



Following the upward call through Philippians ...

Found in Christ

Some day soon, Jesus is going to come roaring back. And what will He find? "And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and every free man, *hid themselves* in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains," was the prophetic vision of the apostle John, "and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, 'Fall on us and *hide us* from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?'" (Revelation 6:15-17). They

will want to hide, but Jesus will *find* them! In view of the spiritual decline of mankind on planet earth as the end of the world approaches, Jesus issues a challenge, "However, when the Son of Man comes, will He *find* the faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). That is a question that those who claim the name of Christ had best be able answer in the affirmative if they still sojourn on the surface of this planet. What was it that the apostle Paul desired that Jesus find?

- **Surpassing value** — Paul's Jewish pedigree had a long check list that very few, if any, could match. But he was willing to set those earthly ties aside for the sake of being called one of the adopted sons of God. He lost his standing with the Jews, his position on the high council, and the respectful greetings in the market place; but he gained high standing in the courts of heaven. He was willing to be homeless and persecuted for the cause of Christ. But the great value was just being able to know Jesus. "More than that," states the apostle, in reference to his standing as a Jew prior to his conversion, "I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him ..." (Philippians 3:8,9). The only way anyone can know Jesus is to repent and be immersed into Him. Simply because people feel like they are in close fellowship with Christ does not make it so; the individual must be indwelt by the Holy Spirit in order to know Christ and to be known by Him. "God is Spirit," and the connection with Him must be through His Spirit. Properly understood, there is nothing that could compare with "the surpassing value of knowing Christ."

- **Found in Him** — The earnest desire of the apostle Paul's heart is on display in this section of the letter to the Philippians. He, for the best of reasons, has the intense hope that, at the Lord's second coming, he "may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Philippians 3:9). At the Lord's return, the angels will be taking the wicked out from the righteous; Paul wants to be "found" in Christ so that he is not cast "into the furnace of fire." To be righteous, a person has to be in Christ; initially he has no personal righteousness to bring before the Almighty in order to recommend himself for eternal life. Following being clothed with Christ in immersion, God expects that the saint's participation in "the faith of Christ" will produce an actual practicing righteousness.

The disciple of Christ has been "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). "Little children," explained the apostle John, "let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous" (1 John 3:7). By the word of God, and by the strength which the Spirit supplies, the saint — like Paul — can be *found* in Christ at His return, exhibiting the righteousness which comes from God.

The "faith of Christ" will produce an actual practicing righteousness.

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