

## Acts 28 – The Great N.T. dispensational divide

Phils.3 – I follow if I may apprehend for which also I am apprehended  
Phils.3 – righteousness by way of Christ's faithfulness

Rewards for faithful service 04

Context is critical in determining our understanding of the words of the Lord. Context can be immediate, near and remote and the out-resurrection of Philippians 3 is more fully considered when we use the context in which we find it. To that end we make some suggestions regarding Paul's reference to apprehend and righteousness as we explore this incredible subject.

*And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: Php 3:9.*

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended:..... Php 3:12-13a.*

The context of Philippians is clear; this letter does not correct error of doctrine but promotes harmony of fellowship and focus as they labor together for the Lord. Working together with the mind of Christ and thus united in faithful service was Paul's theme. We see this in his opening prayers, his appeals to them, his own example, the example of Christ and those who also ministered to them. These very familiar passages below confirm the practical context of this letter and direct our understanding of the words Paul used in chapter 3. Philippians is a letter of practice, walking and working in the Lord for it is God who works out.

*I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Php 1:3-6.*

*According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain [2271, see 3:8 win = 2770]. Php 1:20-21.*

*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ so that — whether I come and see you or whether I remain absent — I should hear that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, by contending side by side for the faith of the gospel, Php 1:27.*

*For it has been granted to you not only to believe in Christ but also to suffer for him, Php 1:29.*

*Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Php 2:12-13.*

With this practical outworking context, what did Paul mean in Phils.3:12-14 when he acknowledged he had not already attained, was perfect and sought to apprehend that for which Christ had apprehended him?

Paul had written of sufferings in Phils.3:10 and I believe this is the short answer. Paul was told from the beginning that sufferings would accompany his ministry, and his

suffering had not yet been completed or filled up.

*But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Act 9:15-16.

At the end of Acts, Paul was ready to die at Jerusalem for the Lord's sake, Acts 21:13, and perhaps he felt his suffering was coming to an end. At Acts 28 Israel was set aside nationally and we believe that the revelation of The Mystery was revealed to him alone and additional suffering would accompany this new ministry. Two ministries of Paul, two sets of suffering and the second set was not completed when he wrote Philippians.

*Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church: Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:* Col 1:24-26. [Eph,3:13, & 2Tim.1:12.]

When Paul wrote Philippians, his sufferings had not been perfected, the goal had not been reached, whereas in 2Tim.4:6-8 he had finished his course and the suffering was about to be completed in martyrdom.

*But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* 2Tim 4:5-8.

The Lord's suffering had culminated in his crucifixion, his sufferings were perfected, matured, they reached the goal of total obedience to the will of the Father, and exaltation followed. The connection is there, Paul, who wanted to share or fellowship in Christ's sufferings wanted to reach the goal of total obedience as did his Lord.

*Saying, The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.* Luk 9:22.

*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;* Php 3:10.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3 that he had not been perfected, that is matured or had reached the goal, but he followed after, he pursued the suffering pathway that had been given him. At the end of this [second] suffering ministry was death, the prize and the hope of an earlier or/and better-quality resurrection.

*If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* Php 3:11

*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Php 3:13-14.

Coupled with this ministry of suffering with a prize in view was Paul's desire for righteousness. This seems unusual in a practical letter written late in his witness, especially since he had written years before about the righteousness reckoned by the grace of God unto all and upon all who believe. Was Paul seeking the righteousness

by faith through grace, which no doubt he already had by faith, or a righteousness of faithful walk? Context will help. Here are some key words from Phils.3.

Phils.3:8 – suffer the loss – win Christ.

Phils.3:9 – righteousness by faithfulness [of Christ].

Phils.3:10 – know him, power of his resurrection, fellowship of his sufferings, conformable to his death.

First, we notice that Paul had counted all things of the flesh as dung that he might win Christ and this would give grounds to believe that the righteousness he sought in Phils.3:9 could be that divine righteousness reckoned by grace.

*I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* Php 3:8b-11.

*But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Rom 3:21-24. Gals.3:23-26.*

Faith into Christ as Savior brings righteousness reckoned by grace, but this does not automatically mean the crown of righteousness is awarded to every sinner made righteous by faith through grace. Divine righteousness is reckoned upon those who were once sinners but now believing into Christ, whereas the righteousness in Philippians could be a righteousness associated with a working out of salvation with a prize; a crown in view that can be won or forfeited.

It is possible that the Romans 3 & 4 righteousness is not Philippians 3 righteousness and the righteousness of Philippians is a key to obtaining 2Tim.4:7-8. The crown of righteousness is not reckoned by faith through grace, it is awarded to those, like Christ, who suffered and finished their course.

*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that Day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.* 2Ti 4:7-8.

We can find a righteousness by faithful works as we compare spiritual with spiritual. This is not the righteousness that enables us to stand in the presence of God, it is a righteousness associated with faithfulness, this is a testimony of the Word.

Israel was a typically blood redeemed people and those that obeyed the Lord and kept his commandments were called righteous.

*But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord GOD.* Eze 18:5 & 9.

Zachariah and Elizabeth were both righteous by their blameless walk in the Law.

*And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.* Luk 1:6.

The nations classified as sheep were ignorant of their good works, but were called righteous and inherited eternal life.

*Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?* Mat 25:37 & 46.

The Lord's ministry was to the lost sheep, the sinners who needed repentance, not the righteous, see Lk.5:43 & 15:7. Joseph of Arimathea was a just [righteous] man, Lk.23:50, Peter and Stephen called Christ the Just [righteous one], Acts 3:14 & 7:52. Christ was blameless before the Law, he was righteous. Cornelius was righteous by works, but before he was saved, Acts 10:22. In Paul's gospel during Acts he wrote that the doers of the Law were righteous, Roms.2:13 [see also 2:5-7].

James wrote of Abraham being made righteous by his works but before that he had opened his letter to the 12 tribes speaking of trials [temptations], trying of faith, patience and the resulting perfection. Paul used the word perfect in Phils.3:15 and described his own lack of perfection in Phils.3:12. James writes of trials of faith and a crown.

*Happy is the one who endures testing, because when he has proven to be genuine, he will receive the crown of life that God promised to those who love him.* Jas 1:12 NET.

Some, who are too quick to deplore James as having a works gospel, fail to see the righteousness he is writing about. Paul is not James, James is not Paul they cry, but in fact, both men are on the same page, they are both writing about faith perfected and at the end, a crown awarded to those who endure. Why not compare James with Romans 5?

James writes the word is able to save their lives, 1:21 but the one who then applies the word finds blessing, 1:25. He identified Abraham as a man who was justified by works, that is, faith in action. Please note when James writes that Abraham's faith was made perfect, he uses the exact same word Paul used in Phils.3:12.

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.* Jas 2:21-23.

*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.* Php 3:12.

Paul used Gen.15:6 in Roms.4:3 and Gals.3:6 and when the writer of Hebrews mentions the righteousness which is of faith, it also mentions that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him; things that accompany salvation, see Hebs.6:9, 11:4, :7, & :6. Abraham was made righteous by faith, but his faith was made perfect as he endured trials and he was called the friend of God and looked for a city which hath foundations, Hebs.11:10.

James adds something to Gen.15:6, he adds that Abraham was a friend of God. James combines Gen.15:6 with Isa.41:8. Abraham was reckoned righteous by grace in Gen.15, but was righteous by works in Gen.22 having endure trial. Note the words perfect and obedience when Hebrews writes about the Lord's suffering.

*For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.* Heb 2:10.

*Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;* Heb 5:8-9.

Righteousness by faith through grace is the initial divine righteousness enabling all to stand before God, but it seems there is a righteousness in faithful works that should follow believing, and these faithful works result in a crown of righteousness.

Paul was prepared to put away the righteousness which is in the Law, Phils.3:6, but he had already clearly exposed the fallacy of seeking that as a means of divine acceptance, Acts13:39, Gals.2:16, & Roms.38. The context of Philippians is faithful obedience, not initial salvation.

We remember that during Acts Paul walked orderly and kept the Law, as did many other Jews during that time, see Acts 21:20-24. The Gentiles had a law to observe, Acts 15, and this observance of the Law was not for divine righteousness, but because the Law contained the truth of righteousness by faith through grace and was the basis of the hope of that time. During Acts Paul endorsed his genealogy as a believer, Roms.11:1, but persecuted the church before his conversion.

Paul was blameless during Acts because he walked orderly and kept the Law, as a believer, Acts 21:24. Was Paul willing to put aside that observance of the Law he practiced during Acts because of the new hope and calling given him? Phils.3:6 noted.

Now, in Philippians, Paul wanted the righteousness of Christ, the faithful obedience unto death, without the Law because the Law and its hope had been put aside at Acts 28.

*and be found in him, not because I have my own righteousness derived from the law, but because I have the righteousness that comes by way of Christ's faithfulness — a righteousness from God that is in fact based on Christ's faithfulness.* Php 3:9 NET.

The context guides us in our considerations and I offer these thoughts as something my readers might like to consider.

We are all students of the Word.

Brian R Kelson  
03-08-2026

# Philippians 3

Warning win out-resurrection prize warning

**3:1-3** Rejoice – [Beware x 3, dogs, evil workers, the concision] - in the spirit, rejoice

**3:4-8** Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss [1Cor.3:15] of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win 2771, [2770 gain in 1:21] Christ,

- 3:9-11** Found/know him
- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| 1. [a] righteousness by faithfulness   | [works?] |
| 2. power of resurrection               | [works]  |
| 3. fellowship of sufferings            | [works]  |
| 4. conformable [like him] in his death | [works]  |
| 5. a resurrection out of the dead LITV | [works]  |
- if somehow attain

**3:12-14** not attained, perfect, apprehended [suffering?]  
I press..after a mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus LITV

**3:18-19** (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are the enemies* of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.) Cp.2Tim.4:1-4.

- 3:20-21** Future
- |                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. citizenship in heaven | [all body members?]        |
| 2. from where we look    | [out-resurrected members?] |
| 3. [then] body changed   | [out-resurrected members?] |
| 4. subdue all things     | [out-resurrected members?] |

**4:1** joy & crown – stand fast - in the Lord

## Paul, the mind of Christ & the out-resurrection - Phils.2, 3

### Christ's out-resurrection

2:6-11 form, equal with God  
abasement  
form of servant  
Likeness of men  
Fashion as man  
Humbled himself

[out res'n] Highly exalted

future honor, knees [appearing]

before the appearing  
raised before others  
to earth before heaven  
food, recognizable  
taught/met with friends  
hid in God until appearing

### Paul & out-resurrection

3:4-21 Israel, Hebrew, Pharisee,  
blameless, zeal,  
gain to loss, dung, win Christ  
righteousness on faithfulness  
to know his resurrection,  
sufferings, death

desire, [out res'n] exaltation, prize

future honor, crown [appearing, 2Tim.4]

before the appearing  
our conversation in heaven;  
from whence we look  
change vile body to like his  
subdue all things unto himself

[we are subjected in new bodies or the crowned help subject others?]  
hidden dispensation ends at appearing?

does this explain this?

