



Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

Philippians 3:20-21 - Our Citizenship is in Heaven

- ***Review - Philippians 3:17-19, Following Paul's Walk***
 - What does it mean to be *followers of me* (Paul)?
 - Some walk *according to 'us'* (Paul, Timothy, Epaphroditus) and some not, why?
 - Who then are *the enemies of the cross*?
- ***Philippians 3:20 - For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:***
 - *conversation (politeuma)* is used only in *Philippians*!
 - Also is *Phil 1:27* where the word is used as a verb not a noun - *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ:*
 - According to Strong, there are 3 interpretations:
 - The administration of civil affairs or of a commonwealth
 - The constitution of a commonwealth, form of government and the laws by which it is administered



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- A state, commonwealth - the commonwealth of citizens
- Do you agree that *citizenship* is an appropriate and best interpretation?
 - Wuest – ‘The Greek word refers to an antecedent condition protracted into the present. It speaks here of fixedness. Thus, the commonwealth of which the saints are citizens has its fixed location in heaven. The stability and security of the citizen under Roman law filled the thoughts of the time with high conceptions of citizenship and its value. Philippi, being a Roman colony, and its citizens therefore Roman citizens, thought in terms of citizenship. Paul seizes this fact as a good opportunity to illustrate to the saints their heavenly citizenship with its privileges and responsibilities. What a contrast between those mentioned in [3:18,19](#), who were citizens of this earth, and those spoken of in [3:20,21](#), who are citizens of heaven!’
- What is the purpose by which *our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven*?
 - It's *from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ*:
 - *look* can also be translated as *eagerly wait* – how should we interpret this; if we are positioned there, aren't we one with the *Savior*?



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- Let's compare that with our current *citizenship*.
 - Englewood or Aurora, Colorado, USA
 - How much did Roman citizenship mean to the Philippians?
 - » *Acts 16:12, 21 - And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.*
 - What are the limitations of our earthly citizenship?
 - Too many to count!
 - And now our *heavenly citizenship*.
 - It is not of ourselves but by grace, positional and eternal!
 - » *Gal 4:26 - But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.*
 - » *Heb 11:10 - For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*
 - What are the limitations of our *heavenly citizenship*?
 - Promises delayed and depend on our faith!
 - » *Heb 11:13 - These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*



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Constable – ‘Furthermore it is from our heavenly kingdom that a Savior will come to deliver us out of this present evil world and take us to our home with Him above (*John 14:1-2*). **The prospect of our Lord's return should motivate us to live as citizens of heaven even while we are still on earth (*1 John 3:2-3*).**’

» *Phil 1:20 - According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death.*

- *Philippians 3:21 - who will transform our lowly body that (it may be ?) conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

– *who will transform (change) our lowly (vile) body that it may be conformed (fashioned unto) to His glorious body*

- What is our current understanding of this incredible promise?
- How should we describe *vile*?
 - Lowness, low estate, spiritual abasement, leading one to perceive and lament his (moral) littleness and guilt.



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- Why is our earthly body called *vile*?
 - Constable – ‘This body is **lowly, weak, and susceptible to all kinds of evil influences**. The idea that it is sinful, which the AV implies by using the word "vile," is absent in the Greek word (*tapeinoseos*).’
 - Is this transformation different than that described in *Romans*?
 - » *Rom 8:29 - For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.*
- Wuest in *Phil 3:21* says ‘These bodies in whose members there resides the sin principle ([Rom. 7:17, 18](#)), will be devoid of that in their new condition. The change has to do with the body, the house or outer casing in which the person dwells. **The individual himself is not changed at glorification, only his body.** That is why the Greek word was used which denotes an outward change.’
 - » *1 Cor 15:42-44 - So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*
 - » *1 Cor 15:51,52 -- Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—*
- In *Rom 8:29* this transformation is to be in His sons after the pattern, model, or image of *His Sonship* in our nature.



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- *According to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*
 - By what process is the Lord accomplishing this?
 - *His working (energeia) - superhuman power, whether of God or of the devil;*
 - » *Eph 1:19 - and what is **the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe**, according to the working of His mighty power*
 - » *2 Thess 2:9 - The coming of the lawless one is according to **the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,***
 - » *John 11:25,26 -Jesus said to her (Martha), “I am the resurrection and the life. **He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. “And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?”***
- John Darby from None but the Hungry Heart (8:1) – ‘To abide in heaven in the Lord Jesus is my place. My faith is exercised here, and the suffering here may be prolonged and continued; but I abide there, and while abiding I engage myself with everything connected with my Father, and with reference to the place He has set me in. **In that blessed region where He has placed me, and where He alone can keep me, and where I am simply dependent upon Him, it is His interests alone which engage me, and thus it is that I minister to the saints.**’