

## RETURNING TO REST IN CHRIST

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### ISAIAH 30:15-23

"For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not, and you said, "No, for we will flee on horses"—Therefore you shall flee! And, "We will ride on swift horses"—Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift! One thousand shall flee at the threat of one, at the threat of five you shall flee, till you are left as a pole on top of a mountain and as a banner on a hill.

Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; You shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; When He hears it, He will answer you. And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it," Whenever you turn to the right hand or whenever you turn to the left. You will also defile the covering of your images of silver, and the ornament of your molded images of gold. You will throw them away as an unclean thing; You will say to them, "Get away!" Then He will give the rain for your seed with which you sow the ground, and bread of the increase of the earth; It will be fat and plentiful. In that day your cattle will feed in large pastures."

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There is some powerful messages of instruction that we can get from this passage of Scripture but it also speaks of God's love for His people. In every time that God's people, collectively or individually strayed/strays away from God and His ways, He begins calling back to them/us, to return to His place of rest. In our passage of Scripture, this was a very interesting time in the history of God's people. God's people of the twelve tribes of Israel were split between two nations, Israel and Judah. From the twelve tribes of Israel, Benjamin and Judah made up what was called the nation of Judah while the other 10 tribes made up the nation of Israel. While Israel had one evil king after the next, Judah had good kings from time to time and then they also had some bad kings. During this period in the history of Judah though, they had one of the best kings to rule over Judah, King Hezekiah. Hezekiah had gotten rid of all of the idols of worship and the sacred pillars to others gods. In **2 Kings 18:5-7**, it says of him, "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. For

he held fast to the Lord; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the Lord had commanded Moses. The Lord was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him."

It was in this period of time that the nation of Israel was taken over by Assyria and most of the people were taken into captivity. There was therefore then a threat upon Judah of being conquered and taken captive by Assyria as well. Through the prophets, including Isaiah, Hezekiah was told not to go for help from Egypt which is mentioned in the first part of Isaiah chapter 30. The gist of what God speaks through Isaiah to King Hezekiah and Judah was to turn from seeking other ways of escape, to find their rest in God, to abide in Him, wait on Him, God will show Himself exalted. They did go through a period of suffering, but God opened their eyes and ears to hear His Word, to know the way to follow Him, and that they must forsake all of their worthless idols, speak against them, and God will bring forth the fruit of a harvest in God's perfect time. This message brings to mind the great promise that God gives us in **Phillipians 1:6**, that "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." It is important though to recognize that the Apostle Paul qualified that by first saying, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for **your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.**" So then the whole promise, in context, is Paul saying, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." As they were remaining in their faith in Christ in their fellowship in the gospel THEN "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ." (**Philippians 1:3-6**)

We like to think of God's promises as unconditional but it His great love for us that is unconditional. Yes, God loves us more than we can possibly imagine. He loves you personally. After all, He created you for His purpose and pleasure. **Colossians 1:16** says, "For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. While we will be looking at **Isaiah 30**, later in **Isaiah 43:7**, God says, "Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him." God's unconditional love for us can be found in **2 Peter 3:9**, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Repentance implies that the condition of the promise rests on us, not Him. For an analogy, suppose a parent says to their

child, "hold onto my hand, we're crossing a very busy street. Don't let go of my hand or you can be hurt or killed." If the child adheres to the parents warning, all will be well. If the child sees a coin on the ground and lets go of the parent's hand and rushes to get the coin, well, bad things can happen, just as the parent had explained. Yet, where this analogy fails is that the parent is no match for the great promises and protection, the perfect protection of God Almighty!

God's great love and promise to us, is in the Words of Jesus, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**) Yet Jesus also said in **John 8:51**, "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word he shall never see death." (**John 8:51**) And Jesus said also, "if you love me keep my commandments," (**John 14:15**), and "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." (**John 14:21**) And then in **John 14:23-24**, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and WE will come to him and make OUR home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." To truly believe on Jesus is to know, to love, and to obey Him. After all, as Jesus tells us, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (**John 14:6**)

This is similarly how we find King Hezekiah in our story. Hezekiah and the nation of Judah was told by God to not follow after Egypt. God said through Isaiah, "In returning [to God] and rest [in Him] you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Therefore then, in returning to God and trusting in Him, they would find their salvation and rest. We know from **2 Kings 19:35**, that as Judah waited on God for His deliverance from the Assyrian army, that an angel of the Lord killed 185,000 Assyrians in their camp. When God says to trust in Him, that He will take care of it, He WILL take care of it, yet it is always on His time. As God's Word promises in **Philippians 4:4-7**, "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Wow!!! What an incredible promise! "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you." (**1 Peter 5:6-7**) God will take care of you...and He will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus! How about one more. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not

on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." (**Proverbs 3:5-6**)

So first, Judah was told to **rest in Him**. Just as we are told to abide in Christ (**John 15**). We are trusting in Christ Jesus that we WILL be saved, that HE IS our Way, Truth, and Life. Then **verse 18** says, "Therefore the Lord will wait, that He may be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him." You ever think about how God is many times just waiting on us? He may be saying something like, "anytime you're ready to quit trying to do things on your own and solve your own problems, here I AM." God is exalted and glorified when He saves us, when He rescues us, when He delivers us from evil! Just as 2700 years after God saved Judah from Assyria He is still receiving the glory. "Blessed are those who wait on Him." He doesn't usually show up on our timetable. Yet God has the omniscient wisdom to show up when He will be exalted, when we can recognize Him for His mercy, when we can recognize His justice, when we will recognize Him as the Lord God Almighty! God basically said to King Hezekiah and the nation of Judah, "wait for it, wait for it, wait for it..." and then WHAM! 185,000 of the troops of the Assyrians slain instantly! So then we too are to rest in Him (trusting in Him) and to **wait for Him**.

Then in our passage of Scripture it says, "And though the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet your teachers will not be moved into a corner anymore, but your eyes shall see your teachers. Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, "This is the way, walk in it." Just as it was with God's people in the Old Testament times He does with us today. Jesus is our Teacher and teaches us to know Him, trust in Him, to believe in Him, to hope in Him, and to love Him and honor Him. What is good enough for our Lord and Savior Jesus is good enough for us. Jesus had to suffer on this earth, the disciples had to suffer on this earth, God's prophets had to suffer on this earth. "All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." (**2 Timothy 3:12**). That persecution isn't always because of a blatantly obvious, godless person that argues with you about the doctrine or teachings of Christ Jesus. We live in a sin infested world and yes, with a lot of Godless people. Who am I referring to as Godless? Once again, as Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and WE will come to him and make OUR home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." (**John 14:23-24**) Therefore if one has the Son of God dwelling in them they also have the Father. God will one day right all of the wrong but in the meantime, we must put our full trust in Him. 1. Rest in Him, 2. Wait on Him, and 3. Endure Suffering (without turning away). 4. and obey Him

God has given us His instruction manual, His love letter to us in the Word of God, the Holy Bible. As the Apostle Paul tells us through his letter to Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**" (2 Timothy 3:16-17) He's also given His Holy Spirit to those who obey Him, as the Apostle Peter preached. (Acts 5:32) Yet how will we know we're hearing His Word if we don't know His Word? How will we know His Word if we don't study it, meditate on it, and get it embedded in our hearts? The Holy Spirit is given to us to lead us into all truth, as Jesus promised (John 16:13), but how will we know the truth if we don't spend time in His Word? When we read God's Word, with a heart that is truly seeking Him, then we find His Word is "**living and powerful [active]**, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." That is, separating the one who has died in Christ and our spirit that has been made alive in Christ. As Jesus tells us, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

"You will also defile the covering of your images of silver, and the ornament of your molded images of gold. You will throw them away as an unclean thing; You will say to them, "Get away!" As we follow Jesus, we are to recognize that Jesus died for our sins and then "in the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus." (Romans 6:11) Therefore, "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2) Those sins that have held us back we must take to the cross and surrender them to Jesus. When we call Jesus our Savior, not only did He die once and for all for our sins against God, but He is still our Savior when we need His help in overcoming sin and evil. When we do sin though we must confess our sin to God and then His Word tells us that, "He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) We are also told to "submit to God, resist the devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) As a child of God we have to also ask God to "deliver you from evil", as Jesus included in what we call the Lord's prayer. Whatever sin has come between you and God, may you confess that to God, ask for forgiveness, and turn from that sin. "Lust, I no longer want it in my heart or in my life!" "Bitterness, I no longer want you in my heart or in my life!" "Unforgiveness, I no longer want you in my heart or in my life!" "Selfishness, I no longer want you in my heart or in my life!" "Pride, I no longer want you in my heart or in my life!"

"Anger, I no longer want you in my heart or in my life!" "Heavenly Father, deliver me, I pray, from evil. Help me Lord Jesus!"

We are called to live as children of God according to the doctrine of Christ which is summed up in what Jesus said was the great commandment and the second that is like unto it. We are expected by God, as His children, to love Him with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and then also to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Mark 12:30-31) In Matthew's account of Jesus saying that, Jesus concluded by saying, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:40) Therefore we are to 1. Rest in Him, 2. Wait on Him, and 3. Endure Suffering (without turning away), and 4 follow Him, that is Jesus and 5. Turn from evil, and pray for deliverance from evil.

"Then He will give the rain for your seed with which you sow the ground, and bread of the increase of the earth; It will be fat and plentiful. In that day your cattle will feed in large pastures." Jesus said, Jesus tells us in John 15:8, "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit." God wants us and others to know that He is the Lord, He desires to be exalted, and glorified to us and through us. As we 1. Rest in Him (abide in Him), 2. Wait on Him, and 3. Endure Suffering (without turning away), and 4 follow Him, that is Jesus and 5. Turn from evil, praying for deliverance from evil, we will bear much fruit for His glory, honor, and praise and for His eternal kingdom. It involves truly believing on the Lord Jesus, from beginning to end, no matter what our circumstances.