

Bat's Head, near Durdle Dor, Dorset: Stillness when all around is in turmoil

I was walking along the Dorset cliffs on a perfect October day: sunny, warm and windy, windy enough to knock me sideways once or twice. Clear skies gave me long views down the coast. From the top of a headland called White Nothe, I looked down onto Bat's Head, a small and narrow promontory projecting out into the sea and into the full force of the south-west winds. Two tiny people were standing on the precipitous end. I'm not keen on heights and I thought how brave they were. As I descended from White Nothe, I met them just coming off Bat's Head and they told me that it was "totally still out there". They said that the stillness was due to the wind hitting the sheer west-facing cliff of Bat's Head and being deflected upwards and creating the effect of a wall. So I walked nervously out to the end on the narrow summit. The air on the rock was so still that even the exposed grass was not moving. Twice I returned to the main cliff to check that the wind had not dropped. Each time strong winds blew. So I sat down on the promontory with the sea 150 feet beneath my feet and with a stunning view along the coast to Durdle Dor, Lulworth Cove and St Alban's Head. There was no-one else around and it was truly amazing up there.

As I sat there in total stillness, the Spirit of God said that this experience represented what he wanted for me in life: complete peace when everything around me was in turmoil. All I had to do was to rest on God my Rock.

In the day of trouble He will keep me safe in
His dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter
of His tabernacle and set me high upon
a rock. Psalm 27:5.

You will keep in perfect peace him
whose mind is steadfast because he
trusts in you. Trust in the Lord for
ever, for the Lord, the Lord, is the
Rock eternal. Isaiah 26:3-4.

God is our refuge and strength,
An ever-present help in trouble.
Therefore I will not fear though the earth give way
And the mountains fall into the heart of the sea...

Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46:1-2, 10a
This is God's plan for all who trust in him; peace and stillness even when there is turmoil and trouble around. After I left Bat's Head, I descended into a relatively sheltered small valley. The wind had not abated and was so strong that it pushed me several yards sideways. Yet the time on Bat's Head, exposed to the full strength of the wind, had been completely still.