



ADVANCING
THE
GOSPEL

Philippians 3:12-21

Introduction

- Paul's earthly goal was to be united with Christ in suffering.
- But Paul explains that his ultimate goal was to be united with Christ in His Resurrection, that he would experience the resurrection from the dead and be united with Christ for eternity.
- This is the prize for the Christian, not earthly rewards.
- Because our citizenship is in heaven, we are to look to the coming glory.

Philippians 3:12-16

What Lies Ahead

- Paul has not yet arrived.
- He emphasizes that he is still pursuing and growing in the knowledge and power of Christ.
- It is not something, he says, that he can make or has made on his own.
- For Paul, everything about his ministry is a product of God's work and God's faithfulness.
- Paul attributes the work to Christ and Christ alone.

What Lies Ahead

- In verse 12, Paul makes it clear that he “presses on” (*dioko*) because Christ “made me his own.”
- He used to pursue the Church to tear it down, but now he pursues Christ to build up the Church.
- The only reason he is able to do any of this work is because of the work Christ has done in him. Paul isn’t focused on his own sinful past and all that he brought against the Church. Through the power of Christ at work in Paul, Paul redirects his focus.

What Lies Ahead

- Just as a runner has “one thing” on his mind, so Paul has a single and central goal for his life. He specifies what this goal is.
- In verse 14, he “presses on” toward the “goal” for the “prize” of the “upward calling,” building on the image of a runner.
- Just as a runner would never win if he kept looking back to where he started, so Paul “forgets” his past because of his overwhelming joy and desire for what lies ahead.

What Lies Ahead

- In verse 15 the word “mature” (*teleios*) seems to simply mean “full” or “not lacking.” Paul’s use here is likely meant to play off his use of it in verse 12.
- The believer is on a perpetual trajectory of growth until the day of Christ; a continual process of faith, submission, pursuit, revelation and obedience.
- Because of what Jesus has done, believers already have a righteous position in Christ. It is time for the Philippians to live up to what they already have (verse 16).

Philippians 3:17-19

Imitation

- In Philippians 2:5, the first call for imitation was to imitate Christ.
- Now in verse 17, Paul instructs the Philippians to imitate him.
- Although Paul is not perfect, he is seeking to be more like Christ and has no qualms in asking the believers to observe and imitate him.
- Growth often comes from the imitation of others.
- Not only should the Philippians, and other believers, imitate Paul, they should also imitate other mature believers (verse 17).

Imitation

- Imitating mature Christians such as Paul is important, because there are other, dangerous alternative examples.
- Paul mournfully describes these false teachers in verses 18 and 19.
- In verse 18, Paul's compassion and the weight he felt are displayed, as he gives his report with tears, the only place recorded that Paul mentions crying.
- He warns the Philippians of those who've gone astray, not with pride or anger, but a broken heart.

Imitation

- The Philippians were not to live lives of indulgence and safety, but of sacrifice and courage.
- This is the life Paul espoused and likewise believes is central to following and knowing Christ.
- But others were not living this way. They did not strive to know Christ and the power of His Resurrection, nor share in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10).
- Instead, in verse 19, they had earthly “minds / thinking,” contrasted elsewhere in this letter (Philippians 2:2, 5; 3:15).

Imitation

- These false teachers are described as enemies of the Cross.
- They were focused on their own physical desires (“their god is their belly”).
- They sought their own glory and thus brought themselves shame (“they glory in their shame”).
- They were consumed with earthly things (verse 19).
- Sadly, their end is destruction.

Imitation

- Christ is the ultimate example that Christians follow. We also need good role models in the faith.
- Christians must strive to imitate those following in Paul's example as well as strive to be an example for others to imitate.
- Christians have been called to salvation for God's glory and for the sake of others.
- The church lives this calling when we set our minds on the things of Christ, not the things of this world.

Philippians 3:20-21

Citizenship in Heaven

- The Philippians were proud of their citizenship in Rome, despite being located in Macedonia.
- Paul utilizes this aspect to highlight their true or primary citizenship.
- Despite all the privileges and responsibilities of Roman citizenship, a heavenly one is far exceeding.
- Paul wants the Philippians to see that the true Savior is of heaven, not Rome.

Citizenship in Heaven

- It was a common belief in Rome at the time that Caesar Augustus was the “savior of the world” because he restored order and peace.
- Paul wants his readers to turn their focus and hope to Jesus, not Caesar.
- This shift for the Philippian believers is meant to take their eyes and pride away from what is seen and turn their hearts to hope in the unseen.
- Paul wants the believers to find their hope in the kingdom that is coming, not in the one found in Rome.

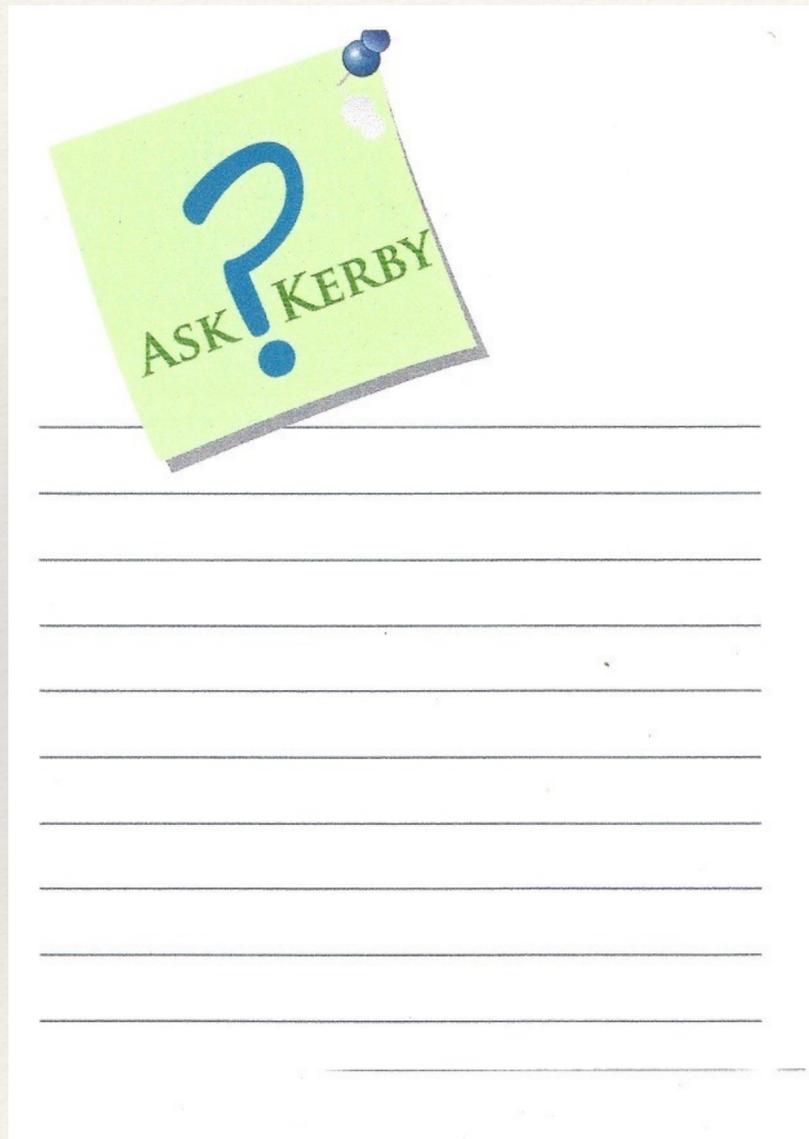
Citizenship in Heaven

- As the root of their hope, in verse 21, Paul describes the certain future for believers.
- Though they are to endure whatever trials God brings their way, eventually their hope will turn to sight, pain erased, disease done away with, and death no more.
- Because of this hope, their concerns ought not be too focused on this earthly life.

Citizenship in Heaven

- Verse 21 gives great hope for the Christian because Paul says Christ will return and “transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body.”
- This verb that Paul uses envisions a dramatic, supernatural event when Christ will “change the form” of our body from lowly to glorious.
- This allows the Christian to hope in eager anticipation for the day when their bodies will be free of sin, decay, weakness, suffering, and death.
- This is our glorious hope!

Ask Kerby



How was the calendar use of BC and AD adopted?

The movie we saw last week mentioned BCE. What does that mean?

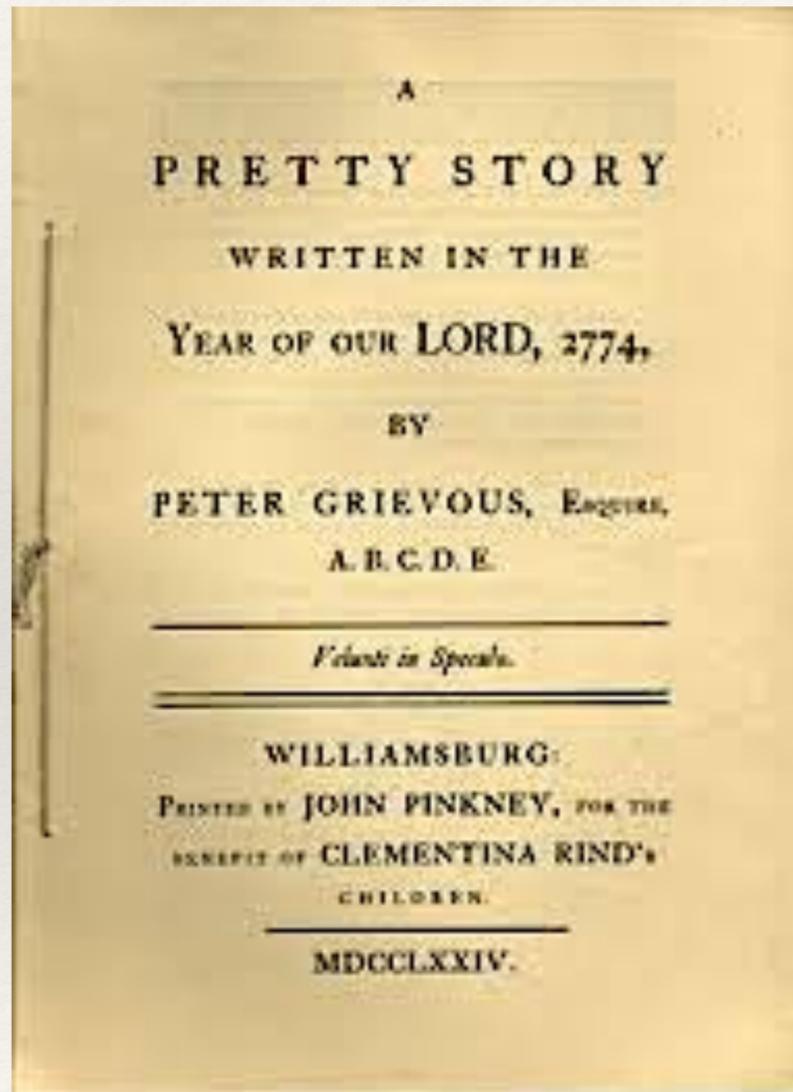
BC and AD

- In our modern calendar, we label all years with BC and AD. BC means “before Christ” while AD means “anno domini” or “in the year of our lord.”
- By the way, there is no “zero year,” and the original assumption was that Christ was born in AD 1 while the year preceding is 1 BC. We now know Jesus was born earlier (probably 4-5 BC).
- This calendar convention was proposed in the sixth century, and was later adopted by Pope Gregory XIII. It took quite a while for it to become a worldwide standard (Russia and Turkey only adopted it in the 20th century).

BCE and CE

- Secular professors instead use the “politically correct terms” of CE and BCE.
- CE is used in place of AD.
- CE refers to the “Common Era” or the “Current Era.”
- BCE describes the era preceding the Common Era.
- This therefore means “Before the Common Era, or “Before the Current Era.”
- It has become a way for non-Christians to refer to historical periods without even making an indirect mention of Jesus Christ.

In the Year of Our Lord



*Done in Convention by the Unanimous Consent of
the Continental Congress on the 17th Day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven
hundred and seventy four of the Independance of the United States of America the 17th*

