

~THORN (412)

.. Figurative Use

- **Any of numerous thorny or prickly plants.** Over 70 varieties of thorny plants have been reported as growing in Israel, among them being the thorny burnet, the thorny caper, the acanthus, the boxthorn, and hawthorns.
- Although thorns proved to be troublesome to man, they were not altogether useless. Thorny plants were employed as hedges
- Therefore here I am **hedging** your way about with **thorns**, and I will heap up a stone wall against her, so that her own roadways she will not find. (**Hosea 2:6**)
- And for fuel,
- For as the sound of **thorns** under the pot, so is the laughter of the stupid one, and this too is vanity. (**Ecclesiastes 7:6**)
- And they served as food for asses, camels, and goats. In more recent times, as may have been the case anciently, the **boxthorn** and the **bramble** in particular have been used for **hedges**, and the **thorny burnet** has been cut up as **fuel for limekilns**.
- And peoples must become as the burnings of lime. As **thorns** cut away, they will be set ablaze even with fire. (**Isaiah 33:12**)
- The effects of the cursed ground, with its **thorns** and **thistles**, were keenly felt by the descendants of Adam.
- And to Adam he said; Because you listened to your wifes voice and took to eating from the tree concerning which I gave you this command; You must not eat from it, cursed is the ground on your account. In pain you will eat its produce all the days of your life. (**Genesis 3:17**)
- And **thorns** and **thistles** it will grow for you, and you must eat the vegetation of the field. (**Genesis 3:18**)
- So that Noah's father Lamech spoke of the **pain of our hands** resulting from the ground which Yehowah has cursed.

- And he proceeded to call his name Noah, saying; This one will bring us comfort from our work and from the pain of our hands resulting from the ground which Yehowah has cursed. ([Genesis 5:29](#))
- After the Flood, Yehowah blessed Noah and his sons, stating that his purpose for them was to fill the earth.
- And God went on to bless Noah and his sons and to say to them; Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth. ([Genesis 9:1](#))
- God's curse on the ground was apparently lifted.
- So Lot raised his eyes and saw the whole District of the Jordan, that all of it was a wellwatered region before Yehowah brought Sodom and Gomorrah to ruin, like the garden of Yehowah, like the land of Egypt as far as Zoar. ([Genesis 13:10](#))
- However, Yehowah did not, as in perfect Adam's case, tell Noah and his family to subdue the earth.
- Further, God blessed them and God said to them; Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth. ([Genesis 1:28](#))
- And Yehowah began to smell a restful odor, and so Yehowah said in his heart; Never again shall I call down evil upon the ground on man's account, because the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up, and never again shall I deal every living thing a blow just as I have done. ([Genesis 8:21](#))
- And a fear of you and a terror of you will continue upon every living creature of the earth and upon every flying creature of the heavens, upon everything that goes moving on the ground, and upon all the fishes of the sea. Into your hand they are now given. ([Genesis 9:2](#))
- This suggests that imperfect man, without divine guidance, could never subdue the earth in the way God had originally purposed. Man would continue experiencing difficulties in cultivating the soil,

including having to fight such troublesome plants as **thorns** and thistles.

- Undoubtedly man's mismanagement of earth's resources has increased his problems in this regard.
- In the Promised Land, a land flowing with milk and honey.
- And I am proceeding to go down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a land good and spacious, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the locality of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. (**Exodus 3:8**)
- The Israelites had to work to keep the land free of **thorns** and other weeds, as these quickly take over neglected or desolated land.
- And I shall set it as a thing destroyed. It will not be pruned, nor will it be hoed. And it must come up with the **thorn**bush and weeds, and upon the clouds I shall lay a command to keep from precipitating any rain upon it. (**Isaiah 5:6**)
- And it must occur in that day that every place where there used to be a thousand vines, worth a thousand pieces of silver, will come to be, for the **thornbushes** and for the weeds it will come to be. (**Isaiah 7:23**)
- With arrows and the bow he will come there, because all the land will become mere **thornbushes** and **weeds**. (**Isaiah 7:24**)
- And all the mountains that used to be cleared of troublesome plants with a hoe, you will not come there for fear of **thornbushes** and **weeds**, and it will certainly become a place for letting bulls loose and a trampling ground of sheep. (**Isaiah 7:25**)
- On her dwelling towers **thorns** must come up, nettles and thorny weeds in her fortified places, and she must become an abiding place of jackals, the courtyard for the ostriches. (**Isaiah 34:13**)
- Eventually, through disobedience to Yehowah, Israel brought spiritual ruin to the nation, God's inheritance, and this was reflected both figuratively and literally in their laboring in vain, sowing wheat but reaping **thorns**.

- I have left my house. I have deserted my inheritance. I have given the beloved one of my soul into the palm of her enemies. (Jeremiah 12:7)
- They have sown wheat, but **thorns** are what they have reaped. They have worked themselves sick, they will be of no benefit. And they will certainly be ashamed of the products of you people because of the burning anger of Yehowah. (Jeremiah 12:13)
- As highlighted by Jesus illustration concerning the sower, **thorns** threaten the growth of cultivated crops.
- Others, too, fell among the **thorns**, and the **thorns** came up and choked them. (Matthew 13:7)
- Some other fell among the **thorns**, and the **thorns** that grew up with it choked it off. (Luke 8:7)
- So before a field covered with **thorns** and **thistles** was cultivated, these troublesome plants were removed, generally by burning the field over.
- But if it produces **thorns** and **thistles**, it is rejected and is near to being cursed, and it ends up with being burned. (Hebrews 6:8)
- **Thorns** also presented somewhat of a fire hazard. Especially at harvesttime, when the **thorns** alongside the standing grain are dry, they readily catch fire, and an entire field can be consumed as the fire spreads from the **thorns** to the standing grain.
- In case a fire should spread out and it does catch **thorns**, and sheaves or standing grain or a field gets consumed, the one who started the fire is to make compensation without fail for what was burned. (Exodus 22:6)
- In **mockery**, Roman soldiers braided a **crown of thorns** and placed it on Jesus head.
- And they decked him with purple and braided a crown of **thorns** and put it on him. (Mark 15:17)
- And the soldiers braided a **crown of thorns** and put it on his head and arrayed him with a purple outer garment. (John 19:2)

- While the particular plant in question has been linked by many with *Paliurus spina-christi*, a shrub growing to a height of 6 meters (20 feet) and having flexible branches with stiff **thorns**, no certain identification is possible.

•• Figurative Use

- Frequently **thorns** are mentioned in a figurative, or an illustrative, sense. The Assyrians, although interwoven like **thorns**, were to be consumed as fully dry stubble.
- Although they are being **interwoven even as thorns** and they are drunken as with their wheat beer, they will certainly be devoured like stubble fully dry. (**Nahum 1:10**)
- **Thorns** are used to denote people, even rulers, whose actions being bad, are in line for adverse judgment.
- At that Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah the king of Judah, saying; The **thorny weed** itself that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying; Do give your daughter to my son as a wife. However, a wild beast of the field that was in Lebanon passed by and trampled the **thorny weed** down. (**2 Kings 14:9**)
- You have unmistakably struck down Edom, and your heart has lifted you up. Enjoy your honor and dwell in your own house. Why, then, should you engage in strife under unfavorable conditions and have to fall, you and Judah with you? (**2 Kings 14:10**)
- For wickedness has become aflame just like a fire, **thornbushes** and weeds it will eat up. And it will catch fire in the thickets of the forest, and they will be borne aloft as the billowing of smoke. (**Isaiah 9:18**)
- In the fury of Yehowah of armies the land has been set afire, and the people will become as food for the fire. No one will show compassion even on his brother. (**Isaiah 9:19**)
- And Israel's Light must become a fire, and his Holy One a flame, and it must blaze up and eat up his weeds and his **thornbushes** in one day. (**Isaiah 10:17**)

- And the glory of his forest and of his orchard He will bring to an end, even from the soul clear to the flesh, and it must become like the melting away of one that is ailing. (**Isaiah 10:18**)
- And the rest of the trees of his forest, they will become such a number that a mere boy will be able to write them down. (**Isaiah 10:19**)
- Wicked opposers of Yehowah's servant are depicted as being extinguished like a fire of **thornbushes**.
- All the nations themselves surrounded me. It was in the name of Yehowah that I kept holding them off. (**Psalms 118:10**)
- They surrounded me like bees, they were extinguished like a fire of **thornbushes**. It was in the name of Yehowah that I kept holding them off. (**Psalms 118:12**)
- Jesus Christ referred to **thorns** when illustrating the truth that individuals are known by their fruits.
- By their fruits you will recognize them. Never do people gather grapes from **thorns** or figs from **thistles**, do they? (**Matthew 7:16**)
- **Thorns** designate persons and things that cause injury and are troublesome.
- If, though, you will not drive the inhabitants of the land away from before you, then those whom you leave of them will certainly become as pricks in your eyes and as **thorns** in your sides, and they will indeed harass you on the land in which you will be dwelling. (**Numbers 33:55**)
- **Thorns** and traps are in the way of the crooked one, he that is guarding his soul keeps far away from them. (**Proverbs 22:5**)
- And no more will there prove to be to the house of Israel a malignant prickle or a painful **thorn** out of all those round about them, those who are treating them with scorn, and people will have to know that I am the Sovereign Lord Yehowah. (**Ezekiel 28:24**)
- Paul's **thorn in the flesh**.

- Just because of the excess of the revelations. Therefore, that I might not feel overly exalted, there was given me a **thorn in the flesh**, an angel of Satan, to keep slapping me, that I might not be overly exalted. (**2 Corinthians 12:7**)
- May have been an affliction of his eyes or another part of his body.
- Looking intently at the Sanhedrin Paul said; Men, brothers, I have behaved before God with a perfectly clear conscience down to this day. (**Acts of Apostles 23:1**)
- At this the High Priest Ananias ordered those standing by him to strike him on the mouth. (**Acts of Apostles 23:2**)
- Then Paul said to him; God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall. Do you at one and the same time sit to judge me in accord with the Law and, transgressing the Law, command me to be struck? (**Acts of Apostles 23:3**)
- Those standing by said; Are you reviling the High Priest of God? (**Acts of Apostles 23:4**)
- And Paul said; Brothers, I did not know he was High Priest. For it is written: You must not speak injuriously of a ruler of your people. (**Acts of Apostles 23:5**)
- Where, then, is that happiness you had? For I bear you witness that, if it had been possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me. (**Galatians 4:15**)
- See with what large letters I have written you with my own hand. (**Galatians 6:11**)
- Or perhaps the false apostles and other disturbers who challenged Paul's apostleship and work.
- For I consider that I have not in a single thing proved inferior to your superfine apostles. (**2 Corinthians 11:5**)
- But even if I am unskilled in speech, I certainly am not in knowledge, but in every way we manifested it to you in all things. (**2 Corinthians 11:6**)

- **Now what I am doing I will still do, that I may cut off the pretext from those who are wanting a pretext for being found equal to us in the office of which they boast. (2 Corinthians 11:12)**
- **For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. (2 Corinthians 11:13)**
- **And no wonder, for Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14)**
- **It is therefore nothing great if his ministers also keep transforming themselves into ministers of righteousness. But their end shall be according to their works. (2 Corinthians 11:15)**
- **I marvel that you are being so quickly removed from the One who called you with Christ's undeserved kindness over to another sort of Good News. (Galatians 1:6)**
- **But it is not another, only there are certain ones who are causing you trouble and wanting to pervert the Good News about the Christ. (Galatians 1:7)**
- **However, even if we or an angel out of heaven were to declare to you as Good News something beyond what we declared to you as Good News, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)**
- **As we have said above, I also now say again, Whoever it is that is declaring to you as Good News something beyond what you accepted, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:9)**
- **I wish the men who are trying to overturn you would even get themselves emasculated. (Galatians 5:12)**
- **Henceforth let no one be making trouble for me, for I am carrying on my body the brand marks of a slave of Jesus. (Galatians 6:17)**
- **Yehowah, through his prophet Jeremiah, compared the hearts of the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to ground covered with **thorns**, that is, with untruth, injustice, and unrighteousness.**
- **If you would return, O Israel, is the utterance of Yehowah, you may return even to me. And if you will take away your disgusting things on my account, then you will not go as a**

fugitive. (**Jeremiah 4:1**)

- And if you will certainly swear, As Yehowah is alive in truth, in justice and in righteousness! Then in him the nations will actually bless themselves, and in him they will boast about themselves. (**Jeremiah 4:2**)
- For this is what Yehowah has said to the men of Judah and to Jerusalem; Plow for yourselves arable land, and do not keep sowing among **thorns**. (**Jeremiah 4:3**)
- Get yourselves circumcised to Yehowah, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, you men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, that my rage may not go forth just like a fire, and it certainly burn with no one to do the extinguishing, on account of the badness of your dealings. (**Jeremiah 4:4**)
- Sow seed for yourselves in righteousness, reap in accord with loving-kindness. Till for yourselves arable land, when there is time for searching for Yehowah until he comes and gives instruction in righteousness to you. (**Hosea 10:12**)
- You people have plowed wickedness. Unrighteousness is what you have reaped. You have eaten the fruitage of deception, for you have trusted in your way, in the multitude of your mighty ones. (**Hosea 10:13**)
- Fittingly the replacement of **thorns** by trees represents the restoration of divine favor.
- Instead of the **thicket** of **thorns** the **juniper tree** will come up. Instead of the **stinging nettle** the **myrtle tree** will come up. And it must become for Yehowah something famous, a sign to time indefinite that will not be cut off. (**Isaiah 55:13**)

See Also **BRAMBLE**

See Also **BRIER**

See Also **BUSH**

See Also **LOTUS TREE**

See Also **WEEDS**