

#9 Philippians

Tom Tillman

Verse 20: 'For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,'

Paul wrote at least 14 letters of which we have 13. Remember, in his letter to the Colossians, he mentions his letter to the Laodiceans but it, along with no one knows how many others, were lost during the first few hundred years until the collected letters and books became our established Canon of Scripture.

Of Paul's 13 letters, at least 5 clearly mention the Rapture and all of them 'assume' the Rapture. Foremost in his mind, as he taught and wrote, was that he, with all other true believers would be caught up in the Rapture at any moment. That is what informed his thinking and writing.

Paul had been taken up into Heaven to be taught our Doctrine by the Lord Jesus Christ and by Whom was appointed an Apostle. In fact, in 1 Cor 12 where he describes being caught up to Heaven, he uses the same word, *harpazo*, which he used to describe our being caught up at any moment. Luke also used the very same word, in Acts, as he described Philipp's being 'caught up and away' from the presence of the Ethiopian Eunuch.

Paul had been given details and understanding of the Gospel, a greater understanding of the Grace of God, the special relationship of the Church to the Lord Jesus Christ, that we are His Bride, that we are saved wholly by God's Grace through our faith and especially of the truth and reality of the ever imminent Rapture of the Church. In 1 Thes 4:7, he said we would be caught up; the word he used means to be snatched away by force. He used the Greek word '*harpazo*' which Jerome translated into Latin, '*rapturo*,' from which we get the English, '*rapture*.' He says that he is teaching 'my Gospel' which was given to him by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Since Paul had been to Heaven, seen it, walked and talked with the Risen Lord Jesus Christ, the same risen Jesus Christ that John describes so gloriously in the first chapter of Revelation, his mind and heart were always on the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ might return at any moment to raise the 'dead in Christ' and those who were alive and remained. Jesus didn't tell Paul that it would be nearly 2000 years until the Rapture actually came to pass so he expected it at any moment and he taught, always, that it would happen at any moment.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul refers to the Rapture six times!

In chapter 1:10, he wrote, '...that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense **till the day of Christ...**'

Paul is the only writer to use the phrase, 'day of Christ,' and it always refers to the Rapture, the day when Jesus Christ comes for His Bride. Throughout Scripture, we read the phrase, 'Day of the Lord,' but it always refers to the Judgment and Wrath of God on sinful man, the time of the beginning of the Tribulation, onward.

In chapter 2:16, he wrote, '...holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in **the day of Christ** that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.'

In chapter 3:11, he wrote, '... if, by any means, I may attain to **the resurrection from the dead.**'

In this, he refers, of course, to the Rapture but here, when this letter was being written, about AD 61, he was beginning to recognize, as he is imprisoned in Rome, that he might not remain alive all the way to the Rapture and yet, again, he always believed that it could happen 'today.' But he did get 2000 years in Heaven!

Paul was likely beheaded by the Romans, under Emperor Nero, sometime around May or June of AD 68. Nero himself **died** by suicide on June 9th of the same year.

In chapter 3:14, he wrote, '... I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.'

The upward call of God is our heavenly citizenship while we accomplish what God has called us to while we are foreigners, shining as light in a foreign land... this present kingdom of darkness. The prize to which we are called is our final reward, which we will receive, at the end of our race, whether we've died first or we remain alive until the Rapture.

In 1 Cor 9:24, he wrote, 'Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. ²⁵ And everyone who competes *for the prize* is temperate in all things. Now they *do it* to obtain a perishable crown, but we *for* an imperishable crown.' That is our goal of the prize.

And the writer to the Hebrews, which certainly could have been Paul, wrote: 'Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Heb 12:1

Chapter 3:20: 'For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,'

Here, then, is Paul's 5th reference to the Rapture in his letter to the Philippians. The Greek word he used for citizenship is, 'politeuma,' which can also refer to 'politics.' The KJV uses the word, *conversation*: 'Our *conversation* is in Heaven.

The Greek word, 'politeuma,' is defined as: 'the administration of civil affairs or of a commonwealth; the constitution of a commonwealth, for of government and the laws by which it is administered; a state, commonwealth; the commonwealth of citizens.

Our politics is in Heaven. Our politics is not of the Earth or of the USA. Our citizenship and our politics are in Heaven where every political decision has been made perfectly, forever, and those are the politics which should be governing our words, thoughts and deeds. Our conversation should be governed by the 'Constitution' of the Commonwealth of Heaven. God's written Word is the Constitution of the commonwealth.

The Church began as a true commonwealth; in Acts, we read, 'Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. ³³ And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, ³⁵ and laid *them* at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.' Acts 4:32

Many people claim that they want the Church to be like it was in Acts; but all they really mean is that they are looking for signs and wonders as were done by the Apostles and Prophets but few would be willing to sell their lands and houses so that the needs of all believers could be met. Today they often seek false signs lying wonders.

The only genuine Commonwealth is that of Heaven and all the True Church. The Lord Jesus Christ is heir of all things and we are all fellow heirs with Him; we will rule and reign with Him for 1000 years and then forever and we will share in all that is, throughout all the vast Universe... think about it! Imagine it! Feel it!

We eagerly wait for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will come for us, at any moment, to receive us up to Himself in the clouds: 'For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. ¹⁸ Therefore comfort one another with these words.' 1 Thes 4:18

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

Verse 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.'

That is the ultimate prize that every believer will receive at the moment of the Rapture: those who have died, 'in Christ,' and then we who are alive and remain. In that instant, in a 'twinkling of an eye,' our mortal bodies will be changed, from dying, degenerating, weak and feeble bodies, into glorious, eternal bodies like that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

John wrote, of that moment, 'Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but ***we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*** ³ And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.' 1 John 3:1

Everyone who has this hope, our blessed hope, Paul calls it, all who hold on to this hope and guide their conversation and lives by this hope, will constantly purify themselves, meaning, they will be much more apt to 'walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which we've been called.' Eph 4:1

'...looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself *His* own special people, zealous for good works.' Titus 2:13

Again, Paul is constantly bringing into his letters, reminders of what our true goal is: to walk worthy of the Lord, to set our minds on things above and to wait eagerly and expectantly for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ who will, at that moment, fully redeem us... finally we will be redeemed, not only, as we already are, in spirit and soul, but then, the completion of that for which the Lord Jesus Christ bought us, that we would be like Him. That is God, the Father's ultimate goal for you and me... that we are finally and fully transformed into the image and likeness of His Son: the glorious, spotless Bride whom He planned, chose, elected, called and saved, whom the Father will, then, as it were, walk us down the aisle, as the Father of the Bride, and hand us over to His beloved Son, the Lord Jesus Christ Who went to the Cross, for us, to fully pay the price for all our sin and to purchase us for Himself. That will all occur, in Heaven, at the Marriage of the Lamb, during the final week of Daniel 9's 70 weeks of years, when the World will experience the Wrath of God poured out, without measure, in payment for how they rejected His free gift of Salvation through faith in His Son.

The Father walked through the Slave Market and chose out all of the most hopeless, dirty, worthless slaves He could find and paid the full price of our redemption; He took us home, delivering us into His Kingdom of Light, He washed us in His Son's blood, clothed us in robes of His Son's Righteousness, seated our spirits with Him in Heavenly places and now awaits His planned moment when He will send His Son to retrieve us from this hostile, foreign kingdom of darkness to finally, fully redeem us, body, soul and spirit.

Our bodies walk the Earth; our spirits are seated in Heavenly places and our souls somehow inhabit both. Our flesh always wants to sin, our spirits always draw us toward God and our souls must always, daily, hourly, and minutely, choose. //World Pop in 1500: 500 million; in 1900: 1.5 billion; today, almost 8 billion//(explained in class)

'The power by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself:' the Word says that eventually every knee will bow and every tongue confess, 'Jesus Christ as Lord of all.'

We, of course, already do so but the unbelieving World refuses to. When they are all resurrected, at the end of the Millennium, to be judged guilty and thrown into the Lake of Fire, along with Satan, the Antichrist and the False Prophet, as they stand before God, I think there will be a large angel behind each one who will place their heavy hands on each guilty one and force them down into a bowing position and then squeeze their shoulders so hard while whispering in their ears, 'I can't hear you... what did you say?' And then squeeze even harder until the one who is forced to bow will cry out, 'Jesus Christ is Lord of all!' The angel will say, 'Good boy, or girl,' and then pick them up and throw them into the fire.

That is what awaits everyone who refuses God's free gift of Salvation... our neighbors and friends, even relatives and loved ones; all we can do is lovingly present the Gospel and pray for their eventual salvation remembering, that even after the Rapture, then will be the greatest harvest of souls for God's Kingdom that has ever been... many will remember the things we've said... but we may remember the things we did not say.

Chapter 4:1: 'Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so ***stand fast in the Lord***, beloved.'

Remember, when Paul writes, 'therefore,' we need to ask what it's there for: he is saying, 'Since our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, at the Rapture, which could happen at any moment, who will transform our weak, earthly bodies into glorious, eternal bodies like His own, ***Stand fast in the Lord!***'

How do we stand fast in the Lord? He tells us in his letter to the Ephesians: 'Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹ Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹² For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the

heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, **and having done all, to stand.**' Eph 6:10

Then he goes on, in Ephesians, to describe each part of the armor of God.

We're putting up, on our website, all of our teaching through the years... Ephesians is *almost up*. Keep checking back... <https://HeartsofLove.org> Our Peter notes are also *almost up*.

Peter writes, 'Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ⁹ Resist him, steadfast in the faith...'

Always remember... we are not called to go out looking for demons with which to do battle. We are to stand fast, in the Lord, when any attack comes.

'Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until *these* calamities have passed by.' Psa 57:1

'He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. ² I will say of the LORD, "*He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.*" ³ Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler *And* from the perilous pestilence. ⁴ He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth *shall be your* shield and buckler. ⁵ You shall not be afraid of the terror by night, *Nor* of the arrow *that* flies by day, ⁶ *Nor* of the pestilence *that* walks in darkness, *Nor* of the destruction *that* lays waste at noonday. ⁷ A thousand may fall at your side, And ten thousand at your right hand; *But* it shall not come near you. ⁸ Only with your eyes shall you look, And see the reward of the wicked. ⁹ Because you have made the LORD, *who is* my refuge, *Even* the Most High, your dwelling place, ¹⁰ No evil shall befall you, Nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; ¹¹ For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways. ¹² In *their* hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. ¹³ You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, The young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. ¹⁴ "Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. ¹⁵ He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I *will be* with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. ¹⁶ With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation." Psalm 91

That is David saying the same thing that Paul and Peter tell us: stand firm stand fast and stand still in the Lord. He is the One Who fights for us, the One Who defends us; He is the One Who wills and works within us to accomplish all His will through us and He will continue to form us and mold us into the image and likeness of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, right up until He is finished with each one of us at the moment of the Rapture. That is why it is so important for us to be faithful in allowing Him to change us because once that Rapture comes, that's it; there will be no more time or room for the kind of growth and maturity that He planned for us to undergo while here in this infinitesimal moment, on Earth, compared to our Eternity with Him, ruling and reigning with Him forever.

When I misspelled *forever*, my spell-check wanted to put, '*forefeel*.' Is that even a word? Well if spell-check says it is... it must be! I looked it up; it means, ' To feel beforehand; have a premonition of. To feel beforehand; feel as if by presentiment, an anticipatory feeling or anticipatory **tactual** perception; a tactual image associatively aroused by the presentation of a visual, **auditory, etc., stimulus**.

That is exactly our goal in teaching: that we forefeel the Rapture, our new bodies, seeing the Lord Jesus Christ in all His Glory, Heaven, our ruling and reigning forever, with Him, our eternal rewards scattered throughout the vast Universe, our being with Him always... these are the things that I work to instill in all of us.

Then I had to look up: **tactual**: from tactile: Communicating or imparting the sense of touch; giving rise to the feeling of contact or impingement. Arising from or due to touch; impressed or communicated by contact or impingement; relating to or originating in touch.

That's it, also, exactly! I want Heaven, the Rapture, Eternity, Rewards... all of it... I want it to be so real to us that we feel it, that we can actually touch it from the auditory stimulus of teaching.

Whenever we leave here, feeling like we've touched eternity... God has done what He intended.