



Links Players

Wilderness Images: Part 3

And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi. (1 Samuel 23:29 ESV)

Playing golf in the southern Utah landscape requires all your senses. Green fairways tuck between ancient valleys, and shifting sunlight dances across the towering red cliffs. The winding canyons are endless. Desert winds blow. The rugged beauty, desert washes, and small rivers are enjoyed by many.

The Judean wilderness is a different experience of awe. In the uninhabited wilderness heat, wadis (slot canyons) with steep cliffs were often a refuge for rebels or displaced populations in the past.

David found refuge in a wadi as King Saul pursued him (1 Samuel 23-24). This deep wadi is known as En Gedi, where a waterfall fills a pool of living water and offers a place of rest and refreshment.

A wadi is a gift of mercy in the desert—a carved-out valley that offers shade, shelter, and a pathway through harsh terrain. Its vertical walls protect weary travelers from wind and blazing sun.

A wadi can also bring death. The sky may look blue, but if rain is falling far away in the hills, a sudden flash flood rushing through the canyon can destroy everything in its path without warning.

The image of a wadi offers several spiritual lessons. God does provide refuge and rest, but we must remain attentive to his voice. There are circumstances in life outside of our control and not in our immediate sight.

Complacency must never replace reliance on God. The wadi invites us to rest, but also to watch, pray, and stay humble before the God who knows and sees farther than we do.

En Gedi is an oasis providing refuge in the wilderness. When David hid among the caves, he found food, water, and protection. At the mouth of this wadi, a shallow brook draws us into the wadi where we find living water waiting. The effort it requires to get there is worth every drop of cool water.

God's presence is always with us. It is not a mirage, but a true spring in a dry and weary wilderness season. Some days his grace showers us in a waterfall. Other days, it might feel like we are hiking uphill for it.

Jesus is our living water. As we return to him again and again, he renews and restores our hearts. In wilderness seasons, God provides En Gedi oases.

These oases may come as we spend time alone with God and in his Word. They may also arrive through the care and compassion of others. As we receive that grace, we should also look for opportunities to become an En Gedi of shalom and refuge for someone else.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your nature and creative beauty that provides rest and refuge. As I receive from you may I also be a refuge to someone else.

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