

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 109 – Philippians 2:19-3:16

Day 541: Philippians 2:19-24

Verses 19-30

Paul's great concern is for the progress of the gospel in Philippi, even as he wants them to know that the gospel is served in his own circumstances. It is for this reason he sends this letter and with it Epaphroditus (vv. 25-30), and for this reason also he hopes to send Timothy (vv. 19-24) before coming himself to Philippi (v.24).

Verse 19

Ἐλπίζω δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα κἀγὼ εὐψυχῶ γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν.

ἐλπίζω hope, expect

On the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Lightfoot comments, "The Christian is part of Christ, a member of His body. His every thought and word and deed proceeds from Christ, as the centre of volition. Thus he loves in the Lord, he hopes in the Lord, he boasts in the Lord, he labours in the Lord, etc. He has one guarding principle in acting and in forbearing to act, μόνον ἐν Κυρίῳ (1 Cor 7:39)."

Eadie says it expresses dependency, "Only if Christ willed it could it happen, and he felt and hoped that his intention to send Timothy, after a brief interval, was in accordance with the mind of Christ."

ταχέως adv. quickly, at once, soon

Here 'as soon as possible.'

πέμπω send

κἀγὼ a compound word = καὶ ἐγὼ

εὐψυχέω be encouraged, be cheered

This verb is found here alone in the New Testament.

γνοῦς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s γινώσκω

Verse 20

οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω ἰσόψυχον ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει,

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδέν no one, nothing
ἰσοψυχός, οὐ sharing in the same feelings

This adjective occurs nowhere else in the NT. Lightfoot says that Paul's meaning is that he has none *like Timothy* who has such genuine concern for the Philippians.

Eadie suggests that the comparison implied in the adjective is not between Timothy and other of Paul's helpers but between Timothy and the apostle himself – i.e. there is no-one, other than Timothy, who cares for the Philippians in the way Paul does. So Fee who says, "Paul emphasises that the primary reason for *Timothy's* coming is that he can count on him to carry Paul's own deep concerns at heart."

ὅστις, ἧτις, ὅτι who, which
γνησίως adv genuinely
μεριμνάω be anxious, be concerned about

Verse 21

οἱ πάντες γὰρ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
ἑαυτός, ἑαυτή, ἑαυτόν see v.7
ζητέω seek, search for, look for

Cf. 2 Tim 4:10.

Fee argues that 'all' is not a reference to other co-workers who are not quite like Timothy: "Given what we know of Paul elsewhere and the high regard with which he holds those who travel with him, and that in 4:21 he sends greetings from 'the brothers who are with me,' it does not seem possible that he should here slander them with this kind of barrage." He thinks rather that Paul is referring to people like those mentioned in 1:15 and 17 who preach Christ but for their own ends. The words are also intended also for the Philippians for they are to beware of such people and to follow rather the example of Paul and Timothy – or more correctly of Christ. They are to put the needs of others before self-interest and so follow Christ in the way of the cross.

Verse 22

τὴν δὲ δοκιμὴν αὐτοῦ γινώσκετε, ὅτι ὡς πατρὶ τέκνον σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.

δοκιμή, ἡς f character, proof, proven character

"'approved character' as in 2 Cor 2:9; 9:13 ... Timothy was personally well known to the Philippians." Lightfoot

πατήρ, πατήρ m father

τέκνον, οὐ n child

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγὼ

δουλεύω serve, be a slave

εὐαγγέλιον, ου n **good news, gospel**

In the ancient world it would have been common for a son to learn his trade from his father. Timothy had been like a son to Paul, learning from him the business of being a minister of the gospel.

Verse 23

τοῦτον μὲν οὖν ἐλπίζω πέμψαι ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἔξαστῆς·

ἐλπίζω see v.19

ἀφίδω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἀφοραω fix one's eyes on; ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τα περι ἐμε as soon as I know my situation

Another verb which occurs here only in the NT.

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγω

ἔξαστῆς adv immediately, at once

"Although the clause is awkwardly expressed in the Greek, Paul's point is clear. As soon as he has any inkling as to the outcome of the trial, he will send Timothy to fill them in further on 'my affairs.' Thus Timothy's reason for coming is twofold: in the first instance for Paul's sake, to see how the letter has affected them; and second for their sakes, to be encouraged and brought up to speed about the outcome of his imprisonment." Fee

Verse 24

πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι.

Cf. 1:24-26.

πέποιθα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s πειθω persuade; perf have confidence, be confident

ταχέως see v.19

ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s ἔρχομαι

Day 542: Philippians 2:25-30

Verse 25

Ἀναγκαῖον δὲ ἡγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιωτὴν μου, ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

ἀναγκαῖος, α, ον **necessary, urgent**
ἡγησάμην Verb, aor midd dep indic, 1 s ἡγεομαι **think, regard, consider**

An 'epistolatory aorist' (as also ἐπέμψα v.28). The perspective of the verb is from the time of expected receipt of the letter, not the time of writing.

We know nothing of Epaphroditus except what we read of here.

συνεργος, ου m **fellow-worker**

συστρατιωτης, ου m **fellow soldier**

Fee thinks that "the imagery is that of a wounded comrade-in-arms, who is being sent back home for a rest."

"The true Apostle, like St Peter or St John, bears the title as the messenger, the delegate, of Christ himself, while Epaphroditus is only so styled as the messenger of the Philippian brotherhood; and in the very next clause the expression is explained by the statement that he carried alms to St Paul... For this sense of ἀποστολος, 'a delegate or messenger of a church,' see 2 Cor 8:23." Lightfoot

λειτουργος, ου m **servant, minister**

χρεια, ας f **need, want**

πεμπω **send**

"In a culture where prisoners were not cared for by the state, but whose 'necessities' for life (especially food) had to be supplied by friends or relatives, this is no small thing that they had done. They have thus 'offered priestly service' (to God, is implied) by their sending Epaphroditus with the gift necessary for him to sustain life in prison. This present word about Epaphroditus anticipates the full acknowledgement in 4:14-20." Fee

Verse 26

ἐπειδὴ ἐπιποθῶν ἦν πάντας ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἀδημονῶν διότι ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἠσθένησεν.

ἐπειδη since, because, for

ἐπιποθεω long for, desire

The present participle indicates continual longing.

ἀδημονεω **be distressed or troubled**

Cf. Matt 26:37; Mk 14:33 where the verb is used of Jesus' agony.

"It describes the confused, restless, half-distracted state, which is produced by physical derangement, or by mental distress, or grief, shame, disappointment, etc." Lightfoot

διότι because, for, therefore

ἀσθενεω **be sick, be ill, be weak**

Fee suggests that Epaphroditus may have been taken ill on his way to Rome (cf. comments of Eadie on v.30), and one of his travelling companions returned to Philippi with the news. Epaphroditus continued on his way to Rome at great risk to his health and even his life (v.30).

Verse 27

καὶ γὰρ ἠσθένησεν παραπλήσιον θανάτῳ· ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἠλέησεν αὐτόν, οὐκ αὐτὸν δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ, ἵνα μὴ λύπην ἐπὶ λύπην σχῶ.

παραπλήσιον Adv. nearly, almost
θανατος, ου m death
ἐλεαω and ἐλεεω be merciful, show
kindness

μονος, η, ον only, alone
λυπη, ης f grief, sorrow, pain

Perhaps meaning the sorrow of Epaphroditus's death on top of the sorrow of his present sufferings.

σχῶ Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἔχω

Verse 28

σπουδαιοτέρως οὖν ἔπεμψα αὐτόν ἵνα ἰδόντες αὐτόν πάλιν χαρήτε κάγω ἀλυπότερος ὦ.

σπουδαιοτερωσ all the more eagerly; with
greater urgency
πεμπω send

"I.e. with the letter, as in Eph 6:22; Col 4:8; Philemon 11 and perhaps also 2 Cor 9:3." Lightfoot

ιδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄρω
see

παλιν again, once more
χαρήτε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl χαιρω
rejoice, be glad

Eadie provides evidence that Paul, almost always puts παλιν before the verb to which it relates. Hence the sense is that they will rejoice again.

κάγω a compound word = και ἐγω
ἀλυποτερος, α, ον relieved of sorrow or
anxiety
ὦ Verb, pres subj, 1 s εἶμι

Verse 29

προσδέχεσθε οὖν αὐτόν ἐν κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς, καὶ τοὺς τοιούτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε,

προσδεχομαι receive, welcome, accept
τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun
and adjective such, of such kind
ἐντιμος, ον valuable, honoured,
esteemed

"and hold such in honour,' that is, such as Epaphroditus. The more usual classic form of expression is, ἐντιμας ἔχειν ... The class of men οἱ τοιοῦτοι, of whom Epaphroditus is a noted example, deserve the esteem and gratitude of the church for their self-denying and disinterested labours." Eadie

Verse 30

ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἤγγισεν, παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ ἵνα ἀναπληρωσῇ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας.

μεχρι unto, as far as
θανατος, ου m death
ἐγγιζω approach, draw near
παραβολευσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep
ptc, m nom s παραβολευομαι risk
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul',
living being, person
ἀναπληρωση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s
ἀναπληρωω complete the full measure
of, fill

ὑστερημα, τος n what is lacking

"The lack was not in the gift itself, but in the ministrations of it. They were absent and could not minister to the apostle; but Epaphroditus, by his kind and assiduous attentions, fully made up what was necessarily wanting on their part." Eadie

λειτουργια, ας f service

"The probability is, either that his attendance on the apostle in Rome had exposed him in some way or other to a dangerous malady, or that, in his extreme haste to convey the Philippian gift and tender personal service to the prisoner, he had brought on an alarming sickness during his journey." Eadie

Day 543: Philippians 3:1-6**Verse 1**

Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ. τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining: (το)
λοιπον adv. finally, henceforth, from
now on

Many think that Paul begins his conclusion, but then breaks into a new subject only to resume his conclusion in 4:8. Fee disagrees and suggests that the meaning here is not 'finally' but 'as for the rest [of what needs to be spoken to].' It marks "a transition to the final matters to be taken up in the letter, not its conclusion." Cf. 1 Thess 4:1; 2 Thess 3:1.

χαιρω rejoice, be glad; imperat used as a greeting

Lightfoot argues that the verb means 'Farewell' but also carries with it the injunction to rejoice. Fee, however, argues that this *is* a call to rejoice and "serves as Paul's first antidote to their being taken in by the possible attractiveness of the Judaizing option."

γραφω write

τα αὐτα γραφειν What are these 'same things'? Lightfoot thinks the words introduce what was intended to be a closing exhortation against dissention, a topic needful to the Phillipians and which chapter 2 had touched on by way of exhortation to Christ-like humility. Fee thinks that the reference is to the warning and exhortation that follows and that v.18, and the insistence that this repetition is for their safety, provide confirmation for this view.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγω
 ὀκνηρος, α, ον troublesome, irksome
 ἀσφαλῆς, ες safe, sure; safeguard;
 definite; the facts

Verses 2-19

Fee comments, "Given the frequency with which Paul speaks to this issue in his letters, one must assume that the arguments of the Judaizing faction had a surface attractiveness to many, despite the (literally) painful consequences if Gentiles were to submit. But Paul appeals not to the physical pain, but to historical and theological realities. *Why* the Phillipians should need to be warned again against such 'rubbish' (v.8), and whether it is related to teachings espoused by either of the women in 4:2, are matters of conjecture. Among the better guesses is that which sees a relationship between the attractiveness of 'becoming Jewish' (a *religio licita*) and the Phillipians' present suffering at the hands of fellow Roman citizens, because they were followers of a *Kyrios* who had been executed as a state criminal. Perhaps by embracing the outward expressions of Jewish identity, they could still belong to Christ but ward off some of the opposition. In any case, and despite the emotive language of v.2, there is little hint either here or elsewhere in the letter that such people are actually *present in Philippi* at the time of this writing or that a serious threat is at hand. After all, Paul's primary response takes the form of personal narrative, not argumentation as such; and not once does he threaten them with the *consequences* of such an action."

Verse 2

Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν.

"What Paul is about to repeat for their 'safety' begins with the threefold warning, 'look out for,' expressed with powerful rhetoric, full of invective and sarcasm against (apparently) Jewish Christians who promote circumcision among Gentile believers... Such people have been 'dogging' him for over a decade, and as the strong language of Gal 5:12 and 2 Cor 11:13-15 makes clear, he has long ago had it to the bellyful with these 'servants of Satan' who think of themselves as 'servants of Christ' (2 Cor 11:15,23)." Fee

βλεπω see, beware of
 κυων, κυνος m dog
 κακος, η, ον evil, bad, harm
 ἐργατης, ου m labourer, workman

"Such people, Paul proffers, in trying to make Gentiles submit to Torah do not work 'righteousness' at all, but evil." Fee

κατατομη, ης f mutilation

The term occurs here only in the NT. "The cognate verb occurs in Lev 21:5 (LXX), which prohibits priests (who 'serve' God) from 'cutting' their flesh as pagan priests did (cf. 1 Kings 18:28)." Fee. "The term justly designates the men whose creed was, 'Except ye be circumcised and keep the whole law of Moses, ye cannot be saved.' Viewed in this light, and as enforced for this end, it was only a cutting, and so the apostle calls those who make so much of it 'the slashers.'" Eadie

"Traditionally, on the basis of centuries of Protestant theology, it has been assumed that they were putting forward Torah observance as a way of getting right with God. But there is serious doubt as to whether that would have been their primary intent; after all, these Gentiles are already believers in Christ, as are all those upon whom the Judaisers urge circumcision. Most likely, therefore, at issue for them is Torah observance as evidence of Gentiles' truly belonging to God's people and therefore of their genuine obedience to Christ. Nonetheless, even though their first interest is in making Jews out of Gentiles, in the sense of securing their place within the Abrahamic covenant, Paul clearly sees through to the ultimate theological consequences for those who would capitulate – that it has the effect of adding a plus factor to grace, and thus of eliminating grace altogether by exchanging it for boasting in 'one's flesh.' This in turn explains why the following argument and illustration from Paul's personal history takes the form it does." Fee

Verse 3

ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἔσμεν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι
θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν
Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκί
πεποιθότες,

The emphatic ἡμεῖς responds to the challenge concerning who are the true people of God.

περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those
circumcised

The expression encompasses Paul and the Philippian church, including both Jews and Gentiles. Cf. Gal 3:9,14; Rom 2:29; 1 Cor 7:19; Gal 5:2,6. Paul goes on to summarise the true marks of the people of God under the New Covenant.

λατρεῦω serve, worship

Many MSS read θεῷ rather than θεοῦ (and p⁴⁶ omits both). Metzger writes, "The singular reading of p⁴⁶ is to be explained as due to accidental oversight, and the reading θεῷ appears to be an emendation introduced in order to provide an object for λατρεύοντες (as in Rom 1:9 and 2 Tim 1:3)."

Of λατρευοντες Fee writes, "Paul's usage is determined by the LXX, where it is used almost exclusively to denote the Levitical 'service' in the temple cultus. Here it stands in ironical contrast to v.2. 'Mutilation' is what those who 'serve' in the temple cultus were forbidden to do. Now, in contrast with the 'workers of iniquity' who are engaged in such illegitimate 'service,' Paul says we are the true circumcision, who 'serve' by the Spirit, over against serving by the flesh. The verb, therefore, is not the one for 'worship' in the sense of what the congregation does together as a gathered people, but represents the 'service' of God's people in terms of their devotion to him as evidenced in the way they live before him. Rather than offering such service by 'cutting away the flesh,' so as to be identified with the people of God under the former covenant, the true circumcision live (= 'serve') in Christ by the power of the Spirit. Thus Paul has in view not external rite over against internal 'spiritual' service, but two ways of existing – in the 'flesh,' which he understands as life centred in the creature as over against God, or as the eschatological people of God, evidenced to be so by the Spirit of God, through whom all life in the present is now service and devotion to God."

καυχασθαι boast, boast about

Cf. Jer 9:23,24 and 1 Cor 1:31; 2 Cor 10:17. "They gloried not in themselves, in anything about themselves – not in circumcision or in Abrahamic descent but in Christ Jesus, and in Him alone – ... in His great condescension; His birth and its wonders; His life and its blessings; His death and its benefits; His ascension and its pledges; His return and its stupendous and permanent results." Eadie

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

Paul makes a play here on the word σαρξ, cf. Gal 3:2-3.

πειθω persuade; perf trust, rely on, have
confidence, be confident

These are the marks of the true child of God: service of God in/by the Spirit; glorying in Christ Jesus (note the Trinitarian structure here); placing no confidence in one's own abilities.

Verse 4

καίπερ ἔγω ἔχων πεποιθήσιν καὶ ἐν σαρκί.
εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἄλλος πεποιθέναι ἐν σαρκί,
ἐγὼ μάλλον·

καίπερ though, although

Introduces an implied conditional – "Though I might ... " Paul is saying that if they (the 'mutilators') want to play that game then he, Paul, can beat them on their home ground.

πεποιθεις, εως f confidence
δοκεω think, suppose
ἄλλος, η, ο another, other
πεποιθέναι Verb, perf act infin πειθω
μαλλον adv rather, instead

Verse 5

περιτομῆ ὀκταήμερος, ἐκ γένους Ἰσραήλ, φυλῆς Βενιαμίν, Ἑβραῖος ἐξ Ἑβραίων, κατὰ νόμον Φαρισαῖος,

"For the dative περιτομῆ 'in respect of circumcision' compare 2:7 σχηματι εὐρεθεις" Lightfoot

ὀκταήμερος, ον on the eighth day
γενος, ους n family, race, people, nation
φυλη, ης f tribe, nation, people

Benjamin was called the 'beloved of the Lord' (Deut 33:12), gave Israel their first king and was alone faithful to Judah. The Holy City itself was in their territory. No Gentile converts who submitted to the Torah could ever claim like privileges.

'A Hebrew of the Hebrews' – "descended from a long line of pure ancestry without any accidental infusion on either side of foreign blood." Eadie. Fee thinks the term sums up the previous three – 'in every way a Hebrew.'

νομος, ον m law

Cf. Acts 26:5. "The combined evidence of Matt 23:15 and Acts 15:5 suggests that Jewish Christians who came to Philippi to promote Torah observance on the part of Gentiles would most likely also belong to this sect." Fee

Verse 6

κατὰ ζῆλος διωκων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, κατὰ δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐν νόμῳ γενόμενος ἄμεμπτος.

ζηλος, ου m, and ους n zeal, jealousy
διωκω persecute, seek
ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church

An evidence of his former zeal for the law and traditions of his fathers.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness
γενόμενος Verb, aor ptc, m nom s γινομαι
ἄμεμπτος, ον blameless, faultless

"He thought himself, and others thought him, without a flaw." Eadie. "Paul has no 'blemishes' on his record, as far as Torah observance is concerned, which means that he scrupulously adhered to the pharisaic interpretation of the Law, with its finely honed regulations for sabbath observance, food laws and ritual cleanliness. His former blamelessness in these matters makes his Christian pronouncements on these items all the more telling." Fee.

Wright, in his commentary on Romans (*New Interpreter's Bible*) comments on this verse: "Presumably he [Paul] meant that, as a good Jew, he regularly used the means of forgiveness and purification that were on offer in the Temple and the sacrificial cult and took part in the great fasts and feasts through which the devout Jew was assured of God's forgiveness and favour. Thus at any moment he was a Jew in good standing; not that he had always done what Torah prescribed (we must not suppose the pre-Christian Paul to have been so ignorant of his own motivation and behaviour), but that he had always repented and sought God's forgiveness through the appropriate methods. Torah, he might have said, can show me that I am a sinner and can also show me the way of forgiveness. We must assume that someone who followed this path would consider themselves 'blameless according to the law.'" See on Romans 3:19-20 for fuller notes on Wright's understanding of Paul.

Day 544: Philippians 3:7-11

Verses 7-11

Fee suggests that these verses begin with the theme of gain and loss, echoing earlier language of the letter (1:21) before introducing the main theme which is *knowing Christ*. The theme of righteousness and the law (picking up v.6) is then introduced against the background of this foundational theme which then returns to occupy the foreground in vv.10-11. Paul's primary focus is on what it means to *know Christ*.

Secondly, Fee suggests, "Even though the content differs considerably, both the linguistic echoes and the general 'form' of the narrative seem intentionally designed to recall the Christ narrative in 2:6-11. While Christ did not *consider* God-likeness to accrue to his own advantage, but 'made himself nothing,' so Paul now *considers* his former 'gain' as 'loss' for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ. As Christ was 'found' in human likeness,' Paul is now 'found in Christ,' knowing whom means to be 'conformed' (echoing the μορφη of a slave, 2:7) to his death (2:8). Finally, as Christ's humiliation was followed by God's 'glorious' vindication of him, so present 'suffering' for Christ's sake will be followed by 'glory' in the form of resurrection. As he has appealed to the Philippians to do, Paul thus exemplifies Christ's 'mindset,' embracing suffering and death. This is what it means to 'know Christ,' to be 'found in him' by means of his gift of righteousness; and as he was raised and exalted to the highest place, so Paul and the Philippian believers, because they are now 'conformed to Christ' in his death, will also be 'conformed' to his glory."

Verse 7

[ἀλλὰ] ἅτινα ἦν μοι κέρδη, ταῦτα ἤγημαι διὰ τὸν Χριστὸν ζημίαν.

Fee thinks that the text without ἀλλὰ is more likely original but recognises that it is a tough call.

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὁ τί who, which, whoever,
whichever, whatever
κερδος, ους n gain

The things he has listed in the previous verses.

ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

"While he cannot renounce – nor does he wish to – what was given him by birth (circumcision, being a member of Israel's race, of the tribe of Benjamin, born of true Hebrew stock), he does renounce them as grounds for boasting, along with his achievement that expressed his zeal for the Law. Hence the significance of his use of the verb, 'I *have come to consider* them as a loss,' rather than a simple affirmation, 'what things *were* gain *are now* loss.'" Fee

ζημια, ας f loss

The transition from the plural, 'whatsoever things', to the singular 'loss' carries the idea that all these things *put together* amount to less than nothing – they are loss.

Verse 8

ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ ἡγοῦμαι πάντα ζημίαν εἶναι διὰ τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνωσεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου μου, δι• ὃν τὰ πάντα ἐξημιωθην, καὶ ἡγοῦμαι σκύβαλα ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω

μενουν and μενουνγε rather, on the contrary

ἀλλὰ μενοῦνγε καὶ 'not only so but what is more' Fee

εἶναι Verb, pres infin εἶμι

ὑπερέχον Verb, pres act ptc, n nom/acc s

ὑπερεχω be of more value than, be better than, surpass

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

"As v.10 will clarify, 'knowing Christ' does not mean to have a head knowledge about him, but to 'know him' personally (BAGD) and relationally. Paul has thus taken up the Old Testament theme of 'knowing God' and applied it to Christ. It means to know him as children and parent know each other, or wives and husbands – knowledge that has to do with personal experience and intimate relationship. It is such knowledge that makes Christ 'trust-worthy.' The intimacy will be expressed in v.10 in terms of 'participation in his sufferings.' In the light of such expansive language, therefore, the object of his 'knowing' is not simply 'Christ,' nor even 'Christ Jesus,' but 'Christ Jesus *my* Lord.'

"Here is the evidence of intimacy and devotion. Paul regularly refers to Christ with the full title and name, 'our Lord, Jesus Christ'; only here does he reverse the order and substitute the first person singular pronoun. The 'Christ Jesus,' because of whom he gladly considers all else to be loss, is none other than 'my Lord.' The reason for such devotion and longing is not expressed here, but it rings forth clearly in Gal 2:20, 'who loved me and gave himself for me.' This is not simply coming to know the deity – it is that, of course – but even more so, it is to know the one whose love for Paul, expressed in the cross and in his arrest on the Damascus road, has transformed the former persecutor of the church into Christ's 'love slave,' whose lifelong ambition is to 'know him' in return, and to love him by loving his people. There is something unfortunate about a cerebral Christianity that 'knows' but does not 'know' in this way." Fee

"Is it not super-eminent knowledge to know Him as the 'Christ,' not simply because He has been anointed 'with the oil of gladness.' but because we too 'have an unction from the Holy One.' – to know him as 'Jesus,' not simply because He wears our nature, but because we feel His human heart throbbing in unison with ours under trial and sorrow – to know Him as Prophet, not simply because He is Light, but because we are light in Him, – to know Him as Priest, not simply because He has laid Himself on the altar, but because the blood of sprinkling is manifest upon our consciences, – to know Him as 'Lord,' not simply because He wears a crown and wields a sceptre, but because we bow to His loving rule and gather the spoils of the victory which He has won and secured?" Eadie

ἔζημιωθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s ζημιωω
(only in pass) lose, suffer loss
σκυβαλον, ου n dung, garbage

The term can mean 'refuse,' "especially of the kind that was thrown out for the dogs to forage through. Although it could possibly mean 'dung' here, more likely Paul is taking a passing shot at the 'dogs' in v.2." Fee

κερδαινω gain, win

Verse 9

καὶ εὕρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, μὴ ἔχων ἐμὴν
δικαιοσύνην τὴν ἐκ νόμου ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ
πίστεως Χριστοῦ, τὴν ἐκ θεοῦ
δικαιοσύνην ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει,

εὕρεθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s εὕρισκω

To be found in Christ now and in the day of resurrection. Fee thinks that the primary reference here is future though within the context of Paul's 'already but not yet' eschatological perspective. "On the other hand, the modifying participial clause ('having righteousness') is oriented toward the present, as is the final purpose clause (vv. 10-11), which is gramatically dependent on the present clause... Paul uses his own story as the paradigm for looking to the future on the basis of the 'presence of the future' found in the righteousness that Christ has provided. He expects to 'gain Christ and be found in him' on the day of Christ, precisely because this is *already* his experience of Christ. Second, *where* Paul is now 'found' – and expects to be at the end – is 'in Christ.' He now lives in fellowship with Christ, who is both the source of this new life and the sphere in which it is lived."

ἐμος, η, ου 1st pers possessive adj my,
mine

δικαιοσύνη, ης see v.6

Paul picks up the theme of v. 6b.
"Circumcision – and all other forms of Torah observance – means to 'boast' in human achievement; and its 'blamelessness' is expressed in ways that count for nothing at all. One is thus neither righteous in the sense of being rightly related to God nor righteous in the sense of living rightly as an expression of that relationship." Fee

Eadie's comment on Paul's understanding of righteousness is worth quoting. "This righteousness – δικαιοσύνη – which the apostle aspired to possess, is the only ground of acceptance with God. In itself it is not ἐμῆ, but of God – ἐκ Θεοῦ – as in His grace He has provided it, so that it is said of us – δαιουμένοι δωρεαν τῆ αὐτοῦ χαριτι. Rom 3:24. It is wrought out by Christ, and in His blood – ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ – Rom 5:9; or it is δια τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ. Rom 3:24. It becomes ours through faith, being in one aspect ἐπι τῆ πιστει, in another δια πιστεως, and in another still, ἐκ πιστεως. Rom 5:1. And this connection of faith is further described thus – λογίζεται ἡ πιστις εἰς δικαιοσύνην; or, subjectively, καρδια πιστευεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην. Rom 10:10. Of the possessor of such righteousness it may be said – δικαιουται παρα τῷ Θεῷ. Gal 3:11. Christ obeyed the law for us, and for us suffered its penalty, and the merit of this obedience unto the death becomes ours, as soon as we can say of ourselves, και ἡμεεις εἰς Χριστον Ἰησουν ἐπιστευσαμεν. Gal 2:16. He who was ἀδικος becomes δικαιος, and escapes that κατακριμα which sin merits, Rom 8:1, the ὀργη Θεου – Rom 1:18; nay, enjoys the benefit of redemption – τὴν ἀφεσιν των παραπτωματος. Eph 1:7. When ἔργα του νομου – works of law, are disclaimed, and faith is simply reposed on God – ἐπι τον δικαιοντα τον ἄσεβη – guilt is cancelled, acceptance is enjoyed, and such a change of state entails a change of character: those in whom the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, 'walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' Rom 8:4. The sinner is not indeed held by any legal fiction to be innocent. The entire process implies his guilt, but he is no longer exposed to the penalty; he is held, or dealt with, as a righteous person, 'the eternal justice of Christ Jesus being imputed to him.' (Hooker) And the result is – οὐς δε ἐδικαιωσε, τουτους και ἐδοξασεν. Rom 8:30. This righteousness, divine in its origin, awful in its medium, and fraught with such results, was the essential element of Paul's religion, and the distinctive tenet of Paul's theology."

πιστις, εως f faith

There is considerable debate over whether the genitive Χριστου here is subjective, 'through Christ's [own] faith[fulness],' or objective 'through faith in Christ.' Fee outlines the debate and, while acknowledging that the subjective genitive has some attractiveness in that it would then refer back to the narrative in 2:6-8," concedes that the context demands the objective genitive. He concludes, "Thus, as usual in Paul, the contrast is between 'works' and 'faith,' not so much referring to forensic 'justification' of those who have 'broken the law' – but referring to the means to and expression of one's relationship with God. Such righteousness comes 'from God,' he insists, in contrast to being 'my own' predicated on the law. And it has been made available through Christ, in whom Paul is now 'found' and in whom he 'boasts,' hence it is 'through faith in Christ.'"

ἐπι τῆ πιστει 'which is on the basis of faith' cf. Acts 3:11. Eadie says this is a dative of instrument.

Verse 10

τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτὸν και τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ και [τὴν] κοινωνίαν [τῶν] παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ,

γινῶναι Verb, aor act infin γινωσκω

"From this statement and the following clauses, it is plain that this knowledge is that of deep and deepening experience." Eadie Fee thinks the first και is expegetic – the sense is 'so that I may know him, *that is*, the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings.'

ἀναστασις, εως f resurrection

The resurrection is linked with the power of the Spirit both in the sense of Christ himself being raised in the power of the Spirit and in that his resurrection life is conveyed to us by the Spirit. To know the risen Christ is to know something of the power of his resurrection life, cf. 2 Cor 4:11.

"Along with the gift of the eschatological Spirit, it was the resurrection of Christ that altered Paul's (and the early church's) understanding of present existence – as both 'already' and 'not yet.' In Jewish eschatological expectations these two events, above all, would mark the beginning of God's final wrapup. Very early on the church recognised that *the* Resurrection (Christ's) had already set the future in motion... In contrast to the backward-looking Judaisers, Paul and the Philippians live the life of the future by the power of the (eschatological) Spirit of God (v.3)." Fee

κοινωνια, ας f fellowship, sharing in, participation
παθημα, τος n suffering

We must not lose sight of the context of Paul's letter: both he and the Philippians were suffering for the gospel. Furthermore, the Judaisers were perhaps offering an option which might enable the Philippians to avoid a measure of suffering for Christ. "But Paul will have none of that, precisely because from his perspective any genuine knowing of Christ means participation in his sufferings, since only in such sufferings does one truly know Christ – as 2:6-8 has made plain... It is difficult to imagine that Paul is not here reflecting on the teaching of his Lord, that those who follow Christ will likewise have to 'bear the cross' on behalf of others." Fee

συμμορφιζομαι take on the same form as

Recalls the Christ narrative of 2:6-11.

θανατος, ου m death

There can be no participation in Christ's resurrection without participation also in his death. "In all things Paul coveted conformity to his Lord – even in suffering and death." Eadie.

What he means is expounded by Paul in 2:6-11. "Christian life is cruciform in character; God's people, even as they live presently through the power made available through Christ's resurrection, are as their Lord forever marked by the cross. The heavenly Lion, one must never forget, is a slain Lamb (Rev 5:5-6) ... All of Christian life is stamped with the divine imprint of the cross as we live out the gospel in the present age, while we await the hope of resurrection." Fee

Verse 11

εἰ πως καταντήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

κατανταω come, arrive, reach, attain

εἰ πως καταντήσω 'if so be I may attain'
This is the goal or aspiration to which all outlined in the previous verses tends. The εἰ πως which may appear to express uncertainty, may:

- i) Have the sense of 'in this way' i.e. the resurrection is to be attained only through the present path of suffering with Christ, cf. Rom 8:17;
- ii) Reflect uncertainty as to whether the final state will be attained through resurrection *from the dead* or transformation at the parousia (cf. vv.20-21).

The future prize itself is not in doubt.

ἐξανάστασις, εως f resurrection
νεκρος, α, ον dead

Postscript

"If suffering and the temptation to become religious were causing the dimming of such vision for some in Philippi, in contemporary Western (and much of the rest of the world) culture the dimming is for different reasons, more often connected with values related to material gain. Paul's 'vision' seems to have the better of it in every imaginable way; and a common return to 'the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord' could go a long way toward renewing the church for its task in the post-modern world. Our lives must be cruciform if they are to account for anything at all; but that word is preceded by the equally important one – the power of his resurrection, which both enables us to live as those marked by the cross and guarantees our final glory." Fee

Day 545: Philippians 3:12-16

Verses 12-14

These verses should not be seen as starting a new theme; they form part of Paul's continuing argument. Fee argues, "In light of what has just been said in vv 10-11, the 'goal' is not 'perfection' but the eschatological conclusion of present life, while the 'prize' is none other than the final realisation of his lifelong passion – the full 'knowing' of Christ. To this end, all else is not only 'loss' and 'street garbage' (v.8) but is to be 'forgotten' altogether."

Verse 12

Οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, διωκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ [Ἰησοῦ].

ἤδη adv now, already

"In the verb ἔλαβον there is the idea of laying hold of something before him that he had not yet reached ... The figure of the race and its prize rose up directly in the apostle's mind, and as he is about to give it shape, other ideas intrude themselves and claim a prior expression; that is to say, what the apostle had not yet attained to is what he has been describing in the previous verses, but now especially imagined to his mind as the prize given to one who is victor in the race course. In the first clause of the 13th verse the apostle resumes the figure, and in a few vivid touches, completes it." Eadie

"What he has not yet 'obtained' ... is the eschatological realisation of the goal expressed in vv. 10-11, the kind of knowing Christ that will be his only when he has 'attained unto the resurrection from the dead' – or its equivalent, as vv.20-21 clarify." Fee

ἦ οἱ

Some Western MSS read ἔλαβον ἢ ἤδη δεδικαιωμαι ἢ ἤδη τετελειωμαι. This would seem to be a gloss by a "pious copyist who imagined that the Divine side of sanctification was left too much out of sight." Kennedy

τετελειωμαι Verb, perf pass indic, 1 s
τελειωω make perfect, complete

The focus is not so much on perfection as reaching the goal.

διωκω seek after, pursue

The intense action of the runner in a stadium.

καταλάβω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s
καταλαμβάνω obtain, attain
κατελήμφθην Verb, aor pass indic, 1 s
καταλαμβάνω

"He means to say, not merely that he pursues a certain course of action because he has been converted, but because this course of action is in unison with the purpose of his conversion." Eadie.

"While Paul is indeed pursuing the eschatological goal with all his might, that is only because Christ was there first, pursuing him as it were, and 'apprehending' him so as to make Paul one of his own. Paul's point, as always, is that Christ's work is the prior one, and that all his own effort is simply in response to, and for the sake of, that prior 'apprehension' of him by 'Christ Jesus my Lord.'" Fee

Verse 13

ἀδελφοί, ἐγὼ ἑμαυτὸν οὐ λογιζομαι κατειληφέναι· ἐν δέ, τὰ μὲν ὀπίσω ἐπιλανθανόμενος τοῖς δὲ ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεκτεινόμενος,

ἑμαυτὸν Pronoun, acc s ἑμαυτου

Many MSS read ὅπου rather than οὐ. Metzger comments, "The reading οὐ, which is simply supported, appears to have been changed to οὐπω by copyists who considered Paul to be too modest in his protestations."

λογίζομαι reckon, count, suppose
κατειληφέναι Verb, perf act infin
καταλαμβάνω

"self-complacency was no feature of the apostle's character ... He viewed not so much the progress made as the progress still to be made – surveyed rather the distance before him – between him and the goal, than the space that now lay behind him – between him and the starting point." Eadie

There is some difference in versification here. Some versions begin v.14 with ἐν δε

εἰς, μισ, ἐν one

ὀπίσω behind

ἐπιλανθανομαι forget, neglect

"Paul as a runner who 'pays no attention to the things that are behind' is probably a parting shot at what some of the Philippians might now be finding attractive. By 'pursuing' Torah observance as 'advancement,' they would in fact be after the very things Paul has gladly put behind him as refuse. In any case, as the rest of the analogy makes clear, the present accent is on 'straining toward what is ahead.'" Fee. Eadie thinks the reference is to past Christian attainments – though we could extend it to include past Christian failures. He says, "In his Christian course he did not repose on memories. What had been gained was only an excitement to further progress."

ἔμπροσθεν before, ahead, in front
ἐπεκτεινομαι stretch towards, reach for

Verse 14

κατὰ σκοπὸν διωκω εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

σκοπος, ου m goal (κατα σ.) toward the goal

The noun σκοπος is used in the LXX for a Hebrew word denoting the point (or target) at which an archer aims (Job 16:12,13; Lam 3:12).

διωκω see v.12

βραβειον, ου n prize

The coveted crown – the incorruptible crown.

ἄνω from above

κλησις, εως f call, calling

Cf. κλησεως ἐπουραντου μετοχοι Heb 3:1. Of εἰς τὸ βραβεῖον τῆς ἄνω κλήσεως τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ Fee comments on the series of genitive qualifiers that their "sense is easier to sort out than its grammar. Whatever names we may give to his genitives, Paul intends the following relationships: First, God has 'called' Paul to himself, which will culminate in glory; second, that call, which began at his conversion, is 'heavenward' in terms of its final goal; third, God's call found its historical and experiential locus 'in Christ Jesus'; and fourth, at the end of the race Paul will gain the prize, the tangible evidence that the goal of God's call has been reached."

'let us live up to what we have already come to (an understanding of)' cf previous verse. "He who employs what he has, prepares himself for further gifts." Eadie

Verse 15

Ὅσοι οὖν τέλειοι, τοῦτο φρονῶμεν· καὶ εἴ τι ἑτέρως φρονεῖτε, καὶ τοῦτο ὁ θεὸς ὑμῖν ἀποκαλύψει·

Paul now turns to application to the situation at Philippi. Paul uses the first person plural rather than the second – it is application and appeal rather than polemic. He is urging them to join him in following.

ὅσος, η, ον as much as; pl. as many as
τέλειος, α, ον perfect, mature

A play on words, cf. v.12. Grown men, those who have put away childish things (cf. 1 Cor 13:10-12). Eadie says that Paul "elsewhere speaks of two classes in the church – "babes and perfect men." 1 Cor 2:6; Eph 4:12,13; Heb 5:13,14. The terms νηπιος and τελειος are in contrast. See also 1 Cor 14:20."

φρονεω think, have in mind

Looks back to 2:5. A renewed appeal to a certain mindset – the mindset of Christ.

ἑτέρως otherwise, differently

ἀποκαλυψει Verb, fut act indic, 3 s

ἀποκαλυπτω reveal, make known

"The meaning of the apostle is that God, by revealing the difference and showing the fault of it, would remove it." Eadie

Verse 16

πλὴν εἰς ὃ ἐφθάσαμεν, τῷ αὐτῷ στοιχεῖν.

πλην nevertheless, however

'whether you see *all* things fully my way or not.'

ἐφθάσαμεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl φθανω

reach, come to

στοιχεω walk, conduct oneself