

The Caches. Doctrine of Deposits: Concept in O.T., Psalm 31:1-4

Gregg, Josiah. Commerce of the Prairies. Edited by Max L. Moorhead. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954, pp. 47-48:

We soon got under way, and that evening pitched our camp opposite the celebrated 'Caches,' a place where some of the earliest adventurers had been compelled to conceal their merchandise.

James Beard and Samuel Chambers induced some small capitalists of St. Louis to join in an enterprise, and then undertook to return to Santa Fé the same fall, with a small party and an assortment of merchandise.

Reaching the Arkansas late in the season, they were overtaken by a heavy snow storm, and driven to take shelter on a large island. A rigorous winter ensued, which forced them to remain pent up in that place for three long months. During this time the greater portion of their animals perished; so that, when the spring began to open, they were unable to continue their journey with their goods. In this emergency they made a cache some distance above, on the north side of the river, where they stowed away most of their merchandise. From thence they proceeded to Taos, where they procured mules, and returned to get their hidden property.

The term cache, meaning a place of concealment, was originally used by the Canadian French trappers and traders. It is made by digging a hole in the ground, somewhat in the shape of a jug, which is lined with dry sticks, grass, or anything else that will protect its contents from the dampness of the earth. In this place the goods to be concealed are carefully stowed away; and the aperture is then so effectively closed as to protect them from the rains. In caching, a great deal of skill is often required, to leave no signs whereby the cunning savage might discover the place of deposit. To this end, the excavated earth is carried to some distance and carefully concealed, or thrown into a stream, if one be at hand.

The place selected for a cache is usually some rolling point, sufficiently elevated to be secure from inundations. If it be well set with grass, a solid piece of turf is cut out large enough for the entrance. The turf is afterward laid back, and taking root, in a short time no signs remain of its ever having been molested. However, as every locality does not afford a turfy site, the camp fire is sometimes built upon the place, or the animals are penned over it, which effectually destroys all traces of the cache.

Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "cache":

A hiding place of goods, treasure, etc. A hole or mound made by American pioneers to hide stores of provisions, ammunition, or food.

In Washington Irving's *Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, we have this quote, *Captain Bonneville ... prevailed upon them to proceed ... to the caches.*

John C. Frémont was a mapmaker and explorer of the Far West. Under the sponsorship of Missouri senator Thomas Hart Benton, Frémont mapped much of the territory between the Mississippi Valley and the Pacific Ocean. The **Encyclopaedia Britannica [IV: 308]** has the following description of Frémont's explorations:

As emigration to the Oregon Territory became important in 1842, the War Department sent him to survey the route west to Wyoming. In 1843 he completed an important survey to the mouth of the Columbia River. Thoroughly exploring much of the Northwest, he produced descriptions helpful to future emigrants and added significantly to geographic knowledge of the area. Turning south, he made a rash, dramatic winter crossing of the Sierra Nevadas to California, which further added to his fame. Later Frémont wrote a comprehensive report of his explorations, which was eagerly read by thousands. That report contains this comment:

“As this was to be a point in our homeward journey, I made a cache (a term used in all this country for what is hidden in the ground) of a barrel of pork.”

Thus, a cache is a secret repository in which valuables are stored until they can be retrieved or claimed by their rightful owners. This concept may be observed in several doctrines found in Scripture. We will now examine several as we undertake a study of the Doctrine of Deposits.

The Doctrine of Deposits

I. The Concept from the Old Testament

A cache, as we have defined it, is, in essence, a vault into which valuables are deposited. In order for these valuables to remain secure their cache must either be kept secret or it must be capable of withstanding all attempts to raid its contents. There are several deposits which are common to all believers at salvation and to some believers during the Christian life, and in the eternal state.

Several Hebrew words which contain the idea of hiding valuables inside of a secret cache are used in Psalm 31:19-Psalm 31:20. We will note these words and their definitions and then see how they are used in the passage.

SAPAN: [Hebrew] To conceal something with a definite purpose, e.g., protection. Connotes storing up something on account of its value.

HASÁ: To seek refuge; to flee for protection; figuratively to put trust in God. A derivative which occurs in our passage is *MAHSEH* which means “*refuge*” or “*shelter*.”

SATAM: To hide; to be hidden; to lie hid.

SOK: To hide in secrecy; to conceal; to lay up in store as a treasure; to lay up carefully and safely; to lay up in reserve.

We need a moment of orientation to the background of Psalm 31. This psalm, written by David, was composed during his time of his estrangement from Saul (1 Samuel 18-31). Saul was constantly tracking David in hopes of killing him. David continually escaped his capture due to the “*goodness of God*.” As Saul continuously pursued David, David did two things, (1) he kept moving and (2) he kept praying. He ultimately found safe refuge in the Philistine city of Ziklag for which he gives thanks in Psalm 31. In order to get the context of the chapter and our application let's briefly note the first four verses:

Psalm 31:1 - To the chief musician, A Psalm of David. In You O Jehovah, I sought refuge [*HASÁ*]; let me never be ashamed; deliver me in Your righteousness.

Psalm 31:2 - Incline Your ear to me; deliver me quickly; be a rock of refuge to me, a stronghold to save me.

Psalm 31:3 - For my rock and my Fortress You are. For Your name's sake you will lead me and guide me.

Psalm 31:4 - Pull me out of the net that they hid for me, for You are my strength.

From this introduction we can see that David considers Jehovah to be his cache of safety in time of peril. He wishes to be ensconced into the safety of His protective care. He looks on the divine cache as a rock and a stronghold protected by divine goodness, righteousness, and power in which he will find safety and deliverance from those who would seek to destroy him.

Psalm 31:19a - How great is Your goodness which You have stored up [*SAPAN*]
for those who have reverence and respect for you.