

# MEDITATIVES



## Encountering God

Daily reflections from Creation  
Through Image and Words

# Beach

The picture was taken in Cornwall in England. The sun blazed down onto the late Spring evening between two rocks, reflecting on the pools that had remained from the retreating tide. The sun between the rocks reminds us that the Son of God, Jesus, must be central in our lives. His light is bright, warming and full of life.



*Early in the morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus. He called out to them, 'Friends, haven't you any fish?' 'No,' they answered. He said, 'Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.' When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. **John 21.4-6, 8***

The beach was a place of eating, relaxing, training and restoration for the disciples. Life with Jesus is fun, varied and full of light. He asks us to live different but when we hear his voice and obey what he says it always leads to life and to abundance. Where do you need to throw your net? Is Jesus calling you to relax, be restored, to live different?

# Clouds

These were photographed in Gem Lake, Colorado. The unusual cloud formations over mountains are lenticular clouds and can often look like 'UFOs' and remind us that God is big, creative and powerful. Nothing is too hard or impossible for and with God.



*The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze, and your strength will equal your days. There is no one like the God of Jeshurun, who rides across the heavens to help you and on the clouds in his majesty. The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms... **Deut 33.25-27***

We sometimes forget how awesome God is. He created the entire world - every cloud, every living thing and every day. God holds the world in his hand and Jesus sustains all things through his powerful Word. When things seem to be out of control, God is in control. God who rides on the clouds is the one who created each cloud and you very uniquely. In everything, you can sing and know, "Our God is greater, our God is stronger, God you are higher than any other."

# Fog

The day that lockdown was lifted after Covid, I made my way to Dartmoor very early to get out and feel free. As I made my way towards Great Links Tor, the fog rolled in, engulfing the tors and obscuring the landscape. Within minutes, the sun came out and burned off the fog



*We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us! **1 Corinthians 13.12 (MSG)***

There are times in life where a fog seems to hang over our life. We sometimes can't see the path ahead and aren't sure what God is saying or doing, or what is going on. We may face difficulties and trials or just feel tired out. These are times to hold on to God, to his Word and to trust him. God promises that he is a way maker, a promise keeper, a light in the darkness. Trust God. Let his light burn off the fog.



# Heavens

It's estimated there are around 200 billion galaxies in the known universe. In Psalm 147.4 the Bible says that God counts the number of stars and calls each one by name! If God knows the stars and their names, think how much more he knows, cares for and loves you.



*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. **Psalm 19.1-4***

The heavens are like God's painting that points to God as the great heavenly artist. When we see a great painting we know someone painted this. In the same way, when we see the heavens, we can be sure that that God is alive and real. A prayer: Lord when we see the heavens and what you have made we are inspired and in awe of you. Help us to put you in your right place and reflect your glory. Amen.

# Islands

This is Asparagus Island off Kynance Cove in Cornwall. There are over 6000 islands in the UK. You can walk to Asparagus Island at low tide across the beach. As a Christian it's good to have space and time alone with God but also vital to stay connected to other believers



*Let them give glory to the Lord and proclaim his praise  
in the islands. **Isaiah 42.12***

*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up,  
left the house and went to a solitary place where he prayed.*

**Mark 1.35**

Sometimes we need to make ourselves like an island with the tide out. We're not cut off from others permanently, we are taking some time out with God alone. The tide will go out again and re-connect us to others but we all need some 'tidal time' to speak to God and hear what God speaks to us. Jesus took time out to speak to God and hear from him and so do we. As we do this we are refreshed and re-inspired. Do you need to take some 'island time' with God? Do it.

# Lakes

This was an early morning scene over Buttermere in the Lake District. The early morning fog hovered over the still water creating an eerie reflection. Jesus walked on a lake, as did Peter until he took his eyes off Jesus. The Christian life is where we 'walk by faith not by sight'



*Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught Peter. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those in the boat worshipped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." **Matthew 14.31-33***

The life of faith in Jesus isn't about how much 'faith' you can create in yourself but simply trusting in Jesus. We need to know that we have a big God and have faith in who he is. The same powerful God who walked on water and who did miracles, lives on the inside of us through the Holy Spirit. The Christian life is about letting God flow out of us. That is 'walking on the water' faith. "Just believe" (Mark 5.36)

# Mountains

The mountains are places of awe, of challenge, of varied routes, of adventure and sometimes scary places. Being in the mountains reveals the magnificence of God. Jesus spent time in the mountains - praying, walking and talking with his disciples and revealing fresh perspectives



*Six days later, three of them saw that glory. Jesus took Peter and the brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. His appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes. Sunlight poured out from his face. His clothes were filled with light. Matthew 17.1-2 (MSG)*

Do you need a fresh perspective in life? It is often good to get away from 'normal' life and spend time with God, just like Jesus did. Or maybe you feel in need of adventure, taking a new route in life, getting out into the wild? Or do you want to go 'up' and bring your relationship with God to a new level. Mountains reflect and offer opportunity for all of these things, remembering it is God who created them.

# Paths

God has a path for you. It may not always be as clearly as this one in Whinlatter Forest. Sometimes when you are walking somewhere unfamiliar you can miss the path and go the wrong way. But God promises to lead us, he directs us and leads us back when we go wrong



*God refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. **Psalms 23.3***

*Remember the Lord in everything you do, and he will show you the right way. **Proverbs 3.6***

God leads us in many different ways. The Bible is the main way, giving us specific verses and giving us general wisdom. The Holy Spirit also whispers to us, nudges us and leads us. Sometimes God uses people. Other times we use common sense to choose the right path. We can be sure of being on God's right path if we ask him, hear what he says and obey



# Plains

If you have ever watched any Westerns you'll recognise the plains. This was taken from the Rocky Mountains in Colorado on a cold but clear winter's day. The plains may not be as exciting as the mountains but they are a vital place of open heavens, of epic views and filled with life.



*So on the plains of Moab, by the Jordan across from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them... **Num 26.3***

*On the plains of Moab the Lord said to Moses... **Num 33.50***

*About 40000 crossed over... Before the Lord... to the plains plains of Jericho for war. **Joshua 4.13***

In nature, a plain is a wide open expanse. In the Bible we see that the plain was a place of camping, of stopping and being refreshed, of gathering and a place where God spoke directly to his people. Sometimes we need to come to God simply, without distraction and clutter to stop; pause; get refreshed and hear God's voice; to get his guidance. If this is where you are, be still, rest and know God (Psalm 46.10)

# Rainbows

God gave the rainbow as a sign of his promises and his faithfulness. God often speaks to us through a rainbow: in hard times or loss, as guidance or strength. The image on the left isn't a rainbow but a 'circumzenithal arc' and looks like a cross or angel wings, representing God's protection



*And God said, "This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth." **Genesis 9.12-13***

The rainbow was God's promise to Moses never to flood the whole earth again. God has been faithful to this promise and he is always faithful. Even when things don't seem that way. The rainbow is a sign in the skies for all to see, showing that God is creative, vibrant and the master painter, showing his glory in the sky. The colours reflect his holiness (red, like a burning flame) to priestly purple (God connecting to people)

# Rivers

The River Liza runs off from its source down towards the distant Ennerdale Water in the Lake District on an early Spring day as the sun beat down on the mountains. Through twists and turns the river flows, bringing life into Ennerdale forest, feeding and impacting all it touches

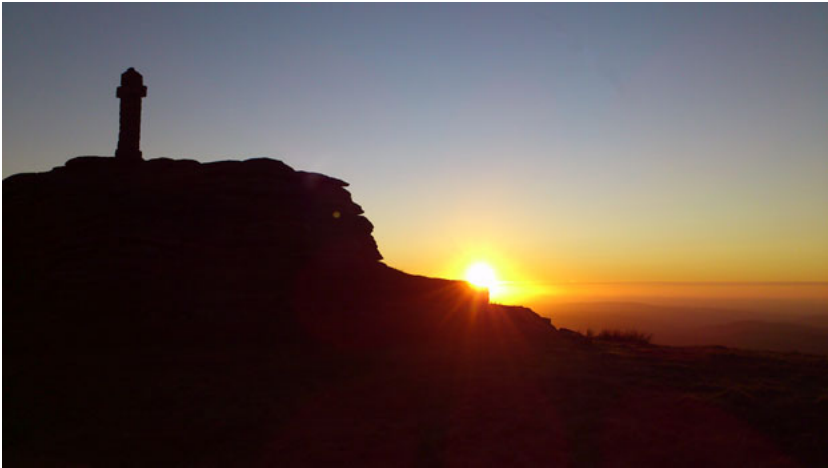


*Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. " **John 7.38***

When you put a plug into an electrical socket, you receive power. In the same way, when we plug into Jesus we get life that feeds and impacts us but that also flows out of us to feed and impact other people. A river has many turns, has varied currents, directions of flow, varied shapes and sizes and touches all kinds of wildlife, animal life and people. The key is the river stays connected to the source and not blocked. The Christian life is the same, connected to Jesus

# Rocks

Sunset on Brat Tor on Dartmoor with Widgery Cross silhouetted high on the rock against the setting sun. The cross on the rock stands firm, almost watching over the distant towns and villages of Devon and Cornwall. Jesus is your rock - your strength and safety.



*The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. **Psalms 18.2***

In the New Testament, Jesus the builder tells the story of two houses - one built on rock, one built on sand. When the storm came, only the house on the rock stayed standing. Jesus is that rock. The rock was a place of provision for Israel (Moses struck the rock and water came out). Jesus is your provider. The rock was a place of refuge for safety. Jesus promises to be with us and never leave us. David used rocks to slay the giant. Jesus helps you face enemies and will defeat your enemies. Just stand on the rock.

# Sea

Charmouth in Dorset is on the Jurassic Coast, which is a coast containing a large amount of fossils and sea glass. On this day, the sun poked its head out from the clouds briefly, giving a silvery shine to the sea. Out to sea, the breaks in the cloud revealed 'God rays' of sunshine



*Oh, thank God—he's so good! His love never runs out. All of you set free by God, tell the world! Tell how he freed you from oppression, Then rounded you up from all over the place, from the four winds, from the seven seas. **Psalms 107:1-3***

The sea is a place of adventure as well as a way of getting to distant places and to explore. The sea is beautiful but can also be powerful and out of our control. This reminds us of the character of God who calmed the raging storm, who calls us friends on the adventure of life but who is also to be respected as an awesome and Holy God. He is well beyond our understanding and his ways are greater and higher. Like Noah, stay safe in the 'ark' of God's presence.



# Snow

Snow transforms a landscape. Its sparkling white coat can take an already picturesque place and make it look incredible. It makes mountains look more magnificent. In the Bible, white is often associated with purity. Isaiah speaks of how God clothes us with a 'righteous robe'



*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool*  
**Isaiah 1.18**

In Isaiah 61.10, the prophet speaks of how God has clothed Him with garments of salvation and a robe of God's righteousness. The snow reminds us that when we give our lives to Jesus, he removes our old selfish nature, clothes us with a 'white' robe or his righteousness, making us new in our spirits with his Holy Spirits. We don't always live right so the life of faith is about working with God so that his goodness impacts and flows from our whole being.

# Sunrise

Matt Redman's song '10000 Reasons' seemed so true watching the sun rise over the Rocky Mountains in Estes Park. "The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning. It's time to sing your song again." Sunrise is a time of the light breaking through the darkness, of God's promises



*Wake up. Put your face in the sunlight. God's bright glory has risen for you. The whole earth is wrapped in darkness, all people sunk in deep darkness, But God rises on you, his sunrise glory breaks over you. Nations will come to your light, kings to your sunburst brightness. Look up! Look around! Watch as they gather, watch as they approach you...*

**Isaiah 60.1-3**

After Moses met with God, his face was shining so brightly that he had to put a veil on his face. As a believer, you are a carrier of that same light with the Holy Spirit in you. Jesus tells us in Matthew 5.16 that we don't need to hide this light but to let it shine through the good we do that points people to God. People need the light in you. Don't hide your light. Let it shine, let it burn, let it out, let God get the glory.

# Sunset

Sunsets are incredible explosions of colour and light in skies, painting pictures of ever-shifting hues as the light has to travel through more atmosphere, scattering blue light, leaving more yellow and red light to reach our eyes. Sunsets remind us of God's faithfulness and provision



*God's message, the God who created the cosmos, stretched out the skies, laid out the earth and all that grows from it, Who breathes life into earth's people, makes them alive with his own life... **Isaiah 42.5 (The Message)***

Isaiah 42 tells us that God created the entire cosmos, the whole world. When the sun sets at night, it reminds us of another day of God's faithfulness, of God keeping the world going by the power of his powerful word (Hebrews 1.3). It is God who created the world and its flavours and colours. God is the creator, the master craftsman, the perfect artist. The same God who breathes his life into you is the God who calls you to breathe out his life, colours, flavours to others.

# Trees

Trees are good for us. They provide biodiversity, promote health and wellbeing, help with food production, provide green space and help fight climate problems. Trees can communicate with each other through roots (so-called 'wood wide web'). They offer protection and shade



*On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations*  
**Revelation 22.2**

In places like Psalm 1 and Jeremiah 17, we see the life of faith likened to trees. These trees are 'planted by water' (in Spirit-filled Bible-filled active faith communities), the leaves stay green (full of God), fruit-filled (doing God-works), who stays fresh (doesn't go stale!) and God is with in all things.



# Valley

The Lairig Ghru is a renowned pass in the Cairngorms in Scotland. In winter it takes on an epic feel and can quickly turn and feel very menacing and wild, especially when when visibility is obscured through fog, in the torrential winds that can be over 100mph and in whiteouts in snow.



*Even when I walk through the darkest valley, I will not be afraid, for you (God) are close beside me. Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me. **Psalms 23.4***

There are times in life that can feel like being in a valley. Many of God's people have experienced these times when the wind seems strong, the fog obscures the path and you can't 'see' God through the whiteout. But God is with you. We don't live by sight but by faith. So hold onto God and the truth of his Word above what you see, hear, think, feel. God plans our steps and our stops. Lift up your eyes.



# Waterfalls

"Your love is like a waterfall, waterfall, running wild and free, You hear my heart when I call, when I call, Deep calls to deep, Your love is like a waterfall, waterfall, raining down on me" (Chris Tomlin 'Waterfall'). Waterfalls are untamed, carving new routes, smoothing rock, life-giving



*When they moved I heard their wings - it was like the roar of a great waterfall, the the voice of The Strong God, like the noise of a battlefield... **Ezekiel 1.24***

In his fight with Goliath, David went to the brook to pick up stones - smoothed by the jostling waters. The stones were then thrown by David with accuracy and effectiveness. Let the Holy Spirit and God's Word wash over you like a waterfall and mould you into a smooth, effective, accurate stone.