

Baal Slot
Seven Devils
Mountains

©
Jeff R. Filler
2007

Jesus, lead me day by day,
I receive you, Oh God. I
receive your strength - I shall
mount up with wings, as
an eagle.

Page 1

Jackie and I drove down to the
Seven Devils, for a two or three
day backpacker trip. As we came
around the vista, a mile or so from
the trail head, the devils were
shrouded with smoke. The Pole
cabin fire west of Lucile had
crossed Sheep Creek along the
Snake and the smoke was
backdrafting up Sheep Creek.
By windy saddle, and then
Seven Devils campground the air
was the smell of smoke - like
a campfire (but without the
campfire). The Devils looked more
ominous with the smoke, and
perhaps I should have taken a
pic, but I just don't like taking
pictures, of things that just ought
not be so.

In deed to get to the Devils we had

Page 2

drive past two large fires - one that blackened the Waha area south of Lewiston into Hell's Canyon, and the Pole fire, from Pittsburg Landing to, now, almost Riggins. (It not might be so.) Two miles up the Seven Devils grade the Forest Service had set up a billboard about the fire and what areas were closed, etc. Indeed there were two Forest Service personnel, and so we stopped and chatted. Yes, we could go south of Windy Saddle, but not north - closed. It was obvious this guy was not from around here, probably not even Idaho. Nice enough, and with starched uniform, name tag, latest copies of maps showing the active line, trying to point out places on the map that I could point out faster... he was fine. I'm happy for him, he's just doing his job... but as I thought on the fancy trucks, the helicopter landing at the strip at Slate Creek, the fire camp nearby, I couldn't help but think -

{ Forest fires aren't an emergency, nor is fighting them a mission - the whole thing has become a f-g industry ... (just like fighting crime, drugs, even cancer)! }

So we climbed up through the smoke, up Climbers Trail, coughing more than normal, with the view of the lowlands blocked entirely. We (Jaei and I) got to the first pass above the campground, also above Mirror Lake, and in normal fashion continued to the trail to Goat Pass, on the (unofficial)

Here, as planned, we broke off the trail and headed south directly toward Tower of Babel, as I had reconnoitered several weeks earlier. It seemed farther, perhaps because it was not now the first time, and others had gone that way (some tracks, or maybe they were mine).

Now we broke down off the ridge to skirt across the west face of Babel,

Page 4

also planned, and now there weren't so many tracks. (Maybe the prior tracks were mine, or probably by others either climbing Babel or going into Mirror).

But now with the sun on the slot between Babel and Naal it looked doable, so we started high.

As best we could we stayed in the big rocks getting up to the slot, more stable. The theory was that if we could make it to the top, Terry said we could make it around, as he had so scouted while on our goat hunt.

At all went well but in one place it got sketchy... the rocks were small, loose, on loose dirt and loose rocks underneath, and in one spot all the handholds were loose dirt and rocks - not what one might guess from a look from a half mile away.

ughhh...

But at about this point we were able