

## Paul's Christian Outlook And Exhortations

Phil. 3:12

**PHI 3:12 Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.**

1. "Not that I have already obtained it" - He is speaking of the blessings of the resurrection.

- See Phil.3:11 "in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."
- Lit. "obtained" is "received." TCNT has "laid hold of it."
- Paul was still in the flesh though he wanted to be in the glorified state with Christ. He was looking forward to the resurrection and being in heaven with Christ. (Phil. 1:22-25; 2 Cor. 5:1,2).

PHI 1:22 But if I am to live on in the flesh, this will mean fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.

PHI 1:23 But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better;

PHI 1:24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

PHI 1:25 And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith,

2CO 5:1 For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2CO 5:2 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven;

a. The resurrection was future.

1) Some perhaps taught the resurrection is only a mental resurrection.

2) Some, like the Pharisees, taught there is no resurrection. (Acts 23:7,8).

3) Some taught it was past.

- It is possible that some were arguing the resurrection that takes place at baptism is the only resurrection. (Col. 2:12; 3:1).
- It is possible they may have argued that only certain ones were raised and others would not be raised from the dead.
- Paul instructed the church to withdraw from those denying the future resurrection arguing it was past. (2 Tim. 2:16-18).

2TI 2:16 But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,

2TI 2:17 and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus,

2TI 2:18 men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some.

- Paul warned against close association with those who denied the resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:32,33).
- b. It will take place at Christ's coming on "the last day." (Jn. 6:39, 40, 44, 54; 11:24; 12:48).
    - 1) The wicked will also be raised on that day. (Dan.12:2; Jn. 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15).
    - 2) The wicked will be judged "at that last day." (Jn. 12:48).
2. "or have already become perfect"
    - a. He may be speaking of perfection in absolute sense.
      - 1) This will never be reached in this life and Paul never taught that he or any other could reach absolute perfection.
      - 2) We can grow spiritually in this life, but we will never reach perfection. (1 Jn. 1:7-10).
      - 3) We should strive to grow in Christ and become better and better.
      - 4) We should constantly be developing the Christian graces. (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
      - 5) Every Christian should strive for maturity. (Heb. 5:11-14: 6:1).
      - 6) Maturity can be obtained. (Matt. 5:48; Phil. 3:15; Eph. 4:4), but maturity can never be obtained in the absolute to the point no improvement can be made.
    - b. He could be speaking of the perfection of the resurrection and heaven.
      - 1) This physical body will be raised and changed. (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 15:50-58).
      - 2) This new body will be adapted for a spiritual place and eternal place like heaven.
      - 3) The physical body cannot enter heaven. (1 Cor. 15:50).
      - 4) The physical body is not made or adapted for an eternal place like heaven.
  3. "but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus"
    - a. He was pressing on to be more and more like Christ.
    - b. He was pressing on to one day being with Christ in heaven.

**PHI 3:13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,**

1. "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet"
  - a. I am not all that I want to be or should be.
  - b. Paul was making a different effort to please Christ. (1 Cor. 9:27; Gal. 1:10).
  - c. He was still in his mortal body awaiting the resurrection and heaven.

- d. Walking in “the newness of life” was not the only resurrection. (Rom. 6:3-5).
2. “but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind”
    - a. Paul had done some horrible things in the past.
    - b. He had been a great persecutor of the church. (Acts 7:58-8:3; 26:9; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 1:13).
    - c. Paul had been forgiven, but he never forgot the horrible things he had done.
    - d. He did accept God’s grace and forgiveness.
  3. “and reaching forward to what lies ahead”
    - a. He was striving to be better.
    - b. He was looking forward to the resurrection and heaven.
    - c. It was “very far better.” (Phil. 1:23).

**PHI 3:14 I press on toward the goal for the [heavenly] prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.**

- “I press” is from “dioko” [dee **oh** koh] meaning “to seek after, to pursue.”
  - “call” is literally “calling” - 1 Cor. 1:26; 7:20; Eph. 1:18. Men are called through the gospel. (2 Thess. 2:13,14).
1. “I press on toward the goal”
    - a. “goal” is “skopos” [skah **pahs**]. It means “goal, the distant mark looked at, the goal or end one has in view.”
    - b. Everything in Paul’s life was a determination to reach the heavenly goal and be with Christ.
    - c. This should be our mind set.
  2. “for the [heavenly] prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus”
    - a. “prize” is “brabeion” [brah **bay** ahn]
    - b. “prize” refers to “perfection” of heaven.
    - c. It is not a “prize” won by chance or merit, but comes from trusting and obeying Jesus.

**PHI 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect [complete, full-grown, mature], have this attitude [mind set]; and if in anything you have a different attitude [mind set], God will reveal that also to you;**

1. “Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, have this attitude”
  - a. “perfect” is from “teleios” [tel ay ahs] meaning “complete, perfect, full-grown.”
  - b. Paul is hopeful these mature Christians would see eye to eye in regard to these things.

- c. They too should have the mind set of living and preparing for heaven.
2. “and if in anything you have a different attitude” - If you disagree with me, I am hopeful you will change.
3. “God will reveal that also to you” - God will reveal that you need to change your mind and have the same attitude.
  - a. The time line for this change is not given.
  - b. There is no evidence that this would come by direct revelation to them, but most likely means they would come to this realization with a more complete understanding of God’s word.
  - c. The faithful accept God’s word, but some or many would reject it.

**PHI 3:16 however, let us keep living by that same standard to which we have attained.**

- “standard” is not in the original.
  - Lit. “nevertheless to what we arrived, by the same to walk.”
1. “however, let us keep living” - Paul wants them to keep living by the revelation of God.
  2. “by that same standard to which we have attained”
    - a. “standard” - KJV has “rule.”
    - b. See GAL 6:16 And those who will walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

**PHI 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.**

1. “Brethren, join [unite] in following my example” ASV has “Brethren, be ye imitators together of me.”
  - a. Paul was seeking with all his being to please Christ. (Phil. 1:21; Gal. 2:20).
  - b. He had expressed the same attitude in relationship to God the Father in Galatians 1:10.
2. “and observe [take notice] those who walk [live] according to the pattern you have in us”
  - “observe” is translated “mark” [take notice] in some versions.
  - It is from “skopeo” [skah **peh** oh]
    - a. “pattern” is from “tupos” [**too** pahs] - “example, model, pattern.”
    - b. Paul had admonished the Christian at Corinth to follow his example insofar as he followed Christ. (1 Cor. 11:1).

**PHI 3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,**

- “enemies of the gospel” - Rom. 11:28
- “even the death on a cross” - Phil. 2:8. Paul was not ashamed of the cross, but recognized had to die on the

cross that man might be saved. It is not something shameful to the believer.

1. “For many walk [live], of whom I often told you” - Paul had previously warned against these individuals [brethren or mostly brethren] who were influencing the Philippian church from within or without.
2. “and now tell you even weeping”
  - a. Paul was devoted to the cross of Jesus. (1 Cor. 2:2; Gal. 6:14).
  - b. It brought him great sadness that the cross had enemies especially among religious people.
  - c. You can expect enemies from the world, but one would not think they would come from religious people.
3. “that they are enemies of the cross of Christ” - Many enemies of Christ are religious people claiming to follow Christ.

Those who bound the Mosaical law on Christians. (Gal. 5:4). See Phil. 3:1,2, 9, 10.	Those who teach Christ is not the only way to heaven. (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12).	Those who denied the importance of the church for which Christ died.
Those who denied the atonement of Christ.	Those who deny the humanity of Christ. (1 Jn. 4:1; 2 Jn. 7).	Those who live according to the flesh keep men from coming to Christ.
Those who taught Jesus was not raised from the dead.	Those who denied the sinlessness of Christ. (Heb. 4:15).	Those who taught salvation is by merit. (Eph. 2:5, 8-10).
Those who teach morality alone will save.	Those who teach we are saved on the basis of our wealth or education or social standing.	Those who teach that one is saved by doing what is right in his/her own eyes. (Jere. 10:23; Matt. 15:9).
Those who taught works of faith were not necessary. (Jas. 2:14-17; Rom. 1:5; 16:26).	Those who denied the Deity of Christ.	Those who deny the importance of doing the will of God. (Matt. 7:21-24).

**PHI 3:19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.**

1. “whose end is destruction” - This is a reference to the **“enemies of the cross of Christ.”**
  - a. “end” is from “telos” [teh lahs] - This is a reference to their eternal destination.
  - b. “destruction” is from “apoleia” [ah poh lay ah] - It is used of hell.
    - 1) In Matthew 10:28 Jesus used the word “apollumi [ah pahl loo mee] means “to destroy, to put an end to, to devote to destruction, that is, eternal misery.” It does not denote annihilation, but a place of suffering. (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).
    - 2) The Greek “olethron” [ah leh thron] meaning “ruin, destruction” is used in 2 Thessalonians 1:8,9. It too refers to hell.
    - 3) The wicked [here “whose god is their appetite and whose glory is in their shame”] will reap what they have sown. (Gal. 6:8).

2. “whose god is their appetite”
  - a. “whose god” - All people have a god, but the god of some is their “appetite.”
  - b. “appetite” - Lit. “koilia” [koi lee ah] - “belly, stomach.” It refers to their sinful appetites.
  - c. See Rom 16:18 For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.
3. “and whose glory is in their shame” - They are proud of and boast of things that should make them ashamed.
  - a. There were people then and now who “glory” in things of which they should be ashamed. (Jude 1:13).
  - b. Christians glory [boast] in the Lord. (Gal. 6:14).
4. “who set their minds on earthly things” - Paul recognized the resurrection and heaven were future.
  - a. The Christian is to have his mind set on spiritual things. (Col. 3:1,2).
  - b. The Christian is to walk in the newness of life. (Rom. 6:1-4).
  - c. He seeks first the kingdom of God. (Matt. 6:33).

**PHI 3:20 For our citizenship [home] is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for [the coming of] a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;**

1. “For our citizenship is in heaven” - He proceeds to describe the friends of the cross and he includes himself in that number.
  - a. The KJV has “conversation.” It is an old word meaning “manner of life, conduct.”
  - b. The verb form of this word is used in Philippians 1:27. NASB

PHI 1:27 Only **conduct** yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

- 1) The word is used in the sense of “manner of life, live, conduct.” It could be rendered “conduct of a citizen.”
- 2) It would include “conversation.” See KJV
- c. The verb form of the word “politeuo” [pah lee too oh] also occurs in Acts 23:1.

ACT 23:1 And Paul, looking intently at the Council, said, "Brethren, I **have lived** my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day."

- 1) Here it is rendered “have lived”
- 2) Paul had lived his life in “good conscience before God.”
- d. The word “citizenship” is from the noun “politeuma” [pah lee too mah]. The word can mean (1) commonwealth

(2) home (3) state (4) citizenship. “Commonwealth” is a body of people constituting a state or politically organized community.

e. Many translations render this “citizenship.” ASV, NASB, NIV, Marshall

f. The Christian’s citizenship [home] is in heaven.

1) This is where his name is written. (Lk. 10:20).

2) This is where Jesus taught His followers to lay up treasures. (Matt. 6:19-21).

3) This is the place where those who do the will of God will be. (Matt. 7:21).

4) This is where the persecuted will be. (Matt. 5:10-12).

5) This is where those who add the Christian graces will be. (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

g. The Christian is a mere pilgrim on this earth. (1 Pet. 2:11).

h. Like Abraham and the other patriarchs Paul was looking for a heavenly home. (Heb. 11:10, 13-16).

HEB 11:10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

HEB 11:13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

HEB 11:14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own.

HEB 11:15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return.

HEB 11:16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

i. Jesus has prepared a place for us there. (Jn. 14:1-3).

j. We have a place reserved in heaven. (1 Pet. 1:4).

2. “from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ” - Every Christian prepares and eagerly looks forward to the second coming of Christ. (Matt. 25:13).

a. “Savior” is identified here as “the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Eph. 5:23; 2 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 3:6).

b. God the Father is sometimes called “Savior.” (1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10; Tit. 1:3; 2:10).

c. God saves man through His beloved Son.

**PHI 3:21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.**

1. “who will transform the body of our humble state” - Lit. “the body of the humiliation of us”

a. “transform” - “metaschematizo” [meh tah skay mah tee zoh] - “transfer, transform.”

b. “the body of our humble state” - “the body of our humiliation” - ASV

- c. The fleshly body is mortal and corruptible.
  - d. It is destined for the grave. (Eccles. 3:2; Heb. 9:27; 1 Cor. 15:20-22).
  - e. It is destined to decay and return to dust. (Eccles. 12:7).
  - f. All of this does not pose a problem to the Almighty God of heaven.
2. “into conformity with the body of His glory” - Lit. “making it conformed to the body of the glory of him”
- a. Jesus has a spiritual body in heaven. Though He is a life-giving Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45), He is not without form.
  - b. Believer will have a body like Jesus, that is, a new spiritual body. (1 Jn. 3:2).
  - c. This does not mean we will be like Christ in every way.
    - 1) Jesus is God’s exalted Son, but we shall be servants in heaven. (Rev. 22:3).
    - 2) We will not become gods.
    - 3) We will not be Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient, etc. like Christ [Deity].
    - 4) We will have the privilege of worshiping and serving God and His Son. (Rev. 5:9-13).

REV 5:9 And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

REV 5:10 "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."

REV 5:11 And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands,

REV 5:12 saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing."

REV 5:13 And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

- d. 1 Corinthians 15:49-58 gives some information about this new body.
    - 1) It will be imperishable and immortal. (1 Cor. 15:53, 54).
    - 2) It will be victorious over death. (1 Cor. 15:54-56).
    - 3) It will ascend to meet Christ in the air and be with Him in heaven. (1 Thess. 4:13-18).
3. “by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself”
- a. This change in the Christian’s body will come by the power of Jesus Christ.



1) Jesus, as Deity, has unlimited power.

2) He demonstrated unlimited power by creating all things. (Jn. 1:1-3; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb.1:3).

b. This same power is the power that will cause “all things” to be subject to Himself.

c. Jesus will overcome His enemies when He returns. (Mk. 12:36; Acts 2:35; 1 Cor.15:25,26; Heb. 1:13; 10:13).

d. None will be able to stand up to Jesus when He comes with His angels. (Matt. 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:7).

MAT 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father <b>with His angels</b> ; and will then recompense every man according to his deeds.	MAT 25:31 "But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and <b>all the angels</b> with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne.	2TH 1:7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with <b>His mighty angels</b> in flaming fire,
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e. The devil, his angels and the wicked will be cast into hell - the lake of fire. (Matt. 25:41,46; Rev. 20:10; 21:8).

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