

## Wait and Return

**Isaiah 30:15-18** <sup>15</sup> For thus says the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." But you would not, <sup>16</sup> And you said, "No, for we will flee on horses "-- Therefore you shall flee! And, "We will ride on swift horses"-- Therefore those who pursue you shall be swift! <sup>17</sup> One thousand *shall flee* at the threat of one, At the threat of five you shall flee, Till you are left as a pole on top of a mountain And as a banner on a hill. <sup>18</sup> Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD *is* a God of justice; Blessed *are* all those who wait for Him.

"Don't shoot till you see the whites of the eyes." This is a famous order reportedly given by Colonel William Prescott at the battle of Bunker Hill on June 17, 1775. Additionally, he also told his soldiers to aim for the officers. Many historians doubt the veracity of this quote. Yet, it is clear that the colonial soldiers were very careful with their ammunition and did aim for the officers.

The colonists technically lost the battle when they eventually ran out of ammunition and were forced to retreat. Nevertheless, the British suffered more than twice the casualties of the colonists and a disproportionate amount were officers

Waiting isn't usually thought of as a difficult thing or a brave thing, but certainly, in that situation it was. Waiting while the British troops moved closer firing at you took courage. Refraining from firing back as they drew nearer took nerve and self-discipline.

It is a hard thing to wait when the enemy is charging right at you with guns blazing. The colonists waited and even though they didn't technically win the battle, many historians believe that what happened there in a couple different ways help lead to the final victory for the Americans.

The Lord tells the Israelites in our text to wait, but unlike the colonists they did not. They saw the enemy coming at them and the Lord told them to wait and he would deliver them. Instead of waiting on the Lord they ran down to Egypt to sign a treaty. Instead of waiting on the Lord they put their trust in Egypt.

God tells them that because they jumped on their horses to go down to Egypt they shall ride their horses fleeing from the enemy. He said that they wanted to swiftly do something rather than wait, therefore they shall swiftly flee. They didn't wait and they lost their salvation.

It can be very hard thing to wait. Whether you are a colonist with red coats coming at you, or a father with his child in the emergency room, or simply a guy with a friend who is in pain, our natural reaction is often the desire to jump into action. Many are the times my dad was upset with me because I just started doing something without waiting to hear instructions first.

God wants us to wait on Him. He's got a plan for us. He had a plan for the Israelites. A plan that involved His Son being born to die for the sins of the world. They couldn't see God's plan, so they gave up on Him. But our salvation comes from waiting on the Lord.

It is an easy thing to stand up on your confirmation day and say I trust in the Lord. It is a much harder thing to wait day after day for Him to act in His own time. Things happen in our lives, and we want to act now, we want God to act now. Sometimes it becomes very hard to wait for the Lord to act in His time. The temptation is to give up waiting, even to give up trusting the Lord. God promises that our salvation comes in His time.

As we wait for the Lord, He has two simple instructions for us: 1. Return, 2. Rest.

**In returning and rest you shall be saved; In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.**

To return to God is to confess our sins and seek His forgiveness. Returning to the Lord is not a quinquennial thing or an annual thing, it is a daily thing. Returning to the Lord means daily acknowledging He is right and I have been wrong. It's a daily acknowledgement of the power that sin still holds over me. We confess our sin and receive God's forgiveness.

Return to Him and find rest. Find rest in Him through daily prayer and bible study.

We turn back to Jesus, and we lay our burdens on Jesus, then we wait. We wait for His salvation. We wait for His strength to fill our lives.

If you are anything like me, you wake up in the morning and have a list of things you want to get done. Maybe you didn't even sleep well because that whole list was there in the back of your head. It seems like you must get to it. Like the Israelites, you get up on the horse and get to it. "Swift to ride."

But first remember that your strength comes from the Lord.

**"In returning and rest you shall be saved. In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."**

Return and rest, daily confession of your sins and then finding rest in His word and in prayer.

Because the Israelites would not wait for the Lord, the Lord promises that He will wait for them. The Lord isn't ready to give up on His people. He is going to wait for a time when He will be able to be gracious to them.

He is going to wait until "He is lifted up." And when He is lifted up then they will receive His mercy

**Lam 3:25 The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.**

As we begin a new year it is time for us to return to the Lord and find rest in Him again. We haven't always waited for Him as we should, but He is waiting for us right now.

It took a lot of nerve for those colonists to wait till they saw the "whites of their eyes," sometimes waiting on the Lord is also a hard thing, but the Lord promises that He will bring His salvation to those who wait for Him, and more importantly He is waiting for us.

Amen