

# Philippians 3:20-21 Commentary

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Philippians 3:20 For our [citizenship](#) is (3SPA) in [heaven](#), from [which also](#) we [eagerly wait for](#) (1PPM) a [Savior](#) the [Lord Jesus Christ](#) (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [hemon gar to politeuma en ouranois huparchei](#), (3SPA) ex [ou kai soteria apekdechometha](#) (1PPM) [kurion iesoun Christon](#)

**Amplified:** But we are citizens of the state (commonwealth, homeland) which is in heaven, and from it also we fearefully and patiently await [the coming of] the Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah) [as] Savior, ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**KJV:** For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

**Lightfoot:** Not such is our life. In heaven we have even now our country, our home; and from heaven hereafter we look in patient hope for a deliverer, even the Lord Jesus Christ,

**Phillips:** But we are citizens of Heaven; our outlook goes beyond this world to the hopeful expectation of the saviour who will come from Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** For the commonwealth of which we are citizens has its fixed location in heaven out from which we, with our attention withdrawn from all else, are eagerly waiting to welcome the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and to receive Him to ourselves,

**Young's Literal:** For our citizenship is in the heavens, whence also a Saviour we await -- the Lord Jesus Christ--

FOR OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN: [hemon gar to politeuma en ouranois huparchei](#) (3SPA)

- Phil 1:18, 19, 20, 21; Ps 16:11; 17:15; 73:24, 25, 26; Pr 15:24; Mt 6:19, 20, 21; 19:21; Lk 12:21,32-34; 14:14; 2Co 4:18; 5:1,8; Eph 2:6,19; Col 1:5; 3:1, 2, 3; Heb 10:34,35; 1Pet 1:3,4
- Isa 26:1,2; Gal 4:26; Eph 2:19; Heb 12:22; Rev 21:10-27
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
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## BELIEVERS ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD

**For** - Paul is explaining why we need to be alert to those who are enemies of the Cross. Their focus is earth. The believer's focus is heaven (Col 3:1-2-see **notes** Colossians 3:1; 3:2 for the mindset we are to have continually) See value of pausing to ponder this **term of explanation**.

And so Paul presents the truth about our "position", explaining that our **citizenship** resides not in this world which is passing away, even its lusts, but in heaven. Such a glorious truth should serve to motivate all believers to live lives which accurately reflect our privileged "heavenly" position (compare where believers are "seated" in notes on Eph 2:6-note).

As **John Walvoord** puts it...

The earthly phase of our experience is purely temporary, the goal is to be with the Lord forever. Accordingly, our hope is not simply deliverance from sin in this life or growth in grace or the knowledge of Christ, but our anticipation leaps forward to that day when we will see our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here again Paul has in mind the time of the resurrection of the righteous dead and the **translation** of the living saints...

On that occasion he declares in verse twenty-one that our vile body, or body of humiliation, will be transformed and fashioned according to the pattern of the glorious resurrection body of Christ. This will be a demonstration of divine power of the One who is able to subdue all things unto Himself. Our present body will be transformed into a body that will last forever, a body that will not know pain, or disease, or sin. It will be a body that is timeless in its character and will never wear out. It will be suited in holiness for the glorious presence of the Lord. This does not mean that our bodies will have divine attributes such as God alone possesses, but our resurrection bodies will reflect to some extent the beauty, the glory, and the holiness which is in the resurrection body of our Lord in heaven...

Paul contemplates the fact that the day is coming when these hours of struggle for attainment and apprehension of Christ will be over, and we will stand as trophies of His grace in His presence. ([John Walvoord. Philippians Chapter 3 - To Live is Christ](#)) (Bolding added) (**Ed**: Note that "translation" is a word Dr Walvoord uses as a synonym with the **Rapture**).

**Citizenship** ([4175](#)) (**politeuma** from **politeúo** = to behave as a citizen, see note on "**conduct**" in Phil 1:27 for Paul's use of the root verb **politeuo**) refers to the administration of civil affairs and then to the the place or location in which one has the right to be a citizen (the nation, state, or other political unit). **Politeuma** is that which has been made into a civic entity. **Politeuma** has such senses as political acts, acts of government departments, government, commonwealth, citizenship, and foreign colony. **Vine** says politeuma signifies "the condition, or life, of a citizen, citizenship". It often denotes a colony of foreigners or relocated veterans. Our home is in heaven, and here on earth we are a colony of heavenly citizens.

**Vincent** writes that **politeuma** occurs...

Only here in the New Testament. Revised Version of the NT = citizenship, commonwealth in margin. The rendering *conversation* (KJV) in the sense of manner of life (1Pe 1:15-note), has no sufficient warrant; and that *politeuma* commonwealth, is used interchangeably with *politeia* citizenship, is not beyond question. **Commonwealth** (Webster = "*an independent state or community, especially a democratic republic*") gives a good and consistent sense. The state of which we are citizens is in heaven. See Php 1:27-note.

Compare Plato:

*"That city of which we are the founders, and which exists in idea only; for I do not believe*

*that there is such an one anywhere on earth. In Heaven, I replied, there is laid up the pattern of it methinks, which he who desires may behold, and beholding may settle himself there*" ("Republic," 592).

(Vincent, M. R.. Word Studies in the New Testament 3:452)

Christians are citizens of a kingdom not of this world, Jesus declaring that...

"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting, that I might not be delivered up to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm." (John 18:36)

When we are born into the world, all men are born into citizenship in the kingdom of darkness, Satan's kingdom. The standards of our king became our standards and the conduct of the citizens of his kingdom became the pattern of conduct in our lives. We we are born again by by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, we become citizens of a heavenly kingdom because at that very moment God

delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col 1:13-note)

Now, as believers we are under the authority of a new Ruler and an entirely new set of standards by which we are to conduct our lives. And now while still on earth and in contact with the kingdom of darkness, we function as citizens of the kingdom of heaven serving as

"ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us (and so) we beg (the unregenerate) on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2Cor 5:20)

This **commonwealth**, Paul says, is in heaven. Philippi was a Roman colony. Its citizens therefore were citizens of the Roman empire. Roman citizenship carried with it great privileges and honors, also great responsibilities. The citizen of Philippi was not only obligated to order his manner of life in the right manner. He was to govern his conduct so that it would conform to what Rome would expect of him. He had responsibilities and duties which inhered in his position as a citizen of Rome.

**Is (5225) (huparcho)** means to be or exist and refers to an antecedent condition protracted into the present. In the present context the verb speaks of being securely placed and so the commonwealth of which the saints are citizens is fixed in location in heaven.

The stability and security of the citizen under Roman law filled the thoughts of the time with high ideals of Roman citizenship and its vaunted value. Philippi, as a Roman colony, with its citizens as Roman citizens, thought in terms of the concept of "**citizenship**". Paul seizes this well known and greatly appreciated truth as a good opportunity to illustrate to the saints their heavenly citizenship with its greater privileges and greater responsibilities. What a contrast with those just mentioned.

**William Barclay** commenting on "**our citizenship...in heaven**" adds that "Here was a picture the Philippians could understand. Philippi was a Roman colony. Here and there at strategic military centres the Romans set down their colonies. In such places the citizens were mostly soldiers who had served their time—twenty-one years—and who had been rewarded with full citizenship. The great characteristic of these colonies was that, wherever they were, they remained fragments of Rome. Roman dress was worn; Roman magistrates governed; the Latin tongue was spoken; Roman justice was administered; Roman morals were observed. Even in the ends of the earth they remained unshakeably Roman. Paul says to the Philippians, "Just as the Roman colonists never forget that they belonged to Rome, you must never forget that you are citizens of heaven; and your conduct must match your citizenship."

([Philippians 3 Commentary](#))

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**GOOD MEDICINE FOR THE SOUL DEAR BELIEVER = PONDERING THE THINGS ABOVE** - Some say, "It is not worth so much time and trouble to think about the joys above. If we can be sure we are saved, we know heaven will be wonderful; so why spend any time in heavenly meditation?" These people do not obey God's command, which requires them to set their "affections on things above" (Col 3:2-note). Our homeland or citizenship "is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ—who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body" (Phil 3:20, 21). Thus these people who ignore their homeland voluntarily make their own lives miserable, by refusing the delights which God has set before them. And if that were not all, it were a small matter—but see how many other problems follow the neglect of these heavenly delights. This neglect will dampen, if not destroy, their love of God. It will make even the thinking or speaking of God unpleasant. It weakens their desire to engage in His service. It tends to pervert their judgment concerning the ways of God. It leaves them in the power of every trouble and temptation. It will also make them afraid and unwilling to die; for who would want to go to a God or a place he has no delight in? Who would leave his pleasure here, if he did not know a better place to go? (From [Concluding Encouragement](#))

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A little girl who was taking an evening walk with her father. She looked up at the starry sky and exclaimed?

"Oh, Daddy, if the wrong side of heaven is so beautiful, what must the right side be!" (Charles L. Allen in Home Fires)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - One of the terms used often during the 1992 Summer Olympics by television sports commentators was dual citizenship. One athlete with dual citizenship was a swimmer named Martin Zubero. He was born in the United States, where he has lived nearly all of his life. He attended the University of Florida and trained for competition in the U.S. However, he was swimming under the colors of Spain. Why? His father is a citizen of Spain and so Martin is too. At the Olympics, he chose to represent his father's nation, to which he felt greater allegiance.

Christians too have dual citizenship. We are citizens of this world, no matter what nation we live in, and as followers of Christ we are also citizens of heaven (Phil 3:20). We have all the rights and privileges that accompany being a child of God. He is not only our heavenly Father but our King, and our first loyalty must be to His kingdom. —D. C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**We live in this world  
But our allegiance is to heaven.**

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**Heavenly People** - Christians are a "heavenly" people. That's what Paul meant when he told the Ephesians that God has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:6-note). We live on earth, but "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3:20). We should therefore "seek those things which are above," (Col 3:1-note) and store up treasures in heaven.

We see a graphic difference between an earthly minded person and a heavenly minded person when we look at two Middle Eastern tombs. The first is the burial place of King Tut in Egypt. Inside, precious metal and blue porcelain cover the walls. The mummy of the king is enclosed in a beautifully inscribed, gold-covered sarcophagus. Although King Tut apparently believed in an afterlife, he thought of it in terms of this world's possessions, which he wanted to take with him.

The other tomb, in Palestine, is a simple rock-hewn cave believed by many to be Jesus' burial site. Inside, there is no gold, no earthly treasure, and no body. Jesus had no reason to store up this world's treasures. His goal was to fulfill all righteousness by doing His Father's will. His was a spiritual kingdom of truth and love.

The treasures we store up on earth will all stay behind when this life ends. But the treasures we store up in heaven we'll have for eternity (Mt 6:19, 20, 21-note). When we seek to be Christ-like in thought, word, and deed, we will live like "heavenly" people. —P R Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Wise are those who gear their goals  
to heavenly gains.**

**FROM WHICH ALSO WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR A SAVIOR THE LORD JESUS CHRIST:ex ou kai sotera apekdechometha (1PPMI) kurion Iesoun Christon:**

- Acts 1:11; 1Th 4:16; 2Th 1:7,8; Rev 1:7
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
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**EXPECTANTLY,  
EAGERLY AWAITING  
OUR SAVIOR**

Why are we eagerly waiting? We are waiting now for the culmination of our salvation, for the day when we are free from the presence and even the pleasure of sin. And in the present context, we are waiting especially for what the Savior will do for our physical bodies when He returns (See **Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming**). When our Lord Jesus appears in the clouds as Dwight Pentecost reminds us...

He will summon out of the graves the bodies of those who have fallen asleep in Christ, and those bodies will be resurrected, translated, and glorified into the likeness of the resurrected body of Jesus Christ. At His second coming to the earth to reign, the resurrected Christ will call from the grave the bodies of all the Old Testament and tribulation saints, and those bodies will experience a transformation and glorification so that they will be conformed to the glorified body of Jesus Christ. In His coming again, He will not come as the Savior of souls—that work has been completed. He will come as the Savior of the body...to complete the work that He began at the cross." ([Pentecost, J. D. The Joy of Living: A study of Philippians. Kregel Publications](#))

**Pastor Steven Cole** writes that...

The bodily return of Jesus Christ in power and glory is one of the most frequently emphasized truths in the New Testament. It is mentioned in every book of the New Testament except Galatians, which deals with a particular doctrinal matter, and the short books of Philemon and 2 & 3 John. While there may be debate over the particulars, there is no debate over the certainty of His bodily return. Just as He promised that He came the first time to die for our sins and kept His word, so He promised to return. When He comes, it will be in power to rule and reign.

Two things will happen. First, He will transform our "lowly bodies," which are subject to disease and death and prone toward sin, into conformity to His resurrection body. This will involve not only an outward, physical transformation, in which we receive bodies not subject to disease and death; but also an inward, spiritual transformation, in which we are delivered finally and forever from all sin. If you wonder how God will do it, Paul simply states that it is by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

That's the second thing that will happen when Jesus comes: He will subject all things to Himself. If you are not willingly subject to Him, you will be forced into subjection to Him. His enemies will bow before Him. He will reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. Because of this, you should make certain that you are in submission to the Lord Jesus Christ now, so that He comes as your Savior, not as your Judge. It's safe to say that the extent to which we wait for His coming now reveals the condition of our hearts before Him. Citizens of heaven long for His appearing. ([Philippians 3:17-4:1 Right & Wrong Way to Live](#))

**Eagerly wait** ([553](#)) (**apekdechomai** from **apó** = intensifier [see Vincent below] + **ekdechomai** = expect, look for <> from **ek** = out + **dechomai** = receive kindly, accept deliberately and readily) means waiting in great anticipation but with patience (compare our English expression "wait it out"). To expect fully. To look (wait) for assiduously (marked by careful unremitting attention) and patiently.

Note the "**we**" ("we eagerly wait") indicates Paul included himself among those who had this attitude toward Christ's coming.

**Apekdechomai** is used 8 times in the NT in the NASB ([Ro](#) 3x; [1 Co](#); [Gal](#); [Phil](#); [Heb](#); [1 P](#)) and is translated awaiting eagerly, 1; eagerly await, 1; eagerly wait, 1; wait eagerly, 1; waiting, 2; waiting eagerly, 1; waits eagerly, 1. This verb is not found in the Septuagint (LXX).

The fulfillment of our life, the outlook of our citizenship, is in Christ's coming.

**Kenneth Wuest** explains that **apekdechomai** is "...a Greek word made up of three words put together, the word, **'to receive,'** ([dechomai](#)) which speaks of a welcoming or appropriating reception such as is tendered to a friend who comes to visit one; the word "off," ([apo](#)) speaking here of the withdrawal of one's attention from other objects, and the word "out," ([ek](#)) used here in a perfective sense which intensifies the already existing meaning of the word. The composite word speaks of an attitude of intense yearning and eager waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus into the air to take His Bride to heaven with Him, the attention being withdrawn from all else and concentrated upon the Lord Jesus." ([Philippians Commentary Online- Recommended](#))

**Apekdechomai** is in the **present tense** indicating this is a heavenly citizen's continual mindset (**Do you frequently contemplate His return beloved?**) and the **middle voice** which indicates the subject is the beneficiary of the waiting. Wuest picks up on this nuance of the middle voice with the translation "**eagerly waiting to welcome** the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, **and to receive Him to ourselves**" where "to ourselves" is the reflexive aspect of the middle voice. What a beautiful picture of the Bride, His Church, waiting to receive Him to herself! A waiting, welcoming mindset will motivate the bride to keep herself pure and holy.

**Marvin Vincent** writes that "the compounded preposition **apo** denotes the withdrawal of attention from inferior objects. The word is

habitually used in the New Testament with reference to a future manifestation of the glory of Christ or of His people." (Vincent, M. R. Word studies in the New Testament Vol. 3, Page 1-453)

**A T Robertson** adds that **apekdechomai** is a "Rare and late double compound (perfective use of prepositions like wait out) which vividly pictures Paul's eagerness for the second coming of Christ as the normal attitude of the Christian colonist whose home is heaven." (Robertson, A. Word Pictures in the New Testament)

**Apekdechomai** pictures waiting in great anticipation but with patience. Awaiting eagerly and expectantly for some future event and so to look forward eagerly. Note that seven of the eight NT uses of **apekdechomai** are related in some way to our "**blessed hope**", the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**H. A. A. Kennedy** - The compound emphasizes the intense yearning for the Parousia (The Expositor's Greek Testament)

**Alfred Plummer** declared that the first part of the compound word translated "look for" "implies disregard of other things and concentration on one object. (A Commentary on St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. 1919)

**James Montgomery Boice** stated that "the expectation of the Lord's personal and imminent return gave joy and power to the early Christians and to the Christian communities

Below are the seven other NT uses of **apekdechomai**

[Ro 8:19, 23, 25](#) For the anxious longing of the creation **waits eagerly for** the revealing of the sons of God...23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly** for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body....25 But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we **wait eagerly** for it." (Note the object of the waiting is our future glory = future tense salvation = which will culminate when **Christ's returns**)

[1 Corinthians 1:7](#) so that you are not lacking in any gift, **awaiting eagerly** the revelation of our **Lord Jesus Christ**,

[Galatians 5:5](#) For we through the Spirit, by faith, are **waiting for** the **hope of righteousness** (ultimately fulfilled in Christ).

[Hebrews 9:28](#) so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for salvation without reference to sin, to those who **eagerly await Him**.

[1 Peter 3:20](#) who once were disobedient, when the patience of God **kept waiting** in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.

**For a Savior the Lord Jesus Christ** - see individual word studies below.

**Savior** ([4990](#))( **soter**)

**Lord (master, owner)**([2962](#))(**kurios**)

**Jesus** ([2424](#))(**iesous**)

**Christ** ([5547](#))(**Christos**)

**Showers** comments that Philippians 3:20 "indicates that the expectation of Christ's coming was so intense for Paul and the other Christians of New Testament times that it was the primary focus of their concentration. Would it have been so if there were no possibility of an any-moment coming? (Maranatha Our Lord, Come!)

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**PHILIPPIANS 3:20** - One of the terms used often during the 1992 Summer Olympics by television sports commentators was dual citizenship.

One athlete with dual citizenship was a swimmer named Martin Zubero. He was born in the United States, where he has lived nearly all of his life. He attended the University of Florida and trained for competition in the U.S. However, he was swimming under the colors of Spain. Why? His father is a citizen of Spain and so Martin is too. At the Olympics, he chose to represent his father's nation, to which he felt greater allegiance.

Christians too have dual citizenship. We are citizens of this world, no matter what nation we live in, and as followers of Christ we are also citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20). We have all the rights and privileges that accompany being a child of God. He is not only our heavenly Father but our King, and our first loyalty must be to His kingdom. —D. C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC

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**WE LIVE IN THIS WORLD,  
BUT OUR ALLEGIANCE IS TO HEAVEN.**

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**For our citizenship is in heaven** - As believers in the Lord Jesus, we are citizens of heaven. Here on earth we are only pilgrims journeying toward our eternal home. Yet all too often we act as if this world is our permanent residence.

Many years ago, a man visited his longtime friend, a British military officer stationed in an African jungle. One day when the friend entered the officer's hut, he was startled to see him dressed in formal attire and seated at a table beautifully set with silverware and fine china. The visitor, thinking his friend might have lost his mind, asked why he was all dressed up and seated at a table so sumptuously arrayed out in the middle of nowhere. The officer explained, "Once a week I follow this routine to remind myself of who I am—a British citizen. I want to maintain the customs of my real home and live according to the codes of British conduct, no matter how those around me live. I want to avoid substituting a foreign culture for that of my homeland."

Christians should have a similar concern. Our true citizenship is in heaven, so we must beware of substituting the foreign culture of this world for that of our real homeland (see Ro 12:2). We are not to take on its sinful ways or adopt its values. We need to live in such a way that others will see that we are different.

And we need to remember that we are strangers in this world and citizens of heaven. —R W De Haan [Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved\)](#)

**The Christian who lives above the world  
draws closer to heaven.**

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**PHILIPPIANS 3:20** - The great preacher F. B. Meyer once asked D. L. Moody, "What is the secret of your success?" Moody replied, "For many years I have never given an address without the consciousness that the Lord may come before I have finished." This may well explain the intensity of his service and the zeal of his ministry for Christ.

One of the most encouraging teachings in the Bible is that of the Lord's return to earth. Three times Revelation 22 repeats this promise. As God was about to close the pages of divine revelation, He called attention to this grand theme, announcing in the words of Christ Himself, "Surely I am coming quickly." The last words of our Lord before leaving this earth twenty centuries ago remind us that He is coming back for us. With such a forceful assurance closing the canon of Scripture, we can have this hope continually in our hearts. The expectation of seeing our Savior, being like Him, and being with Him for eternity should prompt us, as it did Moody, to serve the Lord.

In this sinful world it's easy to lose our upward look. Yet we must keep the hope of Christ's return burning in our hearts. The apostle Paul talked about this when he said, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20).

The hope of His last words, "Surely I am coming quickly," should motivate us all to lives of sacrificial service. —Paul R. Van Gorder ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved\)](#)

**The hope of glorification  
keeps before us the need of purification.**

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**F B Meyer...**

**BURGESSES OF HEAVEN**

Phil. 3:17, 18, 19, 20, 21

THE Greek word translated conversation is, as we saw in Phil. 1:27, the root from which we derive our word politics, politician, policeman, and such like; and the true rendering in each case should be citizenship. In the earlier passage it might be rendered: "Be true citizens of God's commonwealth--let your life befit your high calling to be burgesses of the New Jerusalem"; and in this passage it might be rendered: "Your city home is in heaven."

The same thought pervades the Scriptures. "Now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly" (Heb. 11:16). "The city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). Even the patriarchs desisted and greeted from afar the palaces of that heavenly city. And the inspired writer takes up the same attitude when he says: "Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

**Our Citizenship in Heaven.** If we would resemble the saints of past days we must conceive of our citizenship as being in Heaven. That a man should be a citizen of a city, but live in a foreign country, is not an unusual circumstance. In these days when men are scattered so widely over the world, many of the citizens of London are to be found in India, Burmah, and Australia, on a visit for temporary purposes; and so the anomaly is often presented of men being strangers in the place where they are resident, but most at home in the city from which they are absent.

What is true of the pilgrim-life was pre-eminently true of Jesus Christ, who said of Himself, "He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven," as though during His earthly life He recognised that His citizenship in His Father's city remained unimpaired, and that residence for thirty years amongst men did not naturalise Him as a citizen of earth.

In the collect for Advent Sunday we are told that the Son of God came to visit us in great humility; and four times over in the Gospels the Lord's life on earth is described as a visit. All the time He was amongst men, He was a citizen of that city, therefore He lay in a borrowed manger; His body was deposited in a borrowed grave; He had not where to lay His head; and when every man went to his own home, He went to the Mount of Olives. Throughout His life He was a pilgrim and foreigner as all the fathers were.

**Like Master, Like Man.** And what is true of Jesus Christ should be true of every Christian. As Lady Powerscourt puts it: "The Christian is not a man who, standing on earth, looks up to heaven; but who, being in heaven, looks down upon earth, and throughout his life he recognises that he is a foreigner indeed." And this very aspect of the Christian will bring him into conflict with the men of this world, for when he says in his Master's words: "I am not of this world, I am from above, ye are from beneath," they gnash their teeth at him, and cast him out, as the citizens of Vanity Fair did Christian and his companion. One of the Puritans sweetly says: "It cannot be expected that the men of this world can ever understand the Christian life, because they have never been in the City from which he hails, and therefore are altogether ignorant of its manner of life and mode of speech." The world is unable to recognise us, because our language, speech, dress, manner, and method of life are altogether different from that which is in vogue in its society. If unconverted men lay their hands upon your shoulders to hail you as one of themselves, begin to question in your own heart whether you are truly living as one of the citizens of the New Jerusalem.

**This Citizenship is a Matter of Birthright.** In a memorable moment, when the Apostle had been delivered from his foes, he asserted his right to be interrogated without scourging, on the ground of his being a Roman citizen. The chief captain was immediately informed and hastened to his side. "A Roman? With great price I obtained this right! .... Ah!" the Apostle said, "but I was freeborn, my birth carried with it the right of citizenship." Yes, and the residence of a thousand years in Heaven would not make us more certainly citizens of the New Jerusalem, than we are at this moment, if we are born from above. Grant that we still live on this side of the veil which hides the transient from the enduring, the temporal from the eternal, the seen from the unseen, yet, so soon as we are regenerate of the Holy Spirit, in the first moment of our new life, we become enrolled in the list of burgesses, we have the franchise of the New Jerusalem given to us, our names are entered upon its directory. Though as yet we have not taken up the right, and entered into the enjoyment of all that awaits us, we have, nevertheless, the right to enter in through the gate into the city. This may not help you much now, but, I pray you, meditate on it for a few moments daily, and you will find it becoming a growing force to withdraw you from the things of this world, and to attach you to the things of the other world; you will come to reckon that you must set your affection on that city to which you belong, that you must lay up your treasures there where neither moth nor rust corrupt, and that you must regulate your conduct by the regulations that rule in that city. Every regenerate person, by the fact of the new birth, has obtained the franchise of the City of God.

**To Belong to that City should be a Matter of Joy and Pride.** Athens was the glory of Greece, and though the smaller states and cities were in perpetual conflict, every Greek was proud of her peerless beauty and culture. The citizen of Rome, traveling afar, bore himself as a stronger, prouder man, because he could say, "I am a Roman." And if we could really see things as they are, and disentangle ourselves from the net of the material, there is nothing of which we should be more proud, than to belong to that great commonwealth which includes all pure and holy souls of every age, and which shall stand when all cities and politics, all thrones and empires have disappeared, as the foam on the wave that bears it. Men speak of Rome as the eternal city. She has no right to that title. There is only one eternal city, because its foundations cannot be impaired by revolution or change; because its walls are founded on God's eternal covenant of truth; and because all its laws and regulations are based upon the principles of eternal truth. From out of those city gates proceed the angels to all parts of the universe, but they return to it, as the metropolis of life. Thither the kings and princes of science, of literature, of music, of art bring their treasures. The saints of every age find their home there. Her light is brighter than the sun's; there is no temple because God is her Temple; her river is the Holy Spirit of God; her flowers are of amaranth; her streets are of gold; her walls of jasper; her gates of pearl; God Himself is her architect and King.



Who may not be rightly proud to belong to such a city! The Goths who conquered the Roman Empire for God broke upon it like an avalanche from another world; and because they were so utterly indifferent to its attractions, they were easily able to overcome it. Who can overcome the world, but those who have our faith--the faith which detaches from this world, because it attaches us to the unseen and eternal, in God and His Christ? The Church of God will never be able to conquer the world so long as she is part of it, but only as she comes on the world from the sphere above it, with the impulse and impetus of those who believe that their city lies beyond the stars.

**We are to Walk Worthy of It.** The Apostle says that there were men in that time who professed the Cross, but who were "enemies of the Cross." Neither Paine nor Voltaire ever inflicted such awful havoc on the religion of Jesus Christ as those false professors who have borne His name, but been destitute of His grace and power. Such men, the Apostle says, mind earthly things. They were made to face God like kings, but they are always rooting in the earth like swine; their ambitions are limited by the horizon of time and sense. They glory in things of which they ought to be ashamed; appetite is their God, and destruction their end.

A story is told of a man of wealth who was taking his friend round his magnificent mansion, in which a spacious chamber was dedicated to be a chapel. The visitor, who thought of little else than good living, on entering the chapel, said: "What a magnificent kitchen this would make." Whereupon his host replied: "You are mistaken, this is not a kitchen; when I have made my belly my God, then I will make my chapel my kitchen, but not before." How many men there are whose one thought is set on eating and drinking, and the gratification of sensual appetite. There is no chapel in their life, it is all kitchen.

**We must Keep an Eye upon the City Gates.** That word whence, by the peculiar construction of the Greek does not refer to the heavens, but to the city gate. It is a very tender and fragrant thought that whilst transacting our business on the lowlands of earth, we may ever keep our eye on the city gate into which He entered, whom we love, and through which He will most certainly come again as a Saviour. "Whence, also, we look for the Saviour," "He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation." In these dark and dreadful days the Church needs to turn with unceasing hope towards the Second Advent. Oh! when will those pearly gates open! When will that cavalcade issue forth! When through the dim haze will the Lord come, riding upon His white horse, and followed by the army of Heaven! Come quickly, come quickly, O Saviour of men, who by Thy first coming didst put away our sin, and by Thy second coming will put the crown on the work of salvation by raising and changing our mortal body!

**Our Vile Body.** In the old version we read our vile body. When Archbishop Whately was dying, he asked his chaplain to read to him. The chaplain took up this paragraph reading it as it stands in the A.V. "Stop," said the Archbishop, "not 'vile body', if you please, but body of our humiliation." The body is not vile in the ordinary significance of the word, because Jesus bore it, because His blood purchased it, because the Spirit makes it His Temple, and because it has been so often the medium by which holy impressions have gone forth to others. Not vile; but the body of our humiliation, because it cramps, confines, and limits us; it needs sleep and food; it retains in its very organism the impression of past sins; it is a clanking chain, that holds us down when we would fain rise, so that one understands something of what chained eagles feel, when they fret against the iron bars of their cage, and pine to soar on outspread pinions to the sun.

"The body of our humiliation," but it shall be transfigured. It shall rise from its dust, and shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, into the likeness of "the body of His glory." We stand upon the transfiguration mount, and behold the body of His glory. We wait with Mary at the open grave, and see the body of His glory. Finally, from the Ascension Mount, we follow the body of His glory, and behold it, shining as the sun. It seems impossible to believe that one day we shall be like Him, and that our mortal shall be radiant with immortality like His.

**How Shall It Be? How shall these things be?** There is but one answer. "By the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Say this over and over again. When the devil is strong, when passion rages, when you cannot be the man you would when it seems as though the world were hopelessly corrupt and the wrongs of time refuse to be adjusted, repeat these words to yourself, as a sweet refrain: "The power by which He is able to subdue all things unto Himself." Oh, take to Thyself Thy great power and reign! Begin now with obdurate wills, with proud and evil hearts, with indomitable pride, with passion and lust. Subdue these, O Christ, and cause us to be transfigured in the spirit, that whilst in the body of humiliation, we may live worthily of our citizenship, and ultimately rise to the immortal.

**The Joy of the Coming.** It is said that as the cattle, which may have been greatly demoralized by the tossing of the vessel and the discomfort of their quarters, draw near land, at the end of a tedious voyage, and scent the breeze which comes over the ship laden with the fragrance of the dover, the effect is immediate, they begin to revive, and toss their heads as though they were keenly conscious that the voyage was almost over, and that the familiar pasture-lands were within reach. So should we look with reviving hope for the coming of Christ, who will put down all rule and authority and power, will subdue all things to Himself, and complete our salvation which begins with the forgiveness and deliverance from the curse, which proceeds to the ever deepening emancipation from the power of corruption, and which will end when this body of humiliation is delivered from the last remains and

traces of the fall, and raised in the perfect beauty of the everlasting morning.

Is it wonderful that in the first verse of the following chapter, the Apostle turns to the Philippians as his "beloved and longed for brethren," and bids them stand fast? The vision and hope of future glory, when these mortal bodies shall be conformed to the Body of the glory of our Risen Lord, and when the privileges of our heavenly citizenship shall be fully realised, were surely enough to hold them steady as the anchor holds the ship. By all the promises that had been made to them, by all the hopes they cherished, by all the glory which was already flushing the horizon, he urged them to stand fast in the Lord, watching that they should not lose their reward, and waiting until the fulness of the times should bring in the fulness of their redemption. (F. B. Meyer. **The Epistle to the Philippians - A Devotional Commentary**)

Philippians 3:21 [who will transform \(3SFAI\)](#) the [body](#) of our [humble state](#) into [conformity](#) with the [body](#) of His [glory](#), by the [exertion](#) of the [power](#) (PPN) that He [has even](#) to [subject](#) (AAN) [all things](#) to [Himself](#) (NASB: Lockman)

**Greek:** [os metaschematisei \(3SFAI\)](#) [to soma tes tapeinoseos hemon summorphon to somati tes](#) doxes [autou kata ten energeian tou dunasthai](#) (PPN) [auton kai](#) hupotaxai (AAN) [auto ta panta](#).

**Amplified:** Who will transform and fashion anew the body of our humiliation to conform to and be like the body of His glory and majesty, by exerting that power which enables Him even to subject everything to Himself ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Lightfoot:** who shall change the fleeting fashion of these bodies—the bodies of our earthly humiliation—so that they shall take the abiding form of his own body—the body of his risen glory: for such is the working of the mighty power whereby he is able to subdue all things alike unto himself.

**Phillips:** He will re-make these wretched bodies of ours to resemble his own glorious body, by that power of his which makes him the master of everything that is. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** who shall transform this body of ours which has been humiliated [by the presence of indwelling sin and by death and decay], so that it will be conformed to His body of His glory, this in accordance with the operation of Him who is able to bring into subjection to himself all things.

**Young's Literal:** who shall transform the body of our humiliation to its becoming conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working of his power, even to subject to himself the all things.

**WHO WILL TRANSFORM THE BODY OF OUR HUMBLE STATE: os metaschematisei (3SFAI) to soma tes tapeinoseos hemon:**

- 1Co 15:42, 43, 44, 48-54
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 Two Ways to Live](#) - J Ligon Duncan
- [Philippians 3:12-16 Reaching for the Prize](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:17-21 Following Godly Examples](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:18-19 Fleeing from Enemies](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:20-21 Focusing on Expectations](#) - John MacArthur

Christ is not only the Savior of our soul but also the Savior of our body, as Paul explains in this passage. Believers have assurance of the forgiveness of our sins because of His death and assurance of our future resurrection and glorification of our bodies because of His resurrection. Hallelujah!

Paul appears to be speaking especially of the **Rapture** (rather than the Second Coming) and the transformation that will take place in the twinkling of an eye, although a few commentators do refer this event to the **Second Coming**. (See related topic **Table comparing Rapture vs Second Coming**)

**Dwight Pentecost** reminds us that "Because God has an eternal purpose for this physical body, it is important how we treat it and how we use it now. That is the argument of the apostle as he deals with an important doctrinal problem concerning the Philippians. The Philippians are giving ear to false teachers who are leading them to licentiousness. Because they despise the law of God and the holiness of God as revealed in the Mosaic Law, they have concluded that they can live as they please... Paul's defense against the perversions that are being practiced by these lawless ones in Philippi is to remind them of the destiny of this human body.

[\(Pentecost, J. D. The Joy of Living: A study of Philipians. Kregel Publications\)](#)

**Transform** (3345) (**metaschematizo** from **metá** = exchange or change of place or condition + **schematizo** = to form <> from **schema** = shape, outward form or fashion, the form that is seen) means to change the outward form or appearance of something. To alter the outward appearance in such a way as to deceive or to feign to be what one is not (see uses in 2 Cor 11:13, 14, 15)

**UBS Handbook** notes that "This compound verb focuses on the unstable outward shape and appearance, as against the inner stable nature ([The United Bible Societies' New Testament Handbook Series](#))

**TDNT** adds that "The only LXX instance is in (apocryphal book) 4 Macc. 9:22 for the transforming of martyrs at death. Philo uses the verb for "to change into a new form." Josephus has it for changing clothing or disguising as well as transforming.

When Christ the Savior of the body returns, He will **transform** our physical body so that, while it will be the same body, it will no longer be subject to sin, lust, suffering, weakness, misuse, and neglect. Hallelujah!

**Vincent** writes that **metaschematizo** "indicates a change in what is outward and shifting."

The meaning of **metaschematizo** is illustrated by what it would mean to change a Dutch garden into an Italian garden -- this would be **metaschematizo** but to transform it into something wholly different, like a city is **metamorphoo** . (English "metamorphosis").

**Wuest** explains that **metaschematizo** means "to change one's outward expression by assuming from the outside an expression that does not proceed from nor is it representative of one's true inner nature." The word "**masquerade**" is an exact English translation. Satan was originally the holy angel Lucifer. As such he gave outward expression of his inner nature as an angel of light, which expression proceeded from and was truly representative of that nature. That was **morphoomai**. Then he sinned and became an angel of darkness, giving outward expression of that darkness. That was **morphoomai**. Then he changed his outward expression from that of darkness to one of light by assuming from the outside, an expression of light, which outward expression did not come from nor was it representative of his inner nature as an angel of darkness. That is **metaschematizo**. ([Philippians Commentary Online- Recommended](#))

**Wuest** in his comments on **Jude 1:4** ("*certain persons have crept in unnoticed*") draws a parallel from the verb **metaschematizo** explaining that this verb "refers to the act of an individual changing his outward expression by assuming an expression put on from the outside, an expression that does not come from nor is it representative of what he is in his inner character. Lucifer did that after he struck at God's throne and became the fallen angel, Satan. As a fallen angel he gave expression to his sin-darkened heart. But he knew that he could not attract the human race that way. He must impersonate God if he expected to be worshipped as God. He therefore assumed an outward expression of light, put on from the outside and not representative of his inner sinful being. He disguised himself as an angel of light. His ministers, (servants), Modernistic preachers, have done the same (Jude 1:15). Using evangelical terms such as "salvation, faith, regeneration, atonement, resurrection," they put their own private meanings upon them (which negate the orthodox view), and pose as orthodox exponents of Christianity. Reader, do not trust a Modernist any farther than you would a rattlesnake. A rattlesnake will give you warning before it strikes, but not a Modernist. The eternal welfare of your soul depends upon what you believe regarding the person and work of our Lord on the Cross. ([Ibid](#))

It is possible for Satan to **metaschematizo**, transform himself into an angel of light (see 2Co 11:14 below) by changing his outward appearance. But it would be impossible to apply **metamorphoo** to any such change for this would imply an internal change, a change not of appearance but of essence, which lies beyond his power.

Here are the 6 uses of **metaschematizo** in the NT...

**1 Corinthians 4:6** Now these things (speaking of factions, etc), brethren, I **have figuratively applied** to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that in us you might learn not to exceed what is written, in order that no one of you might become arrogant in behalf of one against the other.

**Thayer explains:** To *shape one's discourse* so as to transfer to oneself what holds true of the whole class to which one belongs, ie, so as to illustrate by what one says of himself what holds true of all.

**TDNT:** The use is literary. Paul does not mean that he is putting things in a figure of speech but that he is expressing the matter in another form, i.e., showing what the attitude of believers should be from the example of Apollos and himself.

**Ed:** The idea is to show a connection or bearing of one thing on another as when one illustrates this connection with a figure of speech.

**2 Corinthians 11:13** For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, **disguising** (present tense - this is their continual practice to "stay under cover"!)) themselves as apostles of Christ. **14** And no wonder, for even Satan **disguises** himself as an

angel of light. **15** Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also **disguise** themselves as servants of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their deeds.

**Vincent comments:** The changes described are changes in outward semblance (assuming another's appearance). False apostles appeared in the outward fashion of apostles of Christ; Satan takes on the outward appearance of an angel. All these changes are in the accidents of the life, and do not touch its inner, essential quality. On the other hand, a change in the inner life is described as a change of morphe, never of schema.

**NIDNTT comments:** the thought is not that pseudo-apostles had transformed themselves into apostles, but that they had appeared as apostles and were regarded by some as such. At this time people did not sharply define what constituted an apostle. Paul's opponents called themselves apostles and earnestly presented themselves as such. In the eyes of many, these opponents really were apostles. It was Paul who first called them false apostles.

**Philippians 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.

**Our humble body** - This describes the body which belongs to and also characterizes our humble state. It is this physical form that is subject to wrinkles, change, weakness, sickness, death and decay. This state is far removed from the purpose for which God created man (and his body).

The physical human body was created by God to be the vehicle through which we manifest the life that God has given each of us. In the Garden of Eden, the physical body was designed to serve God and so to be the instrument through which Adam and Eve glorified their Creator. There was nothing evil in their physical bodies as Moses attests recording that...

the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. (Genesis 2:25)

Their lack of shame at nakedness was because at this time they were still without sin (see "**the Sin**") and thus without consciousness of moral guilt. Later, however, **Sin** brought an awareness that the springs of human life had been poisoned, both in themselves and in their progeny (Ro 5:12-note) and they were then "ashamed." In addition **Sin** resulted in our body becoming the seat of weakness, sickness, pain and suffering. Nevertheless, our physical bodies continue to be only instruments, and as such they can either be misused by serving "**Sin**" or they can be used as instruments to serve and glorify their Creator. Paul addresses this distinction in Romans 8 exhorting believers...

Therefore do not let **Sin** reign in your mortal body (the physical body which itself is not evil) that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to **Sin** as **instruments** of unrighteousness; but present (as when offering a sacrifice) yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as **instruments** of righteousness to God. (Ro 6:12, 13-note)

There is nothing evil about the human body per se, but the evil lies in the sinful uses of the body. The mortal or physical body of fallen man thus serves as an instrument that manifests the lusts of the flesh and overt acts of sin. And because of sins, the mortal body is subject to death and decay. But then came the Cross.

**John Eadie - The body of our humiliation** is the body possessed by us in this state, and which also marks its humiliation. It connects us with the soil out of which it was formed, and by the products of which it is supported; on which it walks, and into which it falls at death. It keeps us in constant physical connection with earth, whatever be the progress of the spirit towards its high destiny—its commonwealth in heaven. Nay more, it limits intellectual power and development, impedes spiritual growth and enjoyment, and is soon fatigued with the soul's activity. Let one will as he pleases, his body presents a check on all sides, and at once warns him by the exhaustion he feels, and the curbs which so suddenly bring him to a pause. In it, too, are the seeds of disease and pain, from functional disorder and organic malady. It is an animal nature which, in spite of a careful and vigilant government, is prone to rebellious outbreaks. ([Philippians 3 Commentary - Online](#))

**Humble** (5014) (**tapeinosis** is the noun derived from adjective **tapeinos**; cp the related derivative **tapeinophrosune**) means low, not high, not rising far from the ground. It speaks of one's condition as lowly or of low degree. It described what was considered base, common, unfit, and having little value. It is notable that to the Greeks **tapeinos** and derivatives were words of contempt for they saw man as the measure of all things (sounds very contemporary). To be low on the social scale, to know poverty, or to be socially powerless was considered shameful to the proud Greeks. Thus they used **tapeinos** almost exclusively in a derisive way, most commonly of a slave.

**NIDNTT** writes that in **Classic Greek** use the root adjective **tapeinos** [word study] was originally used (from Pindar in the 5th cent. B.C. on) with the sense of low-lying. The original sense of **low lying** soon gave rise to metaphorical uses, [NIDNTT \(online\)](#) listing several...

(a) low socially, poor, of little social position and influence (Hdt., 5th cent. B.C. onwards), powerless, unimportant;

(b) as a result of one's social standing, with slavish outlook, a synonym of not free;

(c) despondent, downcast (Thuc., 5th cent. B.C. onwards; cf. Eng. "I'm feeling down");

(d) in Socratic and post-Socratic ethical teaching the word was separated from its social links, but retained a depreciatory connotation. Men should avoid the two extremes of arrogance, provocation and pride (hybris), and of grovelling, servile behaviour and base flattery.

(e) Occasionally the word is used with a good connotation in individual, social, ethical and religious contexts. Where this is so, it does not mean humble, but unassuming (in Xen.), obedient, conforming one's behaviour to the righteous laws of the gods (Aesch., Plato). In all these uses there remains the memory of the original physical meaning of below, low, in comparison with that which is above or higher.

The verb *tapeinoō* (from Hippocrates, 5th cent. B.C. onwards) represents in all its varieties of meaning the various shades of meaning of the adj.: to level, humble (socially, politically, economically), harm, make small, make humble, discourage (with fate or life as subject), make one obedient, or self-effacing, make a person obey a regulation (of the reason) (and also the appropriate pass. forms). The reflex. form with *heauton* and the mid. (from Diod.Sic., 1st cent. B.C. onwards used also for mental states) meaning humble oneself, demean oneself, are used normally only in a derogatory sense. Yet Philodemus of Gadara (1st cent. B.C.) demands that those who humbled themselves, should be comforted and lifted up and Plut. (1st cent. A.D.) mentions the custom of humbling oneself before the gods by covering the head during sacrifice and prayer....

OT The fundamental difference between the Gk. and the biblical use of these words has already been indicated. In the Gk. world, with its anthropocentric view of man, lowliness is looked on as shameful, to be avoided and overcome by act and thought. In the NT, with its theocentric view of man, the words are used to describe those events that bring a man into a right relationship with God and his fellow-man (**From NIDNTT - [tapeinos](#)**)

#### Related Resource:

- [Older Articles on Humility](#) - Puritans, et al
- [Quotations on Humility](#)

As **Barclay** explains below the **KJV** rendering of **tapeinosis** describes our body as "vile" which seems to suggest that this body is evil, and should be despised and treated with contempt. Stoic philosophy said that everything that is material is evil, that this body by nature is evil and, because it is material, it can never be anything but evil and therefore is to be utterly despised and held in contempt. Paul is not teaching Stoic philosophy in this verse.

**Barclay** explains that "In modern speech (**vile**) would mean that the body is an utterly evil and horrible thing; but **vile** in sixteenth-century English still retained the meaning of its derivation from the Latin word **vilis** which in fact means nothing worse than cheap, valueless. As we are just now, our bodies are subject to change and decay, illness and death, the bodies of a state of humiliation compared with the glorious state of the Risen Christ; but the day will come when we will lay aside this mortal body which we now possess and become like Jesus Christ himself. The hope of the Christian is that the day will come when his humanity will be changed into nothing less than the divinity of Christ, and when the necessary lowliness of mortality will be changed into the essential splendour of deathless life. ([Philippians 3 Commentary](#))

**Vine** adds that "There is nothing here or elsewhere in Scripture to support the Manichaeian theory of the vileness (a.v. "vile") of our frame, as that for which a contempt is to be entertained

In **Romans 8** Paul explained that all creation must have the condemnation of sin removed from it. The condemnation of our bodies will be removed by the resurrection, which is the climax of our salvation. Paul writes...

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the **redemption of our body**. (glorification = future tense salvation -

see 3 tenses of salvation) (see **notes** Romans 8:18-23)

There are 4 uses of **tapeinosis** in the NT...

**Luke 1:48** For He has had regard for the **humble state** of His bondservant (Mary, human mother of our Lord); For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

**Acts 8:33** In **humiliation** His judgment was taken away; Who shall relate His generation? For His life is removed from the earth.

**Philippians 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.

**James 1:10**-note; and let the rich man glory in his **humiliation**, because like flowering grass he will pass away.

There are 29 uses of **tapeinosis** in the Lxx where it is often used to translate the Hebrew **afflicted**. Gen. 16:11; 29:32; 31:42; 41:52; Deut. 26:7; 1 Sam. 1:11; 9:16; 2 Sam. 16:12; 2 Ki. 14:26; Ezr. 9:5; Neh. 9:9; Est. 4:8; Ps. 9:13; 10:9; 22:21; 25:18; 31:7; 90:2; 119:50, 92, 153; 136:23; Prov. 16:19; Isa. 40:2; 53:8; Jer. 2:24; Lam. 1:3, 7, 9

**Genesis 16:11** And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the LORD hath heard thy **affliction**. (Lxx - **tapeinosis**)

**Ps 136:23** Who remembered us in our **low estate** (Lxx - **tapeinosis**), For His lovingkindness is everlasting

**Spurgeon** said that "Humility is to make a right assessment of oneself...Do not be proud of race, face, or grace."

**Spurgeon** in his **Faith's Checkbook** has this devotional entitled "**This Body Fashioned Anew**":

OFTEN when we are racked with pain and unable to think or worship, we feel that this indeed is "the body of our humiliation." And when we are tempted by the passions which rise from the flesh, we do not think the word "vile" at all too vigorous a translation. Our bodies humble us, and that is about the best thing they do for us. Oh, that we were duly lowly, because our bodies ally us with animals, and even link us with the dust!

But our Savior, the Lord Jesus, shall change all this. We shall be fashioned like His own body of glory. This will take place in all who believe in Jesus. By faith their souls have been transformed, and their bodies will undergo such a renewal as shall fit them for their regenerated spirits. How soon this grand transformation will happen we cannot tell, but the thought of it should help us to bear the trials of today and all the woes of the flesh. In a little while we shall be as Jesus now is—no more aching brows, no more swollen limbs, no more dim eyes, no more fainting hearts. The old man shall be no more a bundle of infirmities, nor the sick man a mass of agony. "Like unto his glorious body." What an expression! Even our flesh shall rest in hope of such a resurrection!"

**Thomas Watson** writes that...

Meditation on the shortness of time should be a means to HUMBLE us. Augustine calls humility the mother of the graces. Balm sinks to the bottom of the water. A good Christian sinks low in humility. And what can sooner pull down the flags and banners of pride—than to consider we are shortly dropping into the dust! The priest was to cast the feathers of the fowls by the place of the ashes (Leviticus 1:16). Just so, all your feathers of honor must shortly lie in the ashes. Shall not he who is clothed with mortality—be clothed with humility? The thoughts of the grave—should bury our pride. (Read full dissertation [Time's Shortness](#))

Oh, you saints, lay aside all your despondencies and discontents, and comfort yourselves with the hopes of future eternal happiness! Shall the outward temple of our body be so splendid and magnificent, like Christ's glorious body, Philippians 3:21? Oh, then, how transcendently shining and beautiful shall the inward temple of our soul be! What angel can express this! But here I must draw a veil. We shall never fully understand heaven—until we come to heaven! ([The Mystical Temple](#))

**INTO CONFORMITY WITH THE BODY OF HIS GLORY: summorphon to somati tes doxes autou:**

- Mt 17:2; Col 3:4; 1Jn 3:2; Rev 1:13-20
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole

- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 Two Ways to Live](#) - J Ligon Duncan
- [Philippians 3:12-16 Reaching for the Prize](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:17-21 Following Godly Examples](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:18-19 Fleeing from Enemies](#) - John MacArthur
- [Philippians 3:20-21 Focusing on Expectations](#) - John MacArthur

The Cross of Christ made possible the future transformation Paul is describing. Our resurrected bodies will be the same body we have today. God will recreate them so that they are recognizable (cf Peter's recognition of Moses and Elijah in Mt 17:4), but because of the work of Christ, this body will be transformed into a body like that of our Lord! The word **summorphos** suggests that the conformity will not simply be a superficial and outward change of form, but a complete change of inward nature and quality. Hallelujah!

What else does **conformity with the body of His glory** imply? Although we see in a mirror dimly even this "dim" image gives us a preview of a glorious future existence for these bodies! For example, the resurrected body of our Lord was not limited by time or space, for He could appear at one moment in Jerusalem and the next in Galilee. His body was not restricted by physical substances and thus He could appear in the presence of the disciples when all natural means of entrance were sealed. John describing one of the post-Resurrection appearances of our Lord records...

And after eight days again His disciples were inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been **shut** (the idea is the door was safely locked), and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be with you."  
(John 20:26)

Our Lord's body although not dependent on food could still consume food. Luke writing of one of Jesus' post-resurrection appearances records that

while they still could not believe it for joy and were marveling, He said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; and He took it and ate it before them. (Luke 24:41-43)

And so beloved our bodies will be our transformed and conformed to our Lord's glorious body! No wonder the saints at Philippi (and throughout the centuries since) were eagerly waiting this final conformation!

**Conformity with** ([4832](#)) (**summorphos** from **sun** [click discussion of sun] = together with + **morphe** [**word study**] = form, regarded as the distinctive nature and character of the object, contrast with **schema** = the outward, changeable fashion) means to have the same form or nature as another

In this context Paul refers to the conformity of children of God "to the image of His Son", of their physical conformity to His body of glory, the body in which He appears in His present glorified state. Our glorified/transformed bodies will finally permit us to be the creations God intended for us to be so that we might enjoy perfect fellowship with Him forever.

**Vincent** commenting on **Philippians 3:21** writes that...

As the body of Christ's glory is a spiritual body, this word (**summorphos**) is appropriate to describe a conformation to what is more essential, permanent, and characteristic.

Paul is saying that our outward and inner man will be brought into conformity with Christ John writing in a parallel passage...

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, **we shall be like Him**, because we shall see Him just as He is. (1John 3:2-**notes**)

Although, this process will not be consummated until Christ's return, it is going on now, Paul explaining that...

we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are (continually = present tense) **being transformed** (**metamorphoo** = a continual change of our form proceeding from and being truly representative of one's inward character and nature = Christ in us the hope [absolute assurance of] of glory [glorification]) into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2Cor 3:18)

The related verb **morphoo** does **not** refer to what is **outward and transient**, but to what is **inward and real**. Hence on the Mount of Transfiguration that glory which was Christ's own, His essential and eternal inner divine nature, shone outward, for a brief time and to a limited degree, through the veil that concealed it during the days of His flesh. Our inner redeemed nature also is one day to be manifested outwardly, marking a change on the **outside** that comes from the **inside** (an "inside job" so to speak). Paul is describing "future tense salvation" or glorification. (**Click** discussion of the three tenses of salvation).

Paul used the verb form **summorphoo** earlier in this chapter writing...

that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, **being conformed** (present tense -continually) to His death (Php 3:10-note)

The only other use of **summorphos** in the NT is also by Paul who writes...

For whom He (God) foreknew, He also predestined [to become] (words in brackets added for flow) **conformed** (summorphos) to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren (Ro 8:29- note)

**Paul** teaches the same truth in Colossians and

When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be **revealed with Him in glory**. (see **note** Colossians 3:4)

**John Eadie** writes of

The adjective **summorphon** expresses a conformity which is the result of the change, though it agrees with soma, the object acted on by the Lord Jesus. The term **doxes** (glory) characterizes Christ's **soma**, as containing or possessing it. For that body is enshrined in lustre, and occupies the highest position in the universe. We know not all the elements of its glory. But we know somewhat. The scene on the hill of transfiguration was an anticipative glimpse, when the face "marred more than any man's," glowed with deeper than solar splendour, and the robes, soiled and tattered by frequent journeys, shone with a purer lustre than the snow.

When He appeared at the arrest of Saul in the neighbourhood of Damascus, His glory dimmed the mid-day sun, and before the symbolical apparition in Patmos, the disciple who had lain in His bosom was so overpowered, that He "fell at his feet as dead."

After He rose, and even before He ascended, His body had lost all its previous sense of pain and fatigue, and possessed new and mysterious power of self-conveyance. Now it lives in heaven.

**Our body is therefore reserved to a high destiny—it shall be like His.** The brightness of heaven does not oppress Him, neither shall it dazzle us. Our humanity dies, indeed, and is decomposed; but when He appears, it shall be raised and beautified, and fitted to dwell in a region which "flesh and blood cannot inherit."

Man has been made to dwell on earth, and on no other planet. If he is to spend a happy eternity in a distant sphere, his physical frame must be prepared for it. If he is to see God and yet live—to serve Him in a world where there is no night and no sleep—to worship Him in company with angels which have not the clog of an animal frame, and like them to adore with continuous anthem and without exhaustion — then, surely, his body must be changed, for otherwise it would soon be overpowered by such splendours, and would die of ecstasy amidst such enjoyments. The glory of heaven would speedily become a delicious agony. Therefore these bodies shall cease to be animal without ceasing to be human bodies, and they shall become "spiritual" bodies — etherealized vehicles for the pure spirit which shall be lodged within them. "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." ([Philippians 3 Commentary - Online](#))

**Spurgeon** in his sermon [Power of Christ Illustrated](#) writes the following concerning the "**body of His glory**"...

When he shall come a second time he will change our vile body and fashion it like unto his glorious body. What a marvellous change! How great the transformation! How high the ascent! Our body in its present state is called in our translation a "vile body," but if we translate the Greek more literally it is much more expressive, for there we find this corporeal frame called "the body of our humiliation." Not "this humble body," that is hardly the meaning, but the body in which our humiliation is manifested and enclosed. This body of our humiliation our Lord will transform until it is like unto his own. Here read not alone "his glorious body," for that is not the most literal translation, but "the body of his glory;" the body in which he enjoys and reveals his glory. Our Savior had a body here in humiliation; that body was like ours in all respects except that it could see no corruption, for it was undefiled with sin; that body in which our Lord wept, and sweat great drops of blood, and yielded up his spirit, was the body of his humiliation. He rose again from the dead, and he rose in the same body which ascended up into heaven, but he concealed its glory to a very great extent, else had he been too bright to be seen of mortal eyes. Only when he passed the cloud, and was received out of sight, did the full glory of his body shine forth to ravish the eyes of angels and of glorified spirits. Then was it that his countenance became as the sun shining in its strength. Now, beloved, whatever the body of Jesus may be in his glory, our present body which is now in its humiliation is to be conformed unto it; Jesus is the standard of man in glory. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Here we dwell in this body of our humiliation, but it shall undergo a change, "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall



sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Then shall we come into our glory, and our body being made suitable to the glory state, shall be fitly called the body of glory. We need not curiously pry into the details of the change, nor attempt to define all the differences between the two estates of our body; for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be," and we may be content to leave much to be made known to us hereafter. Yet though we see through a glass darkly, we nevertheless do see something, and would not shut our eyes to that little. We know not yet as we are known, but we do know in part, and that part knowledge is precious. The gates have been ajar at times, and men have looked awhile, and beheld and wondered. Three times, at least, human eyes have seen something of the body of glory. The face of Moses, when he came down from the mount, shone so that those who gathered around him could not look thereon, and he had to cover it with a veil. In that lustrous face of the man who had been forty days in high communion with God, you behold some gleams of the brightness of glorified manhood. Our Lord made a yet clearer manifestation of the glorious body when he was transfigured in the presence of the three disciples. When his garments became bright and glistening, whiter than any fuller could make them, and he himself was all aglow with glory, his disciples saw and marvelled. The face of Stephen is a third window as it were through which we may look at the glory to be revealed, for even his enemies as they gazed upon the martyr in his confession of Christ, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Those three transient gleams of the morning light may serve as tokens to us to help us to form some faint idea of what the body of the glory of Christ and the body of our own glory will be. ([read entire sermon](#) )

### **The Christian who lives above the world draws closer to heaven.**

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**Frozen Heads** - A newspaper article told about a California mathematician with a life-threatening brain tumor who wants to have his head quick-frozen while he is still alive. The process is known as cryonic suspension. The man believes that scientists will discover a way to cure his tumor and attach his head to a healthy body. He is quoted as saying,

"Everyone should be immortal. I am dying and want to continue to live."

We can't fault that man for wanting to live forever in a healthy body. But we seriously question his method of fulfilling his desire. First, he has no assurance that this expensive procedure will work. Second, even if it did, its benefits would be only temporary. His new body and old head would die eventually.

There is a way, however, to secure all the benefits that he desires. It is to receive Jesus as his Savior. When Christ returns to this earth, everyone who has trusted in Him will get a new body that will last forever and will never be subjected to disease or death. According to the Bible, the Lord Jesus Christ "will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body" (Phil. 3:21).

With a new, glorified body guaranteed to those in Christ, who would want a "frozen head"? -- R W De Haan [Our Daily Bread](#).  
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*He is coming! I shall know Him,  
Jesus, my beloved Lord!  
Changed forever to His likeness -  
Oh, what joy this will afford! - Dimmock*

**Because Christ arose with a new body,  
We are guaranteed a new body.**

**BY THE EXERTION OF THE POWER: kata ten energeian tou dunasthai (PPN) auton:**

- Isa 25:8; 26:19; Hos 13:14; Mt 22:29; 28:18; Jn 5:25, 26, 27, 28, 29; 11:24, 25, 26; 1Cor 15:25, 26, 27, 53, 54, 55, 56; Eph 1:19, 20; Rev 1:8, 18; 20:11, 12, 13, 14, 15
- [Philippians 3 Resources](#)
- [Philippians 3:15-21 The Subtlety of Error](#) - Jack Arnold
- [Philippians 3:17-4:1 The Right & Wrong Way to Live](#) - Steven Cole
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- [Philippians 3:12-16 Reaching for the Prize](#) - John MacArthur

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Literally this verse reads "according to the energy of His being able". Not "out of" but "according to" as one who is incredibly wealthy gives generously. And this is the same "energy" that created the entire universe, so we can be sure He is able to complete that which He began in each and every believer.

**John Eadie** comments that "The language implies that this change of our bodies is the special function which Christ shall discharge at His coming. We look for Him to do this—we anticipate it at His advent. ([Philippians 3 Commentary - Online](#))

**By** (according to) ([2596](#)) (**kata**) means not out of, not just a portion of, but in proportion to His great mercy. If I am a billionaire and I give you ten dollars, I have given you out of my riches, but if I give you a million dollars, I have given to you **according to** my riches. The first is a portion, while the second is a proportion of. So in proportion to the energy presents a picture of indescribable power to accomplish the goal of glorification of our earthly bodies.

**Exertion** ([1753](#)) (**energeia** [word study] from **en** = in + **érgon** = work) describes that which is effective in causing something to happen or is able to bring about. **Energeia** is power in exercise, used only of superhuman power. **Energeia** means God's operative power which is effective in causing this glorious event to transpire in His perfect timing.

**Energeia** gives us our English word "energy". Although **energeia** usually describes the working of God, it is also used of Satan's empowering "the lawless one" (the antichrist).

**Power** ([1410](#)) (**dunamai** cf our English word "dynamic" - see study of related word **dunamis**) means to have power by virtue of inherent ability and resources and so to be able.

**Calvin** - Paul notes not only the power of God as it resides in Him, but the power as it puts itself into act.

#### THAT HE HAS EVEN TO SUBJECT ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF: kai hupotaxai (AAN) auto ta panta:

If any one doubts the power of Christ to do this transformation, Paul replies that he has power **"even to subject all things to Himself."**

**Subject** ([5293](#)) (**hupotasso** [word study] from **hupó** = under + **tasso** = arrange in orderly manner) means to arrange in order of rank or to manage and so to place under one's authority.

**Hupotasso** means to submit (to yield to governance or authority), to place in subjection. It is important to note that many of the NT uses are in the **passive voice with a middle sense** which signifies the **voluntary subjection** of oneself to the will of another. Husbands and wives both need to understand the **voluntary** nature of the submission called for in the marital relationship lest it be misapplied.

**Hupotasso** was a military term meaning to draw up in order of battle, to form, array, marshal, both troops or ships. In this sense hupotasso described the arrangement of military implements on a battlefield in order that one might carry out effective warfare! Inherent in the idea of arranging troop divisions in a military fashion under the command of the leader was that in this state of subordination they were now subject to the orders of their commander. In this sense hupotasso speaks of the subjection of one individual under or to another. In non-military use, **hupotasso** described a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, or carrying a burden.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator and Sustainer of all has the power to order the universe and will make **"all things"** in the universe subject to Himself and then having taken the universe captive will offer it up to God the Father, Paul explaining...

then comes the end, when He delivers up the kingdom to the God and Father, (when will this occur?) when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put **all** His enemies under His feet (this will occur at the end of the **Millennium**). The last enemy that will be abolished is death (see Rev 20:14 where "death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire"). For HE HAS PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET. But when He says, **"All things are put in subjection,"** it is evident that He (speaking of God the Father) is excepted Who put all things in subjection to Him (God the Son). And when all things are subjected to Him (at the end of the **Millennium**), then the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One (God the Father) Who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. ([1Cor 15:24-28](#))

And the power by which He can bring about this subjection of **'all things'**, is the same power by which He can raise our bodies out of the grave. It is the same power He has to make us like Himself, to conform us to the body of His glory. That is our Lord's **promise** and our **Hope**. Such unshakable certitude, begs the question...

### **Where is your focus? Is it on heaven or on earth?**

Don't be distracted by the present but passing world to the point that you miss the encouraging truth of the blessed hope of a glorified body in a heavenly home.

Jesus is "able to save" (Heb 7:25-note). He is "able to aid" (Heb 2:18-note). He is "able to keep" (Jude 1:24). And here in Phil 3:21 we learn He is able to subject all things to Himself.

**Vincent** notes that **hupotasso** in this verse...

is more than merely subdue. It is to bring all things within His divine economy; to marshal them all under Himself in the new heaven and the new earth in which shall dwell righteousness. Hence the perfected heavenly state as depicted by John is thrown into the figure of a city, an organized commonwealth. The verb is thus in harmony with Phil 3:20. The work of God in Christ is therefore not only to transform, but to subject, and that not only the body, but all things. See 1Cor. 15:25-27; Ro 8:19, 20; Eph. 1:10, 21, 22; 4:10.

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**The True Story of Phocas** as told by Dr. John MacArthur...

I want to close by sharing with you a little story that really moved my heart. It's a story of man who really lived, his name is Phocas. He lived in the fourth century. He has been revered through the years as a real precious saint of God, lived in Asia Minor. He lived in the city of Sanopae and he had a little cottage outside the city gate in which he grew a garden. The whole story of the man is recorded by one of the ancient bishops and somehow has found its way down through history. The story goes something like this. Travelers passed his door almost all hours of the day and night as they went in and out of the city gate. And by the wholly ingenuity of love, he stopped as many of them as possible. Were they not weary? Let them rest themselves, sitting in his well-tended garden. Were they in need of a friendly word? He would speak it to them in the dear Master's name. But then quite suddenly one day life was all changed for Phocas. Orders went out from Emperor Diocletian that the Christians must be put to death. When the persecutors entered Sanopae they were under orders to find a man by the name of Phocas and kill him. About to enter the city one hot afternoon, they passed in front of the old man's cottage and garden by the gate. In his innocence, he treated them as though they were his warmest friends, begging them to pause a while and rest themselves. They consented. So warm and gracious was the hospitality they received that when their host invited them to stay the night and go on their way refreshed the next day, they agreed to do so. "And what is your business?" said Phocas unsuspectingly. And then they told him that they would answer his question if he would regard it as a secret. Well it was obvious to them by now that he was a man to be trusted. Who were they? Why they were the soldiers of Rome searching for a certain Phocas who was a Christian. And please, if their kind host knew him, would he be so good as to help them identify him? After all, he was a dangerous follower of this Jesus about whom the Christians talked and he must be executed immediately. "Oh, I know him well," said Phocas quietly. "And by the way, he's quite near. Let's attend to it in the morning." His guests having retired, Phocas sat thinking. Escape? That would be easy. He had only to leave under cover of darkness and at daybreak he could be at least 20 miles away and he knew fellow Christians who would give him hospitality by hiding him. And when the persecution had passed, he could reappear and once again cultivate his little garden. The decision to flee into safety or stay unto death was apparently made without struggle or delay. We can only imagine what he was thinking. Out in his garden Phocas went and began digging in the middle of the night. Was there any earthly thing he loved better than this little plot of ground, the odor of the humus, the feel of the soil, the miracle of fertility? What were his thoughts as he went on digging? Well, there was still time to run away but the Savior didn't run. He didn't run from Gethsemane and He didn't run from Calvary. Or perhaps he thought of his fellow Christians to whom he might go for rest, would not his coming endanger them? And as for these executioners that now were soundly sleeping under his roof, they were, after all, only men who were carrying out orders, and if they failed to find their man, their own lives likely as not would be taken and they would die in their sins. Deeper and deeper Phocas dug. Before dawn he was done and there it was, his own grave. Morning came and with it the waking of the executioners. "I am Phocas," he said calmly. And we have it on the word of the Christian bishop who recorded the story that the men stood motionless in astonishment. They couldn't believe it. And when they did believe it, they obviously were reluctant to perform an execution without mercy on a man who had shown them nothing but mercy. But it was a duty, he reminded them, that they were required to perform. And he was not bitter at them. Besides, death did not terrify him, his heart was filled with hope of heaven. Toward them he bore nothing but the love of Christ and moments later it was all over. The sword had done its work and the body of Christ's love mastered man lay in the stillness of death in the garden he loved so dearly.

**The hope of heaven**

**removes fear.**