

## The Epistle to the Philippians

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This epistle is of first importance, coming as it does between Ephesians, which views the saints seated in the heavenlies, and blessed with every spiritual blessing there, in Christ Jesus, and Colossians in which the saints are exhorted to set their minds on those things which are above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. It exemplifies, particularly in chapter 2 in its reference to our blessed Lord, the moral beauty of the life of a heavenly Man on earth.

Phil. 1: 1 — the epistle is written by the bondman of Jesus Christ. Verse 5 — lays emphasis upon the sterling quality of continuance, "from the first day (A.D. 50) until now (A.D. 60)." Verse 21 — the motivating power for this is seen in the word of Paul, "for me to live is Christ." See also in this connection the words of our Lord in John 6: 57. So the MOTIVE for the believer's living is Christ.

In Phil. 2: 1 — the apostle pleads for likemindedness. His ground for so doing is well known indeed, for this is the mind which energised our Lord Jesus. He is the MODEL for the believer.

Note His Personal greatness — "in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." He is God.

The first man thought it a thing to be grasped at to be equal with God, Genesis 3: 5 — "Ye shall be as gods." He reached up out of the place in which he had been created and in consequence he fell. He who had been given dominion (Genesis 1: 26-28) lost his place by disobedience and thereby became amenable to the judgment of God. The Second Man, Christ, brought no reputation — indeed He made Himself of no reputation, taking upon Himself the bondman's form. Please note His two steps downward:

1: ". . . made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of as servant, and was made in the likeness of men." This does not diminish the reality of the nature which He assumed — for that is declared in the words, "form of a servant" — yet He was not merely man, for even in His incarnation He was Son of God.

2: "And being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Phil. 2: 6-11. Note, the Gospel of John particularly, presents the Son of God in the co-equality and co-eternity of Godhead. The Gospel of Mark presents Him as the Perfect Servant. The Gospel of Luke presents Him as the ever Obedient Man. The Gospel of Matthew presents Him as the King.

Phil. 2: 9. God's approval of this blessed Man in the grace and beauty of His downstooping, with the obedience which marked Him all the way to the death of the cross, has been demonstrated in that He (i.e. God) has highly exalted Him. He has conferred upon Him such dignity and honour in setting Him where He is (Eph. 1: 21, 22) that when the moment for His display arrives, He shall be set forth, publicly, invested with it. Then, as the heavens open and He is manifested — and the Name of Jesus, which He had borne in His lowliness, shall be sounded forth throughout the universe — every knee shall bow, of heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings, and every tongue shall own His Lordship to the glory of God the Father.

Verse 12: yet the Christian company has the privilege of obeying Him now. According to Phil. 1: 6, "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

In Phil. 2: 13, even now, between the commencement and the completion, God is engaged presently in working in His own both to will and to do of His good pleasure. Thus they shall, in the absence of their apostle, work out their own salvation.

The moral graces of Christ are being produced here in the saints while still in that world which has crucified their Lord:

Verse 15 — in the saints,

Verse 17 — in the apostle,

Verses 19-23 — in Timothy,

Verses 25-30 — in Epaphroditus.

In Phil. 3, we see Christ is everything to the Christian. The calling on high of God, in Christ Jesus, is the MARK to which they are hastening. This calls for a supply of grace and power to help them along their heavenly road, hence we read, Phil. 4: 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Christ is the Christian's MIGHT.

May the Spirit of God so entrance our hearts with Christ that we shall go on our heavenly road imbued with the anticipation of the heavenly hope: "For our conversation (commonwealth) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body (body of glory), according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself."