

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 275 – October 2nd – Philippians 3:2-4:1

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Philippians

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Eadie, John,	<i>A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians</i> , T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1894
Fee, Gordon D	<i>Paul's Letter to the Philippians</i> (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1995
Hendriksen, William	<i>Philippians</i> , Banner of Truth, London, 1962
Lightfoot, JB	<i>St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians</i> , 3 rd Ed., MacMillan, London, 1873
Motyer, J Alex	<i>Studies in the letter to the Philippians</i> , IVF, London, 1966

Verses 2-19

Fee comments, "Given the frequency with which Paul speaks to this issue in his letters, one must assume that the arguments of the Judaizing faction had a surface attractiveness to many, despite the (literally) painful consequences if Gentiles were to submit. But Paul appeals not to the physical pain, but to historical and theological realities. *Why* the Philippians should need to be warned again against such 'rubbish' (v.8), and whether it is related to teachings espoused by either of the women in 4:2, are matters of conjecture. Among the better guesses is that which sees a relationship between the attractiveness of 'becoming Jewish' (a *religio licita*) and the Philippians' present suffering at the hands of fellow Roman citizens, because they were followers of a *Kyrios* who had been executed as a state criminal. Perhaps by embracing the outward expressions of Jewish identity, they could still belong to Christ but ward off some of the opposition. In any case, and despite the emotive language of v.2, there is little hint either here or elsewhere in the letter that such people are actually *present in Philippi* at the time of this writing or that a serious threat is at hand. After all, Paul's primary response takes the form of personal narrative, not argumentation as such; and not once does he threaten them with the *consequences* of such an action."

Verse 2

Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν.

"What Paul is about to repeat for their 'safety' begins with the threefold warning, 'look out for,' expressed with powerful rhetoric, full of invective and sarcasm against (apparently) Jewish Christians who promote circumcision among Gentile believers... Such people have been 'dogging' him for over a decade, and as the strong language of Gal 5:12 and 2 Cor 11:13-15 makes clear, he has long ago had it to the bellyful with these 'servants of Satan' who think of themselves as 'servants of Christ' (2 Cor 11:15,23)." Fee

βλεπω see, beware of
κυων, κυνος m dog
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, harm
ἐργατης, ου m labourer, workman

"Such people, Paul proffers, in trying to make Gentiles submit to Torah do not work 'righteousness' at all, but evil." Fee

κατατομη, ης f mutilation

The term occurs here only in the NT. "The cognate verb occurs in Lev 21:5 (LXX), which prohibits priests (who 'serve' God) from 'cutting' their flesh as pagan priests did (cf. 1 Kings 18:28)." Fee. "The term justly designates the men whose creed was, 'Except ye be circumcised and keep the whole law of Moses, ye cannot be saved.' Viewed in this light, and as enforced for this end, it was only a cutting, and so the apostle calls those who make so much of it 'the slashers.'" Eadie

"Traditionally, on the basis of centuries of Protestant theology, it has been assumed that they were putting forward Torah observance as a way of getting right with God. But there is serious doubt as to whether that would have been their primary intent; after all, these Gentiles are already believers in Christ, as are all those upon whom the Judaizers urge circumcision. Most likely, therefore, at issue for them is Torah observance as evidence of Gentiles' truly belonging to God's people and therefore of their genuine obedience to Christ. Nonetheless, even though their first interest is in making Jews out of Gentiles, in the sense of securing their place within the Abrahamic covenant, Paul clearly sees through to the ultimate theological consequences for those who would capitulate – that it has the effect of adding a plus factor to grace, and thus of eliminating grace altogether by exchanging it for boasting in 'one's flesh.' This in turn explains why the following argument and illustration from Paul's personal history takes the form it does." Fee

Verse 3

ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμὲν ἢ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ
λατρεῦντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες,

The emphatic ἡμεῖς responds to the challenge concerning who are the true people of God.

περιτομή, ἡς f circumcision, those circumcised

The expression encompasses Paul and the Philippian church, including both Jews and Gentiles. Cf. Gal 3:9,14; Rom 2:29; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:2,6. Paul goes on to summarise the true marks of the people of God under the New Covenant.

λατρεῦω serve, worship

Many MSS read θεῷ rather than θεοῦ (and p⁴⁶ omits both). Metzger writes, "The singular reading of p⁴⁶ is to be explained as due to accidental oversight, and the reading θεῷ appears to be an emendation introduced in order to provide an object for λατρεῦντες (as in Rom 1:9 and 2 Tim 1:3)."

Of λατρεῦντες Fee writes, "Paul's usage is determined by the LXX, where it is used almost exclusively to denote the Levitical 'service' in the temple cultus. Here it stands in ironical contrast to v.2. 'Mutilation' is what those who 'serve' in the temple cultus were forbidden to do. Now, in contrast with the 'workers of iniquity' who are engaged in such illegitimate 'service,' Paul says we are the true circumcision, who 'serve' by the Spirit, over against serving by the flesh. The verb, therefore, is not the one for 'worship' in the sense of what the congregation does together as a gathered people, but represents the 'service' of God's people in terms of their devotion to him as evidenced in the way they live before him. Rather than offering such service by 'cutting away the flesh,' so as to be identified with the people of God under the former covenant, the true circumcision live (= 'serve') in Christ by the power of the Spirit. Thus Paul has in view not external rite over against internal 'spiritual' service, but two ways of existing – in the 'flesh,' which he understands as life centred in the creature as over against God, or as the eschatological people of God, evidenced to be so by the Spirit of God, through whom all life in the present is now service and devotion to God."

καυχασομαι boast, boast about

Cf. Jer 9:23,24 and 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17. "They gloried not in themselves, in anything about themselves – not in circumcision or in Abrahamic descent but in Christ Jesus, and in Him alone – ... in His great condescension; His birth and its wonders; His life and its blessings; His death and its benefits; His ascension and its pledges; His return and its stupendous and permanent results." Eadie

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body, human nature

Paul makes a play here on the word σαρξ, cf. Gal 3:2-3.

πειθω persuade; perf trust, rely on, have confidence, be confident

These are the marks of the true child of God: service of God in/by the Spirit; glorying in Christ Jesus (note the Trinitarian structure here); placing no confidence in one's own abilities.

Verse 4

καίπερ ἐγὼ ἔχων πεποιθήσιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί.
Εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί, ἐγὼ
μᾶλλον·

καίπερ though, although

Introduces an implied conditional – "Though I might ... " Paul is saying that if they (the 'mutilators') want to play that game then he, Paul, can beat them on their home ground.

πεποιθῆσις, εως f confidence

δοκεω think, suppose

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

πεποιθέναι Verb, perf act infin πειθω

μαλλον adv rather, instead

Verse 5

περιτομῇ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος,

"For the dative περιτομῇ 'in respect of circumcision' compare 2:7 σχηματι εὐρεθεις" Lightfoot

ὀκταήμερος, ον on the eighth day

γενος, ους n family, race, people, nation

φυλη, ης f tribe, nation, people

Benjamin was called the 'beloved of the Lord' (Deut 33:12), gave Israel their first king and was alone faithful to Judah. The Holy City itself was in their territory. No Gentile converts who submitted to the Torah could ever claim like privileges.

'A Hebrew of the Hebrews' – "descended from a long line of pure ancestry without any accidental infusion on either side of foreign blood." Eadie. Fee thinks the term sums up the previous three – 'in every way a Hebrew.'

νομος, ου m law

Cf. Acts 26:5. "The combined evidence of Matt 23:15 and Acts 15:5 suggests that Jewish Christians who came to Philippi to promote Torah observance on the part of Gentiles would most likely also belong to this sect." Fee

Verse 6

κατὰ ζήλος διώκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος.

ζηλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy

διωκω persecute, seek

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

An evidence of his former zeal for the law and traditions of his fathers.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι

ἀμεμπτος, ον blameless, faultless

"He thought himself, and others thought him, without a flaw." Eadie. "Paul has no 'blemishes' on his record, as far as Torah observance is concerned, which means that he scrupulously adhered to the pharisaic interpretation of the Law, with its finely honed regulations for sabbath observance, food laws and ritual cleanliness. His former blamelessness in these matters makes his Christian pronouncements on these items all the more telling." Fee.

Wright, in his commentary on Romans (*New Interpreter's Bible*) comments on this verse: "Presumably he [Paul] meant that, as a good Jew, he regularly used the means of forgiveness and purification that were on offer in the Temple and the sacrificial cult and took part in the great fasts and feasts through which the devout Jew was assured of God's forgiveness and favour. Thus at any moment he was a Jew in good standing; not that he had always done what Torah prescribed (we must not suppose the pre-Christian Paul to have been so ignorant of his own motivation and behaviour), but that he had always repented and sought God's forgiveness through the appropriate methods. Torah, he might have said, can show me that I am a sinner and can also show me the way of forgiveness. We must assume that someone who followed this path would consider themselves 'blameless according to the law.'" See on Romans 3:19-20 for fuller notes on Wright's understanding of Paul.

Verses 7-11

Fee suggests that these verses begin with the theme of gain and loss, echoing earlier language of the letter (1:21) before introducing the main theme which is *knowing Christ*. The theme of righteousness and the law (picking up v.6) is then introduced against the background of this foundational theme which then returns to occupy the foreground in vv.10-11. Paul's primary focus is on what it means to *know Christ*.

Secondly, Fee suggests, "Even though the content differs considerably, both the linguistic echoes and the general 'form' of the narrative seem intentionally designed to recall the Christ narrative in 2:6-11. While Christ did not *consider* God-likeness to accrue to his own advantage, but 'made himself nothing,' so Paul now *considers* his former 'gain' as 'loss' for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. As Christ was 'found' in human likeness,' Paul is now 'found in Christ,' knowing whom means to be 'conformed' (echoing the μορφη of a slave, 2:7) to his death (2:8). Finally, as Christ's humiliation was followed by God's 'glorious' vindication of him, so present 'suffering' for Christ's sake will be followed by 'glory' in the form of resurrection. As he has appealed to the Philippians to do, Paul thus exemplifies Christ's 'mindset,' embracing suffering and death. This is what it means to 'know Christ,' to be 'found in him' by means of his gift of righteousness; and as he was raised and exalted to the highest place, so Paul and the Philippian believers, because they are now 'conformed to Christ' in his death, will also be 'conformed' to his glory."

Verse 7

Ἀλλὰ ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.

Fee thinks that the text without *ἀλλὰ* is more likely original but recognises that it is a tough call.

ὅστις, ἡτις, ὅτι who, which, whoever,
whichever, whatever
κερδος, ους n gain

The things he has listed in the previous verses.

ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

"While he cannot renounce – nor does he wish to – what was given him by birth (circumcision, being a member of Israel's race, of the tribe of Benjamin, born of true Hebrew stock), he does renounce them as grounds for boasting, along with his achievement that expressed his zeal for the Law. Hence the significance of his use of the verb, 'I *have come to consider* them as a loss,' rather than a simple affirmation, 'what things *were* gain *are now* loss.'" Fee

ζημια, ας f loss

The transition from the plural, 'whatsoever things', to the singular 'loss' carries the idea that all these things *put together* amount to less than nothing – they are loss.

Verse 8

ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἡγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐζημιώθη, καὶ ἡγοῦμαι σκύβαλα ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω

μενουν and μεουνγε rather, on the contrary

ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ 'not only so but what is more' Fee

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἰμι

ὑπερέχον Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s

ὑπερεχω be of more value than, be better than, surpass

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

"As v.10 will clarify, 'knowing Christ' does not mean to have a head knowledge about him, but to 'know him' personally (BAGD) and relationally. Paul has thus taken up the Old Testament theme of 'knowing God' and applied it to Christ. It means to know him as children and parent know each other, or wives and husbands – knowledge that has to do with personal experience and intimate relationship. It is such knowledge that makes Christ 'trustworthy.' The intimacy will be expressed in v.10 in terms of 'participation in his sufferings.' In the light of such expansive language, therefore, the object of his 'knowing' is not simply 'Christ,' nor even 'Christ Jesus,' but 'Christ Jesus *my* Lord.'

"Here is the evidence of intimacy and devotion. Paul regularly refers to Christ with the full title and name, 'our Lord, Jesus Christ'; only here does he reverse the order and substitute the first person singular pronoun. The 'Christ Jesus,' because of whom he gladly considers all else to be loss, is none other than 'my Lord.' The reason for such devotion and longing is not expressed here, but it rings forth clearly in Gal 2:20, 'who loved me and gave himself for me.' This is not simply coming to know the deity – it is that, of course – but even more so, it is to know the one whose love for Paul, expressed in the cross and in his arrest on the Damascus road, has transformed the former persecutor of the church into Christ's 'love slave,' whose lifelong ambition is to 'know him' in return, and to love him by loving his people. There is something unfortunate about a cerebral Christianity that 'knows' but does not 'know' in this way." Fee

"Is it not super-eminent knowledge to know Him as the 'Christ,' not simply because He has been anointed 'with the oil of gladness.' but because we too 'have an unction from the Holy One.' – to know him as 'Jesus,' not simply because He wears our nature, but because we feel His human heart throbbing in unison with ours under trial and sorrow – to know Him as Prophet, not simply because He is Light, but because we are light in Him, – to know Him as Priest, not simply because He has laid Himself on the altar, but because the blood of sprinkling is manifest upon our consciences, – to know Him as 'Lord,' not simply because He wears a crown and wields a sceptre, but because we bow to His loving rule and gather the spoils of the victory which He has won and secured?" Eadie

ἐζημιώθη Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s ζημιοῶ
(only in pass) lose, suffer loss
σκυβαλον, ου n dung, garbage

The term can mean 'refuse,' "especially of the kind that was thrown out for the dogs to forage through. Although it could possibly mean 'dung' here, more likely Paul is taking a passing shot at the 'dogs' in v.2." Fee

κερδαινω gain, win

Verse 9

καὶ εὕρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν
δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ
πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ
τῇ πίστει,

εὕρεθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s εὕρισκω

To be found in Christ now and in the day of resurrection. Fee thinks that the primary reference here is future though within the context of Paul's 'already but not yet' eschatological perspective. "On the other hand, the modifying participial clause ('having righteousness') is oriented toward the present, as is the final purpose clause (vv. 10-11), which is grammatically dependent on the present clause... Paul uses his own story as the paradigm for looking to the future on the basis of the 'presence of the future' found in the righteousness that Christ has provided. He expects to 'gain Christ and be found in him' on the day of Christ, precisely because this is *already* his experience of Christ. Second, *where* Paul is now 'found' – and expects to be at the end – is 'in Christ.' He now lives in fellowship with Christ, who is both the source of this new life and the sphere in which it is lived."

ἔμους, η, ου 1st pers possessive adj my, mine
δικαιοσύνη, ης see v.6

Paul picks up the theme of v. 6b.

"Circumcision – and all other forms of Torah observance – means to 'boast' in human achievement; and its 'blamelessness' is expressed in ways that count for nothing at all. One is thus neither righteous in the sense of being rightly related to God nor righteous in the sense of living rightly as an expression of that relationship." Fee

Eadie's comment on Paul's understanding of righteousness is worth quoting. "This righteousness – δικαιοσύνη – which the apostle aspired to possess, is the only ground of acceptance with God. In itself it is not ἐμῆ, but of God – ἐκ Θεοῦ – as in His grace He has provided it, so that it is said of us – δαιουμένοι δωρεαν τῆ αὐτοῦ χαριτι. Rom 3:24. It is wrought out by Christ, and in His blood – ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ – Rom 5:9; or it is δια τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Rom 3:24. It becomes ours through faith, being in one aspect ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει, in another δια πίστεως, and in another still, ἐκ πίστεως. Rom 5:1. And this connection of faith is further described thus – λογιζεται ἡ πίστις εἰς δικαιοσύνην; or, subjectively, καρδία πιστευεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην. Rom 10:10. Of the possessor of such righteousness it may be said – δικαιουται παρα τῷ Θεῷ. Gal 3:11. Christ obeyed the law for us, and for us suffered its penalty, and the merit of this obedience unto the death becomes ours, as soon as we can say of ourselves, καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐπιστευσάμεν. Gal 2:16. He who was ἀδικος becomes δικαίος, and escapes that κατακριμα which sin merits, Rom 8:1, the ὄργη Θεοῦ – Rom 1:18; nay, enjoys the benefit of redemption – τὴν ἀφεσιν τῶν παραπτωμάτων. Eph 1:7. When ἔργα τοῦ νομοῦ – works of law, are disclaimed, and faith is simply reposed on God – ἐπὶ τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ – guilt is cancelled, acceptance is enjoyed, and such a change of state entails a change of character: those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, 'walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' Rom 8:4. The sinner is not indeed held by any legal fiction to be innocent. The entire process implies his guilt, but he is no longer exposed to the penalty; he is held, or dealt with, as a righteous person, 'the eternal justice of Christ Jesus being imputed to him.' (Hooker) And the result is – οὐς δε ἐδικαιώσε, τούτους καὶ ἐδοξάσεν. Rom 8:30. This righteousness, divine in its origin, awful in its medium, and fraught with such results, was the essential element of Paul's religion, and the distinctive tenet of Paul's theology."

πίστις, εως f faith

There is considerable debate over whether the genitive Χριστου here is subjective, 'through Christ's [own] faith[fulness],' or objective 'through faith in Christ.' Fee outlines the debate and, while acknowledging that the subjective genitive has some attractiveness in that it would then refer back to the narrative in 2:6-8," concedes that the context demands the objective genitive. He concludes, "Thus, as usual in Paul, the contrast is between 'works' and 'faith,' not so much referring to forensic 'justification' of those who have 'broken the law' – but referring to the means to and expression of one's relationship with God. Such righteousness comes 'from God,' he insists, in contrast to being 'my own' predicated on the law. And it has been made available through Christ, in whom Paul is now 'found' and in whom he 'boasts,' hence it is 'through faith in Christ.'"

ἐπι τη πιστει 'which is on the basis of faith' cf. Acts 3:11. Eadie says this is a dative of instrument.

Verse 10

τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ καὶ κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ,
γινῶναι Verb, aor act infin γινώσκω

"From this statement and the following clauses, it is plain that this knowledge is that of deep and deepening experience." Eadie Fee thinks the first καὶ is exegetical – the sense is 'so that I may know him, *that is*, the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings.'

ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection

The resurrection is linked with the power of the Spirit both in the sense of Christ himself being raised in the power of the Spirit and in that his resurrection life is conveyed to us by the Spirit. To know the risen Christ is to know something of the power of his resurrection life, cf. 2 Cor 4:11.

"Along with the gift of the eschatological Spirit, it was the resurrection of Christ that altered Paul's (and the early church's) understanding of present existence – as both 'already' and 'not yet.' In Jewish eschatological expectations these two events, above all, would mark the beginning of God's final wrap-up. Very early on the church recognised that *the* Resurrection (Christ's) had already set the future in motion... In contrast to the backward-looking Judaisers, Paul and the Philippians live the life of the future by the power of the (eschatological) Spirit of God (v.3)." Fee

κοινωνία, ας f fellowship, sharing in, participation
παθημα, τος n suffering

We must not lose sight of the context of Paul's letter: both he and the Philippians were suffering for the gospel. Furthermore, the Judaisers were perhaps offering an option which might enable the Philippians to avoid a measure of suffering for Christ. "But Paul will have none of that, precisely because from his perspective any genuine knowing of Christ means participation in his sufferings, since only in such sufferings does one truly know Christ – as 2:6-8 has made plain... It is difficult to imagine that Paul is not here reflecting on the teaching of his Lord, that those who follow Christ will likewise have to 'bear the cross' on behalf of others." Fee

συμμορφιζομαι take on the same form as

Recalls the Christ narrative of 2:6-11.

θανατος, ου m death

There can be no participation in Christ's resurrection without participation also in his death. "In all things Paul coveted conformity to his Lord – even in suffering and death." Eadie. What he means is expounded by Paul in 2:6-11. "Christian life is cruciform in character; God's people, even as they live presently through the power made available through Christ's resurrection, are as their Lord forever marked by the cross. The heavenly Lion, one must never forget, is a slain Lamb (Rev 5:5-6) ... All of Christian life is stamped with the divine imprint of the cross as we live out the gospel in the present age, while we await the hope of resurrection." Fee

Verse 11

εἴ πως καταστήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

κατανταω come, arrive, reach, attain

εἴ πως καταστήσω 'if so be I may attain' This is the goal or aspiration to which all outlined in the previous verses tends. The εἴ πως which may appear to express uncertainty, may:

- i) Have the sense of 'in this way' i.e. the resurrection is to be attained only through the present path of suffering with Christ, cf. Rom 8:17;
- ii) Reflect uncertainty as to whether the final state will be attained through resurrection *from the dead* or transformation at the parousia (cf. vv.20-21).

The future prize itself is not in doubt.

ἐξανάστασις, εως f resurrection

νεκρος, α, ου dead

Postscript

"If suffering and the temptation to become religious were causing the dimming of such vision for some in Philippi, in contemporary Western (and much of the rest of the world) culture the dimming is for different reasons, more often connected with values related to material gain. Paul's 'vision' seems to have the better of it in every imaginable way; and a common return to 'the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord' could go a long way toward renewing the church for its task in the post-modern world. Our lives must be cruciform if they are to account for anything at all; but that word is preceded by the equally important one – the power of his resurrection, which both enables us to live as those marked by the cross and guarantees our final glory." Fee

Verses 12-14

These verses should not be seen as starting a new theme; they form part of Paul's continuing argument. Fee argues, "In light of what has just been said in vv 10-11, the 'goal' is not 'perfection' but the eschatological conclusion of present life, while the 'prize' is none other than the final realisation of his lifelong passion – the full 'knowing' of Christ. To this end, all else is not only 'loss' and 'street garbage' (v.8) but is to be 'forgotten' altogether."

Verse 12

Οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ.

ἤδη adv now, already

"In the verb ἔλαβον there is the idea of laying hold of something before him that he had not yet reached ... The figure of the race and its prize rose up directly in the apostle's mind, and as he is about to give it shape, other ideas intrude themselves and claim a prior expression; that is to say, what the apostle had not yet attained to is what he has been describing in the previous verses, but now especially imagined to his mind as the prize given to one who is victor in the race course. In the first clause of the 13th verse the apostle resumes the figure, and in a few vivid touches, completes it." Eadie

"What he has not yet 'obtained' ... is the eschatological realisation of the goal expressed in vv. 10-11, the kind of knowing Christ that will be his only when he has 'attained unto the resurrection from the dead' – or its equivalent, as vv.20-21 clarify." Fee

ἢ or

Some Western MSS read ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη δεδικαιώμαι ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι. This would seem to be a gloss by a "pious copyist who imagined that the Divine side of sanctification was left too much out of sight." Kennedy

τετελείωμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s
τελείωω make perfect, complete

The focus is not so much on perfection as reaching the goal.

διώκω seek after, pursue

The intense action of the runner in a stadium.

καταλάβω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s
καταλαμβάνω obtain, attain
κατελήμφθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s
καταλαμβάνω

"He means to say, not merely that he pursues a certain course of action because he has been converted, but because this course of action is in unison with the purpose of his conversion." Eadie.

"While Paul is indeed pursuing the eschatological goal with all his might, that is only because Christ was there first, pursuing him as it were, and 'apprehending' him so as to make Paul one of his own. Paul's point, as always, is that Christ's work is the prior one, and that all his own effort is simply in response to, and for the sake of, that prior 'apprehension' of him by 'Christ Jesus my Lord.'" Fee

Verse 13

ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ ἔμμαντὸν οὐ λογίζομαι κατειληφέναι· ἐν δέ, τὰ μὲν ὀπίσω ἐπιλανθάνομενος τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος,

ἔμμαντὸν Pronoun, acc s ἔμμαντου

Many MSS read ὅπου rather than οὐ. Metzger comments, "The reading οὐ, which is simply supported, appears to have been changed to οὐπω by copyists who considered Paul to be too modest in his protestations."

λογίζομαι reckon, count, suppose
κατειληφέναι Verb, perf act infin
καταλαμβάνω

"self-complacency was no feature of the apostle's character ... He viewed not so much the progress made as the progress still to be made – surveyed rather the distance before him – between him and the goal, than the space that now lay behind him – between him and the starting point." Eadie

There is some difference in versification here. Some versions begin v.14 with ἐν δε

εἰς, μια, ἐν one
ὀπίσω behind
ἐπιλανθάνομαι forget, neglect

"Paul as a runner who 'pays no attention to the things that are behind' is probably a parting shot at what some of the Philippians might now be finding attractive. By 'pursuing' Torah observance as 'advancement,' they would in fact be after the very things Paul has gladly put behind him as refuse. In any case, as the rest of the analogy makes clear, the present accent is on 'straining toward what is ahead.'" Fee.
Eadie thinks the reference is to past Christian attainments – though we could extend it to include past Christian failures. He says, "In his Christian course he did not repose on memories. What had been gained was only an incitement to further progress."

ἐμπροσθεν before, ahead, in front
ἐπεκτεινομαι stretch towards, reach for

Verse 14

κατὰ σκοπὸν διώκω εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

σκοπος, ου m goal (κατα σ.) toward the goal

The noun σκοπος is used in the LXX for a Hebrew word denoting the point (or target) at which an archer aims (Job 16:12,13; Lam 3:12).

διώκω see v.12

βραβειον, ου n prize

The coveted crown – the incorruptible crown.

ἄνω from above

κλησις, εως f call, calling

Cf. κλησεως ἐπουρανιου μετοχοι Heb 3:1. Of εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ Fee comments on the series of genitive qualifiers that their "sense is easier to sort out than its grammar. Whatever names we may give to his genitives, Paul intends the following relationships: First, God has 'called' Paul to himself, which will culminate in glory; second, that call, which began at his conversion, is 'heavenward' in terms of its final goal; third, God's call found its historical and experiential locus 'in Christ Jesus'; and fourth, at the end of the race Paul will gain the prize, the tangible evidence that the goal of God's call has been reached."

Verse 15

ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν· καὶ εἴ τι ἑτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν ἀποκαλύψει·

Paul now turns to application to the situation at Philippi. Paul uses the first person plural rather than the second – it is application and appeal rather than polemic. He is urging them to join him in following.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as; pl. as many as
τέλειος, α, ον perfect, mature

A play on words, cf. v.12. Grown men, those who have put away childish things (cf. 1 Cor 13:10-12). Eadie says that Paul "elsewhere speaks of two classes in the church – "babes and perfect men." 1 Cor 2:6; Eph 4:12,13; Heb 5:13,14. The terms νηπιος and τελειος are in contrast. See also 1 Cor 14:20."

φρονεω think, have in mind

Looks back to 2:5. A renewed appeal to a certain mindset – the mindset of Christ.

ἑτέρως otherwise, differently

ἀποκαλύψει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s

ἀποκαλύπτω reveal, make known

"The meaning of the apostle is that God, by revealing the difference and showing the fault of it, would remove it." Eadie

Verse 16

πλὴν εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν.

πλὴν nevertheless, however

'whether you see *all* things fully my way or not.'

ἐφθάσαμεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl φθανω

reach, come to

στοιχεω walk, conduct oneself

'let us live up to what we have already come to (an understanding of)' cf previous verse. "He who employs what he has, prepares himself for further gifts." Eadie

Verse 17

Συμμητηαί μου γίνεσθε, ἀδελφοί, καὶ σκοπεῖτε τοὺς οὕτω περιπατοῦντας καθὼς ἔχετε τύπον ἡμᾶς·

συμμητης, ου m one who joins in following the example of another

Cf. 1 Cor 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess 3:7,9. This compound verb appears here only in the NT and has not been found in other Greek literature. The meaning would seem to be, 'join together in imitating me.' The emphasis is again on unity.

σκοπεω pay attention to, watch out (for)

The force here is 'mark and follow'

οὕτως and οὕτω adv. thus, in this way

περιπατεω walk, live

τυπος, ου m pattern, example

E.g. Epaphroditus. "Since Philippi was a small city on the main highway East and West, a full day's walk from Neapolis on the coast, the Christian community in Philippi was undoubtedly frequented by all sorts of itinerants, who would be given the normal Christian hospitality... Fully aware that not all who would come through were of the same mind as Paul regarding walking in the ways of Christ, he has frequently warned them of such itinerants (as vv. 1 and 18 indicate). This imperative therefore, besides specifying the reason for vv. 4-14, moves toward warning, that when others come among them, they mark well those who 'walk' in the way of the cross and who are living in eager anticipation of the future." Fee

Verse 18

πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν οὓς πολλάκις ἔλεγον ὑμῖν, νῦν δὲ καὶ κλαίων λέγω, τοὺς ἐχθροὺς τοῦ σταυροῦ τοῦ Χριστοῦ,

πολυς, πολλη, πολυ γεν πολλου, ης, ου much, many

The grammar is a little awkward. Eadie says "The verb περιπατουσιν stands emphatically, and without any added characteristic... The apostle, in the previous verse, had referred to his own life and to those who walked like himself ... and now he speaks of others who do not so walk. But he does not formally express the difference by an adverb – he does it more effectively by an entire clause." Fee thinks πολλοὶ γὰρ περιπατοῦσιν "suggests people associated with the Christian community but outside Philippi."

πολλακις often, repeatedly, frequently
κλαιω weep, cry; trans weep for

"He grieved that the gospel should, through them, be exposed to misrepresentation, that the world should see it associated with an unchanged and licentious life" Eadie

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated
σταυρος, ου m cross

They are people who make a profession of being Christians but who refuse to live a life patterned by the cross.

Verse 19

ὧν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὧν ὁ θεὸς ἡ κοιλία καὶ ἡ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες.

τελος, ους n end, conclusion

Perhaps a play on on this term – now by way of contrast with vv. 12,15.

ἀπωλεια, ας f destruction, utter ruin

Cf. Rom 6:21

κοιλια, ας f stomach

"'Stomach' may be a metonymy for the craving after sumptuous fare, or perhaps for surfeiting. One cannot be sure. Perhaps it is intended to be more representative – of those who are so given over to present bodily desires of all kinds, represented by the 'appetites,' that such has become a 'god' to them." Fee

δοξα, ης f glory

αἰσχυνη, ης f shame, disgrace

"That is, they find their glory in what is really their shame." Eadie

ἐπιγειος, ον earthly, of the earth

φρονωω think, have in mind

Cf. Col 3:2. Again, the focus is on 'mindset.'

"These people over whom Paul weeps are first of all 'enemies of the cross'; they are now characterised as those who have abandoned the pursuit of the heavenly prize, in favour of what belongs *only* to the present scheme of things. Their focus is altogether earthward... He is probably describing some itinerants, whose view of the faith is such that it allows them a great deal of undisciplined self-indulgence." Fee

Verses 20-21

"Here is a classic expression of the eschatological framework of Pauline theology, that present life is 'already/not yet,' predicated on Christ and his coming(s). Although the passage begins with the 'already,' the accent falls on the 'not yet,' thus giving perspective to the Philippians' present situation – and to much else in this letter. Christ has gained his present glory through humiliation (2:7-11); he is now 'in heaven' where we 'eagerly await' his coming as 'Saviour'; when he comes he will 'transform' us into his 'likeness,' so that our present bodies that know weakness and 'humiliation' are conformed into the likeness of his present 'glory'; and he will accomplish that in keeping with the same divine 'energy' (cf. 2:13) whereby he will also subject 'all things' to himself (= 'every knee shall bow')." Fee

Verse 20

ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτήρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν,

πολιτευμα, τος n place of citizenship

Paul is making a play on their Roman citizenship, cf. 1:27. Moffatt translates "we are a colony of heaven" and Fee adds, "Just as Philippi was a colony of Rome, whose citizens thereby exemplified the life of Rome in the province of Macedonia, so the citizens of the 'heavenly commonwealth' were to function as a colony of heaven in that outpost of Rome."

ὑπαρχω βε (equivalent to εἰμι)

Cf. Col 3:3. "He who has his home in the future will be only a pilgrim for the present." Eadie

οὗ adv where

σωτηρ, ηρος m saviour

"Only once heretofore (Eph 5:23) [Fee thinks Ephesians predates Philippians] has he used this title ['Saviour'] to describe Christ. That he does so here is almost certainly for the Philippians' sakes, since this is a common title for Caesar. That he does so at all is especially significant christologically, since the title occurs frequently in the OT to refer to God as our (my) Saviour. As with the title 'Lord,' therefore (cf. 2:9-10), Paul has co-opted yet another OT term for God and unflinchingly attributed it to Christ. None of this would be missed by the Philippians, who know the term well in both of its contexts." Fee

ἀπεκδεχομαι look for, wait for

Carries the sense of eagerness or longing.

Verse 21

ὃς μετασχηματίζει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξει αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα.

μετασχηματίζω change, transform

This and σύμμορφον pick up the language of 2:6-8.

σῶμα, τος n body

ταπεινωσις, εως f humble state, humiliation

Our present body, subject to all the weakness and frailty consequent upon the fall. The AV's translation 'vile' is unfortunate. Again, there are echoes of the 'humiliation' of Christ in 2:8. The contrast is with those whose shameful glory is in present excess, v.19.

σύμμορφος, ον having the same form, sharing likeness

Of this glory that belongs to Christ's risen and ascended body, Eadie remarks, "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 at Patmos, the disciple who had lain in his bosom was so overpowered that he 'fell at his feet as dead.'"

ἐνεργεια, ας f (supernatural) working, power
ὑποτάξει Verb, aor act infin ὑποτασσω
subordinate, put in subjection

Cf. 1 Cor 15:36-50. "In some ways this is the most remarkable 'transformation' of all, in that Paul here uses language about Christ that he elsewhere uses only of God the Father... The phrase 'able to subject all things to himself' is Paul's eschatological interpretation of Ps 8:7, where God will 'subject all things' to his Messiah, who in turn, according to 1 Cor 15:28, will turn over all things to God the Father so that 'God might be all in all.' Remarkably, in the present passage the 'subjecting' of all things to himself is said to be by Christ's own power." Fee

"With Paul we would do well not merely to 'await' the end, but eagerly to press on toward the goal, since the final prize is but the consummation of what God has already accomplished through the death and resurrection of our Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord." Fee

4:1

ὥστε, ἀδελφοί μου ἀγαπητοὶ καὶ ἐπιπόθητοι, χαρὰ καὶ στέφανός μου, οὕτως στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ, ἀγαπητοί.

Echoes the exhortation of 1:27

ὥστε so that, with the result that

"Paul uses this conjunction specifically to apply the preceding 'argument' to the local situation." Fee. Cf. 2:12.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

ἐπιπόθητος, ον longed for

This adjective occurs here alone in the NT.

στεφανος, ου m wreath, crown, prize

Cf. 1 Thess 2:19. "The apostle refers ... to the Lord's coming. His converts will then be his wreath of victory, for it will appear that he οὐκ εἰς κενον ἐδραμεν (2:16), and he will receive the successful athlete's reward; comp 1 Cor 9:25)" Lightfoot

Eadie suggests it also has a present reference: "as he had been so instrumental in their conversion, they were to him even now a wreath of honour."

οὕτως and οὕτω see 3:17

The reference may be back to verse 17.

στήκετε Verb, perf act indic & imperat, 2 pl
ἵστημι stand, stand firm, hold ground.

"During their present distress they are to 'stand fast *in the Lord*,' firmly planted in relationship with the same Lord whose coming they eagerly await and who will then subject all things to himself (3:20-21). And they are to *thus* stand firm' (NIV, 'that is how'), referring probably to the whole of 3:1-21, but especially to their 'imitation' of Paul by their upright 'walk' even as they bend every effort to attain the eschatological prize." Fee. It is not just an exhortation to the individual, Paul is here addressing the church.

ἀγαπητοι "The Apostle's love finds expression in the accumulation and repetition of words. In the final ἀγαπητοι he seems to linger over this theme, as if unable to break away from it." Lightfoot.