

The Encounter Series

N – Nuach~Rest

One of my favourite verses in the Bible is Exodus 33:14 where the verb that is used is a wonderful one: *nuach*.

And the Lord said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Most of you will have heard of the Hebrew noun 'ruach' (the 'breath, wind or Spirit' of God). Let me introduce you now to 'nu'ach,' a verb that occurs on numerous occasions in the Bible. The primary meaning of this precious soothing word is to rest or settle down, to be soothed or quieted.¹

There are many occasions when the Lord speaks about giving rest – for example the Lord's promise to David in 2 Samuel 7:11

And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house.²

This restfulness itself produces remarkable results. In the following example we see that God sends His *nuach* – and people are enabled to prophesy.

*Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit **rested** on them, they prophesied. Numbers 11:25-26*

¹ It is not the only word used for rest in Scripture. There is for example *damam* in Psalm 37:7

*Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way,
over the man who carries out evil devices!*

And the lovely word *charash*, as in Zephaniah 3:17 – *He will rest in His love.*

*The Lord your God is in your midst,
a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness;
he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.*

² (Cf 1 Chronicles 22:18 and 2 Chronicles 14:6-7:

"Is not the Lord your God with you? And has he not given you peace on every side? For he has delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land is subdued before the Lord and his people.

*He built fortified cities in Judah, for the land had **rest**. He had no war in those years, for the Lord gave him peace. 7 And he said to Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the Lord our God. We have sought him, and he has given us peace on every side." So they built and prospered.*

We know from Isaiah 11:2 that *the Spirit of the Lord rests on Him [Jesus]*. We often receive an impartation through His Spirit 'resting' on us. At other times, we gain an imparting through spending time with those who are particularly anointed in the Spirit.

Now when the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho saw him opposite them, they said, "The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha." 2 Kings 2:15

Both good and bad alliances and confederations can come about as a result of impartation. It is not hard to think of examples of people influence people for ill, at both a personal and an international level.

When the house of David was told, "Syria is in league with Ephraim," [literally Syria has rested upon] the heart of Ahaz and the hearts of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind. Isaiah 7:2

Habakkuk was disturbed by the troubles the Lord showed him were coming on the nation, but he reached a real place of *nuach*:

*I hear, and my body trembles;
my lips quiver at the sound;
rottenness enters into my bones;
my legs tremble beneath me.
Yet I will quietly wait for the day of trouble
to come [rest] upon people who invade us. (Hab. 3:16)*

There is a lovely promise for Daniel too when he had been through great mental agitation:

*But go your way till the end.
And you shall rest
and shall stand in your allotted place at the end of the days. Daniel 12:13*

Peter is surely translating the idea of *nuach* when he declares that *the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you*. (1 Peter 4:14) It is worth remembering the context in which these words were spoken however: it is when we are **insulted** for the name of Christ that we are blessed!

The Lord Himself will invite the faithful to **rest** from their labours:

Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete,

who were to be killed as they themselves had been. And I heard a voice from heaven saying, "Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on." "Blessed indeed," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!" Revelation 6:11 and 14:13.

Rest, if it is of an indolent nature, can make us complacent and inclined to cut corners, resting more on a false sense of our own competence or importance than on Christ Himself. Nehemiah 9:28 describes a familiar tale:

But after they had rest they did evil again before you, and you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies, so that they had dominion over them. Yet when they turned and cried to you, you heard from heaven, and many times you delivered them according to your mercies.

When we read Proverbs 29:17, some of us must hold our hands up to and confess that we have done far less well in this respect than others:

*Discipline your son, and he will give you rest;
he will give delight to your heart.*

I was surprised to discover recently that *ruach* is used on several occasions to describe the anger of the Lord. (I will say more about that in a subsequent word study). *Nuach* is mentioned as a calming influence in the midst of more weighty emotions: for instance in Ezekiel 5:13 and 16:42:

*"Thus shall my anger spend itself, and I will vent my fury upon them and satisfy myself. And they shall know that I am the Lord – that I have spoken in my jealousy – when I spend my fury upon them . . .
So will I satisfy my wrath on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you. I will **be calm** and will no more be angry.³*

Note too Ezekiel 44:30:

*The first of all the firstfruits of all kinds, and every offering of all kinds from all your offerings, shall belong to the priests. You shall also give to the priests the first of your dough, that a blessing may **rest** on your house.*

Pray for those who are in the category of Lamentations 5:5 who labour and have no rest (*nuach*).

³ Cf Zechariah 6:8 "Behold, those who go toward the north country have set my Spirit **at rest** in the north country."

*Our pursuers are at our necks;
we are weary; we are given no rest.*

Pray 2 Chronicles 6:41:

*“Arise, O Lord, and go to your **resting place**,
you and the ark of your might.
Let your priests, O Lord God, be clothed with salvation,
and let your saints rejoice in your goodness.*

Menuchah

In Isaiah 28:12 the Lord presents His people with a wonderful offer: ‘This is the resting-place, let the weary rest,’ and ‘This is the place of repose.’

The word used here, *menuchah*, is a derivative of nuach. It means **a place of rest – or a place of special soothing**. It is the word used in Psalm 23:2: ‘He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside **still** waters. (literally: waters of rest.)’

It is so important to know what people, places and practices refresh our soul and prepare us for action.

Naomi prays that her daughters in law may find this **rest**, in the home of another husband,” (Ruth 1:9) but the Lord had other ideas: He would meet with Ruth in the Promised Land. It is *much* better to be in the land of promise than in the land of apparent plenty!

The Lord desires that we enter His special rest, not least because it enables us to draw close to where He Himself is.

*“This is my **resting place** forever;
here I will dwell, for I have desired it. Psalm 132:14*

It is by no means automatic, however, that we will enter it fully:

In Isaiah 66:1 the Lord asks an important question. May our hearts be part of the answer!

*Thus says the Lord:
“Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool;
what is the house that you would build for me,
and what is the place of my **rest**?”*

The Lord said to David:

Behold, a son shall be born to you who shall be a man of rest. I will give him rest from all his surrounding enemies. For his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.

David himself, however, was only partially able to enter into this rest.

I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.' (1 Chronicles 22:9; 28:2).

The people Isaiah addressed likewise did not enter in to all that God had in store for them:

*to whom he has said,
"This is **rest**; (the resting place)
give **rest** to the weary;
and this is repose";
yet they would not hear . . .
Therefore I swore in my wrath,
"They shall not enter my **rest**." (Isaiah 28:12, Psalm 132:8)⁴*

The Spirit of God delights to draw us closer to our heavenly homeland as we pray for His 'ruach' to 'nuach' (settle deeply) on us. May the Lord help us to develop the ability to enter more deeply into His rest and experience the fullness of His *nuach* and *menuchah* rest of God. It can only be good for you, for us and for others!

⁴ Compare and contrast Proverbs 14:33 and Ecclesiastes 7:9:
*Wisdom **rests** in the heart of a man of understanding,
but it makes itself known even in the midst of fools . . .
Be not quick in your spirit to become angry,
for anger lodges (**rests**) in the bosom of fools.*



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