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NEW TESTAMENT WORD STUDIES

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(ANAPAUSIS = 'Rest')

One of the fundamental needs of man is *rest*, in which cessation from activities, toil or business affords an opportunity for the refreshment and reinvigoration of his complex being. Rest, not only in the physical realm but also in the realms of the mind and of the spirit, is needed.

To express these ideas two words are employed in the Greek N.T., but the one word, '*rest*', is used to translate both words. *Anapausis* is 'intermission, cessation of any motion, business or labour, rest; while *anesis* is relaxation of those stresses that make life burdensome' (Grimm-Thayer). The former denotes 'a temporary rest, or respite; e.g., of soldiers given relaxation, refreshment, as a preparation for the renewal of labour or suffering' (Lightfoot on Philemon 7). The latter is 'a loosening, relaxing, and is spoken of a more tolerable condition in captivity; relief, rest from persecutions' (Grimm-Thayer).

The former is found five times in the N.T., viz., Matt. 11:29; 12:43; Lk. 11:24; Rev. 4:8; 14:11. In the first and fourth occurrences '*rest*' is '*found*'; and in the others there is '*no rest*'.

The other word, *anesis* occurs in Acts 24:23 (in R.V. = 'should have indulgence'). Also in 2 Cor. 2:13; 7:5 (R.V. 'no relief'); and ch. 8:13, 'eased'; 2 Thess. 1:7, 'rest'.

With the noun *anapausis*, we may couple the corresponding verb *anapauo* used in Matt. 11:28; also in 1 Cor. 16:18; 2 Cor. 7:13; Philemon 7 and 20, where it is consistently translated in the R.V. by the word 'refresh', and in 1 Pet. 4:14 = 'resteth'.

We may study the importance of the term in the context of Matt. 11:28. Here our attention is directed to—

(1) *The Speaker*. In the previous verse He speaks of Himself as the One—

(a) to Whom all things have been delivered by the Father, thereby indicating not only His Superiority over all things, but also His power over all things. By His hand they may be used, by His hand they may be dispensed, by His hand they may be made to serve such ends as He may purpose.

(b) In Whom the reciprocal response of the Father to the Son, and the Son to the Father is that of knowing and understanding. Here there is an equality with the Father implied, for who can know and understand God save He Who is on equality with God?

(c) By Whom the Father can alone be revealed.

It is *this* One Who stands with gracious invitation and invites burdened men to come to Him for refreshment, for rest. It is *this* One Who, in the freedom of His personality, in the fulness which is His, to Whom all things have been handed over by the Father, in the far reaching ability which is His Who can penetrate into the depths of the Father and can only be reciprocally penetrated by the Father—this One Who offers the poor sinner a rest he cannot obtain by his own unaided powers.

(2) *Those Spoken to*—are those who, following the law as interpreted by their own traditions and burdensome ceremonial, found themselves continually in a state of toil seeking thereby to obtain a righteousness by which they would be acceptable before God. They laboured and were heavy-burdened, but were not of necessity weary of such burdens and toil. Rather they rejoiced in them, believing that the more arduous such toil, and the heavier such burdens, the more merit would be credited to them. Jesus saw them with the outer forms of religion, but without its heart as is revealed in such ideas of Fatherhood and Sonship, rest and refreshment, comfort and consolation. In our day we also see many burdened with their religious obligations, but without any reality, without any enjoyment of the rest He delights to give. Do we, even as believers, make rules and regulations, the observance of which lead us far from the heart of the Gospel? Do we become burdened with traditions, and fail to find the Christ Who stands and offers us His rest?

(3) *The Promised Rest*. This is threefold: It is a rest—

(a) *From an intolerable Yoke*—the yoke of manifold additions to 'what is written', the yoke of a rigid orthodoxy, which is after all but the interpretation of some Scriptures according to some certain 'school' of which we are adherents, the yoke of the fear of man as to what he will say or do if there be any attempt to break away from any established ecclesiastical order. Such

yokes Jesus shows to be intolerable and from these He seeks to give you rest.

(b) *With A Shared Yoke*—He invites you to find rest in such a yoke. In such a sharing of the yoke the weaker will be helped by the stronger, the novice will be 'schooled' by the experienced, the self-willed will be taught to obey by the discipline shared with the obedient one.

Have we submitted to this disciplinary exercise, and so found rest, even in our service, for it is a *rest* to be *found*? In the stream of life where we are constantly engaged in its regular duties, in the sphere of service where we seek to do something for our Lord, we shall find a restraint from the impetuosities of self-will, and from the wearing strain of the undisciplined will that has not learned to find rest by keeping in step and pulling in harmony with the One Who shares the yoke. In neither straining to go on ahead, nor lagging and falling behind, but by continuing close by the side of, and in step with, the Yoke-Fellow will there be that restful labour that shall accomplish its intended purpose.

(c) *Under an Easy Yoke*—'My yoke is easy', it is a yoke that is 'sweet'—it does not gall the neck, and the yoke 'sits' easily upon the neck, making the burden 'light'. Here is a rest *to have*. For not only is the yoke borne with ease,—but it is 'My Yoke', and the burden is 'My Burden', and as such is more readily borne for it is being borne for Him.

Further, it is not a yoke that is imposed, as, so often in life, the yoke is imposed upon the unwilling neck of a beast of burden. Here is something which the wearer is invited to take to himself and bear for his Lord. In so doing there is rest, for no conflict of will exists, no weary burden is grudgingly borne, no galling yoke makes painful the doing of the task—a rest has been found, a rest has been obtained and a rest is being enjoyed.

Rest thou oh, my soul! Share thy burden with thy Lord, and wear His 'sweet' yoke for *His sake!*