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## **Uncovering the Meaning of *Hupomone* for Paul: A Biblical Analysis and Its Implications for the Christian Life**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of the research is to reveal the deep meaning of *hupomone* for Paul. Paul saw his obedience and loyalty of the teaching he believe. He strongly defended the Jewish teaching and did the customer of his ancestors before he repented. It also happened when he lived in Christ after his repentance. This research used biblical analysis as the tool to reveal the meaning of *hupomone* for Paul. The result of the research indicates the *hupomone* for Paul is his basic attitudes, such as being stickle, stand firm, being steadfast, and being persevere as the loyal followers of best. The writer emphasizes the meaning of *hupomone* is very relevant, it has impacts for Christian in this era to face many problems in the world.

**Keywords:** *hupomone*; Paul; Christian life; Biblical; perseverance

## INTRODUCTION

The education that Saul lived to become a scribe influenced a lot in him, more so in the field of defending their teachings. This is evidenced by the debates he conducted, because the school he adhered to required him to stand firmly (*hupomone*) in their teachings. They taught the Torah in the foyer of the temple of God, in synagogues and in schools. With extensive experience and intellectual ability to discriminate conscientiously, they are able to develop a cassowary system (kasuistic: a kind of art to determine the wrong or correctness of an action at a certain moment, if it is difficult to determine on the basis of existing general rules). Maintaining tradition, making oral laws that have the same power, as the law of Moses.<sup>1</sup> Uèproved his loyalty to his traditions, by bringing him after and imprisoning the followers of Jesus, the Nazarene. As a very militant Pharisee it became a strong motivation for Saul to persecute the Christians. Christian preaching of Jesus Christ became a doctrine contrary to the Law.<sup>2</sup>

On a mission of inquiry into Jesus' followers, he was sent to Damascus with a mandate from the high priest. But something happened on the road to Damascus that made him change his course. He had to

forsake his path because of the inspiration, his path turned to his new path (Gal. 1:23). The event on the road to Damascus became a calling of Saul to become an apostle to a stranger or nation (an infidel). At the same time he became an apostle and a Christian. He began a new ministry under the power of God. He began evangelism into the land of Arabia, east of Damascus, with many enemies hunting and wanting to kill him (Acts 9:25).

This paper aims to reveal the cause of Paul being so persistent, to firmly defend the teachings of the judiciary before his conversion and life in Christ after his conversion. Why this is important, of course, is because Paul's determination, perseverance and fortitude, need to be possessed in the lives of Christians as followers of Jesus. Because the problems of today's life are very complex experienced by Christians in this world who need attention. This paper edified Christians with the challenges experienced as followers of Jesus to have *hupomone* in their lives.

Analisis of the word *hupomone* has been well done by these last researchers, only it has implications for an educator who must have *hupomone* traits in educating his students.<sup>3</sup> Therefore this paper focuses on

<sup>1</sup> K. Haacker, "Paul's Life," in *J.D.G. Dunn* (Cambridge: Companion St. Paul, 2003), 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> C. M. Martini, *Kesaksian Santo Paulus* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1989).

<sup>3</sup> Santy Sahartian, "Pemahaman Guru Pendidikan Agama Kristen Tentang II Timotius 3:10 Terhadap Peningkatan Kecerdasan Spiritual Anak Didik," *Fidei: Jurnal Teologi Sistemika Dan Praktika* 1,

the purpose of finding out what is the message of the word *hupomone* according to Paul in relation to the life of believers as followers of Jesus Christ.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a biblical approach. Through this approach, it will seek to uncover by investigating, deciphering and explaining carefully. In order to obtain a precise picture and understanding of the meaning of *hupomone* for Paul, the author first describes the perspective of *hupomone* in the Old and New Testaments. It goes on to reveal how *hupomone* was before Paul's conversion and after his conversion. The results of the analysis will be implied for the Christian's life.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### An Outlook at the Word *Hupomone* in the Old Testament and the New Testament

*Hupomone* is a Greek word, from the words *hupo* and *mone*. *Hupo* is the preposition for genitive. *Mone* means to stay, to stay, to be firm. In the New Testament the word *mone* appears only twice in the Gospel of John – *en te oikia tou Patros mou monai pollai eisin ei de me eipon an hymin hoti*

*poreuomai hetoimasai topon hymin* (14:2, 23). Where the two are related statements. The word *hupomone* simply means “to stay”, “to wait for hostile attacks” (just in case the enemy attacks). The word *hupomone* means “holding out”, “standing fast”, “steadfastness”, “endurance” (perseverance, patience).<sup>4</sup>

In the Greek world, *hupomenein* is a neutral form that means simply “to hold out.” Then this word was developed and got a special word in the Greek word list, for which it became a concept of unwavering courage against evil. This means that there is an active effort to deal with enemy forces.<sup>5</sup> This word is widely used in military contexts. From the time of Platon this word has been used, interpreted by two meanings, namely in the positive and negative senses. Positively, fortitude, constancy, and perseverance. A person who can endure suffering, in distress or danger without any thought of obtaining a reward but solely for the sake of his honor. Negatively, there is an attitude of disrespect that passively resigns with a bad face, exile, slavery or indignation, in fear, evil and inaction.<sup>6</sup>

In the Old Testament, the word *hupomone* is defined as hope, belief (1 Chr.

no. 2 (December 29, 2018): 146–72, <https://doi.org/10.34081/FIDEI.V1I2.15>.

<sup>4</sup> Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of The New Testament* (Michigan, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967).

<sup>5</sup> Kittel.

<sup>6</sup> Colin Brown, *New Testament Theology* (Paternoster Press, 1976).

29:15), with God's religious concentration as the hope of Israel.<sup>7</sup> While in the LXX (Septuagint) it means "wait and wait" which is equated with the Hebrew word, *Qawah*, waited, expected. Israel as a chosen nation expects and longs for the fulfillment of promises (Ps. 36, 10, 34), laying hope in God as the giver of strength. So *hupomone* expresses the attitude of human life in the light on "the last days."<sup>8</sup> So it can be understood that it is the general concept of the Old Testament, the pious waiting for God that gives strength. God will fulfill the promise of eschatological salvation. Waiting with active expectations. For those who are patient and endure until fulfillment will be saved.

The New Testament states that *hupomone* as a basic attitude about justice, developed from the Old Testament and Judaism. Fortitude is given with the hope of the realization of the Kingdom of God, which is the basic attitude of Christians as well as to face the attacks of the enemy and the unbelieving world and to find themselves amid trials. That is the preparation for achieving God's salvation. So *hupomone* describes the existence of a human attitude waiting for Christ. In Jesus' teaching of for-

titude, perseverance is a prerequisite for salvation. "But he that endure to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 24:13). For harsh situations demand perseverance, patience, as Matthew mentions that many will apostatize, betray and hate one another. Many will be lost by false prophets and because of the development of evil, "the love of man shall grow cold." In waiting is required one's strength, self-control, fortitude, perseverance in trials as well as in anticipation of them, for the sake of the kingdom of God, which will end trials.<sup>9</sup>

### ***Hupomone* to Paul's Conversion**

Paul came from a Diaspora Jewish family. The city of Tarsus where he was born approximately at the beginning of the century AD (Acts 21:39; 22:3) was the capital of the Roman Province of Cilicia. At that time the city of Tarsus was already famous as a center of traffic and trade from Asia Minor to Syria, specifically as a center of traffic and trade from Asia Minor to Syria, specifically as one of the centers of Greek culture, so it is sometimes referred to as Athens.<sup>10</sup> The city is famous not only for trade, but also by its position as an important communication and cultural center.

<sup>7</sup> Brown.

<sup>8</sup> Colin Brown, *Dictionary of The New Testament Theology, The Paternoster Press*, vol. 3, 1976.

<sup>9</sup> Balz Gerhard and Horst Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of The New Testament*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991).

<sup>10</sup> G Bornkamm, *Paul* (New York: Harper & Row Publisher, 1969).

Jerome mentions a piece of rumors about Paul's parents who had lived in Gischala in Galilee when their raid moved to Tarsus. According to Paul's confession he was "a Hebrew born of Hebrews" (Phil. 3:5), meaning that his family had just become overseas Jews, Paul's father probably became an overseas Jew, and possibly became a prisoner of war and perhaps after his release he obtained Roman citizenship.<sup>11</sup>

The spread of Hellenism, which still played an important role in the first century, has given rise to universalism and syncretism. While the Jews outside Palestine had a high awareness in the delivery of Yhwh's commandment amid the foreign nation in which they were, nevertheless, it was largely driven by spiritual pride as the "chosen people of God." Fanaticism about the Law, the traditions of the grandmother who was considered holy, the worship and offerings in the temple of God and her belief in salvation as an exclusive elect. These are the dominant things in the lives of the Jewish righteous.<sup>12</sup>

As was common for Paul's Jewish children to study a school called the Synagogue, he learned many things there: lan-

guage, rhetoric, torah law and Jewish customs. This was also true of Paul's parents where since childhood, Paul had been educated in the devout Jewish religious life. His family maintained the traditions of their ancestors, even using the Aramaic language. To deepen his religious observance, Paul sent by his father to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem he was taken care of by the famous rabbi, Gamaliel. He was educated in a Pharisee ward according to his letter to the Galatians. He was a passionate and pious Jew. Paul was not a man who was distressed by the law, but he was a man who practiced the Jewish religion with all his soul and body, besides being the most fanatical among the Jews.<sup>13</sup> There is a traditional Jewish thought held by Paul, that the law is the demonstrated way to maintain and declare a relationship with God. The law is given for life. But the Jew who was a law (*en nomon*, in Greek) praised Him for the Law as a guarantee of His salvation so it had to be done.<sup>14</sup> Paul's declaration of the law is the essence of Paul's concept of sin, namely the struggle of man's pride to rely on his own strength and seek salvation in the Torah.<sup>15</sup> In this case it can be understood that Paul

<sup>11</sup> Martin Dibelius, *Paul* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1953).

<sup>12</sup> Bonar H. Situmorang, "Pengertian Hukum Taurat Bagi Paulus Dalam Surat Roma Dan Relevansinya Dengan Adat Batak" (1986).

<sup>13</sup> Nobert Brox, *Memahami Amanat Santo Paulus* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> Situmorang, "Pengertian Hukum Taurat Bagi Paulus Dalam Surat Roma Dan Relevansinya Dengan Adat Batak."

<sup>15</sup> Herman Ridderbos, *Paulus: Pemikiran Utama Theologinya* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2008).

glorified the Lord by obeying the Law and the traditions.

The education and teaching that Paul received from childhood and even learned again from Rabbi Gamaliel, ultimately had the concept of thinking that the Law saved, this had been deeply imprinted in Paul's heart, eventually leading him to fanaticism and legalisticism. It was because of his bigotry that he, caused him to vigorously attack the new movement created by Jesus, whom he regarded as a new sect. Where Jesus proclaimed the name of God, especially with the confession of Jesus' followers after his ascension to heaven that Jesus was Lord. This caused Paul's anger to explode, no longer tolerable to stem his indignity. To him there is no incarnation of God, still transcendent, that Messiah will come from heaven with all His glory. Eventually Paul led the movement to pursue and imprison the Nazarene believer Jesus, even killing him.

Paul, as a Pharisee, considered himself a true righteous man.<sup>16</sup> Paul earnestly demonstrated his obedience to the Law. The idea of Acts about his appearance in Damascus has opened up questions or criticisms, although he went to Damascus equipped with the authority or mandate of

the High Priest to drag Christians before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, but that is not possible, because the highest administrative court is Rome – Damascus is already so far from Judea. After all, the high priest no longer has power over Damascus. That is, Paul Pharisee moved within the framework of the last power (sophomore, forbidding and excommunicating).<sup>17</sup> Paul a man of character cannot be invited to “compromise” by anyone in his life. Therefore, when a figure named Jesus appeared with his teachings, Paul was very strongly opposed, hated and persecuted, and even tried to kill Jesus' followers.<sup>18</sup>

I understand that Paul's actions resulted from his fanaticism towards his ingrained teachings. He was willing to show full obedience and loyalty to the Jewish teachings and customs of his ancestors. Finally, it brings Paul to a brutality that will destroy those who want to overhaul or blaspheme the god of his ancestors.

### ***Hupomone After Paul's Conversion***

The events on the road to Damascus, where the heavenly light that shrouded Paul was Jesus, the Nazarene himself, stopping and blinding Paul's eyes. According to ancient beliefs, there is something shown, his eyes have seen a divine thing.<sup>19</sup> Jesus' ques-

<sup>16</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul, Apostle of Liberty* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

<sup>17</sup> Bornkamm, *Paul*.

<sup>18</sup> Karel Sosipater, *Etika Perjanjian Baru* (Jakarta: Suara Harapan Bangsa, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> Dibelius, *Paul*.

tion to Saul, “Saul, Saul, why did you persecute me?” Howard understood this question of Jesus to show the futility of Saul’s resistance all along to Jesus Christ.<sup>20</sup> According to Hoerber quoted by Natanael Purba, that the journey to Damascus was the starting point that changed it from Saul the hunter of Jesus’ followers to Paul the preacher of the good news (Gospel).<sup>21</sup> The author analyzes that it was at that time that the glorified Jesus reversed Paul’s mistake by touching Paul’s conscience (inner life).

This awareness of the person of Jesus, indeed, was the basis for the radical change in Paul. Where Paul finally had a new effectiveness that distorted the values he originally believed to be true. Paul saw that the person of Jesus fulfilled all the demands of the law and even the entire Bible.<sup>22</sup> This event became a reflection for Paul, who opened his heart’s eyes to true knowledge, through the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ is the Savior for all this world. That conviction of true new knowledge is strongly evident in that Paul actually made a defense of the preaching of the cross of Christ. He preached the dead Lord Jesus and then rose on the third day, which he used to hate and avoided

when he had not met Jesus.<sup>23</sup> God’s liberating grace reminded Paul of the terrible sin that once carried him; the awareness of sin made him always dependent on God’s grace. He strives strongly against self-sin, and trains himself to live and submit to the power of God.<sup>24</sup>

Furthermore, Martin Boughtus asserted that Jesus had conquered the heart and straightened Paul’s concept of thought about himself and the teachings brought by Jesus. This resulted in Paul turning 180 degrees, and this was not the result of “indoc-trination” because Paul admitted, “but when He who had chosen me before I was born, He had called me by his grace, pleased to declare His Son to me, with the command that I preach/preach Him among foreign nations, nor did I confer with flesh and blood, nor went up to Jerusalem to the apostles before me, but I went to Arabia and back again to Damascus” (Gal.1:15-17).<sup>25</sup>

Bonar H. Situmorang said that Paul was prepared by God negatively, meaning that Paul worked on the side of the opponent (Jesus’ opponent) so that Paul followed the development of Jesus’ teachings and followers, finally God arrested and made Paul an apostle to foreign nations. The law that was

<sup>20</sup> Howard Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1980).

<sup>21</sup> Natanael Purba, “Refleksi Teologi Memaknai Ikut Menderita Demi Injil Kristus Berdasarkan 2 Timotius 2:1-10,” *ANTUSIAS: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan* 7, no. 1 (2021): 74–89.

<sup>22</sup> Haacker, “Paul’s Life.”

<sup>23</sup> Martini, *Kesaksian Santo Paulus*.

<sup>24</sup> C. K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

<sup>25</sup> Dibelius, *Paul*.

once understood as salvation is no longer considered so. For the Law as God's desire is no longer something that is done by force, but spontaneity with the unanimity of heart and the obedience of faith in God.<sup>26</sup> When Paul says "But now, without the law the righteousness of God has been revealed."<sup>27</sup> After Paul repented and became an apostle of the Lord Jesus, He finally realized that what he used to be so proud of was nothing more than a "garbage" that he had to throw away and leave behind, for the knowledge of Jesus Christ was far greater than what he received in this world.<sup>28</sup> This clearly shows the difference he adhered to after his conversion. Paul defines that God's righteousness revealed in the gospel is truth in faith, that is, truth because of the mercy of God bestowed freely upon sinful man. God's saving work was initiated by God Himself, He became flesh, with obedience and faithfulness to death for redemption for sinful man.<sup>29</sup> Thus, Paul's understanding of salvation has passed from the law to the gospel. For Paul interprets the gospel as:<sup>30</sup> a) The power of God that liberates every believer,

first of all Jews, but also of Yunani; b) For in it (the gospel) is real the truth of God, which is based on faith and leads to faith, as it says: "the righteous shall live by faith." It is on this basis of this understanding that Paul declared a necessity for followers of Jesus Christ to be obedient, steadfast, diligent and steadfast (*hupomane*) in faith and hope. Believers in Christ are new creations, which have been manifestly justified by grace, so Paul describes this life with a new world that is faith. Faith is not an intellectual part, but faith is the basic attitude of believers toward God. It can be said to be the basis of Paul's theology by the term; "justification by grace through faith," is God's work of salvation. Salvation is grace and grace for all.<sup>31</sup>

The foregoing, Paul said to the church, was his experience and testimony for in his evangelism and ministry he experienced various obstacles, charged with being a false apostle, hunted down by Jews who wanted his life, even in his flesh there was a thorn. Finally Paul counseled, "For everything that was written in former times

<sup>26</sup> Situmorang, "Pengertian Hukum Taurat Bagi Paulus Dalam Surat Roma Dan Relevansinya Dengan Adat Batak."

<sup>27</sup> Ridderbos, *Paulus: Pemikiran Utama Theologinya*.

<sup>28</sup> Arifianto Alex, "Studi Teologis Prinsip Penginjilan Paulus Dalam 1 Korintus 9:16," *LOGIA* 2, no. 1 (2020): 22–41, <https://doi.org/10.37731/log.v2i1.42>.

<sup>29</sup> Doni Herianto and Wempi Sawaki, "Menerapkan Strategi Penginjilan Paulus Dalam Kisah Para Rasul 17:16-34 Pada Penginjilan Suku Auri, Papua," *Kurios (Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen)* 2 6, no. 2 (2020): 318–29, <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v6i2.213>.

<sup>30</sup> Nikolaus Hayon, *Tema-Tema Paulus* (Flores: Nusa Indah, 1989).

<sup>31</sup> Robin Scroggs, *Paul for a New Day* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977).



was written for our instruction, so that through endurance and through encouragement of the scriptures we may have hope” (Rom. 15:4). May God edify and encourage you to live in harmony with others, according to Jesus Christ, so that together with others you glorify God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>32</sup> Paul, after his conversion, was firm in his belief in the one and “transcendent” Lord God. Where the transcendent God became immanent because of the grace of Jesus Christ for man.

### **Theological Message and its Implications for the Christian Life**

Living in Christ is a new reality, not just an idea. Paul has stated, that the new reality must be proved by itself in the new will/desire.<sup>33</sup> Since Paul became an Apostle, he has experienced much of the struggle and suffering as much as he did to Jesus’ followers before he repented.<sup>34</sup> Paul viewed the sins committed in his past as an adherent of Judaism with great horror. At one with the struggles of being a Christian is an ongoing war against his personal sins.<sup>35</sup> From the point of view of the fact of the experien-

ce of believers in Jesus, the real war begins at the moment when a person is united in Christ.<sup>36</sup>

The livelihood of man in general, three days; past, present, and future. What we once went through, now we are forged between the present and the future, between faith and hope. Then we must first lean our hope in Christ, because the reality is now, the world is full of suffering, where christians live. So Paul exhorted to persevere (*hupomone*) as a virtue and a basic attitude of christians.<sup>37</sup> Standing firm and enduring with patience, does not mean that it is passive to face suffering, but to actively do good works. That is, it requires man to give up his life to God; those who by diligence do good, seek glory and honor and destruction, he will gain eternal life. “Sturdy/steadfast perseverance in doing good,” not resigned to suffering in adversity/distress. In Romans 5, Paul shows how justified believers can use suffering. He not only rejoices in “the hope of obtaining the glory of God,” “more than that, we rejoice in suffering, knowing that suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance produces temperament/disposition,

<sup>32</sup> Brown, *New Testament Theology*.

<sup>33</sup> Brunner, *The Letter to The Romans* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952).

<sup>34</sup> Sonny Eli Zaluchu, “Analisis Kisah Para Rasul 15 Tentang Konflik Paulus Dan Barnabas Serta Kaitannya Dengan Perpecahan Gereja,” *Kurios (Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen)* 4, no. 2 (2018): 107–17, <https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v4i2.83>.

<sup>35</sup> David Wenham, *The Christian Life of Tension? A Consideration of the Nature of Christian Experience in Paul* (New York: Pauline Studies, 1981).

<sup>36</sup> J. Knox Chamblin, *Paulus Dan Diri: Ajaran Rasuli Bagi Keutuhan Pribadi* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Brunner, *The Letter to The Romans*.

and temperament/disposition produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, for the love of God is already poured out in our hearts through His bestowed Spirit for us. For hope is the temperament/disposition of waiting for what we do not see with diligence, as we are waiting to be lifted up as children, and the deliverance of our bodies, for in the hope of salvation, finally rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering persevering in prayer.<sup>38</sup> The suffering that Jesus experienced and His victory was the basis for Paul to respond to the struggle/suffering practice.<sup>39</sup>

Paul was a “fanatic” in the Jewish religion, and became a capable young scribe before his conversion. Paul was a man of character who did not know “compromise” in his life, therefore when Jesus and his teachings appeared, Paul strongly opposed, hated and persecuted and even killed Jesus’ followers. Paul’s journey to Damascus wanted to kill Jesus’ followers, but suddenly he experienced blindness, then Jesus “met” and there was a brief dialogue, then Paul experienced renewal and there was a radical repentance in his life. He used to persecute Jesus followers before, but after his conversion he became the herald of salvation in Jesus.

Paul showed the nature and attitude of *hupomone*, of holding fast, standing firm, steadfast and diligent even though Paul faced various pressures and severe challenges as a follower of Jesus. Yes, he was faithful to Jesus until the end of his life. Christians who follow Jesus, who believe in Jesus Christ has been justified by grace through faith, meaning that we are new creations, required to persevere actively in the hope of the glory of the Kingdom of God. With *hupomone*, Christians show a new reality, which is to live, be rooted in Christ and obey until death.<sup>40</sup>

## CONCLUSION

As a conclusion in this study is *hupomone* could be reached by fully rely on Christ in times of trouble, distress needs to be integrated in communion with Jesus Christ, emulating the life of Jesus Christ until the time of death, then it is necessary (in distress) to put hope in his faith in Christ. The second coming of Christ is *basileia* (kingdom) as the culmination of God’s victory. This means that the hardships experienced are not in vain because they have a guarantee of victory as long as the difficulties are still based on *hupomone* attitudes.

<sup>38</sup> Brown, *New Testament Theology*.

<sup>39</sup> Andreas Yewangoe, *Menakar Covid-19 Secara Teologis* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2020).

<sup>40</sup> Y. Bambang Mulyono, *Theologia Ketabahan* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993), 25.

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