

## The Waiting Room | Acts 1:12-14 | June 18, 2017

**NOTE:** This week our subject matter focuses on two words – *wait* and *prayer*. I have found the treatment of both to be rich and full of transforming sap. Thus, they stand alone. Drink freely from these precious markers revealing our covenant relationship with our Father.

1:4 **Wait** for the promise of the Father...

**Wait = *perimenein***

[NOTE: Our word for “*wait*” is a compound Greek word ***peri*** = a preposition meaning both *concerning*, and specific to our text, with reference to place and position *about, around* -- and ***meno***.]

***Menein*** = remain, wait

TDNT, Vol. IV

The concept of remaining or abiding takes different forms according to the different relations and antonyms in view. 574

In the *Old Testament* the abiding of God and the things and persons relating to God is of religious and theological significance. As distinct from the mutability and transitoriness of everything earthly and human, God is characterized by the fact that He endures. To speak also of eternity simply gives strength to the thought (Ps 9:7; 101:12)... His Word of address and promise, abides (Is 40:8)... The new heaven and the new earth will also remain (Is 66:22). The new Jerusalem is the city which will know no destruction (Zech 14:10). 575

In the *New Testament*, too, ***menein*** is used of the immutability of God and the things of God. His counsel, which cannot be changed, Rom 9:11, His Word, which remains as compared with what is human and corruptible, 1 Pt 1:23, 25, the office of the NT as compared with the transitory office of the OT, 2 Cor 3:11, faith, hope and love [***pistis, elpis, agape***] as things which abide, 1 Cor 13:13. 575

***Menein*** is particularly common in the Johannine writings... The abiding of the Spirit on Christ in Jn 1:32 lifts Him above the prophets, who are honoured only with temporary inspiration. It also lifts His filling with the Spirit, and the later filling of Christians, above the passing ecstatic states of pagans. The endowment of the Spirit is a continuing state in the Christian religion. Along the lines of the common Greek expression [*remain in*] the NT often refers to the psychological abiding of the righteous in the things which belong to salvation, 1 Tm 2:15 [*she will be saved through childbearing—if they **continue** in faith and love and holiness, with self-control.*], 2 Tm 3:14 [*But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed*]. In the Johannine writings such phrases are developed into distinctive personal statements concerning the lasting immanence between God and Christ or Christians and Christ. This is a stronger form of the Pauline “in Christ”. 575-576

By the use of *menein* John seeks to express the immutability and inviolability of the relation of immanence. In so doing he elevates the Christian religion above what is attained in Hellenistic rapture of even in the prophecy of Israel. Thus God abides in Christ, Jn 14:10. Believers abide in Christ (6:56; 15:4-7; 1 Jn 2:6, 27 f.; 3:6, 24) and Christ in them (Jn 15:4-7; 1 Jn 3:24). God abides in believers (1 Jn 4:16), and believers in God 1 Jn 2:24; 4:16). The eschatological promise of salvation becomes immediate possession in virtue of this statement in the present tense. 576

1:14 *All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer...*

### **Prayer = *proseuche***

#### NIDNTT, Vol. 2

In the *New Testament* the most comprehensive term for “to pray” is *proseuche*. It denotes prayer in general, and may be used without further qualification. 855

In the *Old Testament* prayer is all-important because of that which both characterizes and constitutes the nation of Israel, his relation to his God. The whole history of Israel is therefore permeated and borne along by prayer. At all its important points man is found in converse with God... The OT suppliant never forgot that he was addressing the holy, almighty God (an utter impossibility apart from God’s condescending kindness and grace). This is shown by the frequent use of the very *histahwah* [Hebrew] which really means to prostrate oneself, and which may therefore indicate man’s customary posture in prayer, though there is also evidence of prayer being offered from a standing position. The parallel expression, to fall down on one’s knees, is also used occasionally. Such phrases are intended to indicate the humility of mind which must always characterize a man as he prays. 862

In the *New Testament* *proseuchomai* [verb] occurs 85 times and *proseuche* [noun] 37 times, both being particularly frequent in Acts... In the NT prayer is in all respects as it had developed in the OT... The early church bears witness to the fact that it regards Jesus Christ as its Lord and its living head, who, having conquered death, is alive for evermore. Consequently one can enter into living, personal contact with him, talking with him just as one did when he was on earth (cf. Acts 9:10-16; 2 Cor 12:8 f). It follows that genuine prayer is not monologue but dialogue, in which the person praying is often silent in order to listen to Jesus’ word and command. As in the OT, therefore, prayer is something very personal and specific, a genuine conversation with God or Jesus Christ. And since the NT believer knows God as his Father, with even greater clarity than anything his OT counterpart could have enjoyed, his praying proceeds from a childlike trust, as expressed in the typical NT form of address “Father”, which Jesus taught his disciples to use (Matt 6:6-9; Lk 11:2; Eph 3:14 f.; also *abba*, the Aramaic word for Father, Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6). 867

NT prayer can be about anything, from the smallest matter to the greatest, from the affairs of today to those of eternity... In Matt 6 as in Lk 11 the Lord’s Prayer is embedded in longer discourses concerning true prayer (Matt 6:5-15; Lk 11:1-13); it must be marked by simplicity, concentration, discipline, patient confidence – and obedience. 868

## TDNT, Vol. II

[NOTE: a compound word – *pros* = a preposition expressing direction “marker of direction or aspect from which something is determined... marker of closeness of relation or proximity... Marker of movement or orientation toward someone...” Lexicon 874; and *euche*.

*Euche*, in non-biblical Greek the simple form is the most comprehensive term for invocation of the deity. In the earliest period the sense of “to vow” is present as well as the more common “to ask,” to pray.”

*Old Testament* usage – if we consult the lexicon of Gesenius-Buhl we find that for “to pray” the only Hebrew word is not very common [Hebrew *to pray*]. On the other hand, several words belong to the sphere of prayer, and these must all be taken into account if we are to present all the OT material. 785

[Thus, it is important for us to recognize the depth and complexity of *prayer* in Old Testament Times.]

*Prayer and faith in Yahweh.* Our primary task is to portray the most essential features of OT prayer as they derive from the religion of Israel and are illustrated in the available materials. The religion of Israel demanded exclusive worship of Yahweh, and therefore all prayer in Israel was necessarily addressed to the one God. It is obvious that this was of decisive importance. The one God is the God of Israel who established the covenant of Sinai, made Israel His people and established this relationship on the obedience of the people to His will. In this relationship Israel who established the covenant of Sinai, made Israel His people and established this relationship on the obedience of the people to His will. In this relationship Israel is conscious of the might and wisdom, the goodness and faithfulness of Yahweh, but also of His moral holiness and righteousness and therefore of a requirement which, so far as we can see, is moral from the very first. On the basis of these presuppositions the piety of the individual Israelite is always embedded in his awareness of belonging to the covenant people. The individual with his individual faith shares in the faith of the religious and national fellowship. As a member of this fellowship he has a personal share in the relationship with God granted to his people. In the OT, therefore, we constantly see that the individual is praying as a member of the people of Yahweh. The life of prayer, like the whole life of faith, is determined not so much by the relationship “man to God and God to man” as by the relationship “Israelite to Yahweh and Yahweh to Israelite,” which for its part is posited by the relationship “Israel to Yahweh and Yahweh to Israel”. It is the final relationship which gives the Israelite the confidence which is the ultimate presupposition of all prayer but which can here have a strength that would not be possible apart from this starting-point. In other words, the prayer of the Israelite is directed, not to a God of whom one does not finally know what to expect, but to the God who has made Himself and God of Israel and who has made Israel His people. In prayer the Israelite knows that the God to whom he prays displays a basic goodness and faithfulness towards His people. 790-791

The Psalter is the treasure-house of OT prayers of imperishable worth... Experience in every age confirms the fact that there is in the prayers of the Psalter a supreme religious force which can only derive from the God of the Psalmist who is the Father of Jesus Christ. “A remarkable experience in

missionary work is that the Gentile world learns to pray from the Psalter. No book of Scripture has become the universal possession of Christian congregations in this way. With terrible realism the young convert from paganism appropriates the prayers and cries of the fathers, seeing himself persecuted with them, hoping for the kingdom of God in terms of these songs, prostrating himself in the penitential Psalms and giving thanks in the songs of praise, magnifying the greatness of God and finding a new relation to creation: 'Lord, how great and manifold are thy works.' It is impressive to see how natives of the Gold Coast, taught by the Psalms, pour out their needs freely before God, ask Him for direction and light, give thanks that they are heard, and set themselves in the divine salvation history which through the Psalms goes out into the world and reaches them too." 798-800