



Citizens of Heaven

Following a scathing rebuke of those who lead people away from the true gospel of Christ, those he describes as **enemies of the cross**, the apostle Paul returns to the encouraging theme found throughout this epistle to the church in Philippi.

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 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.

Philippians 3:20-21 NASB

To put it mildly, this world has its highs and lows. In the good times, we may have our heads down and not so focused on eternity. But in harder times, it is easier for us to long for what the Lord has saved up for His children, things that are so beyond our imagination that we couldn't possibly even dream of them (cf: 1 Cor 2:9). In our two verses today, we are given a glimpse into that which awaits faithful followers of Christ.

As believers, we are adopted into God's family and given **citizenship in heaven**. Ephesians 1:5 tells us, "***In love He [the Father] predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,***" and in 1st John 3:1 we read, "***See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are.***" And these statements agree with the words of our Lord Jesus when He said, "***If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you,***" (John 15:19).

And as citizens of heaven, we no longer have any need to lust after the things of this world (cf: 1st John 2:15). We instead **eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ**. Here we are faced with a chance to make an honest assessment of our heart's desires. Are we **eagerly** waiting for Jesus? Or are we still putting worldly passions in front of Him? If so, this is a good time to humbly recognize this and pray against it. The definitive prize of life is to be with our Lord and Savior, and each day we should consciously remember to be excited for His return, whether that is through natural death or His glorious return on the clouds.

Paul says that Christ will **transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory**. This is truly an incredible assurance! Think of it: Jesus Himself will transform our lowly human bodies to be like His glorified eternal body. While at salvation we are made into a new creation (cf: 2 Cor 5:17), one day we will share in Christ's glory as we are given a new heavenly body that will be free of sin and death and last for all eternity. What on earth holds a candle to such a promise? The answer is obvious: nothing.



And Jesus does all this **by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself**. God the Father bestowed all authority in heaven and earth to His Son (Matt 28:18, 1 Peter 3:22, Eph. 1:21, Phil. 2:11, etc.). This gives our Lord the power to do all things as His Father willed and planned (John 5:19, 6:38), and in this limitless power He will not only transform us into glorified, eternal beings, but also will reveal His absolute authority over all things in the universe. No one that has ever walked the face of this earth from Adam until the end of days, nor any creature ever created in heaven or on earth, will escape being subjected to the awesome and unmitigated power of our Savior.

As we consider this, praise the Father that we are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (cf: Eph 1:4-5) and rejoice that not even one from His flock will be snatched away or lost. In John 6:39-40 Jesus said, ***“This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.”***

A beautiful companion to this passage is found one chapter earlier in this epistle: ***“For this reason also, God highly exalted Him [Christ], and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,”*** (Phil. 2:9-11).

You don't have to dig deeply to see what an astonishing promise is contained within our passage today. These two verses should be committed to memory to help us stay focused on what really matters: leaving the world behind, and serving Christ in great anticipation of His return where we will be transformed to share in His glory.

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