

## Imagining The Garden Of Eden (Part Seven)

**The Nuach Rest**

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**Given 16-Oct-10; Sermon #1015**

Agricultural cultivation has been a primary occupation of humankind since Adam and Eve. The initial definition of cultivation is fairly simple, and I think you will see this is very true. Cultivation is the process of growing plants, specifically crops for food but also for other uses, on arable land. The term *cultivation* is usually associated with large-scale agriculture; we are talking farming rather than simply gardening. You could say that you are cultivating your garden, but normally it is for bigger processes.

Crop cultivation requires fertile soil and water from irrigation or precipitation, and seeds—you need the seeds, otherwise you're just performing a purposeless task—and also various specialized tools: the plow, the shovel, the cultivator itself, and various other things all the way up to great, big combines and harvesting machines. Cultivation involves such things as tilling of the land, sowing of the seeds in the appropriate season, fertilization, controlling weeds, deterring pests, and of course harvesting the crops.

In the modern age, this practice has been developed into the professional science of agronomy. This has expanded and specialized into areas such as crop rotation, irrigation and drainage, plant breeding, plant physiology and genetics, soil classification, soil fertility, weed control, and insect and pest control. So we're talking about a big subject here. In the past several decades it has developed into a highly technical field, especially lately in the cutting-edge field of genetic modification of plant genomes to increase yields, heighten drought and pest resistance, and, they hope, produce beneficial traits.

As we know, genetically modified organisms do not always play by the rules. We have heard even from this pulpit the horror stories of super bugs and super weeds. We wonder if our food is safe to eat over the long term. We have heard that there are some varieties of potatoes and corn and other

crops that are not good to eat. I have recently heard that almost all the soybeans that are produced in the United States are genetically modified.

I think this is clear, but other people contest this (and they are probably being paid by Monsanto); but agronomists, I believe, are playing God. They are dabbling in matters beyond their knowledge and certainly beyond their control. They plant a field of genetically modified this or that and say that it is working on this particular crop, and they publish this to everyone and say what a success it was. But we found studies that say that these things leap over the boundaries of these fields and infect plants that are not even related to them. The weeds become pest resistant and pesticide resistant or herbicide resistant, and they start taking over.

God prepared the earth and everything in it for man's use. So it begs the question, why should man try to improve upon what God made? He certainly created the food plants to give us the nutrition we need, so it is very dangerous and presumptuous for men to change what God created, which is very good. That was His own judgment on His creation, that is was all very good, and it was perfect for the purposes for which He made it.

If we search out the history of agriculture on the Internet or in some secular history, we would find some absolutely ridiculous theories regarding this primary human activity, call it agriculture or cultivation. At least these things are ridiculous to those of us who believe the Bible. For instance, secular historians (and we have to understand that they come from an evolutionary bias and believe only what can be verified by science and archaeology), posit that agriculture was developed, and these are their words, at least 10,000 years ago. So we are going way back, most likely in the Fertile Crescent, though it seems to have happened simultaneously in parts of China, Africa, New Guinea (of all places) and the Americas in several places. And they say that before 10,000 years ago, the fruits of these plants, particularly grains, leaves (for example, spinach or lettuce) and also berries were gathered by hand in the wild, because before 10,000 BC (or 10,000 years ago), we were all hunter/gatherers. We had not evolved to the point where we could stick a seed in the ground and grow it and cultivate it. Talk about wild—their theories are wild. If you want to see where I got this, there is a web site called [xtimeline.com](http://xtimeline.com) that shows you a timeline of human agriculture. It is utterly fascinating, as you might imagine.

But the Bible declares that agriculture began immediately after creation, 6,000 years ago. Genesis 3:17-19 indicates that God had already broached to Adam and Eve what he would be doing, that he would be a farmer, he would till the ground, he would work the earth. This is an indication that at the time of the Garden of Eden, God was instructing them (Adam maybe specifically) in this would be employment, profession, or occupation. Verse 17 is in the curse of Adam after he sinned:

**Genesis 3:17-19** Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return.”

So we see that because Adam had sinned, his cultivation of the earth would be cursed. It would be harder than it would have been had he remained obedient to God. God would have blessed his endeavors. He would have been able to put seed in the ground, and the ground then would have produced abundantly with less sweat of his face, as it says here. He would have been able to work *with* the earth rather than against it, and produce great yields, great crops, to feed humanity.

**Genesis 4:1** Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have acquired a man from the LORD.” Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.

We find here that Adam and Eve’s first two sons were involved in agriculture, one in growing of animals, the other in growing of crops. We see here that immediately after the Garden of Eden, we have agriculture going full-throttle for this very small family that was humanity at that time. My point here is that mankind was never really without the knowledge of sowing

and cultivating and reaping, since God clearly instructed them of on these matters in the Garden of Eden. He would not have just kicked them out of the Garden to fend for themselves; God is not that kind of God. He always gives the instructions that are needed for life, so He would have given them what they needed to know.

The historians were correct in saying that agriculture began in the Fertile Crescent, but entirely wrong in suggesting that it happened concurrently all over the globe. What they are seeing in their archaeology, and dating very badly, is the simultaneous reinstitution of agriculture after the Flood. That was part of Noah's job to spread the people out over the whole earth, and once he had spread them out in these various places, they would have begun farming. That is what people do. They have to grow food, so the archaeological remains of ancient agriculture that they found are proof that Noah, at least in part, did somewhat of what he was supposed to do. How cooperative the people were, we do not know, but Noah certainly did his part.

In this series on imagining the Garden of Eden, we have been moving forward on the concept that in giving us a human spirit, God endowed us with imagination. The imagination that He has given us is a good thing, although it can be used for evil. But He wants us to use it in creative, inventive, artistic, and other endeavors, to help us to see possibilities that we may not have thought of before. We can employ it to great advantage in Bible study, as long as we keep our imaginations firmly within the bounds, firmly within the hedges, of God's revelation. In a sense, what we are doing in using our imaginations when we approach God's word is trying to read between the lines to provide depth and background, thus understanding what is written. If we employ our imaginations, we should be able to enhance our understanding and see more possibilities of what God may be trying to get us to understand.

I will give you a short summary of what has gone on before. This is sermon number seven so I have six sermons to summarize here. The Garden of Eden narrative covers Genesis 2 and 3, and right now we are only up to Genesis 2: 14. We saw that Genesis 2 is not a separate creation account from Genesis 1. There is a big controversy in theological circles about whether Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are two separate accounts that have been brought together in the Bible, almost like we are supposed to choose between one of the other,

which one we are going to believe. We found that Genesis 2 actually concentrates on day six, primarily, and it provides a lot more details for what God did on that particular day. We also saw in the first sermon that Genesis 1, the creation account, is more universal and grandiose in scope, whereas Genesis 2 is more down to earth and it is very detailed and personal.

So we go from macro to micro in the detail, and I also suggested that the changing of the name of God in these chapters parallels this change, that we go from the great God of all things to the Lord God who is our personal Savior, the one who wants to be our Elder Brother. We also saw the creation of Adam and how God was very meticulous in His artistry in creating man. We also saw the planting of the Garden of Eden, where I suggested that God planted the Garden after creating Adam, in order to reveal to him who He was and to prove to him that He was the creator, so he could see the Lord God at work, and give him an example of what he should be doing.

I talked extensively about the breath of life and *naphesh*, very important concepts that occur in of the first verses of Genesis 2. One sermon covered what and where Eden was, and also where the Garden was located within Eden. We ascertained that by some of the clues that we saw there that it must have been in the area of Jerusalem.

We also looked briefly into the two trees. I concentrated a bit more on the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. In the last sermon, I described the four rivers of Eden. It is actually one river and four branches of it, as it is described in Genesis. I also showed that we cannot use those pre-Flood rivers to locate Eden on a modern map, because we have had the Flood between then and now, and the courses of those rivers have been drastically changed. If we look at a topographical map of the area Jerusalem, we are not going to see the Tigris, the Euphrates, and those other rivers anywhere close. As a matter of fact, the one river that we can establish that is in the area Jerusalem is merely a spring now. So we cannot use the biblical clues to find it on a modern map.

The short paragraph of Genesis 2:15-17 contains some of the most critical, fundamental verses in the entire Bible. These are big. There are only three

little verses, but they are big verses in our understanding of God's way, of God Himself, of what God wants, where God is going. So we are going to be taking these three verses quite slowly.

I imagined that I was going to get through verse 15 today, but we are not going to get through verse 15 today, because there is so much, it is just packed full in these very few words.

**Genesis 2:15-17** Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it [a very simple statement, but there is a lot there]. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

That is our subject for the next 15 sermons—I am exaggerating, but it very well could; there is just so much packed into these three little verses. Right now we are going to concern ourselves only with verse 15. What we want to do immediately in seeing what it says here—“Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it”—is that the primary actor and the one who has been the primary actor throughout this whole narrative up to this point is the LORD God.

Genesis 2 is about the actions of this Person. Later on, we find Adam taking some actions also, but even then it is the LORD God leading him into these things. So the subject of the entire chapter is God, it is not necessarily Adam. This is a revelation to us of God's part in creation, God's part in leading us, God's part in providing for us, God doing this, that, and the other thing. Genesis 2 is just full of understanding of how God started mankind off on the right foot and gave him everything that he needed. Genesis 3 is how it all went bad because of man's part, and also Satan's, but we will not get to that for a while.

It is the LORD God who takes the man and puts him in the Garden. Now that is kind of an interesting way to put it. God took the man—here, he was already conscious, as far as we can tell, because it says in verse 7, which is previous to this in the chronology, that He breathed into him the breath of life. So he was alive, he was conscious; he had all that understanding that the spirit of

man gives a person. So he was conscious; he saw, he watched, he beheld the LORD God planting a garden. He saw Him at work. I am sure he was given instructions so he not only saw God at work, he heard Him talking to him, telling him things and instructing him on all kinds of things. So we have Adam, here, being very passive at this point. God is the one doing. God is the one taking him and putting him in the Garden. We could read this taking and putting as if God were taking a canary and putting it in a cage. It almost sounds like that, where Adam was just an object, not sentient, being manipulated. But that is not the way we should look at it.

These verbs are in the passive voice. These actions are done to Adam. That is not how it reads in English, but in Hebrew, these are in the passive. You would understand that these things were done *to* Adam, and not that Adam was doing them himself. But we should never get the impression that God did this against the man's will. That is not the way all. Just because it was done to him does not mean that he was not eagerly going on his own volition. Actually, I saw that suggested in one of the Hebrew lexicons that I looked up on these words, that they said that it was done against his will, and I do not see where they got that. Instead, I think we should imagine something along the lines of God taking Adam by the hand and leading him to the Garden and installing him in it. This was more along the lines of a cooperative effort. Maybe a better way to put it, in theological terms if you like, would be more like a husband leading his bride into their new home and presenting it to her as their permanent residence. “Look what I have made for you, honey.” “Look what I have made for you, my son. Come on in, this is where we are going to live together.”

And so we find Adam being more than willing to come along because he had watched this beautiful garden being created right before his very eyes, and he was probably very eager to go there because it was paradise. Now Adam did not have anything to compare it to, but I am sure he could see the beauty. He could see the fertility, he could see the way that everything was just there, all these blessings, all this produce that was right there at hand. He was very willing to go along with Christ, the pre-incarnate Christ, to this new home of his.

This is where we get into some of the nitty-gritty of this. The Hebrew word underlined *take* is a common Hebrew word, and we do not even need to

worry about this word because it is very similar to our own concept of “take.” They are pretty much the same. If you put them side by side, they do not sound the same, but their meanings are pretty much the same. So it goes from take, as in stealing; or take as in carry; or take as in your being able to absorb something (“he could take it”). All those things are in this same word, so we are not going to deal with this word very much, because it simply means that that God took Adam to the Garden. He conveyed him there.

A much more interesting word is *put*. To us, that is another really common word; it means to place a thing. But in Hebrew, even though the word does have that connotation in some instances, meaning “to deposit,” it means a bit more than that here. I believe *put* is a very bland and awful translation of this word. If I can give them credit at all for using *put*, it was safe. I think they chose to use *put* because God did put Adam in the garden, but the translators did not want to mess with the theology, because I think that it would lead to areas that they were not comfortable with.

The root word here that we are talking about is the word *nuach*. It is very interesting, because another big word in this chapter is *ruach*, which is breath. But this is *nuach*. In the passive voice that is used here, it means to cause to rest, or to cause to dwell. You can see where *put* would come in here: You can say that to put somebody someplace would be the same as to cause them to rest there, to cause them to be put there. But this word is theologically sensitive. The *Theological Word Book of the Old Testament* on this word gives these synonyms: *shabbat*, connoting the absence or the ceasing of activity or a particular activity (you can see why they might not want to talk about this word, other than in terms of *put*); *shaqat*, this is one we are not very familiar with; it connotes the absence of disturbance from external causes; also *shalom* as in *Jerushalom*, *Jersusalem*, connotes not just peace but wholeness, and as a matter of fact, the way it actually comes across best connotes the state of well-being. Two more synonyms: *domi* which means quiet, and *raga'*, which means to be in repose.

We have the definition here of *nuach*, “to cause to rest or dwell.” That is the technical definition of the passive form of this verb. But its synonyms (*shabbat*, *shaqat*, *shalom*, *domi*, *raga'*) are a very interesting selection of synonyms. Obviously with the mention of *shabbat*, we can come to this conclusion that this is actually the second time in this chapter (as men have



divided them) that godly life, or the life God wishes us to lead, is described in terms of rest. We see that in verses 2 and 3:

**Genesis 2:2-3** And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had done, and He rested [that's *shabbat*] on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested [*shabbat*] from all His work which God had created and made.

Here in these two verses, as we come into the second creation account (this is actually the end of the first creation account, but it is part of the transition to the second account of the same thing), we have the idea of rest. God gave an example of His resting, and as we know later, commanded that we all do as He did. But here, He used the word *shabbat*, meaning He ceased, He stopped. He stopped doing the creating that He had been doing in making the physical creation. So in the language used here, this was seen as rest and understood as rest.

In Genesis 2:15, God shows in His leadership of Adam into the Garden that His intent from the very beginning was for mankind to dwell in a state of rest, for all time. Notice the difference in verses 2 and 3, we see God ceasing and resting on the seventh day. But in verse 15, we see on the sixth day God leading Adam into the Garden of Eden to rest on a weekday, to cause him to rest. This starts to make things go in your brain, I hope, and please continue to think. The *nuach* rest (I will call these the *shabbat* rest and the *nuach* rest, so we keep them separate) is not inactivity. The *shabbat* rest is. In that case, God ceased, so technically the *shabbat* rest as shown in verses 2 and 3 means that He stopped doing what He did. But the *nuach* rest in verse 15 is not one of inactivity, but a permanent state of peace and security. It is a permanent state of peace and security that is only possible in God's presence. We are going to add to this because that is not the final definition, that is just what we have seen so far in terms of the way *nuach* is defined by the lexicons.

This state of being, this state of peace and security, is symbolized by the Garden. He took him in to dwell in this garden, as the garden was in a state of peace and security among other things. Some commentators call this particular *nuach* rest *salvation rest* (we will understand shortly). The commentators also describe it as *victory rest*, which is also interesting

because the understanding of the word *overcome* has to do with victory, with prevailing, for gaining a victory over. We know that the New Testament idea of the rest of God, as we see in Hebrews 4:4-11, will become a reality in His eternal Kingdom. Already in Genesis 2:15, we are getting hints about this ultimate state of being, because of this word *nuach*.

This is a different form of rest from what we have been generally taught in the church of God. We have been taught mostly about the *shabbat* form of rest. The *nuach* form of rest is a little bit different. There is some overlapping and they are not antithetical to each other in the least. But this adds another layer, and I especially want to show by the end of the sermon how it adds a layer to our observance of the Sabbath; and, in general, how we conduct our lives in the world on the other six days.

So we have these two ideas in Genesis 2: the *shabbat rest* and the *nuach rest*. Notice what happens when we go to the commandment, in Exodus 20:8-11, where the word *nuach* is found in verse 11:

**Exodus 20:8-11** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath [the *shabbat*] of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. [Verse 11] For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and [ *nuach*] rested the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day [the *shabbat* day, the day of ceasing] and hallowed it.

Both *shabbat* and *nuach* are used here, *nuach* once and *shabbat* several times. In verse 11, God recounts Genesis 2 and 3, where He went into the *shabbat* rest after He created on six days. Do you know that in the commandment He changed it? He did not *shabbat* rest, He *nuach* rested. Those are God's own words. In Genesis 2:2-3, when the account is given in the narrative, it is only talking about *shabbat*, but when it comes to the giving of the commandment, He shows that the rest that He actually did not only include *shabbat* but it also included *nuach*. He did both.

So the commandment takes up both ideas, which means that the commandment on us means that we need to keep both. We need to cease from doing our customary work and we also need to indulge ourselves in the rest of God, the *nuach* rest. They are to be done in tandem. The Sabbath is not just a day of ceasing from work, it is also a day of immersing ourselves in this other rest as well. Both concepts have to be done to keep the Sabbath properly.

So far we have some ideas of how to define *nuach*, but I want to do it even more clearly if we can. Technically, it means to rest, dwell, or even to settle down. We saw it in the passive; this is in the more active sense, to rest, to dwell or to settle down. The root concept that we need to understand, underlying all of these things, is being stable—that is what happens when you rest, you come to a stop, you may be in a reclining position, you are stable in that state—but maybe even more importantly as far as we are concerned, this word implies permanent stability. It is being stable and permanently so.

This has all kinds of connections to what I brought out on the Last Great Day in my sermon, afterward on the Sabbath after that, because that concept is that the Last Great Day symbolizes the permanence of eternity—forever and ever—that the state of mankind will be fixed, as sons of God. We will dwell forever in this glorified state with God. It is the idea of enduring, of being settled, not being in the wilderness, of having real roots and a foundation, and the concept of forever. This idea of *nuach* fits right in, because the rest of God that He wants us to have, which is showed here in Genesis 2, leading Adam into the Garden of Eden, is a symbol for what we are going to have in the new heavens and the new earth. It is easy to see that this Godly rest, this *nuach*, has its ultimate fulfillment in God's kingdom, when everything and everyone will be permanently settled for all eternity.

Now what does this mean for us spiritually; what does it mean in terms of keeping the Sabbath? That is my focus for the rest of the sermon. We are going to put together the appearances of this word and find out how the Bible uses it so we can have a better understanding. I will say as a summary that these occurrences in the Old Testament suggest the state of being securely settled in peace, blessing, contentment, even delight, and victory

through God's intervention and our continued obedience. These concepts are all there in various places throughout the Old Testament. If you want a very short phrase to understand God's rest: true bliss. The way God would consider true bliss, and we are to be practicing this true bliss, this true spiritual bliss, every Sabbath day. We are trying to get to this point where we are we are securely settled in peace, blessing, contentment, or even delight (remember, God said that the Sabbath day was a delight), and victory through God's intervention and our continued obedience.

Here is a handful of some of the 144 appearances of this word in the Old Testament. I am going to take these in biblical order as they are presented in the Old Testament. The first one, in Exodus 33, is interesting because it is in the section of Scripture just after the Golden Calf incident, and Moses is asking God to show Himself to him because he needed reassurance.

**Exodus 33:14** And He said [God said to Moses], “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest [*nuach*]”

That is a very interesting way to put it, because these clauses are parallel. “My Presence will go with you” is parallel to “I will give you rest.” They are not talking about two different things; they are talking about the same thing. So here it is implied that God's presence is the source or catalyst of this rest. It is God *in* the day that makes the Sabbath a rest. It is God in us that gives us true rest. God's presence is the common denominator for that rest. Without God in the picture, there can be no rest, not this kind of rest.

The first major characteristic of this *nuach* rest, the one we saw in Genesis 2: 15, is that God was there. He lived in the Garden and He brought Adam to live in the Garden with Him. Therefore, he had what it took to have this rest: He caused him to rest by bringing him into the Garden with Him.

**Numbers 32:15** For if you turn away from following Him, He will once again leave them in the wilderness and you will destroy all these people.

This is in the section of Scripture where the tribes Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh wanted to settle on the east side of Jordan and they were given permission to do so. This is a warning against them leaving or apostatizing.

The word “rest” does not appear there. This particular verb is translated as “will leave them.” That is a negative form, meaning that if you turn away from God (Reuben, Gad and half Manasseh), I am not going to allow you to have rest. God is basically saying “I will un-rest you, by putting you back into the wilderness.”

They came into the Promised Land in order to have rest. That was supposed to be the way it was. We find out in Hebrews that the rest really never occurred. But that was the promise, that if they would go into the land, God would see that all of their enemies were done away with, chased away, and He would give them rest. So we have these two concepts: the Promised Land (think Kingdom of God) is the place of rest but the wilderness is the place of the unrest. It is a place of unease; it is a place of un-repose. It is a place where there are all kinds of things going on. There is contention, privation, “no joy in Mudville,” as it were, because you are not permanently settled. You are in a state of unrest all the time.

If you forsake God and do not keep His commandments, He will leave you out in the wilderness. This is where we get the idea that our continued obedience is part of the equation. God will intervene in order to give us rest, but that is conditional upon our continued obedience. If we forsake Him, He will kick us out of the Garden. What did He do to Adam and Eve? He brought them into His rest, into the Garden of Eden, and they were there for just a short while. Satan came in, tempted them, they sinned (meaning they did not obey God, they were idolatrous), and God kicked them out. Where? Into the wilderness.

When Cain sinned, where did he go? Into the land of Nod, which was basically a wilderness area out east of the Garden of Eden. What we see here is that our continued obedience is part of God's rest. If we are not obedient, we will not have the rest. Obedience to His law is very important.

**Deuteronomy 12:10-11** But when you cross over the Jordan and dwell in the land which the LORD your God is giving you to inherit, and He gives you rest from all your enemies round about, so that you dwell in safety, then there will be the place where the LORD your God chooses to make His name abide.

Now notice, in this case He is promising to give them rest and to have a place where He lives among them. So in a way, God was recreating the conditions of Eden. He was going to bring them into this land where He lived and He would give them rest all about from their enemies. It was a physical promise that He would give them peace and rest.

**Joshua 21:43-44** So the LORD gave to Israel all the land which He had sworn to give to their fathers, and they took possession of it and dwelt in it. The LORD gave them rest all around, according to all that He had sworn to their fathers. And not a man of all their enemies stood against them; the LORD delivered all their enemies into their hand.

A lot has happened between Deuteronomy 12 and these verses in Joshua. Here we have the connotation of rest in terms of a lack of enemies, an absence of enemies, and therefore the people had peace and safety and security. And maybe what is even better is that there was no contention. There was no one to fight. Peace, safety, and security: these are all elements of this *nuach* rest.

**I Chronicles 22:9** Behold a son shall be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies all around. His name shall be Solomon, for I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days.

That is in David's lifetime when God is promising him that He will allow his son to build the Temple. History shows that during that time, Solomon did not have to fight any wars. The result was obviously peace and quietness. Solomon's empire was able to expand. Economically, he was wealthy beyond avarice and it was the golden age of Israel. So we could add prosperity in here if we wanted to, but I particularly want to add the concept of quietness, because we have seen the others before. Peace we have seen before, lack of enemies we have seen before, but this idea of quietness, or you could even say stillness, is new.

**II Chronicles 6:41** Now therefore, arise, O LORD God, to Your resting place [talking about the temple, where God lives on earth],

You and the ark of Your strength, let Your priests, O LORD God be clothed with salvation, and let Your saints rejoice in goodness.

That is during Solomon's prayer of dedication when he finally did build that Temple. This is an interesting one because it is used as an adjective, but I want you to notice the other words that surround it, which give an idea of why it is used this way. God is in His Temple. There is peace in the reign of Solomon all about. God is dwelling with His people, and what are the ideas that surface to Solomon about this particular condition? Strength, salvation, joy, and goodness. Are we adding all these little factors in to the *nuach* rest as we go along? These are the wonderful blessings that come when God's presence is known and taken advantage of, cooperated with. This is the kind of thing that Adam could have enjoyed in the Garden of Eden. Here we are just adding some of these concepts that are part of this *nuach* rest.

**Job 3:26** I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes.

Job defines it negatively to his three friends by the antonyms of the word "rest" (*nuach*). We see some of the things that should be absent when we are participating in God's rest. When we are in God's rest we should be at ease; we should not be troubled; we should have quiet or stillness. It should be a time when there is no contention, no trouble, nothing loud and cacophonous (I am not necessarily talking about actual sound, I am talking about jarring occurrences). It is a time of peace, quiet, and ease.

**Psalms 116:7** Return to your rest, O my soul, for the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.

That is a psalm of thanks after being saved from physical death. The rest of God comes as a result of God's blessing, His bountiful blessing. There is the idea of God's intervention coming in here. The ability to have this rest would not have occurred unless God did something. Remember in Genesis 2:15, He took Adam and He placed him, or He caused him to rest. That is where the importance of the word "take" or "took" comes in; because God took, God did something to intervene in Adam's life by leading him into the Garden and giving him rest. Here we find that this person could return to rest because God had healed him or God had saved him. God had done

something to intervene into his life so that he had the ability to have this rest. So here God's intervention is part of the equation as well

Getting back to Genesis 2:15, the Garden is a symbol of all that God had provided. It is not only the place of rest, but it also had all those things in it that God had provided bountifully in order for this rest to take place and to be taken advantage of.

**Proverbs 29:17** Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.

If you have children, you will understand that. Solomon is telling us here that the rest that we feel when our children please and delight us with their obedience and their success in life is the same kind of feeling that we will have in this *nuach* rest of God. It is a feeling of pleasure and delight because of good things happening, because somebody has done something great and there has been success.

**Isaiah 14:3** It shall come to pass in the day the LORD gives you rest from your sorrow, and from your fear and the hard bondage in which you were made to serve.

**Isaiah 14:7** The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing.

Those verses are right before the verses that talk about the fall of Helel, the fall of Satan. Here in Isaiah 14 we find that rest occurs in the absence of sorrow, fear, and hard bondage. This is not the fear of God but the fear of enemies, fear of other things like death. The rest of God, this *nuach* rest, is an absence of sorrow, fear, and hard bondage. . . kind of like when you feel like singing because of your liberty. You have been saved from all of those things and now you are free to live the right way.

**Isaiah 28:12** To whom He said, “This is the rest with which you may cause the weary to rest,” and “This is the refreshing”; yet they would not hear.



This is in the section where it talks about “here a little and there a little, precept upon precept, line upon line,” trying to tell His people about His way. God wanted the Israelites to participate in His rest, but it never happened. Here we see that the rest that He is talking about is the kind of rest that we feel when we have been weary and we are finally allowed to relax. The word here is “refreshed,” another idea to throw in to this *nuach* rest.

**Isaiah 63:14** As a beast goes down into the valley, and the Spirit of the LORD cause him to rest, so You lead Your people, to make Yourself a glorious name.

This is an important one, because it brings Jesus Christ our Messiah into it and His Holy Spirit, which gives us an idea of how it occurs. It shows who the activator is and how it occurs. It is the Messiah that leads us to this rest, and He does it by His Spirit.

**Ezekiel 37:14** “I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken it and performed it,” says the LORD.

This is in the Valley of Dry Bones chapter. We are talking about the Great White Throne judgment period when physical Israel is raised. Notice what God says to them. This is the same kind of translation that was done in Genesis 2:15. Instead of saying that “I will cause you to dwell” or “I will cause you to rest,” they use the word “place.” So here in this Great White Throne judgment period, Israel comes up out of their graves and God puts His Spirit in them (remember, we just saw that in Isaiah 63:14, that it is God who actually performs this through His Spirit); He allows them to live, not just physically live, but this is spiritual life that He is talking about; and because of this, because of what He does in calling them, in resurrecting them, giving them His Spirit, renewing them, making the new creation in them—they then have the ability to enjoy His rest. They can rest in the Lord as it were.

Thus we have in Genesis 2:15 a summary statement of God's desire for mankind as represented in the person of Adam. He wants man to dwell in rest with Him forever in Paradise. We not only have this to look forward to as our eternal reward, but we have the opportunity every week to participate

in it in spirit. The Sabbath day is the day of the week in which God puts His presence. It is time that is holy time, and it can only be holy by the presence of God. We, too, have God's presence in us by His Spirit. He lives in us, does He not? So we actually have a double presence of God on the Sabbath day. We not only have God's presence in us all the time, as we do on the seventh day just as we do on the other six days, but we also are immersed into the presence of God in the fact that it is His Sabbath day.

So what does this mean? It means that our Sabbath days should not just be a ceasing of our customary work, but it should also be marked by the characteristics of the *nuach* rest. These concepts should be part of our Sabbath day: peace, refreshment, joy, contentment, quiet, strength, safety, security, liberty, obedience, success, victory, and salvation, among others. It is the day in which we enjoy the blessings of God and do our best to share them with our families and our brethren. It is these sorts of attitudes, these sorts of characteristics, that should be flowing between us on this day, and most of all, they should be flowing toward God Himself.

Particularly in thanks, but in any other way that we can express to Him how much we appreciate Him taking us and putting us into His rest. It is not a day to be in the wilderness. It is a day to come out of the world. The wilderness is a symbol of that world out there in which Satan rules, and it is all the opposite of this rest. Contentions and strife, politics, war, lying, thieving, not to mention all the perversions that are out there. God wants us out of it. He wants us in His Garden, especially on the Sabbath, dwelling in peace with Him. In the world, we should always be conscious that we are in the presence of God, and those other six days, we should be aware that God is in us, that we take the peace of God with us. It should show in our interactions with others that we come across, that we are different. We live in God's Garden and the peace of God rules in our hearts by His Spirit.

I do not have time to go into the concepts of “tend” and “keep,” so I will not go into that all, but I want to bring my introduction regarding cultivation into play here to bridge between this sermon and the next. God has done to us just as He did with Adam. Upon creating the new man in us, He took us out of the world and put us into His Family.

**Ephesians 2:4-7** But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus [He brought us into His garden, as it were, into Paradise], that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

What He has done now is only a small part of what we are going to see in the future. Bringing us into His Family now is only a token of what we are actually going to see, as it says here, “the exceeding riches of His grace,” that we are going to see in the Kingdom of God.

**Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works [meaning you were not saved by works], lest anyone should boast [but works have a place, notice!]. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to tend and keep it. The LORD God took you and put you in His Family to do good works.

**John 15:4** Abide in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

Jesus says to us, His disciples, “dwell in Me.” That is what “abide” means. “Dwell in me.” He said in Genesis 2:15 that He caused Adam to dwell in rest. It takes the presence of God to have the rest of God.

**John 15:5** I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit [He does the works], for without Me you can do nothing

**John 15:8** By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit,  
so you will be My disciples.

This living in God's presence, this living in God; this dwelling with God in His rest is the only way that we can truly produce the fruit that will please and glorify the Father.