

8. Flower



In Spring, the Judean desert blooms. These are chamomile flowers, springing into life among the rocks. The ground looks so barren, so inhospitable, but the winter rains have triggered a miracle of green across the hills.

Isaiah of Jerusalem, speaking fearlessly of the injustices of his day and of the perverse priorities and allegiances of Israel's leaders, always balances his stern analysis of the situation with a soul-stirring message of hope. And some of his most alluring images of hope are drawn from the desert's progression from winter to spring: "Waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert," he sings. "The desert and the dry lands will rejoice: flowers will bloom in the wilderness" (Isaiah 35. 6b,1).

Isaiah was thinking of the 'desert' of the 8th century BC. "Here is your God!" he cries into its arid spaces. "He will come and save you." (Is 35.4) We could do with Isaiah now. His prophetic analysis of the world's current priorities and allegiances and of the injustices of our own day would be rousing and salutary and our parched lives would gasp with delight at his reviving promise.

Today...

...show us the green amongst the greyness, O God,
the ways in which, by your grace, our deserts bloom.

Amen