

NOSTALGIA FOR A TIME I HAVE NEVER LIVED: THE
PAULINE CONCEPT OF “WAITING” AND THE
ESCHATOLOGICAL IDENTITY OF THE BELIEVER

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1. Introduction

What should make Christians daydream? What believers should long for? Recently, a new concept of “*anemoia*”¹ has emerged in the attempt to describe this strange feeling of missing a time one has never lived, a sense of nostalgia for a world never known. The idea behind “*anemoia*” has some commonalities with the Pauline idea of *waiting* for Christ’s *Parousia*,² as a present nostalgia and simultaneously longing for a future new reality. This paper details the theological Pauline concept of eschatological *waiting* from exegesis of key passages³ in which the concept is applied, namely Galatians 5:5, 1 Thessalonians 1:10, Romans 8:23-25 (together with 1 Corinthians 1:7), Philippians 3:20 and Titus 2:13. This paper argues that, throughout all Pauline writings, eschatological *waiting* is a mark of the eschatological identity of the believer in Christ.

2. AD FONTES

a. Galatians 5:5 – “*For through the Spirit, by faith, we ourselves eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness.*” (ESV)

The first appearance of eschatological *waiting* in the Pauline epistles happens in Galatians 5:5.⁴ The word used by Paul is ἀπεκδέχομαι which indicates a posture of

¹ Coined by John Koenig in 2012, whose project, The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows, aims to come up with new words for emotions that currently lack words. The word was constructed from the greek ἄνεμος (ánemos, “wind”) + νόος (nóos, “mind”), with reference to *anemos*, the warping of a tree by high wind “until it seems to bend backward.” Its definition is “nostalgia for a time one has never known”. See: John Koenig, *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows* (Simon & Schuster, 2021), 168.

² The concept of *parousia* is defined as “the coming”, “to be present of a person or group”, which entails that if one is present, one has arrived when otherwise was absent. There is no reason for understanding that Paul, when applying the concept to Christ, was using in a different sense, which implies that the *parousia* of Christ is His return, His second coming, given the fact that Christ is now bodily absent. See: Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1953), 75; N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 5th edition. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 341; Ben Witherington III, *Jesus, Paul and the End of the World: A Comparative Study in New Testament Eschatology*, (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 1992), 152.

³ These passages were not chosen by the mere presence of the word *waiting*, but when the theological concept of an eschatological *waiting* was employed, for instance when complemented by an object related to Christ’s *parousia* or ultimate/final redemption.

⁴ The traditional Pauline chronology was methodologically applied for the presentation of the key passages. This paper presupposes the historicity of Acts, the South Galatian theory, the Pauline authorship of all letters (including the pastoral epistles) and the jointly deliverance of Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon. See: Guy Waters, “Galatians” in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament: The Gospel Realized*, ed. Michael J. Kruger (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2016), 250-251; Moisés Silva, *Interpreting Galatians*, 2nd edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2001), 129-135; D. A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2005), 331-390; Thomas H. Campbell, “Paul’s ‘Missionary Journeys’ as Reflected in His Letters,” *JBL* 74.2 (1955): 80-87; Robert Jewett, *A Chronology of Paul’s Life* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 7-24; Ben Witherington III, *The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search for the Jew of Tarsus* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2001), 327-331.

confident anticipation of future events.⁵ This word was not attested with the meaning “to expect, to wait” before the New Testament usage. The prefix attached before the verb *δέχομαι* might indicate an attentive head with anxious sight looking for something (*ἀπό* + *ἐκ*).⁶ The comparative use of Peter (1 Pet 3:20) and the author of Hebrews (Heb 9:28) seems to also bear an intensive force⁷ to *waiting*, as a hopeful or maybe even anxious expectation.⁸

In Gal 5, Paul argues that the law is of no advantage for justification and if one is resting on his own efforts to salvation, he has a self-centered mentality and has fallen from grace.⁹ Thence, depending upon grace and being in Christ presupposes a theocentric mentality, an outward-looking faith seeking understanding on God’s Word. The believer’s *waiting* comes by faith¹⁰ and through the Holy Spirit¹¹ (Rom. 15:13).

Faith is the content that informs the eschatological *waiting*. The eschatological *waiting*, then, is a direct consequence of the regeneration operated by the Holy Spirit in the believer’s heart (Eph 2:8; Rom. 5:4).¹² Hence, the presence of such *waiting* is a mark of the Christian identity that intensely looks forward to the consummation of the “hope of righteousness”.

⁵ Aaron C. Fenlason, “Hope,” *Lexham Theological Wordbook* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

⁶ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

⁷ In Dr. Robert Cara’s words: an “humpf” – T.T.

⁸ All the other uses of the word are Pauline and related to eschatological claims. See: Moisés Silva, “ἀπεκδέχομαι, ἐκδέχομαι, προσδέχομαι” NIDNTTE 2:132-133

⁹ John Calvin, *COMMENTARIES ON THE EPISTLES OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS AND EPHESIANS, TO THE PHILIPPIANS, COLOSSIANS, AND THESSALONIANS, TO TIMOTHY, TITUS, AND PHILEMON*, trans. Rev William Pringle (Baker Book House, 1979), 163.

¹⁰ Faith is preceded by *ἐκ* as a preposition of means, expressing the means by which the action of the main verb is performed. The main verb is *ἀπεκδέχόμεθα*, a middle verb showing an action performed by the believer and having its effects upon himself. See: Albert L. Lukaszewski, *The Lexham Syntactic Greek New Testament Glossary* (Lexham Press, 2007); Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1997), 369-374.

¹¹ The Spirit (*πνεύματι*) is a dative of means indicating the means by which the action is accomplished and is also preceded by the explanatory conjunction *γάρ* which, taken together with the dative, express the idea of divine assistance, causality or influence, hence referring to the Holy Spirit. See: Wallace, Daniel B. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1997), 158-170; E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (From B. C. 146 to A. D. 1100) (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1900), 898.

¹² William Hendriksen, *Exposition of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Pub Group, 2002), 237-240.

It is somehow difficult to nail the complete meaning of the expression “hope of righteousness” (έλπίδα δικαιοσύνης), even though grammatically hope is clearly the direct object of *waiting* and righteousness if a qualitative genitive of hope (genitive of apposition).¹³ Elsewhere, the expression “righteousness of God” is used by Paul to express the forensic category of what is required of the man to be freed of the divine judgment. In this eschatological assumption, righteousness can be used as the opposite of condemnation (2 Cor 3:9).¹⁴ Therefore, the expression applied by Paul not only refers to the future consummation of redemption, but also the firm assurance in Christ work, death and resurrection that the believer has today.¹⁵ Conversely, the unbeliever shall be characterized by the absence of the “righteousness of God” and this type of hope. In addition, Paul presents hope in association with the person of God Himself (Eph. 2:12; 1 Thess. 4:13) being the God of hope (Rom. 15:13). It follows that this *waiting* in hope and for the hope amalgamates the action of “hoping” and the very thing it is hoped for.¹⁶

Hereafter, the *waiting* for the “hope of righteousness” is not an uncertain waiting, but a matter of complete assurance of a verdict that has already been settled in Christ, declared by God and will take place through the Holy Spirit. It is the good news of freedom and salvation for everyone who believes, now and forever. For Paul, the eschatological judgment¹⁷ has forensically occurred in Christ and all those who believe in Him eagerly expect the fulfillment of His promises, the complete freedom of sin, the glorification and eternity with God Himself, in new heavens and new earth. The “hope of

¹³ BDF §165

¹⁴ Ernst Käsemann, "The Righteousness of God in Paul" in *New Testament Questions for Today*, trans. W. J. Montague, (London: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2012), 168.

¹⁵ Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids MI; Cambridge (UK): Eerdmans, 1997), 163-165.

¹⁶ Hendriksen, *Exposition of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*, 238.

¹⁷ The expression “the revelation of the righteousness of God” has Jewish roots as the future divine justification and the heavenly judgment. This revelation was taken as the pronouncement of divine justice. Paul then is arguing against this previous understanding of a hidden justification only to be revealed in the end of times, on God’s judgment only in the end of ages, but he is affirming a present eschatological hope, complete assurance of salvation through faith in Christ and conceded by the Holy Spirit to the believer. See: Herman Ridderbos, *Coming of the Kingdom*, ed. Raymond O. Zorn, trans. H. de Jongste (P & R Publishing, 1962), 73 and 211-220.

righteousness” is not an obscure concept that has not been revealed, but is to be apprehended in light of the mystery of Christ,¹⁸ as a benefit already obtained, though not yet consummated completely (Rom 1:17).¹⁹

This may be manifested existentially in bringing back to memory what gives hope (Lam 3:21), as the believer depends on the word and *waits* remembering what is already finished (John 19:28). Having a mind transformed, the call to renew the mind and not be conformed to this age (Rom 12:1-2) is a call to set heart in what is above (Col 3:1), to be conformed to the true identity in Christ. Trusting God’s word and methods, His decreative and preceptive will, is also remembering in hope and working in love what God has graciously revealed by faith to the believer through the Spirit. Proper eschatologically *waiting* is wholeheartedly trusting God.²⁰

b. 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 – “*For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.*”

The second key passage to be considered is part of Paul’s thanksgiving concerning the conversion of the believers in Thessalonica.²¹ Their conversion is summarized²² in turning away from idols, serving the true and living God and *waiting* for Christ’s *Parousia*.²³ Hence *waiting* for Christ takes place as distinct evidence of divine vocation.

¹⁸ For the relation between the hope of righteousness and the concept of mystery in Paul, see: Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 44-53; Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 46-47; Johannes Munck, *Paul and the Salvation of Mankind*, (Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2012), 36-80; Herman Ridderbos, *When the Time Had Fully Come: Studies in New Testament Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2001), 44-61.

¹⁹ Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 165.

²⁰ Richard Sibbes, “Discouragement’s Recovery” in *The Works of Richard Sibbes, Vol. 7* (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1982), 59.

²¹ Jeffrey A. D. Weima *1-2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2014), 108-110.

²² It is currently debated if this portion of Thessalonians is a pre-pauline formula or not due to presence uncommon expressions for Paul here. Even if it is a pre-pauline statement, Paul is, at least, subscribing it as an adequate description of the marks of a believer. See: F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Thessalonians, Volume 45*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David Allen Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, Revised edition. WBC (Zondervan Academic, 2015), 18-20; Charles A. Wanamaker, *Commentary on 1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990), 84-85.

²³ The verbal triad present in 1 Thessalonians 1:3 and 1:9-10 (turned, serve and wait) may reflect the pattern for the entire epistle: (i) thanksgiving about the transformation of the Thessalonians out of idolatry and into the faith established by the apostolic ministry (1:2-2:20); (ii) the current faith and works of the church and the exhortation to continue serving God in the future (3:1-4:12); (iii) doctrinal explanation of Christ’s Parousia and exhortation/admonitions for a

It includes a theological understanding²⁴ with noticeable ethical component as believers look forward to be presented before Christ living holy lives in his honor.²⁵ It is also a comfort amid suffering and disappointment knowing that true salvation and ultimate redemption is already assured in Christ.²⁶ The conversion is not merely change for the sake of changing, but change unfolding in two purposes (two infinitive clauses)²⁷: present holiness (δουλεύειν – to serve the true and living God) and future hope (ἀναμένειν – to wait for His Son from heaven).

The word translated by *waiting* is the verb μένω prefixed with the preposition ἀνα, a construction that only appears here in Pauline writings. Many ἀνα-compounds verbs are treated under the corresponding base form²⁸ and, in this case, meaning to remain in a place and/or state, with expectancy concerning a future event; then “to await” or “to wait for”.²⁹ Therefore, the emphasis is to continue standing where they already were, remaining, dwelling in what they have learned and became.³⁰ The present tense emphasizes the ongoing nature of the eschatological *waiting* as a constant mode of existence of believers. Consequently, it is not coincidental the close connection to the

godly life in the present and future (4:13-5:28). See: G. K. Beale, *1-2 Thessalonians* IVP (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2010), 60; I. Howard Marshall, *1 and 2 Thessalonians* NCBC (Grand Rapids MI.: Eerdmans, 1983), 10-11.

²⁴ Paul was not innovating in his *kerygma*, as preaching a different message to the Gentiles, but he was passing to them what he had received, he was building upon the apostolic preaching in instructing those for whom he was given a special commission. In this sense, 1 Thess 1:9-10 represents a summary of Paul’s preaching at Thessalonica. “The wording (*alēthinō*, “true”; *anamenein*, “await”; *tōn ouranōn*, “the heaven[s]”) and phraseology (“to serve God,” “to wait for his Son”), uncharacteristic of Paul, suggest that Paul was using the vocabulary of Jewish-Christian missionary preaching rather than introducing something that was distinctively his own. This is also suggested by the language of “turning to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess 1:9), which is a typical description of what Gentile conversion to Christianity meant (cf. Paul’s Areopagus speech in Acts 17:16-31). A similar conclusion can be drawn from Paul’s ethical instruction in 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12, which focuses on what Jews perceived to be the three primary Gentile abuses: sexual immorality, lack of love and idleness. The fact that Paul in 1 Thessalonians 4:1 uses technical phraseology for the transmission of tradition to describe this instruction (*parelabete*), indicates once again that he was not an innovator but merely a transmitter of what was commonly considered to be appropriate and necessary instruction for Gentile converts.” Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, The IVP Bible Dictionary Series (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 1993), 74.

²⁵ Robert Cara, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Evangelical Press, 2016), 44-45.

²⁶ Richard N Longenecker, “The Nature of Paul’s Early Eschatology,” *NTS* 31.1 (1985): 85–95.

²⁷ BDF §390

²⁸ Moisés Silva, “ἀνα” NIDNTTE 1:273

²⁹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996) 728–729.

³⁰ Herman Veldkamp, *Waiting for Christ’s Return: On Paul’s First Letter to the Thessalonians* (St. Catharines, Ont.: Paideia Pr Ltd, 1975), 7-14.

cognate *ὑπομένω*³¹ as the verb commonly used to express perseverance or endurance.³²

This is because the expectation is for the returning of the Son who was raised from the death and then is able to deliver us from the wrath to come.³³ Even though believers are currently between *aeons*, Paul is stressing that their faith is genuine when they *wait* assured in Christ resurrection, which is the guarantee of their future eschatological deliverance from judgment.³⁴ The identification of the Son of God as Jesus, meaning Savior (Matt 1:21), emphasizes again his saving work from the just wrath of God.³⁵ Their deliverance (*ὑψόμενον*)³⁶ is an attributive participle connected directly to the person of Jesus Christ who was raised from the dead and, therefore, the living Son - paralleling the living and true God (Father) whom they currently serve.³⁷

The living and true God may be a reference to Jeremiah 10:10,³⁸ whom Paul might have developed his theology of *waiting* from. Jeremiah presents a connection between true faith, hope and love with *waiting* in Lamentations 3:25-27. *Waiting* for the Lord is a relational act of hope and trust in God's words and providence, an act of faith that seeks understanding from and before the Almighty. Jeremiah *waits* in faith and hope lovingly seeking God: "it is good to *wait* quietly for the salvation of the LORD (Yahweh)" (Lm 3:26). *Waiting* is soteriological: both existential and redemptive-historical. *Waiting* for God is the hope of salvation within the providence of God - existential is not taken apart

³¹ James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek* (New Testament) (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

³² G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1958) 25; Willard M. Aldrich, "Perseverance," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 115.457 (1958) 9–19.

³³ Ernest Best, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 1st edition. (Peabody, MA: Continuum, 2003), 84-85.

³⁴ Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 104-111.

³⁵ James D. G. Dunn, *The Theology of Paul the Apostle* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2006), 91-93.

³⁶ The reference to Jesus as the deliverer from God's wrath is referring to Isaiah's prophecy as the one who turn away the ungodliness from Jacob in the coming wrath of God (Is 59:19-20). The same prophecy is probable in Paul's mind when writing 1 Thess 5:1-10 connecting also the Gentiles who turned away from idols to the true God as the true Israel of God. See: Beale, *1-2 Thessalonians*, 59-60; Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, The IVP Bible Dictionary Series (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 1993), 156.

³⁷ Gordon D. Fee, *The First and Second Letters to the Thessalonians*, NICNT. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 47.

³⁸ G. K. Beale, *1-2 Thessalonians* (IVP Academic, 2010), 59.

from eschatological, suffering is not considered apart from sovereignty. This is further detailed as the steadfast love of God (covenantal love-*תּוֹךְ*) is put into action by Yahweh (covenantal name of God). Therefore, *waiting* is persevering in dependance of God (Heb 12).³⁹

This steadfast love of God is the source of the graceful work of redemption that transforms the heart of the believer into the image of God (Rom 8:28-30; 2 Cor 5:17). Redemption transforms the believer into a new identity in Christ while the believer is also progressively being transformed, from glory to glory, into this *imago Dei* through the Spirit (2 Cor 3:18). This enables the believer to love as God loves while he commits himself to love first and foremost to God's glory and also their neighbor. Hence, eschatological *waiting* is also *waiting* in sanctification towards glorification. *Waiting* in love produces an identity of action that marks the believer as one devoted to God and able to sacrificially be poured out in favor of others for the glory of the LORD.

What existentially sustains this movement of love in the believer while *waiting* is the Spirit and the word of God (Ps 119) centered redemptive-historically in Jesus. This is why the hope in which the Thessalonians *wait* is associated with the person of God Himself, as the direct manifestation of the Son in glory in His coming.⁴⁰ The language of the Son coming out of heavens (plural) has direct connection with the semitic concept of the Son of Man from Daniel 7:9-14.⁴¹ Paul is clarifying the apocalyptic understanding⁴² of the Elect One, the Son of Man who will rule as king and will be revealed in the last day inaugurating a new *aeon*, as He comes in His glory revealing Himself together with

³⁹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Message of Lamentations* (Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2015), 112-116.

⁴⁰ Charles A. Anderson Scott, *Christianity According to St Paul*, 1st edition. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 237-243.

⁴¹ Pieter G.R. de Villiers, "In the Presence of God: The Eschatology of 1 Thessalonians", in Jan G. van der Watt, *Eschatology of the New Testament and Some Related Documents* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 316.

⁴² José Miguel García Pérez, "Conversiones En Tesalónica (1 Tes 1:9-10)," *Estudios Bíblicos* 77.3 (2019): 345–71.

the divine heavenly beings to redeem existence itself in the fullness of time (1 Thess 4:17).⁴³

For this reason, the Pauline concept of *waiting* is not innovation, but is rooted in the Old Testament.⁴⁴ Both OT and NT display the necessity of trusting in God, patiently waiting and confidence in God's future. However, the situation of the Christian *waiting* now is different from the previous waiting for the coming Messiah in the OT. The *waiting* in Christ rests on the complete atonement and the fully revealed act of salvation (redemptive-historical).⁴⁵ Christ's resurrection marks the beginning of the new creation and the presence and work of the Spirit is evidence that the end has begun and the body of Christ *waits* for the complete manifestation of the kingdom of God at the *Parousia*.⁴⁶ This is why Paul addresses the church as an eschatological *waiting* community in hope: a body standing secure in the act of salvation in Christ, living by the power of the Holy Spirit and moving toward the fullness of time as the realization of the purposes of God.⁴⁷

Waiting, then, is not only an action to be performed or a state of mind, but part of the faith of those in Christ as they eagerly *wait* to be fully reunited with the Son of Man raised from the dead, king of all there is and deliverer of all those who believe in Him (2 Thess 1:5-10).⁴⁸ The expectation of the *Parousia* has a present transformative effect on the very essence and identity of believers,⁴⁹ as well as the future completion of their

⁴³ Although very interesting, the full appropriation of the Jewish concept of Son of Man is beyond the scope of this paper. For further details, see: Sigmund Mowinckel, *He That Cometh: The Messiah Concept in the Old Testament and Later Judaism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 347-450.

⁴⁴ Paul's use of Scripture is based in the supreme sovereignty of God as the Lord of history. As a disciple of Christ who heard the story of the road to Emmaus, Paul understands that all Scripture bears witness of Christ and even historical events have covenantal implications (1 Cor 10:11). Paul, then, applies Scripture Christologically (Col 2:3). See: Richard N Longenecker, "Prolegomena to Paul's Use of Scripture in Romans," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 7 (1997): 145-68; J Duncan M Derrett, "PAUL'S USE OF SCRIPTURE," *Heythrop Journal* 16.4 (1975): 421-26; Jan Lambrecht, "Paul's Christological Use of Scripture in 1 Cor 15:20-28," *New Testament Studies* 28.4 (1982): 502-27.

⁴⁵ Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 161-170.

⁴⁶ Jurgen Moltmann, *The Future of Hope: Theology as Eschatology*, First Edition. (Herder and Herder, 1970).

⁴⁷ Paul Sevier Minear, *Christian Hope and the Second Coming*, 1st edition. (Westminster Press, 1954).

⁴⁸ Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and Union with Christ: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012), 222.

⁴⁹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Westmont: IVP Academic, 2006), 295.

deliverance in the last day, freed from condemnation and received in the Father everlasting arms forever (Rom 8:1).⁵⁰

c. **Romans 8:23-25** – “*And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.*”
And 1 Corinthians 1:7 – “*so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ*”

In Rom 8:23-25, Paul associates the *waiting* of believers with the eschatological *waiting* of the whole creation for ultimate cosmic redemption (Rom 8:22).⁵¹ The context of the *waiting* of the believer, as one who groans inwardly, is the entire creation *waiting* to be redeemed, to be recreated in Christ (Eph. 1:9-10).⁵² The already and not yet dynamic is present redemptive-historically, but also existentially, as an earnest expectation to be freed from bondage, a hopeful desire for restauration, peace and redemption.⁵³

Then the eschatological *waiting* of the believer is developed into a groan for the redemption of the bodies and the adoption of sons; a groan that is fruit, a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁴ *Waiting* here is ἀπεκδεχόμενοι, a present middle circumstantial participle of time referring to the main finite verb groaning (στενάζομεν), also in the present.⁵⁵ The same verb for *waiting* is repeated in Rom 8:19, 23 and 25 as the expectation for the telos, the fullness of time, focused on the consummation of redemption in

⁵⁰ Constantine R. Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2020), 109-110; Robert C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2006), 131-134.; Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology*, 56-64.

⁵¹ The immediate background for this eschatological anguish is Gen 3:17. The earth being cursed because of sinfulness, sharing the effects of the fall, is the cause of the cosmological waiting that is compared to the pain of childbearing of Gen 3:16. See: Colin G. Kruse, *Paul's Letter to the Romans*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012), 344.; C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans: Introduction and Commentary on Romans I-VIII, Vol. 1*, 6th edition, ICC (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2000), 414-416.

⁵² Olle Christoffersson, *The Earnest Expectation of the Creature: The Flood-Tradition As Matrix of Romans 8:18-27* (Stockholm, Sweden: Coronet Books Inc, 1990), 130-139.

⁵³ James Montgomery Boice, *Foundations of the Christian Faith*, Revised in One Volume. (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 1986), 189-219; Ridderbos, Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 182-186.

⁵⁴ James D. G. Dunn, *Word Biblical Commentary: Volume 38A, Romans 1-8*, WBC (Dallas, Tex: Thomas Nelson Inc, 1988), 473.

⁵⁵ John D. Harvey, *Romans*, ed. Dr Andreas J. Köstenberger and Robert W. Yarbrough, EGGNT (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2017), 206.

resurrection (8:14, 23). This consummation will come with Christ's return, so that Christ Himself is the content of expectation, as He is the hope of righteousness (same verb as Gal. 5:5). On the basis of the gospel that is already received (hence δέχομαι), ἀπεκδέχομαι⁵⁶ thus characterizes Christian life as one of desired anticipation for the day of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1:8).⁵⁷ The mode of existence of true life has a pattern of thought with a mind set on the Spirit and not on the flesh (Rom 8:6), paralleling the same idea of Col 3:1-4 where Paul argues that, since the believer was raised with Christ and is in Christ (the firstborn of the new creation who is in heaven and holds true everlasting life as the guarantor of it), the believer must set his mind on what is above, seeking Christ Himself as the guarantor of his ultimate identity.⁵⁸

Then, the mind of the believer seeks the mind of Christ. It is a mind that looks to the past to the accomplished work of Christ, to the present on how to live by the Spirit and not by the flesh, and to the future for the *parousia* of Christ. The thread that connects all history is unfolded in Scripture as one story and the mind of the believer finds its worldview and truth by standing firm in the Word of God remaining in what was taught. In it, this mind is able to accept and live in contentment with immediate and ultimate realities, even if is existentially suffering or in pain, which is only truly possible being in Christ.⁵⁹

The same idea of Jesus Christ being the guarantor of eternal life to be revealed in the last day is also present in 1 Cor 1:7-8. The verb used there for eschatological *waiting* is also ἀπεκδέχομαι as a circumstantial participle denoting a manner of living that lacks

⁵⁶ Hebrews uses ἐκδέχομαι for the same eschatological expectation (10:13; 9:28).

⁵⁷ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985), 147.

⁵⁸ Petr Pokorny, *Colossians: A Commentary*, trans. Siegfried S. Schatzmann (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson Pub, 1991), 159-161.

⁵⁹ Geerhardus Vos, *The Pauline Eschatology* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 1953), 29.

no gift while expecting the revelation⁶⁰ of Jesus Christ. Christ⁶¹ is at work in the believers providing all that is necessary for living as eagerly anticipating to be reunited with Him. Believers are strengthened in suffering as Christ sustains them all the way to the end and grows them in maturity and sanctification by faithfully living in a manner honorable to the Lord during the interim period.⁶² The ethical element is not detached from the eschatological, meaning that the existential is not separated from the redemptive-historical.⁶³ Pattern of thought, perseverance and sanctification are tied together in order to present the church blameless in the last day.⁶⁴ Until then, the believer can persevere in suffering because he belongs, body and soul, both in life and in death, to his faithful Savior Jesus Christ.⁶⁵ Thence, the eschatological *waiting* that marks the believer is also evidenced in the manner in which the believer suffers because he endures not on his own strength, but in what he received from Scripture: the faith in Christ, the relational hope he has in the Spirit and the graceful love received from the Father.⁶⁶

While not there yet, the Lord provides gifts⁶⁷ to equip the church to live and persevere in *waiting*.⁶⁸ There is a connection between the work of the Spirit distributing gifts in the church (1 Cor 12:4; Gal 5:22-23) and the work in the heart of the believer as he perseveres in *waiting* for full redemption.⁶⁹ This connection also appears in Rom 8:23 when the apostle affirms that the believer has the firstfruits of the Spirit. The connection is established by the appositional genitive “of the Spirit”, as the working of the Holy Spirit

⁶⁰ It is interesting to notice that 1 Cor 1:7 is the only place where Paul refers to Christ *Parousia* as ἀποκάλυψιν.

⁶¹ This passage may provide an account of the Trinitarian work of salvation also reflecting in the perseverance of the saints and, consequentially, also in eschatological waiting, as the grace of the Father was given in Christ so that the believers may not lack in any gift, which elsewhere are distributed among the church as a work of the Holy Spirit.

⁶² David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians* (Baker Academic, 2003), 34-35.

⁶³ Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 248-251.

⁶⁴ Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory*, 104-105.

⁶⁵ *The Heidelberg Catechism*, Q.A. 1.

⁶⁶ John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015).

⁶⁷ The word for gifts (χάρισμα) could mean spiritual gifts, but Paul here is using it more broadly for the gracious gifts of redemption in general, as in Rom 5:15-16 and 6:23.

⁶⁸ Anthony C. Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NIGTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 97.

⁶⁹ Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, *The First Letter to the Corinthians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Nottingham, England: Eerdmans, 2010), 63-68.

in us (1 Cor 15:23).⁷⁰ In this sense, the groan is emphasized as being internal (ἐν ἑαυτοῖς) as the Spirit works *in us*.⁷¹ Then the object of the participial *waiting* is the entire construction νιοθεσίαν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν, since both are in juxtaposition referring to the consummation of full redemption when Christ is revealed on the last day.⁷² Both passages emphasize dependance upon grace and the Spirit, meaning that the presence of gifts is not a sign of arrival (anti over-realized eschatology), but as graceful gifts of divine providence sustaining the church (and individuals) in perseverance until the *Parousia*.⁷³

The believer's calling is God's working and its purpose is aimed to the future with repercussions on the present (1 Cor 11:26), not the other way around.⁷⁴ The transformation of the believing heart now longs for the completion of what has been initiated. Furthermore, the eschatological *waiting* is also a seal, a mark of this divine work in the new creation who seeks anticipation of what is to come (2 Cor 1:22; 2 Cor 5:5; Eph 1:14).⁷⁵ The structures of the world are falling apart and crumbling (1 Cor 7:31) and the soul of the believer cries out "Maranatha!"⁷⁶ meaning "Lord, come!" (16:22).

Meanwhile, the calling is also to take every thought captive to Christ (2 Cor 10:5), being transformed by the renewal of the mind to present the entire body as a sacrifice acceptable to God (Rm 12:1-2). Proper eschatological *waiting* changes the way of

⁷⁰ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, The Anchor Bible (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 510.

⁷¹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1998), 438.

⁷² Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, Second edition. NICNT (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2018), 521.

⁷³ Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, Revised edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 36.

⁷⁴ The adoption of sons and the bodily redemption (resurrection) in Rom 8:23-25 must be taken into the context of the work of the Spirit, as it is not something completely reserved for the future, but is something that has already been initiated by Christ resurrection as the inauguration of the new *aeon* to come. See: Ben Witherington, *Paul's Narrative Thought World*, 1st edition. (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), 176-177.

⁷⁵ Grant Macaskill, *Living in Union with Christ: Paul's Gospel and Christian Moral Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019), 66.

⁷⁶ It is important to mention that the meaning of the expression *Maranatha* is debatable as the apheretic imperative belongs to Eastern Aramaic. In the Didache, the formula refers to the current presence of the Lord and the split *Maranatha* is not attested in the Greek manuscripts. However, the Fathers of the Church always read *Maranatha* and is compatible in comparison with the ending of Revelation. For further details, see: Andrew Messmer, "Maranatha (1 Corinthians 16:22): Reconstruction and Translation Based on Western Middle Aramaic," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 139.2 (2020): 361–83; Jean-Claude Moreau, "MARANATHA," *Revue Biblique* 118.1 (2011): 51–75; Chris Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Grand Rapids (MI): Cambridge (UK): Eerdmans, 2015), 194-195.

thinking and provides identity of thought for the believer in the mind of Christ, meaning a submissive and active mind seeking God's glory. The believer eagerly *awaits* because his identity has already been transformed into sonship and this new conscience looks forward to the moment of complete cosmological reconciliation and restauration.⁷⁷ The eschatological *waiting*, then, is not a mere a sentiment, but a true ethical, relational and ontological mark of the new identity of the believer.⁷⁸ It is a calling to live *coram Deo* and understanding that the Lord is always near and in action, working for the good of His church today (Rom 8:28).

The Christian life is a calling for present and eschatological fellowship into a covenant⁷⁹ in which believers become one people under the Lordship of Christ and in κοινωνίᾳ with Christ Himself.⁸⁰ The redemption of the body⁸¹ and adoption are not identical events, but elements of the chain of salvation that will be further detailed in Rom 8:28-30.⁸² As the believer is in Christ, he also shares with other believers this communion as the body of Christ, meaning that eschatological *waiting* is not merely existential, but also redemptive-historical as the church (one body)⁸³ collectively eagerly *awaits* the manifestation of sonship, resurrection, glorification and restauration of the entire cosmos.

⁷⁷ Marcus L. Loane, *The Hope of Glory: An Exposition of the Eighth Chapter in the Epistle to the Romans*, 1st Edition. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1968), 89-91.

⁷⁸ Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 34.

⁷⁹ Herman Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. 1, Second edition. (Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2005), 468-477.

⁸⁰ Thiselton, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 104.

⁸¹ The redemption of bodies is interesting to notice because the meaning of σώμα in the Pauline writing is rich (it occurs in the Pauline letters a total of ninety-one times). It usually refers to body/member(s) analogy, the congregation as the body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 10:16-17; 12:12-27), but also describing the church eschatologically as the headship of Christ (Eph 1:23; 2:16; 4:4, 12-16; 5:23; Col 1:18, 24; 2:19; 3:15). The eschatological σώμα, then, bears a corporate dimension. Meanwhile, there also is a more personal dimension of σώμα as the eschatologically *waiting* of the individual believer for glorification (even though it occurs in the context of the corporate community in the final resurrection). Paul's use of σώμα in this sense is essential to his teaching concerning bodily resurrection and the already and not yet, although assured, redemption in Christ, which will take place in fullness in the *Parousia* of Jesus Christ and what Christians eagerly "wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies". Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid, *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, 83.

⁸² H. C. G. Moule, *Commentary on Romans* (Titus Books, 2013), 152.

⁸³ Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, 327-354.

Kοινωνία with Christ and κοινωνία with the church are indissociable elements of the new identity in Christ.⁸⁴

The apostle explains that in this hope the believer's salvation occurred.⁸⁵ The conjugation of hope in the dative denotes this purposeful aspect of it in salvation.⁸⁶ In this sense, Rom 8:19-25 parallels Rom 5:1-5 with a hope that is not vain or empty because it is guaranteed by the love of God that is the source of salvation.⁸⁷ In this hope of adoption and resurrection the believer was saved through faith in Christ, who is the fullness of the image of God and the exact imprint of His being (Col 1:15), the complete manifestation of love.⁸⁸ Then, salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone (Eph 2:8) and not by sight (2 Cor 5:7), completely assured of things unseen (Heb 11:1) because it is based on the word spoken by God and sealed by the Spirit, who presently assures the believers sonship (Rom 8:12-18) and groans with us in our trouble and weakness (Rom 8:26-27).⁸⁹ For this reason, what the believer does not yet have, he *waits* in the Spirit who provides patience (or perseverance - ὑπομονή)⁹⁰ while he eschatologically *waits* for the hope of righteousness, the final deliverance in Christ.⁹¹

d. Philippians 3:20 – “But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ”

The passage in Philippians 3:20 contrasts believer and unbeliever regarding what they worship, what they are looking for, and their telos: one for destruction and the other

⁸⁴ Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 485-496.

⁸⁵ It is interesting to note that Paul refers to salvation in the past, as the believer already possesses a new identity, and does not position it in the eschaton (Rm 5:9; 2 Tim 4:18; Phil 1:19; 1 Cor 3:15). Even though it is in the past, the hope is future, however inseparable as the purpose of salvation.

⁸⁶ Schreiner, *Romans*, 439-440; Moo, *The Letter to the Romans*, 558; Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 419.

⁸⁷ Schreiner, *Romans*, 254.

⁸⁸ Chris Tilling, *Paul's Divine Christology* (Grand Rapids (MI); Cambridge (UK): Erdmans, 2015), 35-40.

⁸⁹ Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory*, 288-289.

⁹⁰ BGAD, ὑπομονή

⁹¹ Geerhardus Vos, "The Second Coming of Our Lord and the Millennium" in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr (Phillipsburg, N.J: P & R Publishing, 2001), 415-422.

for heavenly citizenship.⁹² Also, this is a passage that condenses ideas from various other passages from Philippians and other Pauline epistles into the concept of eschatological *waiting*.

The Greek word for *waiting* is ἀπεκδέχομαι, the same used at Rom 8:19-25; 1Cor 1:7; Gal 5:5 and Heb 9:28. The wording resembles Col 3:1-4 as the enemies of the cross seek earthly things. In Col 3:5-11 those things are associated with idolatry, which bears heavy worship language that is reaffirmed in Phil 3:19 when their focus is self-worship and their god is their stomach (κοιλία). The following verse 20 also has worship language, but resembling the wording of Phil 2:5-11 that is understood as an old Christological hymn.⁹³ It also revisits the theme of 1:21 as a true life is to live in Christ, focusing on the believer's true belonging: our celestial citizenship assured by Christ.⁹⁴

At the same time, this passage is profoundly practical, as it is common in Paul to connect indicatives and imperatives, eschatological hope with ethical commands (Rom 13:11-12; 1 Cor 15:54-58; Gal 6:9; 1 Thess 5:4-6), which is even clearer when *waiting* is mentioned.⁹⁵ The context of the practical implications is Paul's exhortation to imitate him and "keep their eyes" (σκοπεῖτε) on those who imitate Christ. This is an imperative that is commonly used for a military "guard," "spy," or "scout"⁹⁶ as an activity of looking forward. Paul calls believers to keep close watch on those who walk (περιπατέω) in a manner worthy of the Lord.

Then, in verse 20, this life of imitation is not lived only for the here and now, but is essentially a life focused eschatologically in their true patria. The military language⁹⁷

⁹² Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians, Revised Edition*, WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc, 2004).

⁹³ John Reumann, "Philippians 3. 20–21 – a Hymnic Fragment?" in *New Testament Studies* 30.4 (1984): 593–609.

⁹⁴ Gordon D. Fee, *Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, Edition Unstated. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995).

⁹⁵ Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 2nd edition. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), 184-185.

⁹⁶ Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 1047

⁹⁷ For further details on usage of military language in Philippians, see: Carson and Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, 498-515; Bruce Lowe, "Philippians" in *A Biblical-Theological Introduction to the New Testament*, 285-

continues to be used as Paul describes their citizenship (*πολίτευμα*) and their Savior (*σωτήρ*). In contrast to the allegiance and citizenship to Rome,⁹⁸ the believers are reminded of their true identity as citizens of heaven, called to serve the only true King: The Savior Jesus Christ.⁹⁹ The present identity of the believer is deeply rooted in Christ exaltation. The believer's *waiting* is already in victory. Even if Paul tells them about the enemies of the cross in tears, he is confident in ultimate glory. The emotional intensity of the pericope is emphasized as it was in Rom 8:23-25. The *waiting* is described as eagerly, with a sense of deep urgency and anticipation for the end of the war and a time of peace and rest. The believer longs to be reunited with his victorious Savior and to be delivered of the miseries and frustrations of the flesh (Rom 7; 8:10-11; 1 Cor 15:42-54).¹⁰⁰

The idea of belonging to a kingdom that is not seen, but one the believer's eyes should be upon is prominent in eschatological *waiting*. This apparent paradoxically idea is also present in Heb 11:10 when is said that Abraham was looking forward (*έκδέχομαι* – same core verb as waiting, remaining until, expecting) for the celestial city whose builder is God. The identity of the believer, then, is not defined by what is seen, but by belonging to God as 4:1 calls to stand up firm in the Lord (*στήκω*) as a call to persevere, as an army standing up firmly resisting the enemy. Eschatologically *waiting* in hope is not individualistic wishful thinking, but ultimately a relational identity set on the fact that we belong to God. Believers stand firm with their king, having eyes fixed upon New Jerusalem as their celestial kingdom. It is, then, a life of pilgrimage towards the home where they belong. *Waiting* is, existentially and redemptive-historically, an anticipation

⁹⁸ 300; Timothy C. Geoffrion, *The Rhetorical Purpose and the Political and Military Character of Philippians: A Call to Stand Firm* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Pr, 1993).

⁹⁹ G. Walter Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids, MI.: Eerdmans, 2009), 269

¹⁰⁰ Richard A. Horsley, ed., *Paul and Empire: Religion and Power in Roman Imperial Society*, 1st edition. (Harrisburg, Pa: Trinity Press International, 1997), 141.

¹⁰⁰ Moisés Silva, *Philippians*, 184.

for the abolition of the “not yet” *aeon* and the longing to be always together (hope of belonging in eternal relationship) with the Lord (1 Thess 4:17).

In Phil 3:20 that is precisely the mark that distinguishes mankind into self-worshipers and worshipers of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The believer is not guided by sight, but by eschatologically *waiting*: trusting in the work, word and providence of God, since nothing can frustrate God’s saving and restauration purposes,¹⁰¹ as He will bring to completion what He has started (Phil 1:6).¹⁰²

Eschatologically *waiting* is also a mark of true worship as evidence of a life that exists *coram Deo*. Immediate gratification contrasts patient *waiting*. Own glory and shame contrasts ultimate transformation and eternal bodily redemption in glory. Earthly things contrast heavenly blessings. Destruction contrasts new creation. God will restore all things; He has complete control and rules over all things.¹⁰³ The believer is marked both by being uncomfortable in a land that is not his own and by being fully satisfied in the relationship with the Almighty. The believer *waits* to be released of his fleshly body and this evil age, but is secure in God’s everlasting arms, confident in His providence and grace because he belongs to Him.

e. ***Titus 2:13 – “waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ”***

The *waiting* concept is also present in the pastoral epistles. As we demonstrated above, although with different nuances, the core of the eschatological present-future dynamic of *waiting* as both redemptive-historical and existential, is present throughout all Pauline writings, in all stages of his ministry, not as a concept in development, but a crystalized idea marking the genuine transformation operated by the Spirit. *Waiting*

¹⁰¹ As Christopher Wright says, “With Yahweh in the picture, the God who will be what he will be, there cannot not be hope”. See: Wright, *The Message of Lamentations*, 109.

¹⁰² Gary L. Nebeker, “Christ as Somatic Transformer (Phil 3:20-21): Christology In An Eschatological Perspective,” *Trinity Journal* 21.2 (2000): 165-187.

¹⁰³ Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory*, 107-108.

sourced in faith in Christ alone that hopes for His *Parousia* and outworks in love vertically and horizontally, in worship and ethics. Titus 2:13 ties various of these nuances into the *waiting* for the blessed hope, which is the *Parousia* of Christ, who is both God and Savior.

The Greek word used in the verse is *προσδέχομαι*,¹⁰⁴ which resembles the word used by Paul in Romans, Galatians and 1 Corinthians.¹⁰⁵ It means “to receive”; “to wait for”, conveying the sense of receiving something in a welcoming manner.¹⁰⁶ The word carries a religious connotation as a looking forward with a receptive frame of mind,¹⁰⁷ not passively, but being proactive and alert with eager expectation. The religious relation implies awareness for what God is doing, readiness for His calling.¹⁰⁸

The *waiting* of the passage is focused on ethical aspects of the present life. Titus 2:11-12 affirms that the grace of God appeared in Christ bringing salvation to all kinds of people instructing all to live godly lives (Eph 2; Gal 5; 1 Thess 1:9-10).¹⁰⁹ Then, the eschatological *waiting* implies an existential ethical element to those who live in the present age. Believers live looking forward in hope of their inheritance of glory (Col 1:5) and this future glory exerts influence on the present, not only in the content of hope, but in its outwork of love. The Father, rescuing his captive children, brings them into the kingdom of the Son of his love (Col 1:13) and, as citizens of this celestial kingdom, the true Israel of God (Phil 3:20), there is a proper manner of *waiting* for the blessed hope of the appearance of Jesus Christ.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ It is interesting to note that this is the same verb used in the end of the Nicene-Calcedonian creed: “προσδοκῶμεν ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν, καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰώνος” meaning the eschatological waiting for the resurrection and the new *aeon*.

¹⁰⁵ Interestingly the use of this word outside the Pauline writings also points to the concept of eschatological waiting. It is used for those who await God’s kingdom (Joseph in Mk. 15:43 and Simeon in Lk. 2:38) and for the Christian expectation of the resurrection (Acts 24:15) and Christ’s mercy in the judgment (Jude 21). Particularly, this word is the one used by Jesus when telling his disciples to be “as those who wait for their master” (Lk. 12:36). See: Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Abridged in One Volume (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 148.

¹⁰⁶ Aaron C. Fenlason, “Hope,” *Lexham Theological Wordbook* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014).

¹⁰⁷ Frederick William Danker, *The Concise Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 302.

¹⁰⁸ Robert W. Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 2018), 529.

¹⁰⁹ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 526.

¹¹⁰ Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory*, 100-101.

A mark of the genuine identity of a believer is an eye in the future with a foot in the present. *Waiting* is not defined by present circumstances, but by what God is carrying out through history. When Paul writes about the future, it is not detached from the present experience (Col 1:27). Suffering, for instance, is real. In the pastoral epistles, Paul reminds Timothy and Titus of the fact that the believer's endurance (perseverance) is not merely a passive stoic receiving of hardships while ignoring it for a vague transcendental ethereal thought, but it is an intentional effort to trust in the Lord and act accordingly.¹¹¹

For this reason, eschatological *waiting* is forward-looking faith, hope and love. It is an all-encompassing mode of existence of expectancy, which is expressed by the addition of a second participial phrase (parallel the end of verse 12). The present middle participle προσδεχόμενοι modifies the main verb ζάω (“to live,” – more precisely living in a godly way: εὐσεβῶς ζήσωμεν), meaning a life-activity that is continuous and involving all areas of the human being – thoughts, will, feelings, actions, body, relationships, worship.¹¹² The eschatological *waiting* is also a constant active movement that accompanies and directs the heart and life of the believer in the present age (Jude 21) in a manner that he becomes recognizable by it.¹¹³

However, it is not the act of *waiting* that sustains the faith, hope and love of the believer, but the object of this expectation that establishes the vitality of Paul's eschatology. There are two ideas that emphasizes the sustaining power of God in persevering the believers in *waiting* for the *Parousia*: first, what is ahead is described as “the blessed hope.” The fulfillment of salvation is certain because it is guaranteed work of God, who will finish what He has promised and He cannot fail, as Paul insists (Rom

¹¹¹ I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 1st edition. ICC (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 271-272.

¹¹² Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans, 2006), 664-669.

¹¹³ Veldkamp, *Waiting for Christ's Return*.

8:23–30; Phil 1:6; Gal 5:5; Col 1:27; Eph 1:18; 1 Thess 2:19).¹¹⁴ For this reason, believers *wait* in a hope that is blessed. This hope and the appearing of the glory are taken as one and the same, as they are put together by the copulative conjunction¹¹⁵ *καὶ* and referring to Jesus Christ,¹¹⁶ in an appositive position and distributive to both expressions.¹¹⁷

3. Conclusion

What then should make Christians daydream? What they should long for? Being reunited with God Himself! Eschatological *waiting* is what should fill the believer's heart with nostalgia for a time that is to come! The Pauline concept of ultimate *waiting* is an essential characteristic of the mode of existence of the new creature in Christ and permeates the entire being of the believer in faith, hope and love. In this present interim age, the believer lives with eyes fixed on Christ who is in heavens and holds his eternal life. The believer lives as a citizen of New Jerusalem, uncomfortable in this present world and not guided by sight, but completely satisfied in belonging to his Savior. The believer loves with love from another world, being deeply committed to God's glory and propelled to love *coram Deo*. In *waiting*, the entire life (in faith, hope and love) of the believer is changed providing him with a new identity rooted in the new *aeon*. This new identity has a new identity of thought (eschatological mind), identity of belonging (eschatological relationship) and identity of action (eschatological heart). In sum, *waiting* is trusting that God's word is truth and living by it with a deep desire of eschatological fulfilment: Maranatha!

¹¹⁴ William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles, Volume 46*, ed. Bruce M. Metzger, David Allen Hubbard, and Glenn W. Barker, WBC (Zondervan Academic, 2016).

¹¹⁵ A conjunction used to bind two words together in a close relationship of logic. See: BDF §442-443; Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 1997), 657-671.

¹¹⁶ Titus 2:13 is one of the NT passages that directly ascribe full divinity to Jesus Christ as God the Son. Although fascinating, this point is beyond the scope of this paper, but, for further details, see: Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus*, Reprint edition. (Grand Rapids MI: Baker Books, 1992); Murray J. Harris, *Prepositions and Theology in the Greek New Testament: An Essential Reference Resource for Exegesis* (Zondervan Academic, 2021), 74; Hoeksema, *Reformed Dogmatics, Vol. 1 & 2*, 205; D. A. Carson, *Jesus the Son of God: A Christological Title Often Overlooked, Sometimes Misunderstood, and Currently Disputed*, 1st edition. (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 2012); Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: Abridged in One Volume*, 351-373.

¹¹⁷ Yarbrough, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, 529.