

Following the upward call through Philipians ...

*I press on
toward the goal to
win the prize for
which God has
called me
heavenward
in Christ
Jesus.*

Philippians 3:14

Body of Glory

"You are from below," said Jesus to some of the hostile Jewish hierarchy, "I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world" (John 8:23). Jesus clearly came from heaven, as revealed in some of the poignant comments recorded in the gospel according to John. Another example is in regard to the glorification of the Christ. Speaking of the rivers of living water referenced by Jesus, the scripture commented, "But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). For that

glorification Jesus prayed, using these words: "And now, glorify Me together with Yourself with the glory which I had with You before the world was" (John 17:5). The Lord had come from glory, and was returning to glory following His crucifixion and resurrection. He came from heaven to earth, and returned to heaven again. His goal: to lift men — those who would be willing to be redeemed from the morass into which mankind in general had fallen — up to the heights of heaven itself.

▼ **Born from above** — Jesus came "from above"; He used similar terminology in describing those who would be immersed into Christ. "Truly, truly, I say to you," He animadverted, "unless one is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This more literal rendition of this famous verse really brings out what Jesus was intending to accomplish; no longer would His disciples be "from below"; they would like Him be "from above."

▼ **Heavenly citizenship** — The Philippian brethren had all been "born of water and the Spirit." Hence Paul, contrasting them with the enemies of the cross, "who set their minds on earthly things," lifts their spirits with these words: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Philippians 3:20). Saints have been raised up and seated with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6). It makes sense, then, that each Christian is already a citizen of heaven, and is also "from above."

▼ **The second coming** — The angels ("two men in white clothing") explained to the apostles as Jesus lifted off the earth and was received out of their sight by a cloud: "This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). "Behold," said John the revelator, "He is coming in the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him" (Revelation 1:7). Saints, then, "eagerly wait for a Savior" who will come from heaven.

▼ **Resurrection body** — At the Lord's return, everyone — saved and unsaved — will receive their resurrection bodies. For the faithful disciples of Christ, this will be a tremendously joyous moment. Jesus, at that time, "will transform the body of our humble state into conformity of the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself" (Philippians 3:21). How awesome will it be to be a recipient of that great power of Christ, when that power transforms our humble, weak, transient bodies into conformity with that tremendous glory that Jesus now possesses following His ascension!

The apostle Paul has been making the general point all the way through this section about how much he personally desires the proper resurrection from the dead. As he discussed the enemies of the cross, he noted that their "end is destruction." Properly understood, that destructive end in the lake of fire, where the smoke of the torment goes up forever and ever, is overpowering and mind-numbing. At the exact opposite end of the spiritual spectrum is the resurrection of the righteous. "We know that," said the apostle John, "when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is" (1 John 3:2). We eagerly await!

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