

The Place of God's Rest

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Isa 66:1 Thus saith the LORD, The heaven *is* my throne, and the earth *is* my footstool: where *is* the house that ye build unto me? and where *is* the place of my rest?

Isa 66:2 For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* have been, saith the LORD: but to this *man* will I look, *even* to *him that is* poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

In these verses, God reveals a number of things to us about Himself and His attitude about created things. As we look at His words, we can't help but notice that He first of all, reminds us creatures about how lofty His status is. "The heaven is my throne" He says; "and the earth is my footstool." How great our God is! He sits in the heavens. The rulers of the earth are like ants before Him. The forces of earth are His servants! The creatures of earth are of His making. In the imagery that He speaks, we see a spiritual giant; one of limitless power and infinite options. We see the true Lord of the universe. We also see a God who is able to provide men a reference about Himself that they will understand. We sense the magnitude of heaven and we have grown over the centuries to understand something of the wonders of the earth. His exalted position is highlighted by reminding us that the reaches of heaven are His throne. Our very lowly status before Him is showcased by being reminded that the great globe we live on is just His footstool.

In this Word, He plainly is skeptical of there being anything that His creatures can build that would pass for a dwelling place built for Him. To this day, humans have a bad habit in their religion of thinking that they can construct lofty cathedrals, sprawling complexes, etc. and these will make a dwelling place for God. The only time that such a condition has been true was when God commissioned Israel to build a tabernacle where He would dwell among them, and when they exchanged this tabernacle for a temple in the days of Solomon. But now we hear skepticism from God concerning the idea among the Jews that they could have a place for His residence.

Within the context of this questioning, God speaks of such a place being a place of His rest. This rest (in the Hebrew -menuchah= men-oo-khaw) carries the idea of a comfortable place of repose. And the reality behind this word as it relates to God's relationship with Israel is the very reason why He rejects a human made dwelling place. The reality was that the Jews had never honored the relationship with God that He had decreed when He established the rules for that relationship in the laws and ordinances. The Jews had repeatedly gone off into idolatry and all its associated evils and had broken covenant with God. Although the tabernacle, the dwelling place He had ordered built, was among them, they still did not honor the relationship with the Lord. This relationship's success was dependent on humans responding to God in the same holy and honorable way that God was responding to them. But they didn't. This became a kind of incriminating evidence to mankind that he was incapable, under even the best conditions, of keeping covenant with God without an outside power. So, this is where we are in this reading.

God is speaking of nullifying the former relationship with humans as it existed in the Jewish covenant. What we have then, is His explanation about how He would establish a relationship with humans.

I. God Will Not Establish a Place of Rest In Any Lesser Creation Than People

In this new and living way, the dwelling of God is not “with” but “in.”

In Ex. 23:33 and 25:10 God speaks of His dwelling relationship between Israel and Himself and He declares that He will dwell among them. But, when Jesus speaks of God’s dwelling relationship with His people as a result of His Priestly work He says: John 14:17 *Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

No man-made edifice or contrivance stands as the interface between God and humans; but rather the interface is created and ordered by the Lord

Heb 9:11 But Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

Heb 9:12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption *for us*.

See Also Hebrews 8:7-13

II. V. 2: God Demands A Certain Profile In Those He Selects As a Place of Rest

This is not a prerequisite that God must find before He moves in, but a condition met by an act of God to enable the dwelling of God in a comfortable place of repose.

He hints of this in His explanation in the first part of v.2: “For all those *things* hath mine hand made, and all those *things* **have been**, saith the LORD:”

Eze 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

And this is the secret of why God can find a place of comfortable repose in people who are new creatures in Christ Jesus: 2Co 5:18 And all things *are* of God, who **hath reconciled us to himself** by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;