

# THE ART OF WAITING

Traffic congestion and gridlock is rapidly becoming unbearable, or is it because you live ten minutes from your office that you haven't noticed!!?

I wonder if researchers have ever tallied up the amount of time the average person devotes to "waiting" over the course of a lifetime. We wait commuting, sitting in a doctor's office, for the results of our physicals and other medical exams. In our youth we waited for our parents' permission to start dating, for our driver's license, for graduation, for our military hitch to be over, for the right girl to come along to spend our lives with, for our kids to be born and then grow up, for not so much the return ON but the return OF our investments, and on and on.

**How do you handle waiting? What's your attitude while waiting? Do you see it as an obstacle or as a parenthesis that gives you time to do something else while circling the field?**

TODAY'S BIG QUESTION:

**"WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR NOW?"**

An eagle knows long before a storm is approaching. Sensing this, it flies to some high perch to wait for the high winds. When the storm hits, this majestic bird positions its wings so that the strong currents will hoist its body above the turbulence. While conditions are roiling below, the eagle is soaring above it all. It simply uses the storm to lift it higher.

We can learn from the eagle. When life's storms are upon us, we can rise above them by setting our minds on God and placing our total confidence in Him. Because God's power can raise us above them, we can soar above sickness, tragedy, failure and disappointment. Will we experience all of those? Certainly. Do we have to live dragged down by their weight? Certainly not!

It's not the burdens of life that drag us to the bottom. It's how we handle those burdens.

“Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles.” Isaiah 40:31

God’s prophet Isaiah spoke God’s words clearly, frankly and compassionately to his Jewish countrymen throughout Palestine during a 50-year period about 700 B.C.

Israel’s third king Solomon had died 200 years earlier in 930 B.C., and his absence resulting in that nation being split in two. The Northern Kingdom retained the name Israel. The Southern Kingdom, including Jerusalem, became known as Judah.

Speaking earlier through Moses and Joshua, and later through His prophets, God warned the Jews to worship only Him. But they caved in to the surrounding pagan culture and began embracing godless, foreign idols. Thus God brought judgment upon them in the form of the Assyrian invasion and captivity of the Northern Kingdom, and in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian army trashed Jerusalem and hauled most of Judah’s population off to today’s Iraq. There they would languish for 70 years, a specific length computed by God to represent one year for each seven years of a 490-year period in which the Jews failed to leave their fields uncultivated, to give them a rest.

So Isaiah, some 150 years ahead of the Babylonian conquest, warns Judah that it’s coming, giving them God’s promises to comfort them during their imprisonment, and giving them hope by predicting an end to it...and their return to their homeland.

Isaiah also graphically points to a coming Messiah Savior (Isa. 9:6, 7) who would come to earth, rid the universe of sin, and usher in a time of endless blessing for those who trust in Him.

Isaiah reminds his people that God’s sovereign power controls the nations’ destinies in order to accomplish His program. He scoffs at manmade idols, saying they are blasphemous and inconsequential to God’s might.

### **Isaiah 40**

9Climb a high mountain, Zion.

You're the preacher of good news.

Raise your voice. Make it good and loud, Jerusalem.

You're the preacher of good news.  
Speak loud and clear. Don't be timid!  
Tell the cities of Judah,  
"Look! Your God!"  
10 Look at him! GOD, the Master, comes in power,  
ready to go into action.  
He is going to pay back his enemies  
and reward those who have loved him.  
11 Like a shepherd, he will care for his flock,  
gathering the lambs in his arms,  
Hugging them as he carries them,  
leading the nursing ewes to good pasture.

The Creator of All You Can See or Imagine  
12 Who has scooped up the ocean  
in his two hands,  
or measured the sky between his thumb and little finger,  
Who has put all the earth's dirt in one of his baskets,  
weighed each mountain and hill?  
13 Who could ever have told GOD what to do  
or taught him his business?  
14 What expert would he have gone to for advice,  
what school would he attend to learn justice?  
What god do you suppose might have taught him what he knows,  
showed him how things work?  
15 Why, the nations are but a drop in a bucket,  
a mere smudge on a window.  
Watch him sweep up the islands  
like so much dust off the floor!  
16 There aren't enough trees in Lebanon  
nor enough animals in those vast forests  
to furnish adequate fuel and offerings for his worship.  
17 All the nations add up to simply nothing before him--  
less than nothing is more like it. A minus.  
18 So who even comes close to being like God?  
To whom or what can you compare him?  
19 Some no-god idol? Ridiculous!  
It's made in a workshop, cast in bronze,  
Given a thin veneer of gold,

and draped with silver filigree.

20Or, perhaps someone will select a fine wood--  
olive wood, say--that won't rot,  
Then hire a woodcarver to make a no-god,  
giving special care to its base so it won't tip over!

21Have you not been paying attention?

Have you not been listening?

Haven't you heard these stories all your life?

Don't you understand the foundation of all things?

22God sits high above the round ball of earth.

The people look like mere ants.

He stretches out the skies like a canvas--  
yes, like a tent canvas to live under.

23He ignores what all the princes say and do.

The rulers of the earth count for nothing.

24Princes and rulers don't amount to much.

Like seeds barely rooted, just sprouted,

They shrivel when God blows on them.

Like flecks of chaff, they're gone with the wind.

25"So--who is like me?

Who holds a candle to me?" says The Holy.

26Look at the night skies:

Who do you think made all this?

Who marches this army of stars out each night,

counts them off, calls each by name

-so magnificent! so powerful!-

and never overlooks a single one?

27Why would you ever complain, O Jacob,

or, whine, Israel, saying,

"GOD has lost track of me.

He doesn't care what happens to me"?

28Don't you know anything? Haven't you been listening?

GOD doesn't come and go. God lasts.

He's Creator of all you can see or imagine.

He doesn't get tired out, doesn't pause to catch his breath.

And he knows everything, inside and out.

29He energizes those who get tired,

gives fresh strength to dropouts.

30For even young people tire and drop out,

young folk in their prime stumble and fall.

31 But those who wait upon GOD get fresh strength.  
They spread their wings and soar like eagles,  
They run and don't get tired,  
they walk and don't lag behind.

## **Psalm 40**

A David psalm

I waited and waited and waited for GOD. At last he looked; finally he listened.

**BOTTOM LINE:** While we hurry up and wait, let's remember that when it comes to our spiritual growth, an essential element is **WAITING ON GOD. YOU CAN'T FAST-TRACK YOUR SPIRITUAL MATURING.**

**“As God measures time, WAITING TIME is never WASTING TIME.**

As we wait, we can:

- **PRAY**
- **BE OPEN; TELL THE TRUTH**
- **TRUST IN THE LORD**
- **SEEK OUT TIMES OF SILENCE TO HEAR GOD'S VOICE**
- **GAIN THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE.** It takes 100 years to grow an oak tree, but only six months to grow a squash!

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