

Philippians 3:20–21

Our Citizenship Is in Heaven

THEME: WHERE DO YOU BELONG?

Key Scripture Passage

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

— PHILIPPIANS 3:20–21 (NASB)

I. HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

1. Abraham the Stranger

Lived as a stranger because he belonged to something greater. Looking for the city whose architect and builder is God (Heb 11:8–10).

2. Israel Belonged to God

Described as God's treasured possession and a holy kingdom of priests (Exod 19:5–6; Deuteronomy).

3. David's Understanding

Acknowledged that earthly life is temporary: God's people are like strangers and sojourners before Him (1 Chr 29:15).

4. The Prophets' Vision

Pointed toward an everlasting kingdom established by God that destroys competing earthly kingdoms (Dan 2:44; 7:13–14).

I. The Patriarchs' Heavenly Desire

“By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God..”

— HEBREWS 11:8-10 (NASB)

I. The Patriarchs' Heavenly Desire

*“All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth... But as it is, they desire a **better country**, that is, a heavenly one.”*

— HEBREWS 11:13, 16 (NASB)

II. JESUS DEVELOPS THIS IDEA IN THE GOSPELS

👑 John 18:36 — “My kingdom is not of this world.”

💎 Matthew 6:19–21 — Store up treasure in heaven, where true worth abides.

🙏 Matthew 6:10 — Pray for the coming kingdom: “Thy kingdom come.”

📺 Luke 12:32–34 — Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

🏠 John 14:1–3 — Jesus promises a place prepared specifically for us w/ Him.

III. PAUL STATES THE TRUTH EXPLICITLY

Without Citizenship (Phil 3:18–19)

- Live for earthly appetites
- Glory in earthly things
- Their destiny is destruction

With Heavenly Citizenship (Phil.3:20-21)

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”



IV. “OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN”

The Greek Word: *Politeuma*

Occurs only here in the New Testament. Means citizenship, commonwealth, or civic belonging.

The Philippian Context

Philippi was a proud Roman colony. Citizenship meant security, privilege, and distinctive duty.

“You Philippians understand citizenship. You know what it means to belong to a great commonwealth with sacred privileges and obligations.”

V. HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP MEANS HEAVENLY IDENTITY

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household.”

— EPHESIANS 2:19 (NASB)



Corporate Identity: Paul says “*our*” citizenship—we belong together to a redeemed people.



Personal Belonging: “I belong to Christ, and I belong to Christ’s eternal family.”

VI. REPRESENTING HEAVEN ON EARTH

“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the
gospel of Christ...”

— PHILIPPIANS 1:27 (NASB)

Practical Implication

Philippians 1:27 uses the verb *politeuomai* ("live as a citizen"). As citizens of heaven, our daily conduct on earth must accurately reflect our heavenly King.

Privileges also bring Responsibilities

VII. “EAGERLY WAITING FOR A SAVIOR”

1. Expectation

Paul immediately connects citizenship with active, daily expectation.

2. Waiting

We are not passively existing, but eagerly anticipating His arrival.

3. The Person

We wait for a Person: “*a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

VIII. CHRIST WILL COME FROM HEAVEN

Acts 1:11

Jesus will come again in the same personal manner in which He ascended.

1 Thessalonians 4:16–17

The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, catching up His saints.

Titus 2:13

Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior.

Revelation 19

Presents Christ's glorious return and triumphant victory over all His enemies.

IX. TRANSFORMATION

*“...who will transform the body of our humble state into.
conformity with the body of His glory...”*

— PHILIPPIANS 3:21A (NASB)

Body Transformed

Our bodies are not discarded.
Christ will transform our earthly
body of “lowly condition.”

X. CONFORMITY

*“...who will transform the body of our humble state into.
conformity with the body of His glory...”*

— PHILIPPIANS 3:21A

Conformed to Christ

Fulfills Romans 8:29 — God’s ultimate purpose is glorification and conformity to Christ.

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

— Romans 8:23

THIS IS WHY 1 CORINTHIANS 15 MATTERS

1 Corinthians 15:42–53 — The Great Resurrection Contrast

Present Body

- Perishable
- In Dishonor
- In Weakness
- Natural Body

Resurrection Body

- Imperishable
- In Glory
- In Power
- Spiritual Body

XI. CHRIST'S POWER

Christ's expectant Power

“...by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”

— Philippians 3:21b

This transformation will occur whether we are alive or dead when the Lord returns

(1 Cor. 15:51-54; 1 Thess. 5:9-10).

This amazing change will transpire because of the same divine power by which God will eventually subject everything in the universe to Himself.

APPLICATIONS – The Present RESPONSIBILITIES of Citizenship

APPLICATION 1: Not Earthly Irresponsibility

Heavenly mindedness does not mean “this world doesn't matter.” The New Testament commands us to conduct ourselves worthy of the gospel right here on earth.

APPLICATION 2: How do I balance the Spiritual – Physical

1. Set your mind on things above (Colossians 3:2)
2. Keep your feet on this earth below *“Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”* (Philippians 2:4)

APPLICATIONS 3 – 6

APPLICATION 3

Be a good citizen of your earthly country without making it your ultimate allegiance.

APPLICATION 4

Heavenly citizenship should make us more, not less, committed to the local church body.

APPLICATION 5

Heavenly citizenship gives us unwavering hope when our physical bodies fail or suffer.

APPLICATION 6

Heavenly citizenship means we must live each day with an eternal, kingdom perspective.

CONCLUSION: THREE TIMES & DIRECTIONS

1. PRESENT

**Where We
Belong**

*“Our citizenship is
in heaven.”*

Identity
established now.

2. PRESENT / FUTURE

**Whom We
Expect**

Eagerly waiting for
the Savior. Hope
centered on Christ.

3. FUTURE

**What Christ Will
Do**

He will transform
our bodies into
glorious
conformity.

FINAL CHALLENGE

LOOK UP

Our citizenship is in heaven.

LIVE OUT

Conduct ourselves as citizens of heaven while here.

LOOK FORWARD

Eagerly await our Savior, Jesus Christ.

LOOK LIKE HIM

He will transform us into conformity with His body.