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*Now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

- 1 Peter 1:6-7

So continue to endure and remain in the rest of God as you trust his word, because when Jesus Christ returns and is fully revealed in the reality of his creation, you will receive praise, glory and honor from the Lord himself.

## #6 – THE APPOINTED TIME...WAIT FOR IT (Habakkuk 2:3)

*The vision awaits its appointed time;  
it hastens to the end—it will not lie.*

*If it seems slow, wait for it;  
it will surely come; it will not delay.*

- Habakkuk 2:3

*At the set time that I appoint  
I will judge with equity.*

- Psalm 75:2

*He has set a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all people by raising Him from the dead.*

- Acts 17:31

Justice is part of God's good character. Judgment of rebellion, sin, and evil is the logical result of the Goodness of God. The challenging part of this logic is that some judgment will take place in time, but other judgment is reserved for a future day. Paul makes this clear in his first letter to Timothy:



*The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them.*

*In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.*

- 1 Timothy 5:24-25

And we know that rewards and promises work in a similar way. Some promises and blessings occur in this life, while other promises and rewards are reserved for later when God's plan and purpose have been fulfilled.

Since this is true concerning both the judgment of evil and the fulfillment of God's promises, we are told in the Bible to "wait for it."

*If it seems slow, wait for it;  
It will surely come; it will not delay.*

- Habakkuk 2:3

The Lord will judge good and evil with equity, but this will not take place fully until "the set time" (Ps. 75:2). Remain in God's rest knowing all will be judged and all will be fair, and that we are all waiting for the "appointed time" (Hab. 2:3), for he "has set a day" (Acts 17:31) - a day on which he "will judge with equity" (Ps 75:2) and "will judge the world in righteousness" (Acts 17:31). Even while waiting, we must not become bitter or skeptical. We must understand that "the vision awaits its appointed time."

We are all waiting for fulfilled promises and rewards, just as we are all waiting for judgment and a personal evaluation in the future. Today we can remain in God's rest knowing that "it will surely come; it will not delay." But, for now we are told to "wait for it."



#7 – GOD CONTROLS GOVERNMENT AND NATIONS (John 19:11)

*You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.*

- Jesus to Pilate in John 19:11

*There is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.*

- Romans 13:1

The concept that God controls governments, nations and all the leaders of those nations may be the most relevant promise for our generation.

The concept that God controls governments, nations and all the leaders of those nations may be the most relevant promise for our generation. Of course, all of God’s promises are important and beneficial for establishing the fortress of rest in our soul. But right now - as we transition into a dramatic phase of our postmodern and post-Christian Western World culture - we need to process this truth in a way we have not needed to before. Recognizing and keeping hold of truth must become a part of the daily maintenance of our faith rest life.

God established the institution of government (Gen. 9:5-6) and the institution of nations (Gen. 11:1-9) for the wellbeing of mankind on earth. Through these and the other institutions he has established, God provides order and structure for mankind on earth, and at the right time he will use them to bring history to its ultimate fulfillment - the Kingdom of God on earth under the leadership of the man the Lord Jesus Christ.

God will raise up the right leaders and nations to bring about his plans.

The main point for us is that we know and understand the promise that the Lord is ultimately in control of leaders and nations. God is using everything for his good purpose. All leaders and nations will be held accountable before God when he is finished using them



for his purpose. These leaders and nations may or may not know the Lord. They may or may not intentionally serve the Lord. But, the truth of the matter is that they are serving him - intentionally or not - and they will all stand before him for judgment at the appointed time. With this in mind, David writes advice to the rulers of the world - for both those in his day and for every king in every nation that would follow after him:

*Now therefore, O kings, be wise;  
be warned, O rulers of the earth.  
Serve the Lord with fear,  
and rejoice with trembling.  
Kiss the Son,  
lest he be angry, and you perish in the way,  
for his wrath is quickly kindled.  
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.*

- Psalm 2:10-12

Indeed, the anger of the Son of God can flare up quickly, and those in rebellion to the Lord can perish as quickly as burning grass. History is riddled with instances of “the most powerful man in the world” falling from power in a moment. All leaders are serving God, but only those who take refuge in him will be blessed for their service. The others will vanish like vapor into eternity.

Psalm 2:10-12 should be engraved in the stone, hung in the hallways, and printed on the letterhead of the United Nations as an act of mercy to the kings and leaders of the nations today, because one day they will stand before the Son for evaluation and judgment.

Of course, there are several examples of this reality in Scripture, such as those below. In the first, Daniel tells Nebuchadnezzar in 603 BC that it was the Lord who brought him to power and caused nations to submit to him.



*Your Majesty, you are the king of kings.  
The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and  
might and glory; in your hands he has placed all mankind and  
the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live,  
he has made you ruler over them all.  
You are that head of gold.*

- Daniel 2:37-38

Jeremiah tells Nebuchadnezzar the same thing, but adds the duration of his time of dominion. It was to be limited by the Lord to three generations: Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC), Amel-Marduk (560-556 BC), and Nabonidus (556-539 BC).

*It is I (the Lord) who by my great power and my outstretched arm  
have made the earth, with the men and animals that are on the  
earth, and I (the Lord) give it to whomever it seems right to me.  
Now I have given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchad-  
nezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant, and I have given him  
also the beasts of the field to serve him.  
All the nations shall serve him and his son and his grandson,  
until the time of his own land comes. Then many nations and  
great kings shall make him their slave.*

- Jeremiah 27:5-7

Following those three generations, and after the Lord had punished Israel with 70 years of captivity in Babylon, the empire of Babylon itself would be punished for their iniquity.

*Then after seventy years are completed, I will punish the king  
of Babylon and that nation, the land of the Chaldeans, for their  
iniquity, declares the Lord, making the land an everlasting waste.  
I will bring upon that land all the words that I have uttered  
against it, everything written in this book, which Jeremiah proph-*

*esied against all the nations.*

***For many nations and great kings shall make slaves even of them,  
and I will recompense them according to their deeds and the work  
of their hands.***

- Jeremiah 25:12-14

Today's leaders, governments and nations are likewise serving the Lord. When the Lord has used them for his purpose, they will be removed. Some may receive reward from the Lord, but many more will suffer temporal and eternal destruction.

*He changes times and seasons;  
he removes kings and sets up kings;  
he gives wisdom to the wise  
and knowledge to those who have understanding.*

- Daniel 2:21

We can understand this. The fact is the Lord is using leaders, governments, and nations for his purpose. We must trust in the goodness of God and know that some things are being set in motion, while other things had already been established long before we came on the scene. Some events and leaders have already been determined. When the Lord causes commotion, confusion, or chaos political opponents cry out against each other, "Conspiracy! Conspiracy!"

But, Isaiah is told that even if these social and political events look like the conspiracies of man, they are not. Often, the chaos and injustice that men may call "a conspiracy" are actually the judgments of God coming down on the people, leaders, and culture of a nation that God is punishing.

It is time to take this truth also into the strong tower of God's rest in your soul. The Lord told Isaiah to avoid walking in the way of man, and warned him, "Do not call conspiracy all that this people



calls conspiracy.” It is the Lord you are to fear, not the so-called “conspiracies” of one political ideology against another. Honor the Lord as holy, fear him, and keep yourself in his place of rest.

*For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying: “Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, nor be in dread. But the LORD of hosts, him you shall honor as holy. Let him be your fear, and let him be your dread...”*

- Isaiah 8:11-13

## #8 – UNDERSTANDING: THE ONE WHO HAS, WILL BE GIVEN MORE (Matthew 13:12)

*To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.*

- Matthew 13:11-13

If you have embraced the truth that has been revealed to you, then you are in a position to use your understanding to gain even more details about that truth. It is similar to learning the secrets of math.

If a student understands first grade math, then the second grade teacher can build on that knowledge to provide that student with more understanding. This process continues for as long as that student continues to add to his knowledge of mathematics. Eventually, the student will be able to use their understanding to resolve story problems, do equations, and even apply their math knowl-

edge to other fields of study, such as chemistry, economics, and statistical analysis.

However, as often happens, the first grade student who doesn’t know their numbers from 1 to 100 will soon begin to struggle with even basic introductory math lessons. If the student fails to catch up academically and so never masters basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division there is very little hope of ever being able to process something as complex as a story problem. And as an adult that student may not even be able to understand their basic personal finances.

In Matthew 13:11-13, Jesus is saying that if you have received basic instruction concerning the kingdom of Heaven, then you have the foundation to hear and receive the “mysteries” or “secrets” of the kingdom of heaven as well. If you believe there is a God and you understand that God is good, you are ready to receive the next level of insight that God is revealing. You will then learn to see God in creation and in the written text of Scripture.

When Jesus spoke of these things he was building on the principles of theology that had already been built into the understanding of the Jewish people. Within that framework of understanding was the promise that the Messiah would come to Israel and to all mankind to deliver them. And Jesus was that Messiah.

If the people who heard Jesus speak understood his teaching about himself, they would be able to connect that knowledge to their previous understanding. They would then be ready to receive the next level of insight and be able to apply their new learning to their lives.

But, if they instead rejected it as false, then even the understanding they had would stop increasing, grow stagnant, and eventually become useless. And worse, their misunderstanding would be misap-