power and fame filled much of the world, and even the church. This led them to embrace a spirit of letting go. It moved them to ask some form of the following question: What am I filled with now that is holding me back?"** (Robert J. Wicks, from *Crossing the Desert*).