

When Paul wrote to the Philippians he wrote to those who were “ones loved and longed for, my joy and crown”. He encouraged them to “stand fast in this way in *the* Lord”. Philippians is not an epistle reviewing the elemental things of salvation but an epistle written to those encouraged to press on, to endure. Paul appeals to believers to leave babyhood and go forward to perfection or maturity. Remember, perfection has nothing to do with being sinless, but rather Christian adulthood. For those who seek to grow, a prize is in view. This is the context of the resurrection Paul sought to attain.

Let us briefly review verse 10 -11 comparing those verses with some other passages of Paul;

Php 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable to His death;

Php 3:11 if by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead.

Php 3:12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect,

Paul did not desire to know about Christ’s resurrection nor the resurrection of the dead. He wanted to know something beyond these things which he had written about in the past, see Acts 13:23, 30, 17:32, 23:6 1Cor.15:3-4, 12, 22-23 & Roms.6:5-11.

Paul wanted to know the “power of His resurrection”. He sought a resurrection like the Lord’s as to time and quality. The Lord did not enjoy a resurrection of the dead but a resurrection from the dead. Many saints remained in the grave when the Lord was resurrected out from among them. We shall look at this next lesson.

It will help us if we understand the unusual word and phrasing in the original. Paul uses the phrase the resurrection of the dead in many places before this as we have noted, however Paul does not use this phrase in Philippians 3:11. The resurrection Paul wanted to attain by any means was a resurrection from the dead. We must distinguish things differing.

In the Philippians verse according to some manuscripts there is a double use of the preposition “out”. The preposition is a prefix to the general word for resurrection and then again independently in the closing phrase. The verse may be read as follows:

Php 3:11 if somehow I may attain to an (out) resurrection (exanastasin) out (ek) from the dead.

Paul wanted to attain a resurrection like the Lord’s. Our Lord suffered, He did not give up, He endured all things, and so obtained a resurrection of great glory “from the dead”.

Once again we show the structure harmonizing Paul’s desire to know the power of the Lord’s resurrection and this resurrection of Christ as found in chapter 2;

D. 2:6-11 Sevenfold humility of Christ who endured. Resurrection Glory (a resurrection from the dead, Mk.9:9-10)

E. 2:12-17 Appeal. Work out our Salvation

F. 2:17-30 Example of Paul, who was ready to be offered.....(not for sin and sins)

E. 3:1-3. Appeal. Beware

D. 3:4-19. Seven fold loss of Paul who presses on. To know Christ’s resurrection power (an (out) resurrection from the dead)

It is very important that we see the relationship between the two sections marked “D”. The Lord humbled Himself and lived a life of faithfulness. Consequently our Lord was not only the first fruit but the first to be raised from the dead to heights of Glory, the very “heavenly places” of Ephesians where all things are put under His feet. The Lord’s ascension of glory is in harmony with the (out) resurrection from the dead which Paul desired to “attain”.

Let us turn to another post Acts epistle of Paul which also features the Lord’s resurrection in a context of perfection and a crown.

2Ti 2:3 Therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

2Ti 2:4 No one who wangles with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who chose him to be a soldier.

2Ti 2:5 And also if anyone competes, he is not crowned unless he competes lawfully.

2Ti 2:6 It is right for the laboring farmer to partake **first** of the **fruits**.

2Ti 2:7 **Consider** what I say, and the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

2Ti 2:8 **Remember** that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was **raised from the dead** according to my gospel,

2Ti 2:9 in which I suffer ill as an evildoer, even to bonds. But the Word of God is not chained.

2Ti 2:10 Therefore **I endure** all things for the sake of the elect, **that they may also obtain** the **salvation** which is in Christ Jesus **with eternal glory**.

2Ti 2:11 For faithful is the Word, for if we died with *Him*, we shall also live with *Him*.

2Ti 2:12 If we suffer (endure), we shall also reign with *Him*.

2Ti 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith.

2Ti 4:8 Now there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but also to all those who love His appearing.

Read 2Tim.2:10 carefully please. Paul did not endure so the elect could obtain salvation; Paul endured so the elect could obtain salvation with eternal glory. The Lord was raised “from the dead” to glory and honour. All members of the Church which is His Body will live with Christ in heavenly places but not all will reign with Him there. Some will be ashamed and found reprobate in that day, see 2Tim.2:15. Those Christians who endure, who go on to perfection and have their eyes set on the prize, are like Paul who desired to “win Christ” and know the “power of His resurrection”. The resurrection of Philipians 3:11 is the power of Christ’s resurrection “from the dead” to salvation with eternal glory for the faithful and enduring members of the Church.

We now turn to Hebrews to examine our Lord’s “perfection”, His endurance and the resurrection in that context. Hebrews is also a book about “perfection” or maturity, running a race and pleasing the Lord, not about becoming a Christian or maintaining our initial salvation. We did not save ourselves by works nor do we keep ourselves saved by works. We were saved and sealed upon believing (Eph.1:13) but the faithful look to a reward. Here are some passages that set the context of Hebrews;

Heb 2:3 how shall we escape *if we neglect* so great a salvation, (cp 8:9 = regarded not)

Heb 5:13 For everyone partaking of milk is unskillful in the Word of Righteousness, for he is an infant.

Heb 5:14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age (perfection),

Heb 6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity (perfection),

Heb 6:9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you and things that accompany salvation,

Heb 10:38 Now, "the Just shall live by faith. But if he draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him." Cp 13:20-21.

Heb 10:39 But we are not of those "who draw back" to destruction (perdition or waste), ...

Heb 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Heb 12:1 Therefore let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Heb 12:25 See that you do not refuse Him who speaks.we shall not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks,

Heb 13:20-21 Now may the God of peace ...make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight

Notice in this book that faith has to do with pleasing God in growth and works. The Hebrews are urged to leave infancy; the elemental things of salvation and go on to productivity rather than drawing back to waste. Growing into adulthood is about things that accompany salvation. Hebrews is not about our God who gives a gift of eternal life but our God who rewards those who diligently seek Him. Diligent means to search out, to investigate, to crave or demand and please, compare 2Tim.2:15.

This passage shows the faithfulness of the Lord;

Heb 5:8 though being a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Heb 5:9 And being perfected, He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him,

Our Lord is the wonderful example of One who endured and went onto perfection. It is also written of Him that He is not only the author of faith but the finisher thereof. He became victorious in all He set out to do. Then, having finished, He sat down at the right hand of God.

Heb 12:1 Therefore ... let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Heb 12:2 looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured *the* cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right of the throne of God.

The Lord “endured” the cross which is an emblem of patient suffering in Hebrews and Philipians. The Lord endured, He began and finished the walk and was raised from the dead to glory. If we endure and finish our course we might also be raised from the dead to “salvation with eternal glory” just like our Lord. This is the “resurrection Paul desired to “attain”.

Let us now examine some of the “better” things in Hebrews. These “better things” are either the result of faithfulness or given to the faithful who endured, who went on to perfection. Though Hebrews is not about us, the lessons are here;

Heb 1:4 being made so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Heb 7:22 by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better covenant. See also “better” priesthood in 7:24.

Heb 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by so much He is also the Mediator of a better covenant, which was built upon better promises.

Heb 11:16 But now they stretch forth to a better *fatherland* (country), that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them. (The City is something extra provided by God).

Heb 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again, and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.

This word "obtain" in Hebs.11:35 is exactly the same original word as found here;

2Ti 2:10 Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. Compare Colossians 1:28.

There is sufficient evidence to show that those who endure like our Lord have "better" things in view. Paul wanted something "better" when he desired to "attain" the resurrection of Philippians 3. While this is not the "better resurrection" of Hebrews yet it certainly is not the general resurrection we all have because we are in Christ, and so it is indeed "better". Paul wanted to "attain" a resurrection out from the dead, a resurrection in the context of winning Christ, the prize, the crown and reigning with Christ.

If Paul wanted this, then shouldn't we all? If our God has offered us something "better" then should we disregard or neglect such an offer?

Next lesson we shall examine features of our Lord's resurrection from the dead. We shall seek hints as to its power as a guide to the features of the resurrection Paul was willing to attain by any means.

Previous lesson in this series can be found here;

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