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My favourite

Scriptus Papers



Biblical perspectives on various topics

Bible texts

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The Bible is alive, it speaks to me; it has feet, it runs after me; it has hands, it lays hold of me.
(Martin Luther)

God made the world from nothing, and if we can be nothing, then God can make something of us (Martin Luther King Jr)

Introduction

Scriptus means 'having been written', and this *Scriptus Paper* concerns my three favourite Bible verses. The first is from the Hebrew Bible, and the second and third from the New Testament.

1. Isaiah 40:30-31

30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon the Lord 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 (KJV).

This "1611 English" (Early Modern English, or Shakespeare's English following Middle English), is the hallmark of the language from 17th-century scholarship. It has profoundly influenced the English language, with many original phrases becoming standard idiomatic English ([Wikipedia](#)).

Isaiah's text in the KJV is melodious, majestic even, surpassing any attempt in the 20th-21st centuries to improve on it. Its cadence is as heart warming and tear jerking as the violin played by the world's best musicians.

In the early part of the chapter Isaiah said to Judah, *Behold your God will come bringing His rule* and His *reward* (v9-10), leading God to ask, *to whom then will you liken me?* (v25). No human can answer, so the Lord answers His own question in verses 26-29. Just look up at the heavenly lights, God says, because it is He who leads out the stars like a huge army and then calls the roll. In His absolute power and awesome strength none of them dares go AWOL. Moreover, the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary, and there is no searching of His understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increases strength.

Even boys and adolescents who are renown for their strength, vitality, and impatience, and lots of get up and go get tired and exhausted but not so God. What is natural and physical is not the answer, it is spiritual - 'waiting on the Lord'.

I'm not much good at waiting. Are you? Did you know that the average human attention span is now shorter than that of a goldfish? A study found that the average human attention span has fallen from 12 seconds in 2000 (or around the time smartphones hit the scene) to eight seconds some 15 years later. In comparison, scientists believe that the goldfish has an attention span of nine seconds ([Digital information world](#)).

'Waiting' is (*qavah*), which is a place of collecting, a reservoir. In the ancient Middle East, water was very precious and it would be collected in a reservoir so that one would readily have it available when you needed it. Without it you would die so water became one of your primary concerns and when collected in a reservoir it was that reservoir that you had confidence and peace of mind that there would be water when you needed it.



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Waiting continued

In the Akkadian language, *qavah* is a word used for a measuring tape, which gives certainty and assurance that you have the exact proportion measured out and that the end result of whatever you are building, designing, or making will come out as expected. That is, *qavah* (hope, certainty) is meaningless if you cannot imagine a positive outcome. Faith is the substance of your *qavah*, your positive imagination (Hebrews 11:1). God created the world using His imagination. He imagined it and it came to be. I am *qavah*, confident that God has made the way for me, my only concern is that I navigate that way to fit God's measurements ([Chaim Bentorah](#)).



Creation waits for God

The first time this word shows up in the Bible, however, it was not people who waited... it was the created waters. The waters under the heavens were 'gathered together' (*qavah*) into one place, and the 'gathering' (*mikveh from qavah*: collection, hopeful gathering) of the waters He called seas (Genesis 1:9-10).

So the waters waited together in one place and God called the collection of water "seas". What were the waters waiting for? They were waiting for God to create the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarmed after their kind, and every winged bird (v20-22).

Job waits for God's light

But when I waited (qavah) for good, evil came; and when I waited (qachal, hoping patiently) for light, darkness came (Job 30:26). The history of God's people from ancient times is about a long wait, traveling in darkness before they saw the light. Job as waiting for justice as Israel were later on.

Jeremiah waits for God's salvation

"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will wait (qachal, hoping patiently) for him." The Lord is good to those who wait (qavah) for him, to the soul that seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly (duwmam, silently), for the salvation of the Lord (Lamentations 3:24-26).

Jeremiah lamented his trial of affliction under the rod of God's wrath; an experience of darkness without any light; again and again, all day long. Nevertheless, he saw the Lord as his portion, his inheritance, the resource and reservoir that gave him confidence and peace of mind that sitting silently, hoping patiently that he would be rescued from his plight, that the darkness would soon end and fade into the light of God's salvation.

Israel waits for God's justice

We wait for justice, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us (Isaiah 59:11). But the people of Isaiah's day had brought this on themselves. Because there was no **justice** in their paths, that they lamented that '**justice** is far from us', and 'we wait for light, and lo! there is darkness; and for brightness, but we walk in gloom' (v8-9).

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Waiting continued

Also this text:

*In the path of your judgments, O Lord, we **wait** (qavah) for you; your name and your renown are the soul's desire (Isaiah 26:8).* Justice is delivered by a judicial verdict pronounced by God, in which the people of God find their long looked-for delight and satisfaction.

Simeon waits for God's consolation

*There was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon who was righteous and devout, **waiting** (prosdechomai) for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ (Luke 2:25-26).*

'Waiting' (prosdechomai) means to eagerly anticipate a future receiving, and to behave accordingly. 'Consolation' (paraklesis) means to call someone with the intent of bringing that person close, or to call into a group with the intent of bringing the members of that group closer to each other. This verb's bottom line is that of convergence ([Abarim Publications](#)). It's suggestive of the Messiah bringing His people together in oneness with Himself.

Joseph waits for God's kingdom

*Joseph, who was a Sanhedrin member, a good and righteous man (he had not consented to their counsel and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was **waiting** (prosdechomai) for the kingdom of God; went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus (Luke 23:50-52).*

His eager anticipation of receiving the kingdom of God in the future indicated that it had not yet arrived, although it drew near when Jesus first publicly proclaimed it (Mark 1:15).

Saints wait for Christ's glorious appearing

*For the grace of God has **appeared** (verb, epiphaino), bringing salvation to all people. It trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, as we **wait** (prosdechomai) for the safe and secure hope and the **appearing** (noun, epiphaneia, blazing appearing), of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (Titus 2:11-13).*

There are two appearances here - the first of grace and the second of glory. The action of (epiphaino), means to shine closely in one's face. It's the visual equivalent of shouting. In Acts 27:20 it's deployed to describe the crushing absence of sunlight: the not-blazing of the sun ('when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and a violent storm continued to batter us'). On the other hand the noun (epiphaneia), emphasises the intensity of a source of light ([Abarim Publications](#)).

'Glory' (doxa), means "image-formation." The ability to imagine and to bring the imagined into the realm of reality is the essence of *doxa*. It's the quality that makes mankind unique in the animal world, being the foundation of all analysis, all planning and all hope. Unfortunately, due to the zeal of early Christians, who confused the Creator with what they understood about the Caesar, the words gloria and doxa were vacated of their original meaning and began to assume their spectacular modern 'wow' meanings!

Imagination is the power
of the mind over the
possibilities of things.

Wallace Stevens

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Saints continued

The Hebrew (*kabud*), which the Septuagint replaces with our word (*doxa*), means impression. It comes from a verb that describes what a heavy boulder would do to soft earth, and appears to express much the same action as (*dokeo*), meaning to image-form.

Since we are made in God's image (Genesis 1:26), our reality exists in God's imagination, and God's reality exists in ours (John 17:1). That is, our amazing ability to imagine stems from God imagining us first.

Importantly, the word (*doxa*) is related to the word (*prosdechomai*), and means to eagerly wait and anticipate a future receiving. What will be received is the imagined reality of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ ([Abarim Publications](#)). The terms "God and Savior" both refer to the same person, Jesus Christ, and is one of the clearest statements in the NT concerning the deity of Christ (Net Bible notes).

So, if I'm not waiting for our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, then what am I waiting for?

Wings

Back to our text, Isaiah 40:30-31.

*Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord 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 (KJV).*

'Wings' evokes the broad, sweeping "pinion" or fully spread wing of the eagle, emblem of majesty and tireless ascent in flight. Unlike the more general Hebrew terms for "wing," this word focuses on strength, lift, and the far-reaching span that bears a creature skyward. Scripture therefore employs it to portray the yearning for escape, the renewal of strength, and the far-reaching dominion of powerfully moving sovereignty. The verse links patient faith with vigorous, God-given power, assuring Judah that hope in the covenant Lord will lift them beyond human limitations.

The picture here shows that these majestic creatures have a caring side to their natures. The eagle here is giving a free ride to a crow, and Robert [Hawker](#) writes that while other birds carry their young with their claws, eagles bear them on their wings. Inevitably, any predator trying to attack from beneath cannot hurt the young, unless the parent bird is first destroyed.

So, God used this characteristic of the eagle as a metaphor for what He did for Israel, His people. He said:

You have seen...how *I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself*. "...you shall be for me a *priestly kingdom* and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:3-6).

Brought you to myself is the language of a bridegroom bringing the bride to his chamber, speaking of the special relationship that the Lord had with Israel ([Denio](#)).



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2. 2 Corinthians 5:21

God made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we would become the righteousness of God.

Christ being made sin is a difficult expression and has produced unorthodox interpretations. As [Rhodes](#) points out, the Christadelphians argue that Jesus required a sin offering firstly for himself in order to save us. Further, Kenneth Copeland asserts that Jesus gave up His righteousness and accepted the sin nature of Satan. Similarly, Benny Hinn declared that Jesus did not take my sin; He became my sin....He became one with the nature of Satan.

Contrarily, Scripture declares that in the person of Jesus Christ there is no sin (1 John 3:5), He knew no sin (2 Corinthians 5:21), and He did no sin (1 Peter 2:22). These three texts cover every aspect of His being and life. So, it's impossible to accept a change of His nature whereby Christ 'becomes' something like sin itself, or the sin nature, or one with the nature of Satan.

Rather, as Hebrews 2:14-17 says, just as humanity has 'flesh and blood', Christ likewise shared these features that defined His identity as human. This is confirmed by Romans 8:3: '*God sending his own Son in the likeness (similitude, resemblance) of sinful flesh, and about sin, condemned (judged) sin in the flesh*'. And this: Christ Jesus '*took upon himself the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness (similitude, resemblance) of mankind*' (Philippians 2:7).

These texts do not imply that Jesus gave up His righteousness, and became my sin, and became one with the nature of Satan, and required a sin offering firstly for himself in order to save us, and became tainted. Accordingly [Jerome Smith](#), says 2 Corinthians 5:21 should be translated as:

For the One not having experienced sin, He took sin in our behalf, in order that we might be made righteous by God in Him (Lavender New Testament).

Moreover, the whole stream of Scripture supports the idea that Christ took up and away our sins:

In the Torah: *Then he is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the iniquities and rebellious acts of the Israelites in regard to all their sins. He is to put them on the goat's head and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man appointed for the task. The goat will **carry** on itself all their iniquities into a solitary place, and the man will release it into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:21-22).*

In the Prophets: *the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6), and, He **carried** their sins (v11) and, He **took up and away** the sin of many (v12).*

In the New Testament: The language of the Hebrew Bible is continued in the NT:

*Behold, the Lamb of God who **takes away** the sin of the world (John 1:29). Christ having been offered once to **take up** the sins of many... (Hebrew 9:28). Who Himself **took up** our sins in His body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24).*

In sum, Christ took away all that I am, to give me all that He is. That's why it's a favourite verse of mine.

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3. Ephesians 3:19

The third favourite text is overwhelming, startling, and it's reality difficult to comprehend. It's this:

*...that you will be **filled up** into all the **fullness of God** (Ephesians 3:19).*

Here's the lead up to that statement in full:

For this reason I kneel before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. 16 I pray that according to the wealth of his glory he will grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inner person, 17 that Christ will dwell in your hearts through faith, so that, because you have been rooted and grounded in love, 18 you will be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and thus to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you will be filled up to all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

How is it possible to know something beyond knowledge? To comprehend the incomprehensible? Isn't that an oxymoron? 'Filled up into all the fullness of God' sounds like being fully immersed.

'To be filled up' (*pleroo*), means to make full or complete, to fill a hollow thing with something, to inflate something that came into the world flat and empty; wholly there but not yet endowed with volume and structure — like any organism that grows from a genetically complete seed. 'The fullness of God' (*pleroma*), describes the result of *pleroo*, the reaching of some item's full potential ([Abarim Publications](#)).

How may this be summarised? JB Phillips put it like this: *May you be filled through all your being with God himself.* For me it's inexpressible, but if I could find words it would be something like 'I can only be complete, when I am completely immersed into all that God is in Himself'.

That sounds incredible but the text above makes it possible through God's strength and power by way of the Spirit, and the indwelling Christ through faith.

One final question. Is there a description of the fulness of God? These texts provide the answer, and it's not so much as 'what' but 'who':

*God was pleased to have all **fullness** dwell in the Son (Colossians 1:19), and specifically, in Him all the **fullness** of deity resides bodily (Colossians 2:9).*

So, God would have us focus on Christ...until we all arrive to the oneness of the sureness of the recognition of the Son of God, into a fully complete and mature man, into the measure of the adulthood of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children (Ephesians 4:13-14)

As hard as it is to understand this incredible truth, it's still a favourite text.

Conclusion

We have examined three of my favourite texts. Firstly, Isaiah's waiting upon the Lord for renewed strength. For the impatient, waiting for God's light, salvation, justice, comfort, kingdom, and appearing are worthwhile. Secondly, 2 Corinthians 5:21. Christ taking away all that I am as a sinner to give me all that He is in His perfect righteousness is hard to beat as a favourite verse. Finally, the mind-boggling possibility of being filled up into all the fullness of God is difficult to get my head around, but a delightful truth just the same.



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