

God the Rest-Giver

## ***Introduction:***

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*"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. "For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."*

Compare from the Old Testament:

- Ex 33.14: *And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."*
- Jer 6.16: *Thus says the Lord, "Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, Where the good way is, and walk in it; And you shall find rest for your souls."*
- Ezek 34.15: *"I will feed My flock and I will lead them to rest," declares the Lord God.*
- 2 Sam 7.11: *and I will give you rest from all your enemies.*
- Deut 5.33: *"according to all the way which the Lord your God commanded thee to walk in it, that he may give thee rest..."*  
(LXX)
- Jer 31.25: *For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes.*

# *Nature of “Rest” in the Bible*

## Basic idea

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- “The frequent occurrences of God's promises to give his people “rest” include all of the preceding ideas: **a place to land on**, a place of **serenity**, and **cessation from effort**. But they also include a fourth idea, and that is **safety** and **security**. This is made clear by the several references to giving “rest **from his/their enemies on every side**” (Deut 12:10; 25:19; Josh 23:1; 2 Sam 7:1, 11; 2 Chron 14:7 [6]; Neh 9:28; Esth 9:16, 22; Isa 14:3). The sense is to get, or provide, **relief from threat or attack**. So God not only promises to give his people a place to settle, but **he also promises to give them a place of security**. [NIDOTTE, sv. Nuah]
- Gen 8.4 *the ark ‘rested’ on Mt Ararat*
- Image often used of birds landing in their nests or sheep reaching their pasture

## Rest is “from enemies” and “from threats”, from “every side”

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- *When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security (Dt 12:10 NASB; cf 25.19)*
- *And the Lord gave them rest on every side, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. (Jos 21:44, NASB)*

## Rest is from “agitators” (smile)

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Ex 23.11: *but on the seventh year you shall let it **rest** and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat.*

Is 62.6: *On your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; All day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves; 7 **And give Him no rest** until He establishes And makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.*

## From pain, sorrow, harsh toil/work

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Ex 23.12 (31.15): *Six days you are to do your **work**, but on the seventh day you shall cease ...*

*When the Lord has given you **rest from your pain and turmoil** and the **hard service** with which you were made to serve, 4 you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon: [Is 14]*

## **From fear, and leads to security/safety**

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*When you cross the Jordan and live in the land which the Lord your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies around you so that you live in security (Dt 12:10 NASB; cf 25.19)*



# *Extended Aspects of “Rest”*

## **Has an important subjective/psychological aspect to it**

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*“And among those nations you shall find no rest, and there shall be no resting place for the sole of your foot; but there the Lord will give you a trembling heart, failing of eyes, and despair of soul.” (Dt 28.65, NASB)*

## For example, the “soothing aroma” is from our word

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“Soothing aroma”: in the sacrificial law, this is a regular term for the smell produced by burning the sacrifices (cf. Lev 1:9; 2:2; 3:5, etc). “Soothing” (החיו) sacrifices have a restful (הונו), **soothing**, pacifying effect on God. That God’s **anger** at sin is appeased by sacrifice is the clear implication of this phrase [WBC, Gen 6]

## **Social and Community Elements: Removal of treacherous / Help for others, with even a Universal dimension**

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*Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, 12 He who said to them, “Here is rest, **give rest to the weary,**” And, “Here is repose,” but they would not listen. (Is 28:11; NRSV).*

## The positive notion of “Refreshment” is present too

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- “*anapausin*: to become physically **refreshed** after ceasing activity or work— ‘rest, to rest.’ ... ‘let’s go ... to a quiet place and you can rest awhile’ Mk 6.31... ‘you will find rest for yourselves’ Mt 11.29... In the use of (these Greek words), the focus of meaning seems to be upon **the restorative character of rest rather than mere cessation of activity** “. [Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996, c1989). *Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (Vol. 1, Page 259-260). New York: United Bible societies.]
- ‘Rest was built into the natural rhythms of life by the Creator, who rested on the seventh day of creation (Gen 2:1– 3). An important part of the meaning of rest is suggested by the mystery of divine rest: **it draws a boundary around work and exertion and takes a legitimate delight in celebrating what has been accomplished, without an urge to keep working.** [Ryken, L., Wilhoit, J., Longman, T., Duriez, C., Penney, D., & Reid, D. G. (2000, c1998). *Dictionary of biblical imagery* (electronic ed.). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.; That is “REBOOT”--smile]

# *Specific Themes*

## Promised by God

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- *And the Lord gave them rest on every side, **according to all that He had sworn to their fathers**, and no one of all their enemies stood before them; the Lord gave all their enemies into their hand. (Jos 21:44, NASB)*
- *Blessed be the Lord, who has given rest to His people Israel, **according to all that He promised**; not one word has failed of all His good promise, which He promised through Moses His servant. (1 Ki 8:56; NASB).*

## **Accomplished by the Presence of God (mostly in Tabernacle/Temple)**

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**Ex 33.14: “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest”**



## **This “Presence” Motif also hearkens back to the Genesis/Garden Rest**

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Hebrews 4:3 *For we who have believed enter that **rest**, just as He has said, “As I swore in My wrath, They shall not enter My **rest**,” although His works were finished **from the foundation of the world**.*

## And there is a “Big Sabbath” rest ahead...

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*m. Tamid 7.4*: “This was the singing which the Levites used to sing in the Temple...On the Sabbath they sang A Psalm: A Song for the Sabbath Day (Ps92); a Psalm, a song for the time that is to come, for the day that shall be all Sabbath and rest in the life everlasting.”

## *The Davidic Deliverer*

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“As the ultimate Son of David, **Jesus announces the awaited rest**, thereby claiming to bring to fulfillment Yahweh’s OT promise. **Soteriologically**, this amounts to a claim that the total salvation God promised his people is being realized through Jesus as Messiah. **Christologically**, in promising **rest Jesus stands in the place reserved for Yahweh** in the OT. Oppressive forces once again threaten to overcome the powerless among God’s people; Jesus in response uses an OT expression for Yahweh’s salvation, but makes the promise in his own name.” [NDBT]

## *Recap (Part 1)*

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- Rest means being in your God-designed place
- Rest means being through with any struggles needed to get there
- Rest means not worrying about outside attacks or threats—it involves security and safety
- Rest is not only a external state, but it is also an internal experience—close in nuance to English “peace” or “soothed”
- Rest is freedom from distraction and agitation, to be able to focus on creation/enjoyment of delight, beauty, and warmth
- Rest is designed to lead to refreshment of life—new energy, new joy, new eagerness to ‘see what God has for us today’
- Community rest is designed to be for all people—not just biblical Israel.

## *Recap (Part 2)*

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- Community rest will involve removal of the treacherous and destructive
- Rest is designed to “reset” our values—when we are not ‘fighting fires’ we can see the Big Picture better
- Rest was initially, was in the OT, is now with us spiritually, and will be in the New Future— based on the presence of a rest-making and rest-giving God
- The *Shabbat*/Rest is our response to his *Nuah*/Rest-making efforts against our enemies:
  - Our legal guilt (justification)
  - Our condemnation under the spiritual powers (*Christus Victor*)
  - The degenerative situation caused by our sinful behavior (redemption)
  - Our deception about God’s heart, our sin, our helplessness
- This *nuah*/rest fight was won by the One ‘meek and lowly of heart’
- Rest is something we are supposed to share with others...
- ...because our good-hearted God shared it with us.

***But “Rest” is not enough—we need “Shalom”...***

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*“Therefore Thou didst deliver them into the hand of their oppressors who oppressed them, But when they cried to Thee in the time of their distress, Thou didst hear from heaven, and according to Thy great compassion Thou didst give them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their oppressors. 28 **“But as soon as they had rest, they did evil again before Thee;** (Ne 9:27; NASB).*

## *Application, anyone?...*

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*If “rest” flowed from the Temple to others, and WE are the New Testament temples...?*