

“God’s Provisions & Place of True Rest”

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(15RC/ORIG. “BROOKS & NESTS”)

In God’s Word familiar things are used to explain spiritual Truths,... (a ‘vine’ and its ‘branches’, John 15:), or a ‘nest’ for rest (Duet. 32:11-12), “As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, So the Lord alone led him (Israel), And there was no foreign god with him.”

Those analogies illustrate the place of true ‘rest’ under God’s watchful care, that ‘believers’ are privileged to have in a relationship with God and His Son,.. for He said that “He is the vine, we are the branches.” The Holy Spirit will give spiritual understanding of all these illustrations, if one will follow Jesus words (vs.4) “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.”

We abide in Christ through believing in His ‘promises’, and, believing on God’s ‘Salvation Message’ (which tells us what Christ’s Atonement work on the Cross has done for us). God will then enable us to bear ‘spiritual fruit’.

Our ‘resting place’ (through faith in Christ), is like a ‘nest’ to take refuge in (despite difficult conditions in the world). That ‘true resting place’ (that He offers to all true ‘believers’), includes all the provisions that He has in store for those who will abide in (and keep) their faith in Him. Each blessing carries ‘spiritual fruit’ with it.

When we first come to a knowledge of God, we are unable (in our own ability) to understand spiritual Truth, and unable to follow the directions that God gives in His Word. Thus, the human heart wants to provide for its own ‘nest’ (or ‘resting place’). (Paul explained (1 Cor. 10:), that we are like the Israelites in the desert (when they grumbled and complained instead of keeping faith in God to provide,...despite the miracles they had seen Him work for them.) So, God has to dump us from our ‘nest’ to prove our faith, and as a means of spiritual growth for us,...(and that is when we make ‘progress’ in the Christian life).

The Vine and its branches is a valuable illustration of the importance of our staying connected through faith to the true Vine (Jesus Christ), so that we can progress. Most importantly (and we should be thankful), it is the only way we grow in faith in this life, (as God prepares us for Eternal Life). (James 1:2-4 says), “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”

(1 Cor.10:) reveals that the Israelites were not complete in faith), for “they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them and that Rock was “Christ”. But with most of them... God was not well pleased for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.”

That was written as an admonition for us to take heed, not to allow worldly things to become idols to us, and not to follow evil ways of others in the world. (Vs. 6-7) “Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. “Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink, and (then) got up to dance.” (NIV says) “indulge in pagan revelry”). (Vs. 8), “Nor may we be fornicators, like some of them who committed fornication and on a single day 23,000 of them fell dead.” (12) “All this kept happening to them with a figurative meaning; but it was put on record by way of admonition to us, upon whom the ends of the Ages have come. So then, let him who thinks he is standing securely, ... ‘beware of falling’.”

Human nature will still react the same, (if we are not familiar with God's Word). When we first come to a knowledge of God's Truth, we can be fearful in going through difficult circumstances because of not knowing what God's presence should mean to us. We must study God's Word, and ask for enlightenment from the Holy Spirit, to really understand His 'Salvation Message' about what the Atonement work of Christ on the Cross has accomplished for us. If we will study the Word and follow it, God will soon teach us that He is "a refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble". (Psalm 46:1).

As we take a position of 'trust' on God's written Promises, He will enable us to learn what His 'presence' really means, and enable us to enter into our Atonement rights by a 'life of faith' at the feet of Jesus. This is a necessity in the Christian life. The natural heart, however, wants to 'rest where we are', and not make spiritual progress (through "tests of faith"). Human nature does not want to be 'dumped out of its nest'(so to speak), but God (being the perfect Teacher), knows what is best for us in order to advance in the Christian 'life of faith'. God alone knows how fast He can take us along that road (the 'pathway of faith') that prepares us to meet His Son.

God knows all about those 'false resting places' that we like to stay in, and He also knows this is not a true rest. Spiritual progress is hindered when we (by efforts of 'self'), deliberately take ourselves out of a 'place of trust' on God. Paul explained to the Thessalonians, that 'God' "has chosen you for Salvation, through...the Spirit's sanctifying influence,.. and your 'belief' in the Truth" (not belief in our "place of trust".)

God in His mercy, will have to dump us out of 'our nest', so that we can learn how to bear 'spiritual fruit' (as He leads us to His 'true Resting Place'). "If any one does not continue in me" (Jesus said), "he is like the unfruitful branch which is at once thrown away and then withers. Such branches they gather up and throw into the fire and they are burned." We must bear spiritual fruit, striving for that "growth in holiness apart from which no one will see the Lord." (says, Heb. 12:14).

We would like to think we have all the spiritual light we need, (always have good health, money for expenses, and all of our temporal needs supplied, from 'seen sources')(rather than to exercise faith in God); But, that 'misplaced trust' would be 'idolatry'(which has to be removed).

God's love for us is so intense, that He wants to remove every false resting place, and bring us to His true 'resting place',...(which results in happiness now (by faith) while in this life, and for our Eternal Life).

God used extreme measures to deliver Elijah from Israel's idolatry of a false 'place of trust',... by allowing a famine of 3½ years. (1 Kings 17:1), "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." Elijah was a true child of God, however, and had given his life to God (as every Christian must do). God was teaching and leading him (as He wants to do with us), (if we will allow Him).

If we 'believe' on the promises in God's Word, He has an escape for us out of any kind of trouble. It doesn't matter where it comes from, or what kind of problem it is, God's Word always has a plan for the deliverance and protection of those who will trust Him (through 'believing' His Word).

Elijah believed God's Word, so he acted in faith, and God took care of him during the famine (vs.2-5) "Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. "And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there."

Because Elijah believed God's Word, he was able to do according to the word, so he stayed by the Brook Cherith. It is the same with us. Our faith will always be in who (or what) we believe in (and that is where we will place our trust). We believe either the Lord's Word (or the devil's lies).

Placing our trust in the wrong place (depending on some thing or someone else besides God), is a form of idolatry, and God will have to reveal that idol in our life (to prepare us for our goal of 'Eternal Life').

Even though Elijah was a 'child of God', he had to be tested in his faith (the same as God has to test every believer today). (Vs.7 says), "And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no rain in the land." Even the ravens stopped feeding him, so that was the end of Elijah's seen source of supplies.

We would (at first), be upset and worried about a situation like that (if the source of supplies for our family was shut off). And, God didn't find the same means of supply for Elijah, but God had a 'way of escape' for him (just as He does for us, if we do not turn to some seen 'source of supply').

When the bottom drops out of something we are 'trusting in', God always has something better for us (and far more valuable than any loss suffered). It is just a test for us to hold steady and to trust only in Him for the things we need. By remaining faithful, He will lead us to a better divine source, and the spiritual blessing of coming to really 'know God', is something of which the value cannot be put into words.

God gave Elijah the next step to train him in a life of trust and obedience. "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you."

Again, Elijah believed God, so he obeyed Him (and went to Zarephath). He said to the widow (who told him she only had a handful of meal and a little oil in a jar by which to bake a cake for her and her son, before they would die of starvation) "Do not fear; go and do as you have said, but make me a small cake from it first, and bring it to me; and afterward make some for yourself and your son. "For thus says the Lord 'God of Israel': 'The bin of flour shall not be used up, nor shall the jar of oil run dry, until the day the Lord sends rain on the earth.'"

The widow also believed the word from the Lord (through Elijah), so she was able to act in faith on His Word, (and the Lord did not fail His 'Promise'.(vs.15-16), "So she went away and did according to the word of Elijah; and she and he and her household ate for many days. The bin of flour was not used up, nor did the jar of oil run dry, according to the word of the Lord which He spoke by Elijah." The spiritual fruit that Elijah bore, became a 'Christian light' to shine for others (as Jesus said that ours should shine) for it carried over to the widow and her son.

Elijah was called to exercise a high quality of faith on God, but he had surrendered his life right, and he was enabled to meet the test of his faith in God, right. He, (like Abraham, whom God had already declared 'righteous', still had to be tested in faith to the highest degree. In both cases their lives were at stake (not to mention their eternal life). Both were in the most valuable place that any human being could possibly be in; a place where only the living God could be trusted in to deliver them.

But God had a way of escape for them (just as He does for us). He gives us that same privilege of exercising faith in Him, as He gave Elijah. This privilege always includes a valuable spiritual blessing, and (most importantly), a true preparation for Eternal Life results. Anyone today can look for those same results when they exercise the same faith. "He who continues in me and in whom I continue,... bears abundant fruit,"(John 15:5).

Having no human being to depend on (aside from God), led to the glorious event of Elijah being taken up to Heaven by God, (without experiencing death). That is what Elijah's 'preparation by God' in this life, meant to him,... and, we must remember that only those who are prepared by the

sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit, and are ready (with their 'lamps of faith lit') to meet Christ,...will be "caught up with Him in the air" (to be "forever with the Lord").

We need to realize that when we lose any earthly thing that we have depended on, God will lead us to something far more spiritually valuable to take its place. We will finally come to where we are really able to rest in God, and to find the true "rest that remains for the people of God". (Heb. 4:9). It is a 'rest' where we can be happy, victorious, and protected, and prepared (by Him) to receive Eternal Life.

(The late Pastor said), "one of the most trying things in my Christian life, was when I would get a noticeable victory in some way, and I'd have God's 'rest' (it seemed), but I couldn't hold onto it. The harder I tried to hold on, the quicker I lost it. It was a false 'resting place'. I was resting on 'good feelings', ...an 'outward rest' that never lasted. I felt very bad when it fell through, but I learned to trust God for His true 'resting place'. It must have troubled God for me to lose the oasis I had been enjoying (he said), but it was the most valuable thing that could happen to me. We would never find the true 'resting place', if God didn't allow us to experience a false one."

"A lot of people think they are at rest under a Church membership, and in outward morality and righteousness. However, unless a person is filled with the Holy Spirit, that comfort and rest won't last" (because the devil will use discouragement and discontent of every kind, to try to rob us of our comfort, and our Atonement right to enjoy God's peace).

"Being 'born again' and filled with the Holy Spirit, are only 'steps' in the true Christian life, nevertheless, they are vitally necessary and valuable steps. We have to be taught, trained, and developed by God's Holy Spirit, until He enables us to pass through every false 'resting place' (by resisting in faith, the temptations devised by the devil to be trusted on).

We must get rid of that 'nest' where the human heart wants to relax... and come to where we are truly in God's will (and enjoying His 'rest'). God is the only true 'resting place', and we can only come to it by faith on the Atonement work of His Son. Any other 'resting place' will only be temporary.

However, we will suffer no real harm if we are willing to be rid of those 'nests' of ours,... (because some prime 'lessons of faith' will be learned). Also, many questions will be answered while we are going through those false resting places, and the end result will be, that "all things work together for good to those who love God,".

God knows how to remove those false 'places of trust' without our suffering any serious loss, and He wants to replace them with something better for us, spiritually. So, He has to deal with us, (as He did with His people in Bible times).

God says of His people (Israel), "As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings,... So the Lord alone led him, And there was no foreign god with him." (Duet. 32:11-12). (A foreign god, could be anything else we are trusting on.) That is how the Lord teaches all true 'believers' (and how he prepares them for His true 'Resting Place').

The mother eagle throws the eaglets out of their comfortable nest, because she understands them, and, knows that they will never learn to fly if they stay settled in a nest. When she throws them out, they get excited because they are falling, and they begin to flutter their wings (which causes the wings to develop, just as we need to develop in our faith). While they are learning, she swoops under them, catches them, and brings them back to the nest (until the next lesson). Soon they learn to fly, and the heavens are their domain, as they go from peak to peak (instead of remaining in a perishable nest).

