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WAITING ON THE LORD; Ballas; S.T.M., 1961

WAITING ON THE LORD IN ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE  
TO THE PHILIPPIANS

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by

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May 1961

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CONTENTS

The number of books and articles available today on waiting on the Lord of Christ's return is so large that it is difficult to select the most valuable. This work, however, is strongly leaning to the side of waiting on the Lord. Therefore, it is not possible to include all the material available on this subject.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The number of books and articles available today on various aspects of Christian eschatology is legion. A particular emphasis on the responsibility of waiting on the Lord, however, is strangely lacking in these works. This study, therefore, intends to provide an evaluation of this aspect of eschatology. It arose out of a reading of the Scriptures which revealed that more than occasional references to this need for waiting are made in both the Old and New Testaments. A concordance study soon indicated a wide range of interesting Hebrew and Greek terms which occurred in passages that were generally of considerable theological significance. This fact coupled with personal feelings about the ministry, especially in the light of existing world conditions, is responsible for an interest in a Biblical study of the concept of waiting on the Lord. We have chosen St. Paul's epistle to the Philippians for our particular document, because we feel that it is one of several portions of Scripture that best characterizes our particular concern, and, also, because it is a manageable unit with which to operate in discussing a topic which is highly relevant for every generation of Christians.

God's people from Abraham and St. Paul to the present day have always waited on the Lord in the hope that something better would come to deliver them from various earthly limitations. At Jesus' time there were those who were looking for the kingdom of God, the consolation of

Israel, and the redemption of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup>

All redemptive history is ultimately connected with the two comings of Christ, between which the Christian Church has existed for almost two thousand years. It appears that the first Christians may have viewed the Lord's return as being most imminent, even during their own lifetime. But it would take more than a lifetime to preach the Gospel throughout Judea, Samaria, and into the uttermost parts of the earth. Shortly after the death of Ananias and Sapphira, the Church appointed seven men and subsequently other elders, bishops, and deacons, thereby indicating that it was prepared to stay. Even though she had the abiding presence of Christ in the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Church has always longed for that Day when her Lord would return and her salvation would become fully realized.

Our findings indicate the following.

1. Christ will return at the last day.
2. While the early Church did expect her Lord's imminent return, modern scholarship has tended to give undue stress to this matter with the result that unwarranted substitutes have appeared for the idea of waiting.
3. Waiting on the Lord is the only proper reaction to the apparent delay of the parousia, which is an integral feature of the believer's God-intended tentatio.

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<sup>1</sup>One wonders if Zacharias, Simeon, Hanna, Cleopas, Joseph of Arimathea and others did not belong to some sort of redemption sect for whom waiting was of extreme importance. Some authorities have suggested that these may have belonged to a sect of the Essenes. The fourth century father, Epiphanius speaks of such a sect which he calls "Gortheni," a title derived from a word which means "to expect." Arthur Walwyn Evans, "Wait," International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, edited by James Orr et al., V (1915), 3064.

4. God has already saved us in Christ Jesus, our Lord; our waiting is in no way to be construed as being meritorious.
5. God continues to assure the waiting believer in Christ of that goal for which he must wait.
6. Our waiting is to be understood in terms of God's forbearance in continuing to seek and to save that which was lost through the proclamation of the gospel.

The second verse of the epistle of Paul to the Romans (Romans 8:28) reads: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose."

The word "good" in this verse is a relative term. It is not good in itself, but good in relation to the purpose of God. The purpose of God is the salvation of the world. Therefore, anything that works together for the salvation of the world is good.

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## CHAPTER II

### WAITING ON THE LORD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Any serious study of the vocabulary of hope in the Old Testament would surely include a discussion of the Hebrew verbs  $\text{פָּתַח}$ ,  $\text{צָוָה}$ , and  $\text{פָּתַח}$ .<sup>1</sup>

The most common of these is  $\text{פָּתַח}$ . Well over one-half of its forty-seven occurrences are found in the Psalter and Isaiah. The Septuagint translates this verb with  $\text{ἐπομένω}$  on twenty-six occasions. The verb  $\text{ἐλπίζω}$  occurs once in Hos. 12:7.

The root  $\text{פָּתַח}$  probably originally signified a twisting or stretching action. Weiser mentions the concrete example of a strain or tension associated with the yoking of animals.<sup>2</sup> The derived Biblical meaning of waiting or enduring under a period of testing also often depicts a tension (also indicated by the fact that this verb most frequently occurs in the piel which often expresses intense action).

The next common verb of hope indicating an activity of waiting or expectant longing is  $\text{צָוָה}$  which occurs forty-one times. Some of its Septuagintal counterparts are  $\text{ἐλπίζω}$  (thirteen times),  $\text{ἐπομένω}$  (seven times), and  $\text{ἐπέλπίζω}$  which is found six times in Psalms 118 in the Septuagint. The verb  $\text{προσδέχομαι}$  occurs in Job 29:23.

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<sup>1</sup> Weiser gives a convenient discussion of these word stems which is included in the article on  $\text{πιστεύω}$  and  $\text{πίστις}$  in Volume VI of Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, pp. 194-97.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Although occurring but fourteen times, the verb  $\text{פָּרַח}$  enjoys a wide distribution in the Old Testament as it appears in eight different books. Once again the translators of the Septuagint apparently sometimes viewed this verb as being synonymous with the previous two. Greek equivalents include  $\text{ὑπομένω}$  (seven times),  $\text{μένω}$  (four times), and  $\text{ἐμμένω}$  (twice).

In addition to these three terms, we may mention at least two more. Closely related to  $\text{פָּרַח}$  is the verb  $\text{פָּרַח}$  (one also finds it designated as  $\text{פָּרַח}$ ,  $\text{פָּרַח}$ , and  $\text{פָּרַח}$ ) which apparently has as its basic root meaning the idea of whirling or going in a circle. The term sometimes denotes a twisting or writhing in anguish as, for example, a woman in labor (used metaphorically of God in Deut. 32:18).<sup>3</sup> In addition, this verb is sometimes expressive of a patient waiting seemingly accompanied by a forbearing sense of optimism (e.g., Ps. 37:9 and perhaps in Gen. 8:10 where Noah waited another seven days before again sending forth the dove out of the ark). This verb too is twice rendered by  $\text{ὑπομένω}$  in the Septuagint (Judg. 3:25 and Lam. 3:26). In the latter passage we are told that it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

Another term meaning to wait upon the Lord is the verb  $\text{פָּרַח}$  which occurs in the familiar table prayer taken from Ps. 145:15. "The eyes of all look to Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season." A similar thought is found in Ps. 104:27. The Septuagint has  $\text{προσδοκῶ}$

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<sup>3</sup>References cited in this chapter usually refer to their designation in Kittel's Biblia Hebraica.

in both of these passages.<sup>4</sup>

The Old Testament vocabulary of hope is very definitely closely related to its terminology of faith. We have already seen that the translators of the Septuagint evidently often considered the terms just mentioned as synonyms. But even if one had at his disposal nothing more than the Hebrew text (and a Hebrew concordance), he would still be forced to conclude that the verbs treated in this chapter are indeed synonymous by virtue of the fact that one often finds two or more of them in close proximity in contexts which deal with only one basic theme. Examples are Ps. 33:18-22; 37; 69; 130; Is. 8:17; 51:5 as well as the books of Job and Micah. The classic example perhaps is Lam. 3:18ff., where no fewer than five of the above mentioned verbs and nouns occur within the space of a few verses.

The verb  $\text{סָלַח}$  in several instances describes those who, though they looked for light and peace, sometimes found terror instead of peace (Jer. 8:15; 14:19) and darkness instead of light (Job 30:26; Jer. 13:16; Is. 59:9ff.). That this was so was clearly due to the persistent rebellion against Yahweh by individual and nation alike. Thus it was unforgiven sin that was the ultimate cause of the people's darkness (Is. 59:1-2; 12ff.). For some, waiting had degenerated into a merely superficial formality which led to the destruction of those who did not take seriously their covenant responsibility and who willfully persisted in their sin. Furthermore, such people failed to see their need for divine forgiveness without which it was impossible to wait on the Lord in fear and hope

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<sup>4</sup> One ought not overlook the nouns related to the above mentioned verbs (e.g.,  $\text{תְּקִיָּה}$ ,  $\text{סִקָּלָה}$ ,  $\text{תְּוִקָּלָה}$ , and  $\text{שִׁוְרָה}$ ).

(Ps. 130:4ff.).

Particularly in the Psalms, any waiting that was accompanied by confident trust was usually a sure sign that one had experienced God's pardon and forgiveness (Ps. 25; Ps. 39:8f.). Without having experienced that forgiveness, man would continue to live in perpetual darkness. But the light of God's forgiveness had come; Yahweh was already the Savior, Redeemer, and everlasting Light of His people (Is. 60; Ps. 27). Those who lived in such a knowledge and hope longed and waited for the righteousness, justice, forgiveness, deliverance, and salvation of the Lord with firm trust and confidence (as is particularly evident from the closing chapters of Isaiah where the Septuagint uses ἀκραιολύβη for all five of these related concepts).

It is also evident from the pages of the Old Testament that it was the Red Sea rescue and other saving acts of God that made Israel's waiting a confident hope and trust in Yahweh who by establishing, ratifying, and keeping His covenant with His people had made confident waiting for them possible. Such waiting, while a necessary aspect of the believer's posture, was in no way meritorious as it was always the faithful Lord who took the initiative in lavishing upon people His covenant love and grace ( תְּבַרַח ). Only because of the initial gracious waiting of Yahweh upon those whom He had created was it possible for men to wait on the Lord. Yahweh's covenant people waited on and for Him who first waited upon them.

Waiting is predicated of God in Is. 5:1ff. and in an equally striking passage, Is. 30:18. The first reference is the familiar "Parable of the Vineyard" in which יְהוָה occurs three times and which the Septuagint translates with μένω only here. God had waited patiently

for His vineyard to yield good grapes; He found instead wild grapes. He looked for justice and righteousness only to find bloodshed and a cry of those who had by their failure to produce fruits of righteousness become oppressed.

We now note Is. 30:18 where the same verb (  $\text{יָצַח}$  ) is used of both God and man. The Septuagint makes a distinction using  $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omega$  of God and  $\acute{\epsilon}\mu\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omega$  of waiting men.

Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you;  
therefore He exalts Himself to show mercy to you.  
For the Lord is a God of justice;  
blessed are all those who wait for Him.

Divine patience is also characterized in 1 Peter 3:20 where the verb  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\kappa\delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$  (which is used of our waiting in Phil. 3:20) is used of God's longsuffering and patient waiting in the days of Noah. God's "waiting upon" men was a bold figure depicting the Creator who became a slave for the sake of the creature (cf., our Lord in Matt. 20:28 and Phil. 2:7). It is only natural then that the believer "wait on" the Lord in humble dependence and faith. Such waiting would be given expression through prayer and worship (particularly in the Psalms). Hebrew prayers reflected a confident hope for divine help toward some particular need. Answer to prayer was among those things for which the believer waited most patiently. Weiser mentions Is. 30:18; 33:2; Ps. 33:20ff.; and 119:147 as passages which may have been used as liturgical formulas.<sup>5</sup> These and other passages depicting waiting were perhaps used in the liturgies associated with some of the Jewish festivals.

The hope of God's ancient people consisted in an eager expectation

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<sup>5</sup> Weiser, op. cit.

which had as its object the faithfulness of Yahweh, the God of the covenant. The whole idea of waiting was conceived of in strongly concrete terms. Their waiting, whether expressly stated or not was a waiting on or for the Lord (e.g., Ps. 31:25; 38:16; 40:2; 130:5; Prov. 20:22; Zeph. 3:8).

For the Hebrew, the name of an individual indicated in a concrete manner who that individual was and what he represented. God's name, too, conveyed His total personality (Ex. 3:13-15; Ps. 135:13; Is. 42:8; Phil. 2:9-11). Thus we find references to waiting on the name of the Lord God (Is. 60:9; 52:11) as well as the parallel idea of trusting in His holy name as in Ps. 33:21. His was a memorial name, that is, that by which He made Himself to be remembered (Is. 26:8 and 13). The Septuagint renders  $\overline{\text{ס}} \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}}$  with  $\epsilon\lambda\pi\acute{\iota}\sigma\omega$  in Is. 26:8 and Is. 25:9, which passage will be treated later.

Waiting on the Lord was inseparably linked up with the Old Testament believer's confident trust in Yahweh in spite of His being Deus absconditus (Is. 8:17; 45:15; Ps. 10:1,11; 27:7-9; 89:46). Is. 8:17 speaks of waiting with persistence for this hidden Lord in terms of both  $\overline{\text{ס}} \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}}$  and  $\overline{\text{ס}} \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}}$ . "I will wait for the Lord, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in Him." When we contrast this with the concept of waiting in parts of Job, for example, or in 2 Kings 6:33b where Syria's siege prompted the Israelite king Jehoram (or his messenger) to say, "This trouble is from the Lord! Why should I wait for  $\left[ \epsilon \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}} \overline{\text{י}} \right]$  the Lord any longer?", we see the close relationship between waiting and the degree of patient steadfastness inherent in one's faith. We see in the passage from 2 Kings an instance where waiting on the Lord was considered a useless practice by one whose

tension of waiting had reached the breaking-point because his faith was weak or altogether lacking. We see operative in the Jewish passage, on the other hand, a God-given attitude capable of elevating the waiter from the depths of despair to a confidence in his hidden yet ever-present God. Faith here remained firm with the result that a confession was made. It was such a faith that enabled the Old Testament believer to wait for his Lord who he knew would make even the impossible possible. This was the faith of God's prophets who proclaimed their message with a strong hope and courageous confidence, "Thus saith the Lord!"

Because of the particularly heavy concentration of words associated with the Old Testament vocabulary of hope in Ps. 33:18-22, we single out this passage out of many which could be cited to illustrate the confident hope and trust of the faithful believer in His covenant relationship with his Creator and Preserver.

Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him,  
 on those who hope in His steadfast love,  
 that He may deliver their soul from death,  
 and keep them alive in famine.  
 Our soul waits for the Lord;  
 He is our help and shield.  
 Yea, our heart is glad in Him,  
 because we trust in His holy name.  
 Let Thy steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,  
 even as we hope in Thee.

Key terms in this passage include  $\text{אָרְצֵי}$ ,  $\text{לְפָנָי}$  (twice),  $\text{טֹרֵף}$  (twice),  $\text{לְיָדָי}$ ,  $\text{סִדְּוָת}$ , and  $\text{פִּיטְוָת}$ . It is significant that the Septuagint translates both  $\text{לְפָנָי}$  and  $\text{פִּיטְוָת}$  with  $\text{ἐλπίσω}$ ;  $\text{סִדְּוָת}$  is rendered by  $\text{δομενω}$ . (Cf. also Is. 64:4, w. 3 & Heb.)

An inexhaustible storehouse of blessing and theological insight awaits the one who also studies in some detail those Hebrew verbs which tell of God's saving activity including  $\text{שָׁמַר}$ ,  $\text{לְיָדָי}$ ,  $\text{וְלִפְנֵי}$ ,  $\text{יְצִיט}$ .

יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד , מִן־פֶּ and בִּרְפֵ (together with their  
 Septuagint counterparts such as σάωω , εὐομαλ , and εὐδίδω )  
 as well as those verbs which indicate the believers reaction to God's  
 saving goodness. These would include יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד , בִּרְפֵ ,  
 מִן־פֶ , יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד , and, on occasion, verbs  
 such as יָצַד and יָצַד as well as phrases like יָצַד־יָצַד or  
 יָצַד־יָצַד . Key terms in the Septuagint would include πείνω ,  
 πιστεύω , ἐλπίζω , ἐγγίζω , and φοβέω . An examination of  
 the following nouns (in addition to those already mentioned in an ear-  
 lier footnote) help to make the picture more complete: יָצַד ,  
 יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד , יָצַד ,  
 יָצַד , יָצַד , and יָצַד .

It is often impossible to distinguish any particular nuance in  
 meaning between many of these terms as they appear in the same passage  
 or in related contexts. This is no doubt due to the fact that, in the  
 process of general usage, various terms naturally flow together in mean-  
 ing. This is to be expected particularly in the vocabulary of a worship-  
 ing community.<sup>6</sup>

As is true of individual terms, so is it true of the ideas which  
 these terms express that they too tend to flow together. This becomes  
 readily apparent, for example, after one has attempted to isolate pas-  
 sages indicating a hope for temporal aid from those which appear to be  
 speaking of waiting on the Lord for spiritual blessings. It is often

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<sup>6</sup>The fact there are so many synonyms in both testaments of the Bible  
 is due, first of all, to the theological concerns of the inspired authors  
 such as, for example, the author of the Fourth Gospel. Because of its  
 Subject, Biblical theology, above every other discipline and field of  
 study, must embrace the entire gamut of fitting vocabulary and style of  
 language known to man.



next to impossible to distinguish in the Old Testament that which is sometimes termed the temporal from the spiritual. These were both inseparably intertwined for the Hebrew. A physical enemy affected one's entire being and way of life. Similarly, temporal blessings such as rain would cause a believing Jeremiah, for example, to set his hope of Yahweh for all of his needs (Jer. 14:22). Our Common Doxology, "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow," is good Hebrew theology. In the final analysis, there is nothing that is purely temporal or secular. And it is precisely because the Hebrews saw God's hand in all the affairs and estates of men and human history that their theology was so concretely stated and understood. For example, a psalmist speaks of the eyes of the Lord being upon those who fear Him and hope in His steadfast love (Ps. 33:18). Other psalms acknowledge that the eyes of all men wait and look upon the Lord who alone gives them their food in due season (Ps. 104:27; 145:15). This is waiting concretely understood and vividly portrayed.

In being concrete in its use of the vocabulary of hope, the Old Testament is also highly realistic about waiting on the Lord. To maintain a confident attitude of waiting was admittedly no easy matter for such an one as the psalmist in Ps. 69:4 who said, "I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched. My eyes grow dim with waiting for my God." The Septuagint has  $\Sigma\text{ΠΟΜΈΝΩ}$  in Ps. 68:6 and 20.

The Old Testament believer's difficulty was a God-intended discipline designed not to destroy but to make more firm his faith. This type of waiting is seen, for example, in the Psalter which is today the hymnal of Jews and Christians alike. The cry of "How long?" in Ps. 13 is more than counter-balanced in the closing verses of that psalm where the psalmist confidently affirms that he had trusted in the steadfast

love of his covenant God. Ps. 69 ends on a similar note. God assured the prophet Habakkuk that he could and must wait for the vision which seemed to come so slowly but which would nonetheless surely come (Hab. 2:3). Young men fall exhausted from their toil, but they who wait on the Lord, who never faints or grows weary shall renew their strength, being able to run without growing weary and to walk without fainting (Is. 40:27-31). The Scriptures frequently remind us that it is the quiet and steadfast assurance of trial and affliction that makes one strong and prepares the believer for his receiving the crown of life and the salvation of his soul (e.g., Lam. 3:26ff.; Hab. 3:16ff.; Matt. 10:22; 24:13; Mark 13:13; Rom. 5:3-5; 1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Cor. 12:9-10; Heb. 10:36ff.; 12:1ff.; James 1:2-4,12; 1 Pet. 1:6-9; 2 Pet. 1:3ff.; Rev. 2:10).

We have seen that waiting on the Lord with patient endurance is ever so closely related to the believer's confident trust in Yahweh. Whether this relationship is actually close enough to say that confident waiting and saving faith are completely synonymous will be left for the systematician to decide. But of this one thing we must be most certain; Yahweh, the Lord of the covenant, graciously bestowed His gifts of love upon His people which made it possible for them to be obedient to that covenant. For the Hebrew, faith and life were conceived of as one simultaneous activity. It would have been unthinkable to try to drive a wedge between what today is sometimes called justification and sanctification. True Old Testament faith was an active and dynamic force which had to seek expression through inseparable ethical concomitants. We see here perhaps another example of Hebrew concreteness and the flowing together of concepts and ideas into one grand organic whole.

All waiting is ultimately eschatological. Waiting on the Lord and hoping in Him for every need was always done with a view to a concrete goal but particularly so in later Jewish writings with their stress on future theophanies (e.g., Dan. 12:12). Already in Is. 25:9, however, we find words which show remarkable affinities with the New Testament Apocalypse where it is said that salvation has come (e.g., Rev. 7:10; 12:10; 19:1).

It will be said on that day, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him that He might save us. This is the Lord; we have waited for Him; let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation."<sup>7</sup>

And we are reminded once again that it is good that one should wait quietly for this salvation of the Lord (Lam. 3:26).

We have seen in this chapter that the Old Testament vocabulary of hope reflected a realization on the part of God's people that their covenant God had been keeping His promises to be with them in every need. While this hope was sometimes expressed in terms of what might be called contemporaneous materialism, it was, nevertheless, evidence of a confident trust in Yahweh which depicted the active faith of the Old Testament believer.

A study of this kind would remain incomplete were we to confine ourselves only to those passages containing the precise vocabulary of hope without at least mentioning certain other portions of the Old Testament where the idea of waiting is clearly present. In addition to individual passages where the waiting believer cried out, "How long, O Lord?" or used some similar expression (e.g., Ps. 13:1; 79:5; 89:46), the idea of waiting is also strongly associated with certain notable events

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<sup>7</sup>The concept of the Day of the Lord will be treated in Chapter IV.

in Israel's history, a history which can perhaps be characterized as a never-ending anticipation. Moses and later Joshua waited to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and into the promised land. Some of the exiles in Babylon longed to return to Jerusalem where the people who did return were forced to wait some more, this time for the completion of the temple. The New Testament tells us how the prophets (and even angels) longed to experience those things which were yet to come at the time of the incarnate Christ (Matt. 13:17; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

We see in the case of Abraham an example of how God disclosed and revealed Himself by means of promise and fulfillment. The patriarch waited many years for a son. Isaac was born when his father was one hundred years old (Gen. 21:5). The writer to the Hebrews tells us that Abraham died in faith without having fully received the promise as he was only able to see and greet it from afar (Heb. 11:13). We see here an excellent example of Old Testament typology; for He who was Abraham's Seed as well as his Lord told the Jews, "Abraham rejoiced to see My day." (John 8:56; Gal. 3:16). Later, in strictly historical fashion, Luke records that Paul addressed certain members of his audience in Pisidian Antioch as "sons of the family of Abraham" when he spoke to them concerning the Christ about whom the prophets had given their utterances (Acts 13:26ff.). Whether explicitly stated or not, the Old Testament saint was waiting in eager expectation for God to lay bare His holy arm that all the nations of the earth might see His salvation (Is. 52:10).

While the Old Testament hope is not spelled out with the Christological clarity of the New Testament; there is, nevertheless, an equal amount of believing conviction in God's faithfulness in keeping His promises expressed in the Psalms, for example, as one finds in St. Paul's

Epistle to the Philippians. Especially does the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews remind us that there is but one people of God who through His salutary activity in historical processes perfected His entire people in Christ (Heb. 11:39ff.). Only in the incarnate, crucified and exalted Son of God do we see the true unity of the two testaments. For it has been revealed to us that all waiting on the Lord must ultimately be understood in terms of waiting on and for the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44ff.; Acts 3:19-21; 10:43).

It was the author of Prov. 24:14 who urged men to know that God's wisdom was as honey to one's soul. If one would find that wisdom, there would be a future and man's hope (  $\overline{\text{S}} \text{ } \overline{\text{L}} \text{ } \overline{\text{P}} \text{ } \overline{\text{S}}$  ) would not be cut off. Ours is a sure hope in Christ whom God has made our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:24 and 30). It was He who looked for pity and comforters and found none save those who gave Him vinegar to drink that His thirst might be quenched (Ps. 69:21-22). Only because He was cut off from the land of the living is it certain that our hope will not be cut off (Is. 53:8; Acts 8:32ff.; Prov. 24:14).

The Old Testament believer expressed his salvation hope as an eager waiting for a concrete goal; his waiting was in truth always a waiting on the Lord. The New Testament Church has continued to worship her Lord in the words of the De Profundis (Ps. 130) which beautifully describe also the Christian's tension that will remain until the Parousia.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord.  
 Lord, hear my voice;  
 Let Thine ears be attentive  
 to the voice of my supplications.  
 If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities,  
 O Lord, who shall stand?  
 But there is forgiveness with Thee,  
 That Thou mayest be feared.  
 I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait.

and in His word do I hope.  
My soul waiteth for the Lord  
more than they that watch for the morning:  
I say, more than they that watch for the morning.  
Let Israel hope in the Lord:  
For with the Lord there is mercy,  
and with Him is plenteous redemption.  
And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.  
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen.

### CHAPTER III

#### WAITING AND THE CENTRALITY OF THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST

As obvious as it may seem, we must not fail to stress the fact that it is the lordship of Christ which must serve as the substructure which undergirds our discussion of waiting on the Lord. The concept of waiting in the New Testament and, in particular, in St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians is properly understood only as it is related to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is the LORD JESUS CHRIST to the glory of God the Father (Acts 2:36; Phil. 2:11).

The basic meaning of *κύριος* is "one who has the right of authority over others as one who commands willing service."<sup>1</sup> This, however, was not always the meaning of the term. The Greeks for a long time were fundamentally averse to regarding their gods as lords and themselves as slaves (δοῦλοι). In the Orient and in Egypt, however, people tended to believe in gods to whom they felt personally responsible. It was probably not until the first century before Christ that the counter-stream from the East, which poured the Oriental ideas of lordship into Greek molds, actually began in earnest.<sup>2</sup> Only when this had happened did *κύριος* become generally used as the expression connoting a personal

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<sup>1</sup> For much of the material in this chapter, I am indebted to the study of "Lord" by Werner Foerster and Gottfried Quell in Volume II of Bible Key Words from Gerhard Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, translated and edited by J. R. Coates and H. P. Kingdon (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1958).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

relationship of men to a god, expressing itself in prayer, thanksgiving and devotion, and as a correlative to δούλος, whereby the person concerned addressed as master the god whom he called κύριος.

The Hellenisation of the world after Alexander the Great was no doubt successful in large part because of Greek willingness to tolerate and even to incorporate new religions into their pantheon. Religious syncretism was also a characteristic of the Romans but to a far lesser degree because of the emperor cult. The papyri tell us a great deal about the development of κύριος which was common among Oriental religions including, for example, the Egyptian cults of Isis and Serapis.<sup>3</sup> The term quite naturally became applied to sovereigns and rulers throughout the East, including some of the later Ptolemies and at least three of the Herods.

By the time of St. Paul's letter to the Christians in the Roman colony of Philippi, κύριος (the Latin dominus) was a common title given to emperors, notably by citizens living in the eastern part of the Empire. The term was applied to Claudius and Nero, for example, primarily in a political-legal sense rather than as a religious title, although we can ascertain from history that, in practice, the latter meaning was prevalent already at the time of Nero. After the time of Constantine when Christianity had become an officially recognised religion, the term δεσπότης generally replaced κύριος as a designation for the emperor.

Oscar Cullman takes issue with W. Bousset in his Kyrios Christos

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<sup>3</sup>James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), p. 365.



as well as with Bultmann in his Theology of the New Testament, both of whom give undue stress to Hellenistic influences upon the Christian conception of  $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  to the virtual exclusion of any roots in Jewish or Palestinian soil.<sup>4</sup> It is to these that we now turn.

In the Septuagint,  $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  occurs most significantly as an equivalent for  $\text{יהוה}$  and over five-thousand times as a consistent periphrasis for the mysterious divine tetragrammaton  $\text{יהוה}$ . As a translation of the former,  $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  does not always refer to God as it also appears with reference to human positions of leadership ranging from the husband in a family (Gen. 18:12) to the king of a nation (e.g., Gen. 40:1; 1 Sam. 22:12). In referring to God,  $\text{יהוה}$  connotes His sovereign superiority which is often indistinguishable from His lordship characterized by the use of  $\text{יהוה}$ .

The name of Yahweh may perhaps be called the basic mold of all Old Testament predications about God; the figure of Yahweh is the mold of biblical revelation in the Old Testament canon.<sup>5</sup> In speaking of the name Yahweh as a concept of experience, Quell says:

The deeply-felt pathos, the searing honesty of O. T. piety, is rooted in the message about Yahweh, in whose clearly defined personality, in whose insistent will man finds a norm and criterion for life and the world, now covering in a feeling of creaturely dependence before the Holy, now satiated with rapt gazing at the figure (Ps. xvii. 15) in whom all salvation lies guaranteed.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Oscar Cullmann, The Christology of the New Testament (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1959), pp. 193-237. Cullmann also questions Foerster who, in attempting to refute Bousset in his Herr ist Jesus tends, says Cullmann, to fall into the very same error of separating the profane use of the title  $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  from its religious use which certainly also had roots in Hebrew thought.

<sup>5</sup> Foerster and Quell, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 46f.

In confident awe and anticipation, the Old Testament believer waited on Yahweh his Lord who says emphatically, "Seek Me and ye shall live" (Amos 5:4).

It is in His guiding throughout history that Yahweh is seen and recognized as the Lord who demands obedience, which, in fulfillment of His imposed obligation of loyalty, is to show itself in concrete actions toward one's fellowmen.<sup>7</sup> God's lordship in late Judaism and in the pseudepigraphic writings is two-pronged. God is portrayed as the sovereign Lord and Leader of the universe and its history. He is at the same time both the merciful Lord and righteous Judge of the individual.<sup>8</sup> The reason why God is absolute Lord over both world and individual is because He is "Creator of all" (I Enoch 84:2f.); and the election of Israel is seen more and more in terms of God as the Creator of Israel (Apocalypse of Baruch 78:3; 79:2; 82:2).

Having given this brief but basic background, we now proceed to the use of κύριος in the New Testament and, in particular, St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. While the use of κύριος in the Septuagint strongly and consciously affirms that God's lordship is legitimate (an affirmation based on God's creatorship as well as the historical fact of Israel's divine election), these two criteria for legitimate lordship are more than met in the case of Jesus who is the embodiment and Creator of God's New Israel (e.g., Mark 1:15ff.; Heb. 1:1-5).

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 75f.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

Absent only in Titus and in the Johannine Epistles, the term *κύριος* occurs more than five-hundred times in the New Testament. It frequently appears in its everyday meaning of "owner," "master," or to indicate the station or any official capacity in which a person acted (e.g., Matt. 20:8; 21:30,40; 27:63; Mark 13:35; Luke 16:3ff.; 19:33; Acts 25:26; Col. 4:1). St. Paul, however, in using *κύριος* fifteen or sixteen times in Philippians (depending upon the reading adopted in 2:30), always does so with reference to Christ. There is good reason for finding in the Apostle's insistence upon *ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ* as "the name which is above every name" (2:9) a protest against the ever-present danger of bowing the knee to "the gods many and lords many" (1 Cor. 8:5f.) with which Christianity found itself confronted throughout the Greco-Roman world. It is for Jesus alone that the early Church reserved the absolute lordship.<sup>9</sup>

If the Apostle's rather frequent use of *κύριος* in his Epistle to the Philippians serves to remind the congregation of their one Lord, this emphasis is overshadowed by a grander theological purpose, namely, a Christological concern that portrays Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord by virtue of His person and saving work. The Lord Jesus Christ, not Paul or Epaphroditus or the Philippian congregation, is the principal figure in the epistle. He is the only reason why Paul says that he "can do all things" (4:13). This intensely personal faith in his Lord is given full expression in this epistle as Paul takes occasion to show his love for those who had remembered him with gifts while he was in prison (4:10ff.).

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<sup>9</sup>Cullmann thinks the phrase "Jesus be cursed!" in 1 Cor. 12:3 is closely connected with the enforcement of emperor worship and the attendant persecution resulting from one's publicly confessing Christ as Lord, *op. cit.*, pp. 218f.

His letter begins and ends in the customary Pauline manner of conferring upon his readers the grace and peace of the "Lord Jesus Christ" (1:2; 4:23). He mentions that many Christians in Rome, having gained confidence through his imprisonment, have grown more bold to speak the Word of God without fear. Paul calls them "brethren in the Lord," or it may be that their newly found confidence is "in the Lord" (1:14). Perhaps the Apostle wished to convey both of these ideas. It is "in the Lord" that Paul hopes to send Timothy to Philippi, and it is again "in the Lord" that he expresses confidence that he too may visit the Philippians (2:19, 24). In the meantime, they are to receive Epaphroditus "in the Lord" (2:29). Later he calls them "beloved" ( $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\tau\omicron\iota$ ) and exhorts them to stand firm "in the Lord" (4:1). That they are "beloved" probably refers to the fact that they have been loved by God (e.g., Rom. 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:20; 4:12). It is understandable how the term would also be used among believers who are "in the Lord," that is, those who are within the sphere and under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church.

Paul tactfully urges both Euodia and Syntyche to agree "in the Lord" as the binding force able to reconcile them (4:2; Eph. 2:21). Whether one calls  $\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\upsilon\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega$  a "mystical dative" or by any other label, the meaning of the phrase is clear from the Pauline corpus. The baptized Christian is a part of Christ; he is a member of His body (e.g., Rom. 6; 1 Cor. 6:11; 1 Cor. 12; 12ff.; Gal. 3; Eph.; Col.; cf., also 1 Pet. 1:3; 3:15). The Christian has but one guiding principle in acting and in forbearing to act,  $\mu\acute{o}\nu\omicron\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \kappa\upsilon\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omega$  (1 Cor. 7:39).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>J. B. Lightfoot, Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956), p. 120.

Paul exhorts his Philippian brethren to rejoice "in the Lord" (3:1; 4:4) even as he himself was overjoyed "in the Lord" because of their concern for him (4:10).<sup>11</sup> An important reason for rejoicing in the Lord is that "the Lord is near" (4:5).<sup>12</sup> It is the "Lord Jesus Christ" for whom Christians are eagerly waiting as their Savior from heaven (3:20); and it is the supreme knowledge that Christ is already recognised as "my Lord," by virtue of His resurrection (John 20:28), that truly shows this former Pharisee's deep allegiance to Christ which enables him, in comparing this knowledge with all his past "gains," to consider them as something that he would not hesitate to throw away even as one would normally act in discarding refuse (3:8ff.). Such knowledge is inestimable because its subject and giver is the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18) whom every creature is to worship and confess (2:10f.) none of whom will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38f.).<sup>13</sup>

The centrality of the lordship of Christ in this epistle is, of course, best seen in Phil. 2:11 which stands as the culmination of one of the most significant Christological statements in the entire New Testament. It is beyond the scope of our topic to attempt to give a detailed exegesis of Phil. 2:5ff. Whether or not Lohmeyer and others are correct

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<sup>11</sup>F. W. Beare in his recent work, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1959), p. 100, follows Goodspeed in translating  $\chi\alpha\iota\rho\epsilon\alpha\tau\epsilon$  as "farewell" instead of "rejoice" as the epistle appears to be drawing to a close in view of the sudden change in mood in 3:2.

<sup>12</sup>This important passage as well as 3:20f. will be treated at length in subsequent chapters.

<sup>13</sup>Marvin E. Vincent, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 100.

in saying that these verses were originally from an early Christian hymn which the Apostle incorporated into his epistle is also not central to our present discussion. In any event, we can be certain that this passage contains the theology of St. Paul. And it is particularly in this pericope that we can see the results of God's miraculous saving power as seen in Paul, who had been a Jew in the strictest sense of the term (Phil. 3) and a Jewish monotheist if there ever was one, would now emphatically assert ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (cf. also 1 Cor. 12:3).

Concerning Phil. 2:5ff., we note that this chapter speaks as much about the Christian life as it does about the person and work of Christ. The Scriptures never speak of Christology in a vacuum. Paul here emphasizes the earthly ministry of our Lord for the purpose of establishing a relationship between the Savior and sinful man. We first recognize Him as κένος through His emptying Himself as a suffering slave. He was a voluntary δοῦλος who emptied Himself (Matt. 20:28; John 10:18; 2 Cor. 8:9; Gal. 2:20; 1 Tim. 2:6).

Because the Lord Jesus had taken upon Himself the form of a slave, we are to become slaves of one another (1 Cor. 7:22; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:5). This thought was probably present in Paul's thinking whenever he spoke of Christ's lordship as, for example, when he wrote to the Colossians, "As therefore you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in Him" (Col. 2:6). The lordship of Christ influences individual believers by regulating the way that we are to live as we await our final deliverance.<sup>14</sup> To serve

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<sup>14</sup>Waiting and the Christian life will be treated in greater detail in Chapter VI.

our κύριος who not only created us but, as our δοῦλος, redeemed us, connotes not slavery but freedom. We are constrained by the love of Him who died for all (2 Cor. 5:14ff.) All Christian ministry is the service of God and of Christ.<sup>15</sup> Paul and Timothy are δούλου of the Lord Christ (Phil. 1:1). We are slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ as we wait upon (διακονέω) one another (Matt. 20:28; 25:44; 1 John 4:11,21). In the New Testament, a new look is given to earthly relationships of slaves to their masters whom Paul tells, "You are serving the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:22ff.; Eph. 6:5-9).

On this account God has highly exalted Him and conferred upon Him the name which is above every name, that at [in?] the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess LORD JESUS CHRIST to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).<sup>16</sup>

The entire passage rushes toward the words ΚΥΡΙΟΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ as its theological apex, as we also recognize Jesus as Lord through His resurrection and exultation.

That every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father is reminiscent of some very similar words in Isaiah where God says, "I AM THE LORD, that is My name; and My glory will I give to no other" (Is. 42:8; cf., also Is. 45:23; Amos 5:8). God the Father is the Lord; that is His name, and that is precisely who He is. He will certainly give His glory or the name Lord to no other--to no one, that is, but to Him who is His only Son (John 1:14,18; 3:16,18; 1 John 4:9). Jesus is elevated to and, in a sense, even beyond the position of Yahweh in the Old Testament; He is the LORD Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father

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<sup>15</sup>Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1958), p. 305.

<sup>16</sup>Cullmann renders the New Testament haxax ὑπερέψωσεν "more than exalted." It is to be remembered that Phil. 2:9ff. refers to the concrete person of our Lord according to His human nature which is the only nature which could be improved.

(2 Cor. 1:20). "This idea is the foundation of every New Testament passage which actually identifies Jesus with God."<sup>17</sup>

The usual name for God in Old Testament quotations and allusions in which the Septuagint is generally followed is *Κύριος* with or without the article (e.g., Matt. 9:38; 11:25; Luke 1:46; John 12:38 (twice); Acts 4:26; 17:24; 1 Cor. 10:9,26; 2 Pet. 3:8; Rev. 4:8). It is characteristic of the Christological expression of the authors of the New Testament that they incorporate Old Testament statements which speak directly of God the Father and apply them to Jesus (e.g., the use of Is. 40:3 by all four evangelists in Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3; Luke 3:4; and John 1:23). Similarly, Phil. 4:4 may possibly be an allusion to Hab. 3:18. Jesus is specifically called God in Heb. 1:8; Tit. 2:13; and 2 Pet. 1:1.

In 1 Thess. 4:14 it is Jesus who as God's agent will carry out judgment and the resurrection, something which only God could do according to Jewish thinking. Any statement about the lordship of Christ would be considered blasphemous by an unbelieving Jew. The preaching of the cross and a crucified Messiah was scandalous to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles (1 Cor. 1:23). An even greater scandal to the Jew, however, was that Jesus be given the name LORD. Their Messiah had come as God in the flesh into the midst of Judaism, but the Jews failed to appreciate this greatest of blessings (Rom. 9:5).

In addressing a predominately Jewish audience on Pentecost, Peter declared that God had made the crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth both Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:36). Luke, in reporting this sermon, has Peter

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<sup>17</sup>Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 218.



citing the Septuagint version of Ps. 110:1, probably the most frequently alluded to Old Testament passage in the New Testament, where David says, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies a footstool for Your feet" (Acts 2:34f.). The first *κύριος* is the God of Israel; the second is Christ the exalted Lord of the Christian Church which is the New Israel. Yet they are one (John 10:30; 17:11).

An almost endless array of passages could be cited to show that *κύριος* may refer to Christ or God. For example, in prayers the Apostles often make no distinction between God and Jesus (e.g., 2 Cor. 12:8; 1 Thess. 3:12; 2 Thess. 3:5). We note also some of those passages which speak of praying to God "through Christ" (e.g., Rom. 1:8; 7:25; 2 Cor. 1:20; Col. 3:17). It is not long before the student of the New Testament is forced into the realization that there are many passages which are ambiguous as to whether God or Christ is meant (e.g., Acts 9:31; 1 Cor. 4:19; 7:17; 2 Cor. 8:21; Col. 3:22b; 1 Thess. 4:6; 2 Thess. 3:16). Apparently, this ambiguity did not disturb the writers of the New Testament; theologically it was unavoidable.

The proclamation of Jesus' resurrection as, for example, in the sermons in Acts, is a proclamation of the lordship of Christ.<sup>18</sup> The New Testament writers use *κύριος* of Jesus as the resurrected Lord (Acts 2:36; Rom. 10:9). Death no longer has dominion over the risen Christ (*αὐτοῦ οὐκέτι κυριεύει*); rather the Lord is Victor over death (Rom. 6:9; 1 Cor. 15:55ff.). The plenary authority given the

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<sup>18</sup>Charles Harold Dodd, The Apostolic Preaching and Its Development (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1951), pp. 11f.

resurrected Lord is seen in His own words (Matt. 28:18) as well as in the words of the Apostles (e.g., Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:12; 14:9; Eph. 1:20ff.; Phil. 3:21; Col. 1:15ff.; 1 Pet. 3:22; Rev. 17:14; 19:16). Jesus and not the emperor is "Lord of lords and King of kings."

A fixed association of ideas stems from Christ's lordship including His resurrection, ascension and session, and coming again as our Savior and Judge. The comprehensive character of the lordship of Jesus is seen in such passages as Matt. 28:18 and in John 5:22 where Jesus says, "The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son" (cf., also Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:8-12). Our waiting is based upon the past events leading to our salvation as well as upon a confident hope in the Lord's parousia (e.g., 1 Cor. 4:5; 11:26; 2 Cor. 1:20; Phil. 3:20; 4-5) when He will return as Savior (Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 1:10; Tit. 2:13) and Judge (e.g., 2 Thess. 1:9f.; 1 Cor. 4:4f.; 11:32; 2 Cor. 5:10).

It is Christ's exalted lordship and not His saviorhood that is the central confession of the New Testament. The waiting Church is to confess and proclaim that Jesus is Lord, not Savior (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). Tit. 2:11ff. speaks about waiting for the second appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. Phil. 2:11 stresses the LORD Jesus Christ for whom we eagerly wait (3:20); while in Luke 2:11, the angel announces already at Jesus' first appearing the birth of a Savior who is Christ the LORD. All three passages affirm the deity of our Lord. The Scriptures speak of Jesus in many ways; but we agree with Stauffer that of all the

Christological titles, the richest is that of "Lord."<sup>19</sup>

The non-Christian use of the *κύριος* name in the Hellenistic world, its relation to emperor worship, and, above all, its use as the name of God in the Septuagint—all of this certainly contributed to making *κύριος* an actual title for Christ.<sup>20</sup> Cullmann adds, however, that this development would not have been possible had the original church already not called upon Christ as the Lord in her worship. He cites the ancient liturgical formula maranatha in 1 Cor. 16:22 which Paul merely transliterated from the Aramaic thereby indicating that it was well-known.<sup>21</sup> The bending of the knees of all creation and the confessing of every tongue that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father is, without a doubt, a reference to the worship of the absolute Lord described in terms similar to the doxologies addressed to the Lamb and *παντοκράτωρ* in the Apocalypse (e.g. Rev. 4:8; 5:12-14, passim; cf., also Matt. 4:10 and 1 Kings 19:18).

The use of *κύριος* in the New Testament expresses a relationship denoting the one Lord upon whom we are dependent. For Christians there is only one God with whom they have to reckon, from and to whom all things exist, and only one Lord upon whom they depend and to whom they owe everything that makes them Christian.<sup>22</sup> Here again it is clear

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<sup>19</sup>Ethelbert Stauffer, New Testament Theology (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 114.

<sup>20</sup>Cullmann, op. cit., p. 215.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>22</sup>Foerster and Quell, op. cit., p. 103.

that  $\kappa\upsilon\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$  means that One through whom God has entered this world to save and to act, our only Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 8:5f.). This is our exalted Lord whom we confess and worship (Rom. 10:9; 1 Cor. 8:6; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11); because of Him we wait upon one another until that day when He will return to bring to completion that good work begun in us by God (Phil. 1:6). This is the Lord for whom we watch and eagerly wait (Is. 25:9; Phil. 3:20). In the meantime, all of our waiting is with the knowledge that "The Lord is near" (Phil. 4:5).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE "DAY OF CHRIST" AS THE PAULINE PAROUSIA

A discussion of waiting on the Lord naturally suggests the thought of Jesus' return. While the noun  $\pi\alpha\rho\omicron\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha$  occurs twice in Philippians, in neither case is it used as a technical term for our Lord's Second Coming. In both passages Paul uses the term with reference to himself as he speaks of his coming again to see the Philippians (Phil. 1:26) as well as mentioning his former presence with them (Phil. 2:12).

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the phrases "day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6) and "day of Christ" (Phil. 1:10; 2:16) as correlatives of the New Testament concept of the parousia. We have seen on the basis of Phil. 2:11 and other passages stressing the lordship of Christ that, context permitting, we may equate "day of Christ" with another Pauline phrase "day of the Lord" which occurs also in its fuller form as "the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf., 1 Cor. 1:8; 5:5; 1 Thess. 5:2).

It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss in detail the day-of-the-Lord concept in the Old Testament or the use of  $\eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha$  in the Synoptic Gospels, for example. Nevertheless, we think it necessary to present at least a brief overview of these important concepts.

The Old Testament Day of the Lord (  $\text{יְמֵי ה'}$  ) as well as many of the references to "the Day," "day," or "that Day" were terms used by the prophets to describe a supernatural end-time event in which God would reveal Himself to men and usher in a new age by overthrowing

all evil forces and by liberating from the judgment of sin those who trusted in Him for their deliverance. It was the time when God would suddenly break into history to judge His foes and establish His rule. The Day of Yahweh was an eschatological day of triumph when the victorious kingdom of God would become a reality.<sup>1</sup>

But it was the sin of Israel as well as that of the nations which prompted God's prophets to speak about a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of wrath and gloom, a day of devastation and natural upheaval of universal dimension (e.g., Is. 2:10ff.; 24:21ff.; 34:8ff.; Lam. 1:21ff.; Ezek. 7:7ff.; 38ff.; Joel 2:1ff.; 3:12ff.; Amos 3:2; 5:18ff.; 8:9; Obad. 8-11; Zeph. 1:14ff.; 3:8; Zech. 14:1ff.). Such a day would satisfy God's justice and exalt Him above all other gods. Yet because of His great love and mercy, the Day of Yahweh was to be a gracious day of salvation for those who waited and trusted in Him (e.g., Is. 25:9; Jer. 30:7f.; Lam. 3:21ff.; Ezek. 34:11ff.; Amos 9:11f.; Zech. 14:5ff.). The last reference tells of a glorious day in which Yahweh would come to establish His universal reign. That God's eschatological day is sometimes mentioned in connection with His reign suggests that the Kingdom of God and Day of Yahweh are closely related Biblical concepts. We see God's law and gospel enacted in both; both embody judgment, repentance, and deliverance, and both describe the final suppression of all evil and the concrete blessings of the new age.

The closing chapters of Isaiah sound forth the good news that God would reign (Is. 41:21; 43:15; 44:6; 52:7). Malachi ends his prophecy

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<sup>1</sup>John Bright, The Kingdom of God (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 60.

with a reference to the return of Elijah before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord (Mal. 4:5). But we have an even further forward look as early as Is. 25:9, where the confident anticipation of the God of salvation is already realized by the believer.

It will be said on that day,  
 "Lo, this is our God;  
 we have waited for Him that He might save us.  
 This is the Lord;  
 we have waited for Him;  
 let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

The expectation of a Day of Yahweh embraces the important assumption that Yahweh is already known, that is, that man recognizes his own present salvation as well as his powerful Judge. This attitude of waiting is an act of faith on the part of Israel. She did not doubt that she was the people of God whom He had chosen and would continue to defend. In so doing, Israel tended to be complacent about her sin; yet even under such circumstances she sometimes faced the future with a confidence that dared to yearn for that Day of Yahweh as the day in which God's people hoped to see her enemies destroyed.

Von Rad calls Amos 5:18ff. the locus classicus for all discussion about the Old Testament  $\text{יְהוָה בְּיָמָיו}$ , which, while in a negative context, does certainly appear to speak of an eschatological hope.<sup>2</sup> But that day would become an imminent and inescapable day of doom for those whose dead orthodoxy and ritualistic formalism had become a cloak behind which they sought to excuse themselves for committing grave sins, including social injustices over against the poor and destitute of their day.

<sup>2</sup>Gerhard von Rad and Gerhard Dellling, "ἡμέρα," Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament, edited by Gerhard Kittel (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer GMBH, 1933--), II, 945ff., where von Rad terms as improbable Mowinckel's contention that the Day of Yahweh refers to His day of enthronement.

Woe to you who desire the day of the Lord!  
 Why would you have the day of the Lord?  
 It is darkness, and not light;  
 as if a man fled from a lion and a bear met him;  
 or went into the house and leaned with his hand  
 against the wall and a serpent bit him.  
 Is not the day of the Lord darkness and not light,  
 and gloom with no brightness in it?

Amos led men to the presence of the living God whose redemption comes by way of judgment and repentance.<sup>3</sup> Yet by seeking Yahweh and by hating evil, Israel could live; "it may still be that the Lord, the God of hosts, would be gracious to the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:4, 14f.).

The reader of the Old Testament is eventually forced to conclude that there is more than one day or period in which God would intervene within history. Amos already had prophesied about the day of the re-establishment of the fallen tabernacle of David (Amos 9:11f.) which James, as leader of the Apostolic Council, applied to the conversion of the Gentiles (Acts 15:13ff.). In the New Testament, we note our Lord's reference concerning "days of the Son of Man" which are contrasted with "the day" when the Son of Man is to be revealed (Luke 17:22ff.; cf., also references to "the last days" in Acts 2:17; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 1:2; 2 Pet. 3:3). Apparently "the last days" will attain their culmination in one final "great Day of God" (Jude 6; Rev. 16:14). In the meantime, everything is regulated according to the divine economy of time, which is always colored by God's patient forbearance in seeking to appropriate His saving grace to all men (cf., 2 Pet. 3:8ff.). But one hesitates in accepting wholeheartedly the view that the New Testament parousia is

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<sup>3</sup>Martin H. Franzmann, Follow Me: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 24. The reference to the Amos passage is made in connection with a discussion of Matt. 3:2ff.



merely a reworking of the Old Testament Day of the Lord as this tends to overlook the tremendous difference which Christ has made between the two testaments.<sup>4</sup> For He it is who has transformed the Old Testament Day of the Lord into the day of salvation by rescuing us from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10; 5:9).

We shall say a few words at this point about those phrases which speak of our Lord's coming in a cloud with power, "or "in" or "with the clouds" (e.g., Luke 21:27; Acts 1:9ff.; 1 Thess. 4:17; Rev. 1:7). To many today "in the clouds" is merely a symbolic phrase referring to things that are happening in the present order rather than at the end of history (e.g., the creation of the Church).<sup>5</sup> Such a view appears to be based largely upon a symbolic treatment of Dan. 7:13-14. Aside from this passage with its peculiar difficulties, we feel that most, if not all, of those New Testament passages which speak of the coming in the clouds of Christ or the Son of Man ultimately speak of a cataclysmic end-time event especially when they are considered in the light of the entire New Testament (e.g., John 1:51; 5:19-29).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> For a discussion of this and related topics, one might consult Thomas Francis Glasson's The Second Advent: The Origin of the New Testament Doctrine (London: Epworth Press, 1947). The author states that the Old Testament in its teaching about a Messiah makes no mention of a parousia or a glorious descent from heaven. He finds it difficult to believe, however, that the New Testament teaching of the parousia grew out of roots of apocalyptic tradition as found in the Book of Enoch which, says Glasson, has been given undue attention by some scholars of the present century who insist that much in the New Testament is dependent upon that striking pseudepigraph.

<sup>5</sup> T. F. Glasson, "The Reply to Caiaphas (Mark xiv. 62)," New Testament Studies, VII (October, 1960), 88-93.

<sup>6</sup> Oscar Cullmann views the form of messianic hope in which there is an expectation of the Son of Man coming on the clouds as a replacement for the national expectation of a Jewish Messiah and which, although

The term παρουσία occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament, but in only seventeen of these instances is it used as a technical term for our Lord's Second Coming. At least five different authors make use of the term in this way. As such, it is but one of many words whose meaning was recast as it came under the influence of the Christian Church. The word is used in Neh. 2:6 and in the papyri to indicate the visit of an approaching royal figure. In Christian parlance, it frequently refers to the regal return or glorious reappearing of Christ our Lord and King.

In addition to παρουσία and ἡμέρα, the New Testament also employs such terms as ἀποκαλύπτω, ἀποκάλυψις, ἐπιφάνεια, and φανερώ in describing our Lord's Second Coming and its attendant circumstances. The verb ἀποκαλύπτω as well as the noun ἀποκάλυψις often depicts God's disclosure of Himself and the hidden secrets belonging to the last days (e.g., Luke 17:30; Rom. 2:5; 8:18f.; 1 Cor. 1:7; 3:13; 2 Thess. 1:7; 2:3ff.; 1 Pet. 1:5, 7, 13; 5:1; cf., also the use of φωτίσω in 1 Cor. 4:5 and 2 Tim. 1:10). It is to be noted, however, that ἀποκαλύπτω may also have reference to what is taking place among men right now. The disclosure of God's righteousness as well as His wrath is already being revealed (Rom. 1:17-18; cf., also perhaps Phil. 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:5). Divine activity is a never-ending process. Jesus said, "My Father is working still, and I am

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found only on the fringes of Judaism, particularly in the Enoch literature, is that form of messianic hope to which the Gospels testify. Oscar Cullmann, "The Significance of the Qumran Texts for Research Into the Beginnings of Christianity," The Scrolls and the New Testament, edited by Krister Stendahl (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), p. 20.

working" (John 5:17). God does not wait to disclose Himself only at the last day; yet we must not strip the parousia of those things which God finds reason for delaying until that time.

The noun ἑπιφάνεια, particularly in the Pastorals, is used of Jesus' glorious epiphany as Savior and Judge (e.g., 1 Tim. 6:14; 2 Tim. 4:1; Tit. 2:13). A pleonasm occurs in 2 Thess. 2:8 where ἑπιφάνεια and παρουσία occur in the same technical sense in the phrase "the appearance of His coming" (cf., 2 Pet. 3:12 where παρουσία and ἡμέρα are used in a similar manner). The word ἑπιφάνεια is used of our Lord's first appearance in 2 Tim. 1:10. In 2 Tim. 4:8 ἑπιφάνεια may refer to the first advent which would then be set in contrast to the final Day (cf., Tit. 2:11ff. where ἐπιφαίνω depicts the first coming and ἑπιφάνεια the second). The verb φανερώω is used to describe our Lord's first appearance in the flesh, His post-resurrection appearance, His final coming, and our appearing before Him for judgment (e.g., John 21:14; 1 Cor. 4:5; 2 Cor. 5:10; Col. 3:4; 1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:10; Heb. 9:26; 1 Pet. 1:20; 5:4; 1 John 1:2; 2:28; 3:2).

In the preceding chapter, we saw that Christ's Second Coming as Savior and Judge is an integral aspect of His lordship. The writer to the Hebrews states that our ascended Lord "will appear a second time (ἐκ δευτέρου), not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him" (Heb. 9:28).<sup>7</sup> The Lord's parousia will be a visible return, in the same manner in which His followers had seen Him go into heaven (Acts 1:11). His return will be accompanied by the angels in heavenly splendor (Matt. 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7). Only the

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<sup>7</sup>The verbs ἔρχομαι and ἦκω are frequently used of the coming of God or of Christ, the coming of His Day or hour, and even with reference to the coming of angels.

Father knows the time of His coming (Matt. 24:36). The Day of the Lord will be sudden and, for many, as unexpected as the coming of a thief in the night (Matt. 24:42ff.; Luke 12:40; 1 Thess. 5:2ff.; 2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 3:3; 16:15). And He will return in order to effect final universal judgment (Matt. 12:36; 25:31ff.; John 5:22,27; Acts 10:42; 17:31; Rom. 2:16; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 4:17) on that Day which will also be a day of redemption (1 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 4:30; 1 Thess. 1:10).

In Matthew 25, our Lord describes the time when He would return to sit in judgment over all nations whom He would arrange into two groups. Based upon works done as the fruit of faith, this judgment would result in the final separation between believers and unbelievers as each is consigned to his final resting place. To the believers Christ will say, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). To the unbelievers He will say, "Depart from Me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). In both statements, we see the universal grace of God. The eternal fire was not prepared for men; it was prepared for the devil and his angels whose lot must be shared by those who have rejected God's saving grace.

Although we do not know the time of our Lord's parousia, we have been made familiar with many signs which would precede His return (Matt. 24-25; Mark 13; Luke 21). Some of these would be seen as social and political phenomena which would appear in such forms as war and persecution. There are also to be signs in nature and in the heavens. And there are those signs which are within the Church including the rise of false prophets, widespread apostasy, and perhaps the most significant eschatological event of all prior to the parousia, the preaching of the gospel throughout the

world (Matt. 24:14).<sup>8</sup> Then the end will come.

Finally, we return to the contention with which we began this chapter. Are we justified in equating the Pauline phrases *ἡμέρα Χριστοῦ* and *ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου* with the final parousia? We have been treating these terms as synonyms on the basis of what we consider to be conclusive evidence. Paul writes to the Thessalonians, "For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the parousia of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep" (1 Thess. 4:15). We read in the same context, "For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (1 Thess. 5:2).

An even closer connection occurs in St. Paul's second letter to the Thessalonians. "Now concerning the parousia of our Lord Jesus Christ and our assembling to meet Him, we beg you, brethren, not to be quickly shaken in mind or excited, either by spirit or by word, or by letter purporting to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come (2 Thess. 2:1f.; cf., also Matt. 24:36-44; 2 Thess. 1:10; 2:8).

Elsewhere in the New Testament both *παρουσία* and *ἡμέρα* occur at least twice each in 2 Pet. 3:3-12. Scoffers will come in the last days saying, "where is the promise of His parousia?" The author continues that the Day of the Lord will come like a thief. In the meantime, we are to be the sort of persons who wait for and hasten the parousia of the Day of God.

There is further evidence that the early Church equated the Day of the Lord Jesus Christ with His parousia on the basis of variant readings

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<sup>8</sup>St. Paul's entire ministry indicates that he was thoroughly imbued by a passion for preaching Christ wherever he was as well as through his writings (e.g., 1 Cor. 9:16; Phil. 1:12ff.; 25ff.; 4:3).

in 1 Cor. 1:8. The majority of manuscripts support ἡμέρα as the original reading in the passage "that you are lacking in no spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the Day of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is to be noted, however, that D, G, and certain early Greek-Latin versions read παρουσία in place of ἡμέρα, while the Vulgate, in similar fashion, reads die adventus.

The early Church thought of the Day of Judgment as that day when God would suddenly reveal or disclose Himself and those things which heretofore had remained hidden and secret. The noun ἡ ἡμέρα (with the article) was frequently used in contradistinction to ἡ νύξ; "the Day" would bring to light things now hidden and unknown. This conception of "the Day" so dominated the thoughts of the early believers that it was sufficient to refer to the Second Coming by that name alone.<sup>9</sup>

Now the world has its day. Just prior to His arrest, Jesus told the Jewish officers that this was their hour and the power of darkness (Luke 22:53). But the "Lord's day" when He would be vindicated both in salvation and judgment was yet to come (Luke 22:69). This was the name given to the weekly celebration of the Lord's resurrection (Rev. 1:10), which was indeed a day of divine vindication as well as a pledge and anticipation of the final great Day of the Lord.<sup>10</sup> This is the day of which St. Paul speaks in Philippians; this is the Lord who has made Him at peace with God and for whom he eagerly waits (Rom. 5:1; Phil. 3:20).

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<sup>9</sup>S. Barton Babbage, "The Parousia as Revealed in the Gospels," Evangelical Quarterly, XII (January, 1940), 62.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

## CHAPTER V

### WAITING ON THE LORD IN PHILIPPIANS

Two passages in Philippians stand out as being particularly relevant to our discussion. A translation of Phil. 1:19-24 and 3:20-21 follows:

For I know that through your prayers and the support of the Spirit of Jesus Christ this will turn out for my deliverance. It is according to my eager expectation and hope that I shall not be ashamed under any circumstance; but with full boldness, now as always, Christ will be magnified in my body, whether through life or through death. For to me, life is Christ and death is gain. If I am to live on in the flesh, this means fruitful labor for me. But what I shall choose is not for me to say. I am hard pressed between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for this would be far better by far. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sakes.

But our commonwealth is even now in heaven from which we also eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like His glorious body according to the effective working of Him who is able even to subject to Himself all things.

In discussing these passages from the epistle, we will also consider the closely related statement in Phil. 4:5, "The Lord is near." In so doing, we shall endeavor to determine the degree in which the New Testament speaks of a "realized eschatology" as we relate this passage to our topic of waiting on the Lord.

The majority of commentators are agreed that the Apostle probably wrote Philippians from a prison in Rome between 58 and 64 A.D. Paul appears to have altered any views he may have had as to the likelihood of his living to see the parousia; but we are not to conclude from this that he ever lost sight of the imminence of the Lord's return, a thought reflected in several of his letters (cf., 1 Thess. 4:13ff.; 1 Cor. 7:29ff.; Phil. 4:5).

Paul could rejoice and be content because his imprisonment served the Cross of Christ (Phil. 1:13,19; 4:11). Bolstered by the prayers of fellow-believers and having no less a benefactor than the Spirit of Jesus Christ, the Apostle was confident that his experiences would result in his deliverance. It was in keeping with his eager expectation and hope that not even imprisonment could cause him any shame.

What was this eager expectation and hope of which Paul speaks in Phil. 1:20? The interesting noun ἀποκραδοκία occurs only twice in the New Testament, here and in Rom. 8:19, where Paul speaks of the eagerly waiting creation. Elsewhere it is found only among Christian writers. The verb ἀποκραδοκέω, however, is found already in pre-Christian writings, notably in those of Polybius, as well as in the isolated reference in Ps. 36:7 of Aquila's version of the Septuagint. Of the versions of the Septuagint contained in Origen's Hexapla, apparently only that of Aquila employs the related words κραδοκέω (Ps. 129:5) and κραδοκία (Ps. 38:8; Prov. 10:28). An interesting use of the verb κραδοκέω is found in a sixth century papyrus where certain oppressed peasants petition a high official whose parousia they have been expecting and assure him that they await him (ἐκδέχομεν) "as those in Hades watch eagerly (κραδοκοῦντες) for the parousia of Christ the everlasting God."<sup>1</sup> The verb is also used by Herodotus in the sense of waiting for the outcome of something, such as a battle.

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<sup>1</sup>James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959), p. 63.



The eager expectation inherent in ἀποκαραδοκία would approximate the posture and attitude of someone today who eagerly waits with neck craned for an important person or a loved one to alight from a jet liner. For, etymologically, the word suggests two ideas related to earnest expectation: waiting with outstretched head, and doing so with complete diversion from other objects.<sup>2</sup> St. Paul's attitude was one of watching with eager anticipation for his release from this life by death or the parousia, whichever would come first, that he might be with Christ (Phil. 1:23).

St. Paul's life was also governed by an inner attitude of hope (Phil. 1:20). In Greek thought it was possible to nourish hopes that were both bad and good, but the Bible uses the word ἐλπίς only to denote an attitude of waiting for something that is auspicious.<sup>3</sup> Biblical hope implies a confident waiting for a future based on God's promises. The quality of hope does not belong to the realm of visible objects that form the world of flesh and blood, for hope which is seen is no longer hope; but if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience (Rom. 8:24f.; cf., also 2 Cor. 4:16-5:10). Herein lies the strange paradox of Biblical hope, namely, its being seemingly insecure while at the same time exuding complete assurance. It relies on nothing innately available; it is utterly remote from all human claims

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<sup>2</sup>R. M. Pope, "Studies in Pauline Vocabulary," Expository Times, XXII (1910-11), p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>J.-Ph. Ramseyer, "Hope," A Companion to the Bible, edited by J.-J. von Allmen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 172-4. I am indebted to this author for many of the thoughts expressed here.

and accomplishments. As in the case of the aged Abraham, it is a hope that believes against all hope (Rom. 4:18).

Christ Himself is our living hope (Col. 1:27; 1 Tim. 1:1). It is in this hope that we are already saved and in whom we were born anew through baptism to a living hope by His resurrection to a never-ending inheritance kept on deposit for us (cf., Rom. 8:24; Eph. 1:18ff.; Col. 1:5; Heb. 6:18-20; 1 Pet. 1:3f.). Paul's hope in Christ is clearly eschatological; its object is future and yet always, in a very real sense, present through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (cf., Rom. 5:5; 15:4; 2 Cor. 1:20-22; 5:5; Gal. 5:5).

Hope governs the believer's mode of behavior and provides the context for Christian morality as we await the object of our hope, our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1:10; Tit. 2:13; Phil. 3:20). Hope does not signify flight from this world; on the contrary, it implies that the realities of this world must be taken seriously and not be reduced to nothingness. It is precisely because the believer has placed his hope in the living God that he is able to work and to engage in spiritual combat during his earthly sojourn (cf., Phil. 1:24; 1 Cor. 15:58; 1 Tim. 4:10; 6:12; Heb. 10:23; 1 Pet. 1:21; 3:15; 1 John 3:30).

We see in St. Paul a person whose life reflected the proper relationship between an attitude of expectant waiting and hope. His was a confident expectation, because he waited in hope (Phil. 1:20). Even though death seemed very imminent, he could affirm, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). His God-given eschatological principles had so conditioned the Apostle's thought that his one aim was that Christ be honored in his person, whether by life or through death (Phil. 1:20b; cf., Ps. 33:3 in the Septuagint). "To live is Christ

and to die is gain" is Paul's way of saying in Philippians what he had said in his earlier letter to the Romans. "If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and came to life again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living" (Phil. 1:21; Rom. 14:8f.).

St. Paul was prepared to do either one of two things (cf., Acts 21:13). If he were to live on in the flesh here, that would mean fruitful labor for him (Phil. 1:22). He was perfectly content to remain on earth that he might continue to bear fruit for God (Phil. 1:11; 4:11ff.). And here it is that we are permitted to catch a glimpse of a fellow-Christian's innermost thought. Even though he is well aware of the fact that everything is in God's control, he reflects for a moment on the possibility of his being able to choose his immediate future. Were the choice his to make, there would be no doubt in the Apostle's mind that, to a much greater degree, it would be far better for himself to depart and be with Christ. The redundant comparatives in verse twenty-three leave absolutely no doubt as to Paul's intended meaning.

In addition to referring to death, the verb ἀναλύω is sometimes used of ships putting out to sea or of soldiers breaking camp (cf., 2 Cor. 5:1ff.; 2 Tim. 4:6). This verb means "to return" in Luke 12:36. One or all of these ideas may have been present in Paul's mind. Far from being a morbid dying, departure for Paul meant primarily being with Christ. Like Simeon's willingness to depart (ἀπολύω), the Apostle desired to depart, not because he was growing old, but because he too had seen the Lord's Christ. Paul had frequently spoken of his being "in

Christ;" yet he also eagerly looks forward to being "with Christ."<sup>4</sup> This would happen in God's good time; in the meantime, Paul knew that he was being left on earth because God's people needed him for what he still might do "for their progress and joy in the faith" (Phil. 1:25).

The chief thought of Phil. 3:17-21, the epistle for the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity, is that we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body. Phil. 3:20 is the only passage in the epistle where we find an explicit reference to waiting. In this case it is expressed by the double compound verb ἀπεκδέχομαι, which implies an eager waiting or a patient longing. This term does not occur in the Septuagint. Its uses in the New Testament are well worth nothing, however.

The verb ἀπεκδέχομαι is used six times by Paul, and once each by Peter and the auctor ad Hebraeos. The creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19); we wait for adoption as sons, namely, the redemption of our bodies (Rom. 8:23; cf., Phil. 3:20f.). We wait with patience (ὑπομονή) for a hope which we do not yet see (Rom. 8:25). We eagerly wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1:7). Through the Spirit, by faith, we wait for the hope of righteousness (Gal. 5:5). Christ, having been offered once for all to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him (Heb. 9:28). And in 1 Pet. 3:20 this verb occurs in the unique sense of

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<sup>4</sup> Harry Angus Alexander Kennedy, The Theology of the Epistles (London: Duckworth Press, 1948), p. 123. We feel constrained to disagree at this point with C. F. D. Moule who speaks of the preposition σὺν in Phil. 1:23 as the "σὺν of spiritual contact with Christ." C. F. D. Moule, An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (Second edition; Cambridge: The University Press, 1959), p. 81.

God's patient long-suffering (*μακροθυμία*) which "waited" in the days of Noah.

Occuring but seven times in the New Testament, the closely related compound *ἐκδέχομαι* does not necessarily convey the intense sense of urgency that one normally associates with *ἀπεκδέχομαι*. But even in passages which speak of Paul's waiting for Silas or Timothy (e.g., Acts 17:16; 1 Cor. 16:11), it is quite impossible to rule out at least the idea of patient waiting. The same is true of 1 Cor. 11:33 where Paul tells the Christians at Corinth, "When you come together to eat, wait for one another." A note of patient resignation is readily apparent in the case of the farmer who must wait for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it until it receives the early and late rain (James 5:7). An interesting use of *ἐκδέχομαι* occurs in a marginal reading at John 5:3, where it is said that the invalids waited for the movement of the water in the pool. Abraham looked forward to the city having foundations whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10). The exalted Christ is seated at the right hand of God waiting until His enemies are made a footstool for His feet (Heb. 10:13).

Still a third compound of *δέχομαι*, *προσδέχομαι*, is frequently used with reference to waiting. One-half of its fourteen uses in the New Testament occur in Luke-Acts. Simeon was looking for the consolation of Israel; Hanna spoke of Christ to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem (Luke 2:25, 38). Joseph of Arimathea was looking for the kingdom of God (Mark 15:43; Luke 23:51). We are to be like men who are waiting for our *κύριος* to return from the marriage feast (Luke 12:36). Another important passage occurs in Tit. 2:11ff. in the words "awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory

of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." We are to keep ourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (Jude 21). Such terms as προσδοκᾶω (cf., especially 2 Pet. 3:12ff.) and προσδοκία do not occur in the Pauline writings.

It is our contention that many of the significant passages employing terminology from the New Testament vocabulary of waiting reflect an attitude of eager expectation that is coupled with a spirit of patient trust and endurance. In considering Philippians as a whole, we find that all of these components are present in Phil. 3:20 with its reference to waiting for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven.

"For our commonwealth is even now in heaven" (Phil. 3:20a).<sup>5</sup> The New Testament hapax τὸ πολίτευμα has been variously rendered as "citizenship," "colony," "commonwealth," "community," and "constitution," to mention but a few. Each of these concepts would require clarification for the modern reader. The Authorized Version's translation of "conversation" is unintelligible to the modern reader.

At least two avenues of approach are at our disposal in seeking to determine a correct understanding of πολίτευμα. One is to examine

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<sup>5</sup>These words may be illustrated by an interesting note in the commentary of Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch (München: C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Oskar Beck, 1926) III, 623, where a midrash on the superscription of Psalm 18 is cited, with particular reference to David's calling himself "the servant of Yahweh." The midrash explains that David's grounds for giving himself this title lay in the fact that he is here teaching that God adds honor to everyone whom He converts from sin. Now David, prior to his conversion from his deed (adultery), was not registered in the so-called "upper army." But after he had made atonement, he became enrolled in this upper (heavenly?) army and was called "servant of God." It is not difficult to make the connection between David, as he is here described, and the converted persecutor of the Church who calls himself a "slave of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:1), who

the use of this and related terms outside of the epistle. The family of words including *πολίτευμα*, *πολιτεία*, *πολίτης*, and *πολίτευομαι* are all formed from the stem of *πόλις*, which to the Greek meant both "city" and "state," and which is the root for such English words as "polity" and "politics."<sup>6</sup> All four of these terms occur in the Septuagint in one or all of the following books: 2 Macc.; 3 Macc.; or 4 Macc. (but never in 1 Macc.). The noun *ἡ πολιτεία* is found in Acts 22:28 as well as in Eph. 2:12 where, with *πολίτευμα* in Phil. 3:20, it too has been rendered "commonwealth" or "citizenship."

A comparative philological study of *πολίτευμα* itself with the above-mentioned cognates is of relatively little value in determining the precise meaning of its use in Phil. 3:20. Its only occurrence in the Septuagint is as a reference to Joppa in 2 Macc. 12:7. The papyri reflect a wide variety of uses reflecting a general political or public structure in a given community.

Another alternative is to determine what might be learned from the secular history of the Macedonian community at Philippi. For it was only to the Christians living there that the Apostle speaks of "our *πολίτευμα*." Much has been written about the history of ancient Philippi that is relevant to our discussion.<sup>7</sup> Philip, the father of

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presses toward the prize of the upward call of God (3:14), and who includes himself as one whose citizenship is in heaven from which we eagerly await a Savior.

<sup>6</sup>F. W. Beare, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Philippians (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1959), p. 66. Our word "polite" has also been derived from *πόλις* to describe the behavior of a person while he is in the city.

<sup>7</sup>A useful introduction to this subject complete with bibliographical references is to be found in the commentary by Marvin R. Vincent, A Critical

Alexander the Great, after ascending the Macedonian throne in 360 B.C., introduced colonists at or near the ancient gold-mining center known as Erenides, which he later renamed after himself. Philippi was the scene of a decisive battle in 42 B.C. in which the Roman army under Octavian and Antony defeated the Republican forces of Brutus and Cassius, the latter having died in a battle twenty days before the final conflict. In commemoration of his victory, Octavian, who later became Caesar Augustus, recognizing Philippi's importance both as a military position and as a source of revenue, made it and the outlying area a Roman military colony with full attendant rights and privileges. It was at this time that the imperial colonies began to outstrip in importance the co-called municipia or free towns.

A colony of the Philippian type was in many respects a miniature Rome, designed to resemble its mother-city in form and appearance. In Acts 16:12, Luke recognized Philippi as a Roman colony ( *κολωνία* ). It was in this same city that Paul and Silas found it to their advantage to declare themselves Roman citizens (Acts 16:37f.).

That Paul was writing to people who were thoroughly steeped in Roman ways is further evidenced by his use of the Latinism *πρακτώριον* which he mentions without any further explanation (Phil. 1:13; cf., Acts 16:21). We note also Paul's use of the verb *πολιτεύομαι* in Phil. 1:27 where the present imperative is probably to be rendered "keep on discharging your obligations<sup>as</sup> citizens worthy of the Gospel of Christ."<sup>8</sup>

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and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon, in The International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 1xff.

<sup>8</sup>R. R. Brewer, "The Meaning of *politeuesthe* in Philippians 1:27," Journal of Biblical Literature, LXXIII (1954), 76-83. This verb occurs



But on the basis of his words ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάχει in Phil. 3:20, we may be quite certain that the members of the Philippian congregation would find their motivation for living the Christian life not in their loyalty to Rome, but because of an understanding of their present status as a unique colony of heavenly citizens. As people possessing dual citizenship, they are not to yield to patriotic pressure in giving Nero that loyalty which alone belongs to the κύριος Jesus Christ whom they await from another Eternal City, the heavenly mother-city, Jerusalem.

Since our πολίτευμα is even now in heaven, our waiting is as aliens and pilgrims who are on the march toward our homeland and the continuing city (cf., 2 Cor. 5:1ff.; Eph. 2:19; Heb. 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:11ff.) But our waiting is not for a time when we will finally arrive at the completion of a long, tiring march; we wait for a Person, a Savior from heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will come to meet us, whether our journey has been interrupted by death or whether we are still on our earthly pilgrimage, to change our lowly body to be like His glorious body (cf., John 6:39ff.; Rom. 8:29f.; 1 Cor. 15; Phil. 3:10ff.; 1 Thess. 4:16ff.). Heaven belongs to us only because we belong to the resurrected Christ (Rom. 14:8f.; 1 Cor. 15:23).<sup>9</sup>

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in the Septuagint with reference to one's living in accordance with or in the defense of the laws of God. Paul was probably influenced by the use of this term in the Septuagint and not merely by its use in the Roman Empire.

<sup>9</sup>For an interesting study showing possible literary and doctrinal parallels between Phil. 3:20-21 and 2:6-11, see the article by Seal Flanagan, "A Note on Philippians 3, 20-21," Catholic Biblical Quarterly, XVIII (1956), 8-9.

We note that when St. Paul says that our *πολίτευμα* is even now in heaven, he does not use *ἐστίν* but *ὑπάχει*, a verb which often indicates possession or ownership in addition to implying existence (cf., Acts 17:29; Phil. 2:6; Heb. 10:34; 2 Pet. 1:8; 3:11). In modern Greek, *ὑπάχω* means "to be present," or "to exist."<sup>10</sup> It is a universal term used to describe the existential situation among Christians here and now. Paul's reference to our no longer being strangers and sojourners is a parallel idea, since we are, by the Spirit, already fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God (Eph. 2:19). It is in this light that Paul tells the Philippians about "the upward call of God" which he explains in part with the words, "For our commonwealth is even now in heaven" (Phil. 3:14ff).

Our heavenly citizenship is already guaranteed, and God is calling us home. Yet, we must wait, knowing that our salvation will not be perfected, that is, it will not reach its final goal until the event of the *παρουσία* (cf., Rom. 13:11). That good work begun in us by God will only be brought to completion at the Day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6,10; 2:16; 3:12). And it is primarily for our comfort that Paul says, "The Lord is near" (Phil. 4:5).

Apparently, St. Paul's terse announcement that the Lord was near was made partly for the benefit of Euodia and Syntyche, whose personal differences had been blinding them to the fact that, in the final analysis, the last word to be had in any discussion would come from the lips of Jesus. In addition, his nearness ought to provide motivation for our exercising patient gentleness among the people of this world; Christians

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<sup>10</sup>Moulton and Milligan, *op. cit.*, p. 651.

are to live as people who are eagerly expecting their  $\kappa\acute{\upsilon}\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$  (Phil. 3:20; cf., Luke 12:36). The nearness of the Lord is probably best understood here in point of time rather than locally (cf., Rev. 1:3; 22:7,20).

"The Lord is near" and similar expressions have occasioned much discussion (cf., Luke 21:31; Phil. 4:5; Heb. 10:37; James 5:8; 1 Pet. 4:7; Rev. 1:3). Some would understand  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$  in Phil. 4:5 and in similar passages not as meaning "near" but "here," with the result that everything past, present, or future is viewed as having already been realized in Christ.<sup>11</sup> As these men would no doubt agree, to say categorically that such words as  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ ,  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omega$ , or  $\phi\upsilon\delta\acute{\alpha}\nu\omega$  mean "to be here" or "to be present" would be to misrepresent the New Testament data. The verb  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omega$ , for example, occurs in Phil. 2:30 with reference to Epaphroditus, who is said to have approached death; but we know that he did not die as a result of his illness. We are told to lift up our heads because our redemption is drawing near (Luke 21:28; cf., also the use of  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omega$  in Acts 23:15). But the occurrence of these terms in such passages as Matt. 12:28; Mark 1:15; Luke 11:20 and 21:31 may not be dismissed with the same rapidity.

In our Philippian context where we find such terms as  $\delta\upsilon\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\omega$ ,  $\acute{\alpha}\pi\epsilon\kappa\delta\acute{\epsilon}\chi\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ , and  $\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\gamma\acute{\upsilon}\varsigma$ , we find it necessary to clarify the manner in which waiting is to be understood in terms of a Biblical

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<sup>11</sup> We note in particular some of the works of G. H. Dodd beginning with his volume, The Parables of the Kingdom (London: Nisbet and Co., 1950), which first appeared in 1935.

"realized eschatology." The following may serve as a capsuled summary of the main tenets of "realized eschatology" as championed by C. H. Dodd:

The eschaton, a final revelatory act of God expected at the end of history, has become an event in history. The action of God which finally and fully makes known his saving purpose has taken place, and is no longer an object of faith and hope. His character is supremely declared in the ministry, death and exaltation of Jesus. God has shown his hand to such effect that no further revelation is needed for human faith. The act has been played. Human experience has been made aware of new possibilities; this world's darkness has been bathed in light. In this earthly sphere of the relative the absolute has taken real shape. It is not now an ideal to be visualized and striven for in the hope of an ultimate realization, for it has been actualized in Jesus Christ and an ultimate perfect order can do no more than demonstrate afresh that same actuality on a corporate scale, in a society of redeemed persons.<sup>12</sup>

The basic ideas inherent in "realized eschatology" did not originate with C. H. Dodd. The roots underlying this concept lie deeply imbedded in Scripture. For example, redemption is pictured as an accomplished fact in the canticles in Luke 1 and 2. We are already saved by God's grace (Rom. 8:24; Eph. 2:8; Tit. 3:7). All things are ours because we are the Lord's (1 Cor. 3:21ff.; Rom. 14:8). We are now unleavened dough (1 Cor. 5:7) who rejoice that our names are written in heaven and in the book of life (Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Heb. 12:23; Rev. 3:5; 21:27). Now are we the sons and children of God who have the first fruits of the Spirit (Rom. 8:15-17, 23; Gal. 3:26; 4:6; Eph. 1:5; Phil. 2:15; 1 John 3:1, 2, 24). We are heirs of the kingdom prepared for God's elect (Matt. 25:34; John 14:1ff.; Rom. 8:17; Heb. 6:9; 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:4; 3:9). We have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God (Heb. 12:22). "Our commonwealth is even now in heaven" (Phil. 3:20).

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<sup>12</sup> N. C. Blackman, "The Task of Exegesis," The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology, edited by W. D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: The University Press, 1956), p. 21.

It is the position of Alan Richardson that in the light of recent discussion of such texts as Mark 1:15 (cf., Matt. 10:7; Luke 10:9; 21:31), it would seem that we must translate these passages, "The kingdom of God is at hand," and not with Dodd, "The kingdom has come."<sup>13</sup> Richardson cautions that we must not allow the Hebraic manner of speaking of a future event in the past tense to mislead us into interpreting certain texts in a manner that would be at variance with the whole New Testament eschatological program.<sup>14</sup> It is his contention that such passages as Matt. 12:28; Luke 10:18; 11:20 and 1 Thess. 2:16 must mean that the exorcisms wrought by Jesus are the signs of the coming victory of the kingdom of God over the counter-kingdom of Satan.

The end phase has already been introduced, but the end itself has not yet come. The Greek perfect tense often serves to preserve both the idea of an "already" and a "not yet" (e.g., ἤτοιμασμένην in Matt. 25:34; πεπλήρωται and ἔθηκεν in Mark 1:15; πεπληρωμένοι in Phil. 1:11; and τετηρημένην in 1 Pet. 1:4). This paradox is due to the general conception of time in the New Testament.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, some passages assert that enemy powers have already been conquered, while others still appear to look forward to a final victory. The Apocalypse describes these powers as being only provisionally bound. Christ has conquered, but all do not yet recognize His authority. Nor do we see all things in subjection to Him (cf., 1 Cor. 15:24-28; Phil. 3:21;

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<sup>13</sup>Alan Richardson, An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1959), pp. 85-86.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>15</sup>Oscar Cullmann, Christ and Time: the Primitive Conception of Time and History (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1950).

2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 2:8,14; 10:13, noting in particular καταργῆσθαι and ὑποτάσσω in these passages).

Richardson, following Jeremias, would prefer to speak of "an eschatology that is in process of realization."<sup>16</sup> But in all fairness to Dr. Dodd, it must be said that already in The Parables of the Kingdom, he admits that there remains in Christ's teaching a certain tension between "otherworldliness" and "this-worldliness" as represented by the apparent contradiction between the prayer, "Thy kingdom come" and the declaration, "The kingdom of God has come upon you." He goes on to say that Christian thought cannot escape from this tension while staying true to its original inspiration.<sup>17</sup> And Dodd's more recent writings would seem to indicate that he does indeed take seriously what the Scriptures have to say about time and the process of history.<sup>18</sup>

While we would not always find it possible to agree with them, we have good reason for being grateful to men like Dodd, who would warn the Church of a strictly one-sided futurism that would tend to ignore the fact that "the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining" (1 John 2:8). We note, however, that while the Scriptures do indeed speak of eternal verities as present actualities, they also evidence an awareness of the unrealistic limitations imposed upon Biblical theology by a rigid "realized eschatology." For this reason, we

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<sup>16</sup>Richardson, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>17</sup>C. H. Dodd, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>18</sup>C. H. Dodd, About the Gospels: The Coming of Christ (Cambridge: The University Press, 1954). This little volume contains four radio addresses for the Advent Season delivered over the British Broadcasting

sometimes find language that is both present and future in the same passage (cf., Luke 23:43; John 5:25; 1 John 3:2). Nor can we overlook the scores of passages which speak realistically of eternal life and a life of the world to come which, on the other hand, cry out in protest against a one-sided existential realism and leave the door open to a future hope, thereby making the concept of waiting both relevant and necessary (e.g., John 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 5:21; 6:23; Gal. 6:8).

"Realized eschatology" may lead in one of two directions. For a man like Bultmann whose radical existential philosophy tends to make one think only in terms of the "now" or "already," there remains little or no future "not yet." But for those who are tempered by the hermeneutical principle, "Sensus litteralis unus est" or "Unus eimplex sensus," the Scriptures will be interpreted as permitting and demanding both an "already" and a "not yet." Any position adopting an extreme "realized eschatology" must, of necessity, do violence to the Scriptures as they are viewed in their totality. A continued strong emphasis upon "realized eschatology" may result in its becoming a crutch for those who grow weary of waiting for the Lord.

It was probably some time before the early Church came to the realization that a belief in an imminent or early advent did not necessarily mean an immediate return by our Lord. The Church had to learn that its very existence was part of God's working in and through history and that, Christ, standing in the middle of the predestined plan of history died, rose again, ascended, and would return, all within history. The Church's creedal formulations emphasise most strongly a future expectation of the

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Company in 1950. The one entitled "The Second Coming" also appeared in the April, 1951 issue of Current Religious Thought, pp. 20-28.

parousia; and while she also affirms the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, who brings to remembrance all that Christ has spoken (John 14:26), she does not rest completely content with a "realized presence" of her Lord through the Paraclete. The Church has always waited eagerly for her Lord's return, a tension that will remain until He comes (Phil. 1:6, 10, 19ff.; 2:12ff.; 3:12-16, 20; 4:5; James 5:7f.).

Eschatological hope always tends to foreshorten its perspective in order that the believer may feel that the time of the Lord's return is near.<sup>19</sup> God wisely withheld from mankind the time when this earthly order of existence would come to an end (cf., Matt. 24:36; 2 Pet. 3:8ff.). But God did say through His Apostle, "The Lord is near; now is our salvation nearer than when we came to faith" (Phil. 4:5; Rom. 13:11). God has always said, "Behold, now is the appointed time; now is the time of salvation" (cf., Is. 49:8; Luke 4:18-21; 2 Cor. 6:2).

"The time has been fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has drawn nigh; repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). God intended that each generation live under an imminent parousia and judgment that His saving gospel might be relevant for each generation. It is in this sense that we can perhaps best understand our Lord's words that this generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled, that is, understanding these words within their context of God's gathering His elect only after the gospel of the kingdom is preached throughout the entire world (Matt. 24:14ff.). As we await the consummation of our own salvation, God is still busily engaged in extending His grace to others before the end will come. God's kingdom

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<sup>19</sup> John Bright, The Kingdom of God (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953), p. 165.



must grow before the final harvest (Mark 4:26-29). We who wait on the Lord in the twentieth century are by God's grace part of that harvest and members of His kingdom.

## CHAPTER VI

### WAITING ON THE LORD HERE AND NOW

Throughout her history, the Christian Church has been a waiting community of worshipers, in spite of the fact that there have always been those who have scoffed at many of the principal tenets of Biblical eschatology (Matt. 24:48ff.; 2 Tim. 2:17f.; 4:3ff.; 2 Pet. 3:3ff.). Such waiting is a God-intended discipline which is a necessary feature of our being Christian people. But our waiting has far-reaching implications; it is not merely a matter of individual concern. For the very fact that we must wait is evidence of the greater truth that God's universal saving grace is still being extended to others.

Waiting quite naturally implies a tension. But there is also an unnatural tension inherent in our waiting which results from the fact that sin continues to cling to us throughout our earthly pilgrimage (Rom. 7; Heb. 12:1). This tension will continue until the parousia, when God will release us from all aspects of this life which tend to keep us from the Lord (Rom. 8:19ff.; 2 Cor. 5:1ff.).

God, however, assures the waiting believer in Christ of the certainty of the goal for which he must wait. His peace stands guard over our hearts and minds as an objective assurance that He will indeed supply our every need according to His riches and glory in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:7,19; 2 Thess. 3:3). The Holy Spirit manifests Himself through the means of grace as the down-payment or guarantee ( ἀραβὴν ) of that fuller splendor to which we shall fall heir.

Even in the light of such an assurance, the tension remains.

however. Martin Luther recognized this tension and the enemies directly responsible for it, but he also understood God's solution for his dilemma. In a sermon on 1 Corinthians 15, delivered in 1532, Luther had this to say:

We are, indeed, certain that we are God's children; that eternal life has been given us, that death has been trodden underfoot, [sic] that sin is gone and the devil is captive. Nevertheless, I do not see this yet; but I feel the reverse, that the devil besets me. . . . But over there it will be such that I, too, shall thus see it. Sin will be blotted out. There, then, will be a revealed kingdom, and all such things will be clear, just as we already now believe. The treasure is there now, hidden under covers. Later, He will cast away the covers. This is what Paul means when he says: "he (then) delivers the kingdom to God the Father."<sup>1</sup>

This tension of being and becoming is to be resolved only in the light of God's previous action. Only when we see how God has resolved this tension for us through Him who is the "Yes" pronounced upon every one of God's promises can we become what we are by virtue of our baptism (Rom. 6:3ff.; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 1:20; 2 Tim. 2:11ff.). Our certainty rests upon God's promise and abiding faithfulness (1 Cor. 10:13; 2 Thess. 3:3; Heb. 6:13ff.).

We are linked with our Lord and His return not only in baptism, but also in the Lord's Supper; for there we show forth the Lord's death in joyful anticipation of His final Coming and the heavenly banquet. Then our redemption will have attained its consummation, and all creation will have been set free from bondage (cf., Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; 1 Cor. 11:26; 16:22; Rev. 3:20).

God's answer to the maranatha (1 Cor. 16:22) of the waiting, worshipping community is never an outright, unqualified refusal. God always

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<sup>1</sup>Edmund Schlink, "The Task of Lutheran Theology in Evanston," Lutheran World, (Summer, 1954), p. 97.

answers this prayer of the faithful in the affirmative, but with the added stipulation that we continue to be watchful and patient until He comes. When the early Church prayed, "Let grace come and let this world pass away" (Didache 10:6), she was probably not only seeking her liberation but was already well aware of the fact that grace must first be extended to others before the end would come. For this reason, all generations of waiting Christians were to rejoice in their tension, recognizing that this very waiting was a sign that God's kingdom was being extended and that His grace was being offered to others (cf., Matt. 20; Luke 15; 19).

The fact that Christians must wait on the Lord does not give them license for being idle (cf., 2 Thess. 3:6ff.). Luther is reported to have said somewhere that even if he knew that Christ were returning tomorrow, he would, nevertheless, plant an apple tree today. The waiting believer lives each day as if Christ had died yesterday, rose today, and would come again tomorrow.

Waiting, then, does not preclude witnessing; rather the preaching of the Gospel is specifically commended as a necessary concomitant of earthly living prior to the end of this age (Matt. 28:19-20). Paul would lead us to believe that his days on earth were given him for no other purpose than to preach the gospel (cf., 1 Cor. 9:16ff.; Phil. 1:7, 18, 24ff.). God's kindness, forbearance and patience are meant to lead men everywhere to repentance and to saving faith (Rom. 2:4; Heb. 3:13ff.).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Christian mission is the only answer to what waiting believers can best be doing to alleviate present-day tensions within the Church, not only in bringing about a proper balance between doctrinal truth and Christian unity, but also to hasten the coming of the Day of God (Matt. 24:14; 2 Pet. 3:12).

We, too, are living in the days of grace before the parousia, which will bring to a close this present order of existence. For in the resurrection, men neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven (Matt. 22:30). God has commanded man to replenish the earth and preach the gospel, but He alone is responsible for filling His heaven.

Assuming that the parousia will render impossible continued human history as we know it in this present civilization, we do well to reflect upon the question as to where we would have been had Christ returned prior to our being born upon this earth. The fact that Christ did not return when the early Church thought He would should make us most grateful to God. For had the parousia already taken place, we would not exist as persons who have the privilege of looking forward patiently to the return of our Lord (Matt. 22:30; 24:14; 25:10).

But now we take comfort in our eternal election by God, whose Son will indeed return as promised, when all has been fulfilled. The time of Christ's return is not contingent upon our degree of yearning after Him; it is directly dependent on the gracious will and decision of God who would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. We know, however, that God is faithful to His promises. Surely He is coming soon. Amen, come, Lord Jesus, not that we may cease from our waiting, but that we may be with You and sin no more.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUDING SUMMARY

The Scriptural concept of waiting on the Lord is of primary importance to every generation of God's people. Waiting plays a prominent role already in the Old Testament, where it represents a concrete eschatological hope, embracing both justification and sanctification. Some of the key terms are  $\overline{\text{ST}} \underset{\text{T}}{\text{P}}$ ,  $\text{?} \overline{\text{PI}} \underset{\text{T}}{\text{?}}$ , and  $\overline{\text{ST}} \supseteq \overline{\text{PI}}$ .

A proper understanding of waiting on the Lord in the New Testament is contingent upon our first recognizing the central position ascribed to the lordship of Jesus Christ, who is both the object of and motivation for all of our waiting.

In Philippians, our Lord's parousia is described as the Day of Christ. While the Old Testament Day of the Lord appears to have more than one fulfillment, the Day of Christ refers to one final event at the end of history when all men must appear before the exalted Lord. It connotes the consummation of all things.

Waiting on the Lord in Philippians is depicted as an eager longing to be with Christ. This is seen in such terms and phrases as ἀποκαρδοκία, ἐλπίς, ἡμῶν πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἀπεκδέχομαι, and ὁ κύριος ἐγγύς, all of which indicate that waiting is to be understood within the framework of a Biblically oriented "realized eschatology."

Since our salvation is an already accomplished fact in Christ, our waiting is in no way meritorious. Yet, since we are still beset by sin,

we long for our ultimate deliverance which will become fully consummated only at the parousia. In the meantime, God assures the believer of that goal for which he and every generation of Christians must wait.

Even though the Lord has not yet returned after nearly two millenia, He would not have us conclude that Heilsgeschichte has been interrupted or redirected. On the contrary, the very fact that we must wait is evidence that God's universal saving grace is still seeking out men everywhere for the kingdom of His Son, even as God has made us members of that kingdom. And so, with full confidence, we eagerly continue to wait for Him who delayed His parousia long enough that we too might be included in God's redemptive activity.

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