

Old Testament Words for Waiting

“In the NASB the word most often translated ‘wait’ in the sense of waiting on the Lord is the Hebrew *qavah*. *Qavah* means (1) ‘to bind together’ (perhaps by twisting strands as in making a rope), (2) ‘look patiently,’ (3) ‘tarry or wait,’ and (4) ‘hope, expect, look eagerly.’¹

“The second most frequently used word translated ‘wait’ is *yachal*. *Yachal* means ‘to wait,’ or ‘hope, wait expectantly,’ and is so translated in our English Bibles. The KJV sometimes translates *yachal* as ‘trust’ as in Isaiah 51:5, but the NASB has ‘wait expectantly’ and the NIV ‘wait in hope.’”²

“A third word sometimes translated ‘wait’ is *damam*. *Damam* means ‘to be dumb, grow silent, be still,’ but it is sometimes translated ‘wait, tarry, rest’ (cf. Psa. 62:5 KJV).”³

“A fourth word for waiting is *chakah*, ‘to wait, tarry,’ or ‘long for’ (cf. Ps. 33:20; 106:13; Isa. 30:18).”⁴

New Testament Words for Waiting

“*Prosdechomai* is the primary word used in the New Testament for the concept of waiting. It is a compound word from *pros*, ‘to or towards’ and *dechomai*, ‘receive, accept.’ *Prosdechomai* means (1) ‘to receive to one’s self, receive favorably,’ (2) ‘expect, look for, wait for.’ Compare its use in Mark 15:43; Luke 2:25; 12:36; Acts 24:15; Titus 2:13; Jude 1:21. The focus of this word is on the coming of the Lord in either His first or second advents.”⁵

“The second most frequently used word is *apekdechomai*, a triple compound word made up of two prepositions, *apo*, ‘from,’ and *ek*, ‘out,’ and the verb *dechomai*, ‘receive, accept.’ It means ‘to await, expect eagerly.’ Compare its use in Romans 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Corinthians 1:7; Galatians 5:5; Philippians 3:20; Hebrews 9:20. Again, the waiting here is primarily prophetic of the return of the Lord and the glorious blessings that will follow.”⁶

¹ J. Hampton Keathley. “Waiting on the Lord,” Bible.org, June 7, 2004. Accessed April 4, 2020. <https://bible.org/article/waiting-lord>.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

“The other word translated ‘wait’ in the New Testament is *anameno*. Literally, it means to wait up as a parent might wait up for a child to come home. It means ‘to await one whose coming is expected, perhaps with the added idea of patience and confidence.’ This word is used only once and, again, it is used of the return of the Lord (1 Thess. 1:10).”⁷

Overall Understanding of Waiting in the Old and New Testament

In regards to waiting, the Old Testament primarily focuses on our daily walk and need to wait on the Lord and His providential care in the pressures of life. However, in the New Testament, the context of waiting is connected primarily to the impact that waiting on the Lord’s return should have on our daily walk. Overall, when the Bible talks about waiting, it is focusing on our ***waiting on*** or ***waiting for*** the Lord and His lovingkindness.⁸

I. What does it mean to wait on the Lord and for what should we be waiting?

- A. To wait on the Lord means to cease stressing, to rest, to be still, anticipating the presence of the Lord, His lovingkindness, and His providential care to come in His timing, in the midst of circumstances whereby you cannot cause things to happen or keep things from happening and were not called to do so. (Psalm 46:1-11)
- B. To wait on the Lord means to look with a confident expectation on the presence of the Lord, His lovingkindness, and His providential care to come in His timing, in the midst of circumstances whereby you cannot cause things to happen or keep things from happening and were not called to do so. (Psalm 33:18-22)
- C. To wait on the Lord means to hang on to the confident expectation in the return of the Lord in His timing to be made like Him in His return and receive all that accompanies being with Him. (Galatians 5:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-10)

II. What will keep us from waiting on the Lord in the right way? (Numbers 11:1-3)

- A. A lack of trust in the Lord will keep us from waiting on Him in the right way. (*Lack of trust*)
- B. Where there is a lack of trust in the Lord there will be complaining about the adversity we are facing which will keep us from waiting on the Lord in the right way. (*Grumbling/Complaining*)

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

- C. If the source of our satisfaction and the solution to our problems are found primarily in the change of circumstances, then we will lack contentment in the midst of the circumstances whereby we can't cause things to happen or keep things from happening. This lack of contentment will keep us from waiting on the Lord in the right way. (*Discontentment*)

III. What must we have in order to wait on the Lord in the right way? (Psalm 52:8-9, Philippians 4:10-13)

- A. In order to wait on the Lord in the right way, we must have confidence in who the Lord is. (*Confidence in who He is*)
- B. In order to wait on the Lord in right way, we must have confidence that what the Lord does will turn out for our good. (*Confidence in how He will work things out*)
- C. In order to wait on the Lord in the right way, we must have contentment with God in our present circumstances while anticipating His presence, His lovingkindness, and His providential care to come. (*Contentment and satisfaction with Him apart from people and circumstances*)

IV. How do we wait on the Lord in the midst of this Coronavirus Experience?

- A. *As we wait, we embrace the presence of God* – Since we have been taken away from our normal activity, we should get alone to study God's word, to pray to God, to worship God, and to meditate on God's person, promises, plans and precepts and align our hearts with these things accordingly. We do this while expecting the presence of the Lord, His lovingkindness and His providential care to come in His timing. (Psalm 25:5)
- B. *As we wait, we embrace character development through the power of God* –
 - 1. Have and develop in integrity: Don't do what we are not supposed to do, in order to try to make something happen or to keep something from happening in the midst of the coronavirus experience that in essence we can't cause to happen or keep from happening anyway.
 - 2. Have and develop in uprightness: Practice submission to God in our character, conduct, conversations, commitments, and commodities accordingly. We do this while expecting the presence of the Lord, His lovingkindness and His providential care to come in His timing. (Psalm 25:21)
- C. *As we wait, we embrace our God-given service through the power of God* – Continue to submit to what God has commanded us to do in our roles and responsibilities with others in the midst of the coronavirus experience according to the limitations we have. We do this while expecting the presence of the Lord, His lovingkindness and His providential care to come in His timing. (Galatians 6:9-10)

V. What lessons can we learn from waiting on the Lord in the midst of this Coronavirus Experience?

- A. While we wait in situations whereby we cannot cause things to happen or keep things from happening, we must learn to cultivate confidence, satisfaction, and contentment in God's presence, plans, precepts and promises.
- B. While we wait in situations whereby we cannot cause things to happen or keep things from happening, we must be willing and prepared to lay aside our dreams, our plans, and our desires that God did not promise to fulfill and trust in God's goodness if or when our expectations differ from what God allows or ordains to happen.⁹ Therefore, if or when God brings or allows something to come into fruition that is different than what we were waiting and longing for, we will be content with embracing God's goodness over our denied expectations.
- C. While we wait in situations whereby we cannot cause things to happen or keep things from happening, we must learn to worship the Giver above His promises that He will fulfill, and above our expectations that He did not promise to fulfill.

VI. What can we expect from the Lord?

- A. Because we have been saved, we can expect to live in Heaven with Jesus. (John 14:1-4)
- B. Because we have been saved, we can expect to receive a glorified body like Jesus Christ. (Philippians 3:20-21)
- C. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to perfect the things concerning us. (Psalm 138:8)
- D. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5-6)
- E. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to be our help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)
- F. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to help us make it through every trial and temptation we face. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- G. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to provide all we need according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:19)

⁹ David Timms, Sacred Waiting: Waiting on God in a World That Waits for Nothing (Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers, 2009), 38.

- H. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to work all things together for our good. (Romans 8:28)
- I. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to do exceedingly abundantly more than all we could ever ask or think. (Ephesians 3:20)
- J. Because we have been saved, we can expect God to order our steps. (Psalm 37:23)

“Waiting involves an expectation of something special. Waiting means anticipation, expectation, confident hope in something that will take place. Ultimately, waiting on the Lord is like waiting on the sun to rise—waiting expectantly for the Lord’s answers to human needs as the sun brings the warmth of the day. Without knowledge and trust, we simply won’t wait—at least not without a great deal of anxiety—and usually not without taking matters into our own hands.”¹⁰

Therefore, our satisfaction and confidence must be in God’s presence, plans, precepts and promises, above what we want or what we want to happen as we wait on the Lord. It’s hard to lay aside our heart’s longing and trust the Lord’s goodness if what we want from God takes precedence over wanting God Himself.¹¹ “Thomas Merton, a Trappist monk who wrote extensively on the deeper spiritual life, concluded: ‘We can either love God because we hope for something from Him, or we can hope in Him knowing that He loves us.’”¹²

¹⁰ J. Hampton Keathley. “Waiting on the Lord,” Bible.org, June 7, 2004. Accessed April 4, 2020. <https://bible.org/article/waiting-lord>.

¹¹ David Timms, *Sacred Waiting: Waiting on God in a World That Waits for Nothing* (Bloomington: Bethany House Publishers, 2009), 38.

¹² *Ibid.*, 72.