

My Soul Wait Thou Only, Only Upon God

No Pain, No Gain. It's an old saying, but it's still true! Nobody ever escapes pain in the process of growth -not even Believers. Especially not Messianic Believers. We simply cannot become the people G-d meant us to be without some headaches and heartaches. Our L-rd *Yeshua*: “*learned obedience from the things which He suffered*” (see Hebrews 5:8). Life in G-d's family is a life that includes disappointments, mistakes, struggles, hardships, and misunderstandings. Not a moment, however, is spent apart from G-d's watchful eye. Hopefully, today's message will bring you (us) reassurance and renewed determination to trust G-d and hang tough.

The road from earth to heaven is not an easy, downhill slide. It is, rather, a challenge that forces us to look to Him who has gone before us. He will see us through! Each tough experience simply reminds us that we are on the right road.

“For the leader. Set in the style of Y'dutun. A psalm of David: My soul waits in silence for G-d alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and salvation, my stronghold; I won't be greatly moved. How long will you assail a person in order to murder him, all of you, as if he were a sagging wall or a shaky fence? They only want to shake him from his height, they take delight in lying - with their mouths they bless, but inwardly they curse. (Selah) My soul, wait in silence for G-d alone, because my hope comes from him. He alone is my rock and salvation, my stronghold; I won't be moved. My safety and honor rest on G-d. My strong rock and refuge are in G-d. Trust in him, people, at all times; pour out your heart before him; G-d is a refuge for us. (Selah) Ordinary folks are merely a breath and important people a sham; if you lay them on a balance-scale, they go up - both together are lighter than nothing. Don't put your trust in extortion, don't put false hopes in robbery; even if wealth increases, don't set your heart on it. G-d has spoken once, I have heard it twice: strength belongs to G-d. Also to you, Adonai, belongs grace; for you reward all as their deeds deserve.” (Psalm 62).

Waiting. Isn't that just your favorite thing to do? What could be more fun than a slow line at the bank? Or a long, long, long traffic jam making you late for work? Or an eternity of dull magazines at the doctor's office? None of us likes to wait. We get frustrated and impatient, frazzled and worn out. And when the wait involves something serious, like having a home in escrow, hearing back after a job interview, or getting biopsy results, we can struggle with fear and discouragement and anxiety and anger.

Waiting is never easy, but it's a part of life we cannot escape no matter how hard we try. This is especially true for Believers. We are called to order our lives around G-d's purposes and plans, and that means waiting on His timing rather than our own. His way of doing things, not ours, is to become our priority. Consider, for example, the men and women in the Bible whom G-d, called to do His will. Every single one of them had to endure a time of waiting, and it was often painful. In fact, we can call them the Bible Waiters.

- **Noah.** During the years he built the ark, Noah most likely endured his neighbors' derision and perhaps his own doubts. Remember, it had never rained before. And once he was inside the ark, it was more than a year before he stepped on dry land again.
- **Job.** His life's work wiped out in an instant, his children killed with one calamitous stroke, his health ravaged—Job struggled to find G-d's reason for his anguish. Waiting was no serene exercise for him; he railed at the incompetent and insensitive counsel of his friends and raged at G-d's seeming unfairness, until he was humbled by G-d's own words in the midst of the storm.
- **Abraham and Sarah.** Barren. The word hounded Sarah for eighty-nine years. Finally, when she was ninety and Abraham was one hundred, they had their first child together, Isaac, the child of G-d's promise—a promise that G-d had declared to Abraham twenty-five years before.

- **Joseph.** He endured years in an Egyptian prison for a crime he didn't commit. But rather than withering and dying, Joseph's faith grew through the wait because he trusted in G-d's sovereignty.
- **Moshe.** Because he ran ahead of G-d's timing and took justice in his own hands, Moses spent forty years in the obscurity of the Midian desert. Here he learned that you either go with G-d or you don't go at all. It would also take the children of Israel, another forty years to learn to trust G-d's ways instead of their own.
- **The Prophets.** From Elijah to Malachi, the prophets all announced G-d's words to His people and waited for them to return to Him. Sometimes the people repented, but more often than not, they ignored the prophets' warnings and went their own destructive way.
- **Sha'ul.** After a humbling encounter with the risen Messiah, Sha'ul temporarily blinded-waited three days before his sight was restored. The rest of his life was spent waiting on G-d to direct his steps, sharing the good news wherever G-d would lead him.

One thing's for sure-we're not alone in having to wait. But is there anything that can help make waiting more endurable? More productive even, so that our character grows toward G-d rather than away from Him in despair? Let's turn to the Scriptures to see what help the L-rd has provided.

Two Truths About Waiting

From our roster of the Bible's "waiters," we can draw out at least two truths about waiting. First, waiting on *G-d is the rule* rather than *the exception*. All of us have a natural tendency to make waiting on G-d the exception and trusting in our own wisdom and strength the rule. When there are no open doors, we try to force the locks. But G-d's provisions don't always come along the minute we want them to. And we may not know His purposes until we get to heaven. We must learn to accept that, in many areas of our lives, waiting will be the very process G-d uses to mature us.

Second, waiting on G-d means resting, not worrying. It's a matter of trust, isn't it? As David wrote in Psalm 31:14-15: "*But I, I trust in you, ADONAI; I say, "You are my God." My times are in your hand; rescue me from my enemies' power, from those who persecute me.*" All our times are in His hands, even the slow waits. But resting doesn't mean being passive, or inert. Waiting is active. Think of Noah hammering together the ark; think of Joseph being put in charge of the other prisoners because the L-rd was with him. Life goes on, G-d is with us, and we need to be present and involved-whatever our situation. So stay active while you wait, just don't be anxious.

Waiting in Tough Times

Waiting on the L-rd is hardest when we're in a pinch. David was certainly no stranger to tough times. During one crisis, he transposed his faith into a song, Psalm 62. That should give encouragement to us "waiters."

What to Do

We first learn from David's words to focus on G-d. "*My soul, wait thou only upon G-d...*" But only upon G-d we are to wait, David reiterates. Not panicking over our circumstances, not fretting over the meanness of other people who are doing us wrong. And David had his enemies. But David found rest, though, in G-d, who is always in control and who always cares for us. The infinite G-d is certainly greater than any temporal enemy or passing trouble.

Second, David's words remind us to trust in *G-d's* character. We find our rest in focusing on G-d because we know His character is holy and absolutely dependable. What does David mean when he calls G-d his "rock"? The Hebrew word for rock, *tsur*, conveys the idea that G-d is totally reliable. He is a sure source of strength and he endures throughout every generation. Not only is He steadfast, but He is a stronghold of safety, a shelter of

protection, the One who delivers us and gives us hope. He is all-powerful and loving beyond our power to comprehend. Who better to provide for our needs during the tough times of waiting? People who rely on G-d as their Rock will not be moved.

How to Wait

From David, we can also learn two ways to practice waiting. The first way is in silence. The Hebrew word for silence in verse 1 is *dumiyyah*, meaning “a quiet waiting, repose.” It pictures rest. In verse 5, the Hebrew word is *damam*, “to be or grow dumb, silent or still.” With our mouths and hearts stilled, we can meditate on the things of the L-rd. During these times of quietness G-d may bring to mind a needed truth, a praise, something to be thankful for, or a practical application of His Word that we had been missing.

The second way is in confidence. “*I shall not be greatly shaken*” David says in verse 2; then again in verse 6, “*I shall not be shaken.*” Why? Because of G-d's character and His provision. We can wait secure and stable in His love. He saves, shelters, and strengthens us. The prophet Isaiah explained that G-d even exchanges our weakness for His strength when we wait on Him. No wonder David urges us to trust in G-d “*at all times*” (Ps. 62:8)!

“But they that wait upon the L-RD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)

Why Wait?

Why should we wait on G-d and do things His way? David provides part of the answer for us in verses 9-10. Compared with the infinite G-d, humanity can't even budge the scale. We humans are transitory; the power and wealth we strive for is fleeting. And it may look like we got away with harming others to get what we wanted, but as David reminds us, the L-rd “recompense[s] a man according to his work” (v. 12b). How much better it is to wait for that which has substance and eternal worth than grab for the quick, empty comforts. Waiting for G-d results in priceless benefits. They include:

- **deliverance:** “From Him is my salvation” (v. 1b)
- **security:** “He only is my rock . . . my stronghold” (vv. 2, 6)
- **hope:** “For my hope is from Him” (v. 5b)
- **glory:** “On G-d my salvation and my glory rest” (v. 7a)
- **refuge:** “My refuge is in G-d” (v. 7b; see also v. 8)

Practical Application

A student once asked the president of his school if there was a course he could take that was shorter than the one prescribed. “Oh yes,” answered the president, “but then it depends upon what you want to be. When G-d wants to make an oak, He takes a hundred years, but when He wants to make a squash, He takes six months.” Many of us, while waiting on G-d, have asked a similar question, “*L-rd, isn't there a shorter, less difficult route I could take?*” But it's only by waiting on Him that our roots will grow deep enough for us to be as solid as an oak.

It may not be our favorite thing to do, but waiting is one of G-d's most effective methods for growing us into patient, wise, humble, and mature people. These truths on waiting are well worth reflecting on:

1. Waiting involves trusting.
2. Waiting includes praying.
3. Waiting implies resting.