

## **THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS**

### **III. Philippians: Nurture In Living In Preoccupation With Christ**

#### **C. Nurture In Resting In God And His Plan For Us Regardless What Occurs In Life (Philippians 1:19-28)**

##### **I. Introduction**

- A. When Paul wrote his epistle to the Philippians, he faced either being released from prison or being executed for the Christian faith, and this uncertainty tempted his readers to be troubled, Philippians 1:12-13, 20-21.
- B. Paul helped his readers deal with this uncertainty by telling how he looked to God for help regardless what he was facing and by teaching them to heed his example, and his words on this offer edifying directives for us:

##### **II. Nurture In Resting In God and His Plan For Us Regardless What Occurs In Life, Philippians 1:19-28.**

- A. Paul wrote that his imprisonment would end in his "deliverance," a word that lexically means either temporal deliverance or spiritual salvation (*sotaria*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 808-809), Phil. 1:19a. Since Paul's physical safety was not intended because in Philippians 1:20 he wrote that either life or death possibly awaited him (J. B. Lightfoot, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians*, 1974, p. 91), Paul asserted that whatever occurred would result in spiritual gain and glory, God's "deliverance" for him.
- B. This "deliverance" would be handled by God's answering the intercessory prayers of his readers through granting Paul the needed mental, emotional and spiritual "support" (*epichoregia*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 305) of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, namely, the Holy Spirit's support, Phil. 1:19b; John 14:16-18 ESV.
- C. Paul added that the "deliverance" he earnestly expected and hoped to gain was that in nothing would he be "ashamed, disgraced" [in intimidation] (Ibid., p. 25), but **rather** (the strong adversative, *alla*, *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*, 1966, p. 682) that with all "courage, confidence, boldness" (*parresia*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 635-636) he might then as he had always before in his ministry seen Christ be "magnified, glorified" in his body, whether it be the court's decision to acquit him or to execute him for his Christian faith, Philippians 1:20.
- D. Paul added that either outcome of his trial was only gain if met with the courage the Holy Spirit supplied since for him to live was the glorification of Christ in his life, and to die was gain in the sense of his "union with Christ, without the limitations of this life," Philippians 1:21; *Ryrie Study Bible, KJV*, ftn. to Philippians 1:21.
- E. The Apostle Paul knew it was beneficial for his readers that he be acquitted since that would provide more opportunity for productive spiritual service for their good (Phil. 1:22), but he was personally caught between not knowing if he desired to continue to live or to die to be with Christ, Phil. 1:23a: departing to be with Christ was far better for Paul, but it was also necessary that he remain alive for his readers' welfare, Phil. 1:23b-24.
- F. Knowing of the great need for his readers, Paul was **permanently convinced** (perfect participle of *peitho*, "convince," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 644-645; *The Analytical Grk. Lex.* (Zon.), 1972, p. 317) that he would remain and "continue" (*parameno*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 625-626) alive for their further edification in the joy of the faith, that their rejoicing might abound in Christ through his returning to them, Phil. 1:25-26.
- G. Having discussed the issue of the uncertainty of the trial outcome Paul faced, he returned to address the all important goal of his calling as an apostle, that of the discipleship of his Colossian readers, Phil. 1:27-30:
  - 1. Paul urged that his readers only "conduct, lead" their lives (*politeuomai*, Ibid., p. 693) in a way that was "worthy of" (*axios*, Ibid., p. 78) the Gospel of Christ, Philippians 1:27a.
  - 2. By this directive Paul meant that whether he were to come to his readers or remain absent from them, he wanted to hear that they were standing fast in a unified spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel, and in nothing being terrified by their anti-Christian opponents, Philippians 1:27b-28a.
  - 3. Such boldness from God (cf. Phil. 1:19-20) would act as God's "sign" (*endeizis*, Ibid., p. 262) of inevitable judgment on their foes and eventual deliverance for them, an encouraging token in such trials, Phil. 1:28b.

***Lesson:*** Paul edified his readers over his capital trial case by noting that either his acquittal or execution for the faith was a "victory" for Christ PROVIDING he relied on the Holy Spirit for the courage to maintain a strong stand for the Lord. However, as it was more advantageous for his readers that he stay alive, he was convinced he would be acquitted, so he urged his readers to live worthy of the Gospel in the same courage he had from the Lord.

***Application:*** (1) If we face humanly difficult circumstances in life or ministry, may we rely on the Holy Spirit for the mental, emotional and spiritual fortitude to face them with courage, confidence and boldness, knowing God will be thus glorified in us regardless what occurs in the end. (2) May we like Paul direct those we disciple to the same kind of reliance on the Holy Spirit's power to handle the difficult trials they also face in their lives!