

# Focus on Heaven

## A Review of the Book of Philippians

The highest priority in every Christian's life should be to make it to heaven. A study of the book of Philippians will leave one with a sharper vision of this objective. Thematically, Paul states, "*for our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ:*" (Phil. 3:20). Heaven will be a place comprised of people who lived life with a spiritual purpose. The mind or thinking of a heavenward bound Christian is prescribed in the book of Philippians. Three major themes in Philippians expose the mind that sincerely looks to heaven. The heavenward bound man or woman will think spiritually, fellowship spiritual instructions, and care for others' spirituality.

People bound for heaven will have a peculiar way of **thinking**. Said Christian considers others above self (Phil. 2:4). When the heavenward bound Christian is treated shamefully by others, he does not seek vengeance. Said individual does not wear emotions on his sleeves to the point that he is offended by every look and statement of a spouse, brethren, and even those of the world (Phil. 2:14; 4:12). He does not hope and trust in his earthly achievements (Phil. 3:3-9). When desperate times come, he does not fall into disparity (Phil. 4:11-13). When heaven is my true objective in life, I "*learn*" (Phil. 4:11-12) to be somewhat detached from the cares of this world. During Paul's day it seemed to be some people's objective to cause him pain, yet this did not bother him because heaven was his focus (cf. Phil. 1:12, 17-21, 30; 3:11-13, 20-21; 3:15; 4:12). Whether Paul was ill treated, hungry, or doing well in life, he was content knowing that he "*can do all things through him* (Christ) *that strengthens*" (4:13). When you and I "*learn*" to put away the cares of this world, our relationships with God, brethren, and our spouses will be much better. We will have a different outlook in life than the world. Our objective is ever to be heaven!

Secondly, those whose objective is heaven will not only have a peculiar way of thinking, but they will fellowship (share in) spiritual things. The book of Philippians reveals several aspects of Bible fellowship. Bible fellowship is to exist in the areas of preaching to the lost (Phil. 1:5), the grace of God (Phil. 1:7), defending and confirming truth (Phil. 1:7), the Spirit (Phil. 2:1) (i.e. doctrinal unity) (Phil. 1:27; 2:2; 4:2), the suffering of Jesus (Phil. 3:10), sharing in each other's afflictions (Phil. 1:7, 4:14), and supporting gospel preachers (Phil. 4:15). Paul's hope was to "*gain Christ, and be found in him*" (Phil. 3:8-9). When I fellowship spiritual things, I "*gain Christ.*" I **share** in all aspects of the life of Christ when I put Him on (cf. Col. 3:12-15).

Lastly, those whose objective is heaven will desire to see others make it to heaven. Heavenward bound people will think more highly of others than self (Phil. 2:3-4), pray (Phil. 1:9-11, 19), long for (Phil. 1:8), be thankful for (Phil. 1:3), warn (Phil. 3:2, 18-19), encourage faithfulness in (Phil. 1:10, 27; 2:12), and share in each other's afflictions (Phil. 1:7, 4:14), and be willing to support the preaching of the gospel (Phil. 2:30, 4:10, 18).

Note that in each of the above three themes of Philippians, the only individuality that the Christian has is a desire to make it to heaven. Paul says, "*Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded...*" (Phi. 3:15). Christ had no emotional, physical, or spiritual ties to earth other than being passionately concerned about the souls of men (cf. Phil. 2:6-8). Paul calls upon Christians to examine his life of contentment in Christ and so emulate it (Phil. 4:8-9). Today, we have godly men and women to look to for examples to follow (Phil. 3:17). When my mind is focused on heaven, those of the world, brethren, and friends may afflict me with rods or words of disparagement, yet will I press towards heaven. When my health fails and I experience agonizing pain, I will continue to press toward heaven. I may have money, friends, and good health galore, yet I will continue to press towards heaven. Let us remember that "this world is not our home, we are just a passing through..." One's life goal of heaven should ever be the "*one thing I do*" (Phil. 3:13). The next time you get your feelings hurt, experience anger, jealousy, or have feelings of animosity toward someone, check your priorities and remember the book of Philippians.