

Motivation

Philippians 3:10-12

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I. To Know vs. 10-11 Romans 6:1-11

- a. Know Him -
 - i. Paul already knew Christ as his Savior. But he wanted to know Him more intimately as his Lord. **To know** (v. 10) means “to know by experience” (*gnōnai*). The noun (*gnōseōs*) is used in verse 8.
 1. often focus attention upon the ideas of understanding, experience, and intimacy, even the intimacy of the sexual relationship in marriage (cf. Matt 1:25),
 - ii. Finally, Paul considers all his personal advantages and everything else, for that matter, as unspeakable filth “for the goal of knowing Christ in the power of his resurrection, and in the fellowship of his sufferings.”
 - iii. *There is certainly a sense in which faith and knowledge are close in idea, and the meaning of the one is strengthened by sharing in the meaning of the other.*
 - iv. This suggests a crisis of knowledge where for Paul just the *coming* to know Christ outweighs all other values. For him the significance of Christ “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3) is so vast that even to *begin* to know him is more important than anything else in all the world.
 - v. Hence, when Paul speaks of his desire to know Christ, he does not have in mind a mere intellectual knowledge about Christ (Paul had that when he was persecuting the church). Rather, he is thinking about a personal encounter with Christ that inaugurates a special intimacy with Christ that is life-changing and ongoing (cf. John 17:3; 1 Cor 2:8; 1 John 2:3, 4; 4:8; 5:20).
- b. Power of His Resurrection
 - i. Power - **potential for functioning in some way, power, might, strength, force, capability**
 - ii. The power which brought Christ forth from the dead now operates in believers’ lives since they have been “raised with Christ” (Col. 3:1). “Power” (*dynamis*, also used in Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16) means ability to overcome resistance
 - iii. Rather, he is saying “I want to know him *in* the power of his resurrection” That is to say, Paul is not content merely to know Christ as a figure of

history (κατὰ σάρκα, “according to the flesh”), but he desires to know him personally as the resurrected ever-living Lord of his life

- iv. This is the formulation of 2 Cor 5:16. And the δύναμις, “power,” he wishes to know is not something separable from him, but the power with which the risen Christ is endowed. He wishes to know Christ “by experiencing the power he wields in virtue of his resurrection

c. Fellowship of His Suffering

- i. Fellowship - **close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship** (hence a favorite expr. for the marital relationship as the most intimate, that the Greek word κοινωνία, “fellowship,” followed by the genitive case, as here, also carries with it the idea of “participation or sharing in

- 1. Fellowship with Christ means that present participation in one phase, namely, that of humility and suffering, assures us of winning through to participation in the other, namely, that of glory. The spiritual union with Christ which characterises the whole life and work of Paul is especially described in terms of a spiritual fellowship in suffering with Him

- 2. By spiritual participation in Christ the sufferings of the apostle are a real part of the total suffering which is laid on Christ (Col. 1:24). By participation in Christ’s sufferings Paul has hope of analogous participation in His glory R. 8:17: εἶπερ συμπάσχομεν, ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν). The same thought is picked up in 1 Pt. 4:13

- 3. This suggests that the power of the resurrected Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings are to be thought of not as two totally separate experiences but as alternate aspects of the same experience

- 4. This interpretation does not totally rule out the thought of physical sufferings or death playing out their transforming role in the Christian’s life. In fact, the mystical union with Christ in his sufferings and death, as outlined above, is but strengthened and deepened by any physical pain that may be experienced because of faith in Christ. The hazards that Paul faced in his apostolic work, the batterings he was subjected to as a Christian, had the potential for being “the concrete external means” by which he could be conformed to Christ’s death (Beare, 124). Thus, the expression “conforming oneself to his death” can be enlarged to include “costly discipleship,” the kind of suffering expressed so poignantly by the apostle in his letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor 4:10–11, Hawthorne’s translation

- ii. Suffering – Misfortune

- 1. so knowing Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings is equally an inward experience that can be described in terms of having died

with Christ (cf. Rom 6:8 and see Gal 2:19–20). This is not to deny that Paul’s prison experience is also much in the background here.

2. Rather, captivated by the idea that he and all believers are caught up into Christ and are indissolubly linked together with him to share with him in all the events of his life, including his death and resurrection
 3. Therefore, for Paul to say that he wishes to know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings is not that he seeks to know Christ and to experience physical sufferings of martyrdom (cf. *RSV*: “that I may share his sufferings”), but that he seeks to know Christ who suffered and died for him (cf. 1 Pet 3:18; 4:1), to know that he therefore has suffered and died in Christ, only to be resurrected in him to a new and superlative kind of life
- iii. Conformed to His Death
1. (cf. Rom 6:11), to conform his practice in the world to his position in Christ, to renounce his own selfish desires and say yes to Christ, who calls him to take up his cross daily and follow him as a servant of God for the good of humankind (cf. Phil 2:6–8 where *μορφῆν δούλου*, “form of a slave,”

II. For the End

i. Attain

1. *καταλαμβάνειν*, which is the truly difficult word, may mean “to seize, win, attain,” as a runner in a race might run to win the prize (1 Cor 9:24).
2. Rather, it would appear that Paul uses such an unexpected hypothetical construction simply because of humility on his part, a humility that recognizes that salvation is the gift of God from start to finish and that as a consequence he dare not presume on this divine mercy (Caird). A translation such as “in the hope of attaining” adequately and accurately expresses Paul’s feeling of awe and wonder as he wrote the phrase (cf. Acts 27:12; Rom 1:10; 11:14 for similar expressions of expectation;). Such an attitude of humility is not in any way weakened by the active voice of the verb *καταντήσω*, “I might attain”

ii. Resurrection

1. The resurrection occurs at the time of the Lord’s return to earth. (1 Thess 4:13–18). That will finalize the application of resurrection power to the Christian. Paul longed for the complete resurrection in his own life.
2. The apostle is keenly aware that his knowledge of Christ is partial and that he must wait for a future day, the eschatological day

3. That future resurrection, which will be in incorruption, glory, and power (1 Cor 15:42–44), now has the focus of his attention, and only this resurrection is in view.

III. To Keep Going v. 12

a. Not obtained

i. Obtained - **to get hold of someth. by laying hands on or grasping**

someth. directly or indirectly, *take, take hold of, grasp, take in hand*

1. But Paul seems now to be using it primarily to refer to that Christ-encounter he experienced on the Damascus road, at which time Christ laid hands on him, so to speak, forcefully arresting him and setting him off in a new lifelong direction (1 Cor 15:8–10;
2. Perhaps, then, the English verb “to apprehend” is the one best suited to express the idea involved in Paul’s use of καταλαμβάνειν. For “to apprehend” can mean both “to lay hold of with the understanding” as well as “to arrest or seize

ii. Not Perfect

1. **Perfect - to complete an activity, *complete, bring to an end, finish, accomplish***

2. Those same Jewish teachers, whom he attacked so vehemently in vv 2–3, were known to state repeatedly that a person who has been circumcised and is true to the law can reach perfection
3. There is no need, then, to suppose that in addition to such Jewish or Jewish-Christian propagandists the Philippian Christians were beset by still another group of opponents—gnostics, who also believed and taught that perfection could be attained on earth now without waiting for, or without any need for, the resurrection

b. Press On

i. Press- **to move rapidly and decisively toward an objective, *hasten, run, press on***

1. “to keep pressing on,” belongs to the world of the hunter rather than that of the athlete. It does not properly mean “to run”; rather it means “to pursue,” “to chase,” “to hunt down.”
2. The realization that there is too much to know about Christ for one’s knowledge of him ever to be complete this side of the future resurrection incites Paul to keep pressing on to see how much understanding he can achieve.
3. **But lest some should assume that he (or anyone else for that matter) had already attained complete knowledge of Christ, he immediately proceeds to disabuse them of such an assumption.** Christ is too great to be grasped in a single lifetime. And yet this fact does not discourage Paul or dampen his ardor. Rather, it

drives him on to know more. The more he knows about Christ, the more he wishes to know. Hence he views his future as a race course stretching out before a runner who is pressing on to reach the goal and win the prize. Thus, the incomprehensible majesty of Christ is no deterrent to Paul's quest, but a spur, urging him to press on to a still greater knowledge of Christ until it is finally complete when he is called up to receive the prize.

ii. Lay Hold - **to make someth. one's own, win, attain**

1. Hold of by Jesus
2. Paul's encounter with the resurrected and living Christ created within him not only a consuming desire to know Christ intimately and fully, but also an awareness that this was something that could not be achieved in a moment. To know the incomprehensible greatness of Christ demands a lifetime of arduous inquiry.

Word Studies

Know - to have come to the knowledge of, *have come to know, know*¹

Power - potential for functioning in some way, *power, might, strength, force, capability*²

Fellowship - close association involving mutual interests and sharing, *association, communion, fellowship, close relationship* (hence a favorite expr³. for the marital relationship as the most intimate⁴)

According to Paul fellowship with Christ also means that the Christian participates in the detailed phases of the life of Christ. There is a συζῆν (R. 6:8; 2 C. 7:3), συμπάσχειν (R. 8:17), συσταυροῦσθαι (R. 6:6; Gl. 2:19), συναποθανεῖν (2 C. 7:3), συνθάπτειν (R. 6:4; Col. 2:12), συνεγείρειν (Col. 2:12; 3:1; Eph. 2:6), συζωοποιεῖν (Col. 2:13; Eph. 2:5), συνδοξάζειν, συγκληρονομεῖν (R. 8:17), συμβασιλεύειν (2 Tm. 2:12). These terms are often arranged in antithetical pairs (R. 6:4 ff.; 8:17). Fellowship with Christ means that present participation in one phase, namely, that of humility and suffering, assures us of winning through to participation in the other, namely, that of glory.⁶⁵⁰ The spiritual union with Christ which characterises the whole life and work of Paul is especially described in terms of a spiritual fellowship in suffering with Him (Phil. 3:10: κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ).⁶⁶¹ This is not just a living again of Christ's sufferings. Nor is it a mere personal conformity. Nor is it a retrospective passion dogmatics. By spiritual participation in Christ the sufferings of the apostle are a real part of the total suffering which is laid on Christ (Col. 1:24). By participation in Christ's sufferings Paul has hope of analogous participation in His glory (Phil. 3:10: συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, εἴ πως κατανήσω κτλ., R. 8:17: εἴπερ συμπάσχομεν, ἵνα καὶ συνδοξασθῶμεν). The same thought is picked up in 1 Pt. 4:13: καθὸ κοινωνεῖτε τοῖς τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθήμασιν χαίρετε, ἵνα καὶ κτλ., and it is also in the background in 5:1. The whole life and work of the apostle, with the suffering which it entails, is a witness to the sufferings of Christ (μάρτυς τῶν τοῦ Χριστοῦ παθημάτων). Hence the apostle may have certainty here and now that he will partake of the coming glory (ἀ καὶ τῆς μελλούσης

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 200.

² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 262.

³expr. **expr.** = expression

⁴ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 552.

⁶⁵⁰ It may be accepted that Paul was to some degree influenced by similar ideas and statements in current Hellen. cults, e.g., that of Osiris, cf. J. Leipoldt, *Sterbende u. auferstehende Götter* (1923); J. Schneider, *Die Passionsmystik des Pls.* (1929), 75 ff.

⁶⁶¹ Schneider, 31 ff.; 48 ff.

ἀποκαλύπτεσθαι δόξης κοινωνός).⁷⁶² For Paul fellowship with Christ's sufferings is not restricted to individual believers. It broadens out into the spiritual fellowship in suffering of the whole community both within itself and with Christ. As the body of Christ the community has to bear a certain degree of His sufferings. For Paul the sufferings which he has to endure as an individual are a gladly accepted shouldering of part of the burden which lies on the whole (Col. 1:24). Similarly in 2 C. 1:5, 7 Paul deduces from the participation of the Corinthians in his sufferings that they will also be fellow-participants in the divine comfort allotted to him (ὅτι ὡς κοινωνοὶ ἐστε τῶν παθημάτων οὕτως καὶ τῆς παρακλήσεως). Here, too, he expects a fulfilment of the law of fellowship. **V 3, p 807**⁸

Suffering - **that which is suffered or endured, suffering, misfortune**⁹

These παθήματα are called παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ. In 2 C. 1:5 this is not a subj. gen.¹⁰; **V 5, p 932** hence the reference is not to Christ's passion. Things are different, however, in Phil. 3:10 (the αὐτοῦ with τῆς ἀναστάσεως and παθημάτων, also τῷ θανάτῳ, naturally denotes the same relation to Christ). Since Paul does not use παθεῖν for the death of Jesus, it might seem that he has in view, not the death, but the other sufferings of Jesus;¹¹¹⁰ this conjecture is supported by the plur.¹² Nevertheless, the chiasmic construction in 3:10f. shows plainly that the παθήματα of Christ are the same as His θάνατος. That the plur.¹³ παθήματα¹⁴¹¹ can be used as a term for the death of Jesus is shown not merely by 1 Pt. 1:11, where the plur.¹⁵ even leads on to δόξαι as a word for the resurrection (→ 934, 25 ff.), but esp.¹⁶ by Hb. 2:10 (→ 934, 18 ff.). The phrase συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ in

⁷⁶² Cf. Wbg. Pt., 144. Interpretation is affected by problems of authorship. It is hardly enough to see a mere reference to first hand witness of the sufferings of Jesus (cf. the title τοῦ Χριστοῦ), but it is too much to find a reference to Peter as a confessor (μάρτυς) who already shares in the glory (κοινωνός), cf. A. v. Harnack, *Die Chronologie d. altchr. Lit.*, I (1897), 451 f.

⁸ Friedrich Hauck, "[Κοινός, Κοινωνός, Κοινωνέω, Κοινωνία, Συγκοινωνός, Συγκοινωνέω, Κοινωνικός, Κοινώω.](#)" ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 806.

⁹ William Arndt et al., [A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 747.

¹⁰subj. gen. subjective genitive.

¹¹¹⁰ Cf. Wiencke, 126 f.

¹²plur. plural.

¹³plur. plural.

¹⁴¹¹ In 2 C. 1:5 ff. etc. Paul speaks of his own παθήματα only in the plur.; perhaps this habit caused him to use the plur. in Phil. 3:10 too.

¹⁵plur. plural.

¹⁶esp. especially.

Phil. 3:10 means being fashioned into likeness by sufferings, whether these involve death or not. But the *κοινωνία παθημάτων αὐτοῦ* is then actualised only in the sufferings of the apostle himself.¹¹⁷² This shows that here too (→ 931, 23 ff.) there can be no idea of a fellowship of suffering in the sense of true passion mysticism accessible to all at all times.¹¹⁸³ The statement in Phil. 3:10 f. is shown, of course, by both wording and context to refer primarily only to the apostle Paul in person,¹¹⁹⁴ and it is certainly no accident that it is to be found in Phil., which is so rich in personal confessions, just as the saying which relates his sufferings to the death of Jesus occurs in the very personal epistle 2 C. (4:10). 2 C. 4:10 f. is also instructive inasmuch as the *ζωὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ* here corresponds to what Phil. 3:10 calls the *δύναμις τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ*. On the other hand the *νέκρωσις τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* of 2 C. 4:10 (→ IV, 895, 9 ff.), which is synon, with *θάνατος* or *παθήματα αὐτοῦ* in Phil. 3:10, finds in the *εἰς θάνατον παραδιδόμεθα διὰ Ἰησοῦν* v²⁰. 11 an elucidation which is a strong barrier against an exclusively mystical interpretation.¹²¹⁵ Hence one has also to consider whether the *τοῦ Χριστοῦ* in the *παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ* of 2 C. 1:5 is not to be construed along the same lines as the *διὰ Ἰησοῦν* of 2 C. 4:11.¹²²⁶ Cf. also the *ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν* of Phil. 1:29 (→ 920, 23 ff.) and the *συμπάσχειν* of R. 8:17 (→ 925, 13 ff.; 925, 36 ff.). The gen. *τοῦ Χριστοῦ* does not, then, denote a relation of the *παθήματα* of the apostle (or of the Corinthians or any Christians) to the *παθήματα* V 5, p 933 of Christ Himself, whether by analogy, or as a continuation (→ III, 144, 4 ff.), or as a mystical (→ III, 144, 15 ff.)

¹⁷¹² Experience of the power of the resurrection of Jesus (3:10) is not to be related only to certain special operations but to the new life of the apostle (3:8f.) in its totality. Yet Paul says that his sufferings, too, fill his whole life, cf. *ἐν παντί*, 2 C. 4:8, *πάντοτε*, 4:10, *ἀεί*, 4:11. On the other hand, there are for Paul certain situations of particular affliction as well, e.g., the imprisonment which was the setting of Phil., the *θλίψις* of 2 C. 1:8, the *διωγμοί* or *παθήματα* during the first missionary journey, 2 Tm. 3:11 (cf. also *προπαθόντες* in 1 Th. 2:2, → 924, 28 ff. and the instances of *πάσχω* in Paul, → 920, 6 ff.).

¹⁸¹³ The “mystical” content of Phil. 3:10 (→ I, 710, 22 ff.; III, 806, 14 ff.) is subdued by the real character of the apostle’s sufferings and of the awaited resurrection (3:11).

¹⁹¹⁴ Schelkle, 264 presses the verse much too far when he refers it to the fellowship of all believers with Christ.

²⁰v. verse.

²¹¹⁵ As against Schneider, 54, n. 2. A sacramental understanding (→ IV, 895, 7 f.) is not likely inasmuch as the description of sufferings as *νέκρωσις* is on a different level from dying with Christ in baptism, R. 6:2 ff. Cf. also Wiencke, 128. Furthermore, Phil. 3:10 and *παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ* in 2 C. 1:5 are not meant sacramentally.

²²¹⁶ If the *στίγματα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* of Gl. 6:17 refers to scars suffered in persecution (the use of *σῶμα* does not restrict this to the purely physical field; cf. 2 C. 4:10 with 8f.; → III, 147, 29 f.), the gen. *τοῦ Ἰησοῦ* simply means that Paul “received them in the service of Jesus” (Oe. Gl., *ad loc.*) or that they mark him as the property of Jesus; it does not have to mean that “his sufferings are a visible representation of the sufferings of Jesus Christ,” Schneider. 51.

or non-mystical imitation.¹²³⁷ The necessity of Christian suffering is not based on the fact that there has to be analogy, continuation or imitation, but on the fact that Jesus—because there are necessarily παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ (R. 8:18; → 934, 4 ff.), and hence the way to the kingdom of God is through tribulation (Ac. 14:22)—holds out before His disciples the prospect of afflictions¹²⁴⁸ (cf. also the ὑποδείξω of Ac. 9:16, → 919, 18 ff.).

When we read in Col. 1:24: νῦν χαίρω ἐν τοῖς παθήμασιν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ ἀνταναπληρῶ τὰ ὑστερήματα τῶν θλίψεων τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ σαρκί μου ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐκκλησία, the θλίψεις τοῦ Χριστοῦ here are identical with the παθήματα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, since παθήματα and θλίψεις are synonym²⁵, as also in 2 C. 1:4 ff. thus suggests (as distinct from Phil. 3:10) that in the phrase θλίψεις τοῦ Χριστοῦ the gen. is not to be taken as a subj. gen²⁶. (→ III, 143, 42 ff.; 144, 30 f.). On the other hand, even without the *vi*²⁷. μου, there is no doubt but that the παθήματα of Col. 1:24 are the sufferings of the apostle. If the ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν is to be taken non-vicariously along the lines of 2 C. 1:6 (→ 931, 35 ff.),¹²⁸⁹ then the ὑπὲρ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ, which is an extension of the ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν (the Colossians) to the whole ἐκκλησία is also to be construed non-vicariously. The θλίψεις τοῦ Χριστοῦ are thus par²⁹. to the παθήματα or afflictions of the apostle, and any attempt to expound the whole saying (→ III, 143, 38 ff.; 806, 18 ff.; IV, 1097, 32 ff.) must be based on these presuppositions.²³⁰⁰ The idea that θλίψεις or παθήματα are necessary is common in the

²³¹⁷ For him the sufferings do not have to stand “in the closest connection with the passion of Christ,” Schneider, 49. It is not unimportant to note that not only does Paul’s use of πάσχω (→ 920, 6 ff.) not stand under the influence of παθεῖν == “to die” for the death of Jesus, but also that in proximity to or in connection with his πάσχω sayings we do not find such terms as ἀποθανεῖν, θάνατος, σταυρός, αἷμα referring to the death of Jesus, → n. 18. The only exception, apart from 2 C. 4:10 f., is Phil. 3:10 f., and here it is permissible to maintain that there is “a spiritual union between Paul and the crucified Lord in the full sense,” O. Schmitz, “Die Christus-Gemeinschaft des Pls. im Lichte seines Genetivgebrauchs,” *Nt.liche Forschungen*, I, 2 (1924), 197.

²⁴¹⁸ → 933, 21 ff; Worth noting is the observation of Kittel, 189 that when Jesus speaks of the disciples being persecuted, scorned and hated, He does not link this primarily with His death, but with the fact that He, too, is persecuted, scorned and hated.

²⁵synon. synonym.

²⁶subj. gen. subjective genitive.

²⁷*vi. varia lectio.*

²⁸¹⁹ One can hardly relate ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν generally to χαίρω, cf. also Eph. 3:13.

²⁹par. parallel.

³⁰²⁰ Cf. also Schneider, 54–59; Schmitz, *op. cit.*, 190–196; A. Schweitzer, *Die Mystik d. Ap. Pls.* (1930), 127; Dib. Kol., *ad loc.*; Schelkle, 264 f. Cogent objections to a mystical interpretation may be found in Loh. Kol., 77. Better, though unconvincing, is the view of C. Bonnard, “L’Épître de Saint Paul aux Colossiens,” *Commentaire du NT*, X (1950), 110: These θλίψεις of Jesus (cf. 110, n. 6: subj. gen.) are not, of course, identical with the “acte rédempteur de Dieu en Christ” in the death of Jesus (and the resurrection, cf. n. 5); nevertheless, one may speak of a lack in them because “le but de l’oeuvre du Christ” is reached only when the Gospel is preached to all the nations, and this is the

apostle, cf. 1 Th. 3:3 f.;²³¹¹ Ac. 14:22; also 9:16, → 919, 18 ff.; → III, 143, 22 ff. Whatever may be the reason for this necessity (→ lines 2 ff.), it is simply given with the fact that Jesus holds it out as a sure prospect for all disciples.²³²² Sayings like Mt. 5:11; 10:17 f. were V 5, p 934 for Paul and his congregations the presupposition for the fact that suffering is normal and that the absence of it is to be regarded as ὑστερήματα, Col. 1:24. ἀνταναπληρώω thus means the elimination of this deficiency by the presence of sufferings. In spite of the severity of afflictions R. 8:18 is true: ὅτι οὐκ ἄξια τὰ παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ πρὸς τὴν μέλλουσαν δόξαν ἀποκαλυφθῆναι εἰς ἡμᾶς. The concept ὁ νῦν καιρός is synonym³³ with ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος, → I, 205, 40 f.; 206, 25 ff. Afflictions here are those which necessarily arise from the antithesis between the Christ event and the nature of this aeon. Hence the παθήματα τοῦ νῦν καιροῦ are no different from the παθήματα or θλίψεις τοῦ Χριστοῦ, 2 C. 1:5; Col. 1:24. At their end is συνδοξασθῆναι, R. 8:17, → 925, 30 ff.³⁴

task of the apostle, a task which entails suffering, so that “ces souffrances apostoliques doivent s’ajouter à celles du Christ,” 111. In Phil. 2:30; 1 C. 16:17 the word ὑστέρημα, when used with ἀνταναπληρώω, does not denote a quantitative difference as compared with some future measure, but refers to a present religious and ethical obligation. The idea of a foreordained amount of suffering which has to be met is present neither in Paul (→ 931, 31 ff.) nor elsewhere in the NT. nor is it suggested by contemporary assumptions, Kittel, 188.

³¹²¹ Acc. to 3:4 the intimation of sufferings is a constituent part of Paul’s missionary preaching.

³²²² This is very strongly emphasised by Kittel, 189 f. All the same, the ἀνανταπληρῶ of Col. 1:24 is too strongly orientated to the word ὑστέρημα to permit the understanding which Kittel suggests (190), namely, that it is part of the πληρῶσαι τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ (v. 25) fulfilled in the life and work of Paul.”

³³synon. synonym.

³⁴ Wilhelm Michaelis, [“Πάσχω. Παθητός. Προπάσχω. Συμπάσχω. Πάθος. Πάθημα. Συμπαθής, Συμπαθέω, Κακοπαθέω, Συγκακοπαθέω, Κακοπάθεια, Μετριοπαθέω, Ὁμοιοπαθής.”](#) ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 931–934.

Obtained - to get hold of someth³⁵. by laying hands on or grasping someth³⁶., directly or indirectly, *take, take hold of, grasp, take in hand*³⁷

Perfect - to complete an activity, *complete, bring to an end, finish, accomplish*³⁸

Press - to move rapidly and decisively toward an objective, *hasten, run, press on*³⁹

Lay hold - to make someth⁴⁰. one's own, *win, attain*,⁴¹

³⁵**someth. someth.** = something

³⁶**someth. someth.** = something

³⁷ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 583.

³⁸ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 996.

³⁹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 254.

⁴⁰**someth. someth.** = something

⁴¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 519.

Commentary Studies

10 τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν, “[Yes, I consider everything as unspeakable filth] for the goal of knowing Christ.” Finally, Paul considers all his personal advantages and everything else, for that matter, as unspeakable filth “for the goal of knowing Christ in the power of his resurrection, and in the fellowship of his sufferings.” This final goal is expressed differently from the previous two (vv 8–9), which were introduced by ἵνα, “in order that,” and the subjunctive: ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, “in order that I might gain Christ and be found in him.” This goal is expressed by an infinitive with the genitive definite article: τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν, lit⁴². “to know him.” For this reason several commentators understand τοῦ γινῶναι, “to know,” as an explanatory infinitive, more precisely defining the nature and power of faith (v 9): ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει, τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν, “through faith, which is to know him” (see Keck, Hendriksen, Collange, Martin [1976]). There is certainly a sense in which faith and knowledge are close in idea, and the meaning of the one is strengthened by sharing in the meaning of the other. And it is true that the infinitive may be used to explain or define more precisely another word (Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 129). But it is not likely that this is the case here: (1) Nowhere else in the NT is the noun πίστις, “faith,” followed by an explanatory articular infinitive (although it may be admitted that Paul is writing here in a cryptic way). (2) On the other hand, the infinitive with the genitive definite article, as here, is often used to express purpose in the NT, especially in Luke and Paul (Luke 24:29; 1 Cor 10:13; cf. BD⁴³F §400[5]). (3) Furthermore, to change constructions in the same sentence from ἵνα, “in order that,” and the subjunctive to an infinitive in order to show purpose is not an uncommon change in Paul’s writings (Rom 6:6; Col 1:9–10). (4) By taking τοῦ γινῶναι, “to know,” as an infinitive of design, parallel in idea to ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω καὶ εὑρεθῶ ἐν αὐτῷ, “in order that I might gain Christ and be found in him,” one sees immediately in this expression a fitting climax to Paul’s passionate willingness to treat everything as “refuse” that would prevent him from achieving his objective, which is “to gain Christ,” “to be found in Christ,” and “to know Christ.” “To know Christ,” therefore, is the ultimate goal toward which the apostle sets the course of his life (on the grammar here see Fee [1995], 327).

⁴²lit. literally

⁴³BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (University of Chicago/University of Cambridge, 1961)

The tense of the infinitive γνῶναι, “to know,” is aorist and very likely an ingressive aorist, i.e., an aorist that sums up the action of the verb at the point at which it commences (but see Beare, opposed by Fee [1995], 326). This suggests a crisis of knowledge where for Paul just the *coming* to know Christ outweighs all other values. For him the significance of Christ “in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Col 2:3) is so vast that even to *begin* to know him is more important than anything else in all the world. The crisis, however, implies a process. The coming to know Christ results in a growing knowledge of Christ, as Paul makes clear here and elsewhere (Moule).

The verb γινώσκειν/γνῶναι, “to know,” and its cognates (cf. v 8) often focus attention upon the ideas of understanding, experience, and intimacy, even the intimacy of the sexual relationship in marriage (cf. Matt 1:25), based on the Heb. *yāda*. Hence, when Paul speaks of his desire to know Christ, he does not have in mind a mere intellectual knowledge about Christ (Paul had that when he was persecuting the church). Rather, he is thinking about a personal encounter with Christ that inaugurates a special intimacy with Christ that is life-changing and ongoing (cf. John 17:3; 1 Cor 2:8; 1 John 2:3, 4; 4:8; 5:20).

καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ, “in the power of his resurrection.” That this knowledge of Christ is personal and relational is now made clear by the phrases that follow, the first of which is lit⁴⁴. “and the power of his resurrection.” Here, however, the καί, “and,” is more than a simple conjunction. It serves to link the words that follow together with αὐτόν, “him,” in such a way as to define and more fully explain what is meant by αὐτόν, “him” (cf. BDA⁴⁵G: καί, 3). It is not that Paul is saying “I want to know him *and* the power of his resurrection,” as though “him” and “power” were equally worthy objects of his knowing. Rather, he is saying “I want to know him *in* the power of his resurrection” (GOODSPEED⁴⁶D, MOFFAT⁴⁷T). That is to say, Paul is not content merely to know Christ as a figure of history (κατὰ σάρκα, “according to the flesh”), but he desires to know him personally as the resurrected ever-living Lord of his life (κατὰ πνεῦμα, “according to the Spirit”). This is the formulation of 2 Cor 5:16. And the δύναμις, “power,” he wishes to know is not something separable from him, but the power with which the risen Christ is endowed. He wishes to know Christ “by experiencing the power he wields in virtue of his resurrection” (Michael). He wishes to know him alive and creatively at work to save him from himself, to transform him from “bad” to “good,” to propel him forward toward a life of service to others, to inaugurate “newness of life,” life in the Spirit, in a word, to resurrect him from death in sin to life in God, to quicken and stimulate his whole moral and spiritual being (cf. Rom 6:4–11; Lightfoot, Michael, Dibelius, Gnllka).

καὶ κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ, “and in the fellowship of his sufferings.” This second phrase is to be taken closely with the first phrase, not only because it is linked with the connective καί, “and,” but especially because the word κοινωνίαν, “fellowship,” shares the

⁴⁴lit. literally

⁴⁵BDAG Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1999.

⁴⁶GOODSPEED *The Complete Bible: An American Translation*, E. J. Goodspeed

⁴⁷MOFFAT J. Moffatt, *A New Translation of the Bible* (NT 1913; Reprint London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1926)

same definite article with the word δύναμιν, “power”: τὴν δύναμιν ... καὶ κοινωνίαν, “the power ... and fellowship” (see *Note h*⁴⁸). This suggests that the power of the resurrected Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings are to be thought of not as two totally separate experiences but as alternate aspects of the same experience (so Tannehill, *Dying and Rising*, 84–90). Now if the first phrase is interpreted to mean that Paul wishes to know the power of the resurrected Christ at work within him and the second phrase is as closely related to the first as the sentence structure seems to suggest, then it is not plausible to interpret the one of an inner subjective experience and the other of an external objective happening. Paul is not now thinking of his own physical sufferings as in any way completing the full tally of Christ’s afflictions (Col 1:24; on this text see R. P. Martin, *Colossians: The Church’s Lord and the Christian’s Liberty* [Exeter: Paternoster, 1972; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2000] ad lo⁴⁹c), nor does he here have in mind the principle he enunciates elsewhere: “to suffer with Christ is to be glorified with him” (Rom 8:17–18; cf. 2 Cor 4:7–11). Rather, this phrase in its context of being found in Christ, clothed with his righteousness, is highly reminiscent of Rom 6:4–11 in a baptismal context (but see Koperski, *Knowledge*, 266–69). Thus, just as knowing Christ in the power of his resurrection is an inward experience that can be expressed in terms of being resurrected with Christ (cf. Rom 6:4), though outwardly and sacramentally expressed in baptism (see Schnackenburg, *Baptism*), so knowing Christ in the fellowship of his sufferings is equally an inward experience that can be described in terms of having died with Christ (cf. Rom 6:8 and see Gal 2:19–20). This is not to deny that Paul’s prison experience is also much in the background here.

This becomes especially clear when one remembers (1) that the Greek word κοινωνία, “fellowship,” followed by the genitive case, as here, also carries with it the idea of “participation or sharing in” something objective (cf. Seesemann, *Begriff KOINΩNIA*; BDA⁵⁰G) and (2) that a favorite theme of Paul is that of Christ as the last Adam. As such, Christ embodies the whole of humankind or a redeemed humanity. He identified himself so completely with human beings in their state of sin and helplessness that as a result they might be equally identified with him in his resurrected new life of goodness (cf. Rom 5:12–18; 8:3; 1 Cor 15:22, 49; 2 Cor 5:21; Phil 2:7). In Christ’s suffering and death the old humanity came to an end; in his resurrection the new humanity began (2 Cor 5:14–17). Therefore, for Paul to say that he wishes to know Christ and the fellowship of his sufferings is not that he seeks to know Christ and to experience physical sufferings of martyrdom (cf. RSV⁵¹v: “that I may share his sufferings”), but that he seeks to know

⁴⁸h-h Ɔ⁴⁶ κ* B omit the articles τὴν, “the [fellowship],” and τῶν, “the [sufferings],” while ²κ D F G Ψ and the Majority Text include them. It appears that scribes, understanding κοινωνίαν, “fellowship,” as a totally separate entity exactly parallel with τὴν δύναμιν, “the power,” added the article τὴν, “the,” to make this distinction and parallelism clear: “*the* power of his resurrection and *the* fellowship of his sufferings.” Hence, the τὴν, “the,” should be considered secondary.

⁴⁹ad loc *ad locum*, at the place discussed

⁵⁰BDAG Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1999.

⁵¹RSV Revised Standard Version (NT 1946, OT 1952, Apoc 1957)

Christ who suffered and died for him (cf. 1 Pet 3:18; 4:1), to know that he therefore has suffered and died in Christ, only to be resurrected in him to a new and superlative kind of life (Jones, Michael, Caird, Loh and Nida; see also Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 206–8, 261–75; Barrett, *From First Adam to Last*; Scroggs, *Last Adam*; Seesemann, *Begriff KOINΩNIA*). (But see Jewett, *Nov⁵²T 12* [1970–71] 198–212; Siber, *Mit Christus Leben*, 111, 115, 118; Collange; Martin [1976] for a different view that interprets these phrases polemically as Paul’s rebuttal to the wrong-headed teaching of a group or groups of religious leaders who oppose him on the ground that he was an apostle who suffered—a similar charge brought in 2 Cor 10–13, whose commonality with Philippians may postulate an origin of both epistles in Paul’s Ephesian and post-Ephesian ministry.)

συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ, “continually conforming myself [or being conformed] to his death.” That the phrase “the fellowship of his sufferings” has been correctly interpreted, in our view, is corroborated now by this participial expression that immediately follows. To understand this there are several things to note: (1) In a crisscross chiasmic structure Paul equates Christ’s “sufferings” with Christ’s death (see fig. 4). (2) συμμορφίζεσθαι, “to conform oneself,” “to make oneself like,” is a *hapax legomenon*, a word occurring only here in the NT. Nevertheless, in spite of its uniqueness, it immediately brings to mind the vocabulary of Rom 6:1–12: “For if we have become united [σύμφυτοι, lit⁵³. ‘growing or planted together’] with him in the likeness [ὁμοιωμάτι] of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection” (Rom 6:5, Hawthorne’s translation); “If we died with [σύν] Christ, we believe that we will also live with [συζήσομεν] him” (Rom 6:8, Hawthorne’s translation). (3) Therefore, by coining this word and using it here, Paul is not dramatically claiming that he is expecting to suffer physically as Christ suffered or to die as he died (WEYMOUTH, PHILLIPS, J⁵⁴B; see also Meyer, Plummer, Lohmeyer). Rather, captivated by the idea that he and all believers are caught up into Christ and are indissolubly linked together with him to share with him in all the events of his life, including his death and resurrection, Paul creates a new word capable not only of stating that he has died with Christ (cf. Rom 6:10, in baptism?) as a fact of the past, but also of stating his conscious glad choice to identify himself with that death and to conform his life to the implications of that death now in the present. He expresses this great fundamental concept by words compounded with σύν, “with,” such as συσταυροῦν, “to crucify together with” (Rom 6:6); συνθάπτειν, “to bury together with” (Rom 6:4); συζωοποιεῖν, “to make alive together with” (Eph 2:5), and so on (see W. Grundmann, *TDN⁵⁵T 7:786–87*, for a complete listing of these compounds; see also Moule, *Origin*, 124).

Figure 4. Chiasmic diagram of Phil 3:10

⁵²*NovT Novum Testamentum*

⁵³lit. literally

⁵⁴J.B. A. Jones (ed.), *Jerusalem Bible*

⁵⁵*TDNT* G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

συμμορφιζόμενος, “continually conforming myself [*or* being conformed],” is a participle, middle voice and present tense. As such it says that Paul, already dead to sin by virtue of Christ’s death, nevertheless strives to make the effects of that death an ever-present reality within himself by his own constant choice to consider himself in fact dead to sin and alive to God (cf. Rom 6:11), to conform his practice in the world to his position in Christ, to renounce his own selfish desires and say yes to Christ, who calls him to take up his cross daily and follow him as a servant of God for the good of humankind (cf. Phil 2:6–8 where μορφήν δούλου, “form of a slave,” is recalled by συμμορφιζόμενος, “continually conforming myself [*or* being conformed]”; for the baptismal context of both Philippian texts, see Jervell, *Imago Dei*, discussed in Martin, *Hymn of Christ*, 81–82).

This interpretation does not totally rule out the thought of physical sufferings or death playing out their transforming role in the Christian’s life. In fact, the mystical union with Christ in his sufferings and death, as outlined above, is but strengthened and deepened by any physical pain that may be experienced because of faith in Christ. The hazards that Paul faced in his apostolic work, the batterings he was subjected to as a Christian, had the potential for being “the concrete external means” by which he could be conformed to Christ’s death (Beare, 124). Thus, the expression “conforming oneself to his death” can be enlarged to include “costly discipleship,” the kind of suffering expressed so poignantly by the apostle in his letter to the Corinthians (2 Cor 4:10–11, Hawthorne’s translation):

Always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus’ sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

(See 2 Cor 1:8–10; 6:8–10; 11:21–33. It has been noted earlier that Paul’s suffering in Ephesus is reflected in the Corinthian correspondence.) This setting would answer the criticism of Fee ([1995], 332 ⁵⁶n. 61, 336 ⁵⁷n. 72), that Paul is not implicitly responding to his opponents in this section.

11 εἴ πως κατανήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν, “in the hope of attaining the resurrection from among the dead.” If by reading v 10 one should think that Paul has shifted from a futuristic eschatology (cf. 1 Thess 4:13–17) to a “realized” eschatology, where the Christian’s resurrection has already taken place (cf. 1 Cor 15:12; Col 3:1–3; and the error of Hymenaeus and Philetus in 2 Tim 2:7–18) in Christ’s resurrection (cf. Gal 2:20), clearly this is not the case. The apostle does assert that the Christian died and rose with Christ, and is now living in the power of Christ’s resurrected life (Dibelius, Gnllka, Collange). But this conviction does not lead him to surrender the hope of a future resurrection, when all conflicts will be resolved; all ills healed; all human frailties, both moral and physical, eliminated; and all wrongs forever set right (cf. 3:21). Paul’s “eschatological proviso” (*Vorbehalt*), i.e., the tension between what is already experienced by believers and what lies ahead, is one of the most axiomatic conclusions in recent Pauline studies.

⁵⁶n note

⁵⁷n note

Paul expresses this hope of a future resurrection in an unusual way. He begins with the words εἴ πως καταστήσω, lit⁵⁸. “if somehow I might attain.” These words seem to convey an element of doubt or uncertainty, however slight (see Bockmuehl, 217, who comments, “There is a degree of contingency often underrated by commentators”). But if there is any doubt in Paul’s mind, it is not about the reality of the resurrection to come (cf. 2 Cor 5:1–8; Phil 3:20–21), or about the trustworthiness of God (Rom 8:38–39), or about the way in which he will attain the resurrection, i.e., by martyrdom (cf. Otto, *CB*⁵⁹Q 57.2 [1995] 324–40, who thinks the doubt is real that Paul will fail to be resurrected as a martyr), or by some other way (Martin [1976]), or about himself (Michael, Vincent, Collange) as to whether he might be rejected for his own defects (1 Cor 9:27; but see Phil 3:9; Rom 5:17–18, 21). Rather, it would appear that Paul uses such an unexpected hypothetical construction simply because of humility on his part, a humility that recognizes that salvation is the gift of God from start to finish and that as a consequence he dare not presume on this divine mercy (Caird). A translation such as GOODSPEED⁶⁰’S “in the hope of attaining” adequately and accurately expresses Paul’s feeling of awe and wonder as he wrote the phrase (cf. Acts 27:12; Rom 1:10; 11:14 for similar expressions of expectation; BD⁶¹F §375). Such an attitude of humility is not in any way weakened by the active voice of the verb καταστήσω, “I might attain” (akin to 3:12–14), as though Paul were thinking that by himself and his own efforts he could attain the resurrection. His expression as it stands implies the following modification: “If by the grace and goodness of God I might be privileged to participate in the resurrection” (see Gundry Volf, *Paul and Perseverance*, 254–60).

The expression Paul uses here for the resurrection, ἐξανάστασις, does not appear in the LXX⁶², nor is it found elsewhere in the NT. Paul coined it, perhaps, compounding the preposition ἐκ, “out of,” with the usual word for resurrection (ἀνάστασις), so that by using this strengthened form along with the repeated ἐκ, “out of”—ἐκ νεκρῶν, “out of the dead”—he might stress in a striking way that it is precisely the rising from among the dead he has in mind here, not the mystical rising with Christ that is the present experience of all believers. That future resurrection, which will be in incorruption, glory, and power (1 Cor 15:42–44), now has the focus of his attention, and only this resurrection is in view. See the full note of the unusual term “resurrection from the dead” in Bockmuehl (218–20); he emphasizes its polemical background.

Explanation

In this section, Paul makes it clear that Jewish Torah piety presented advantages, such as birth, religion, and position in society, and that Jewish boundary markers, however arduously achieved, ultimately are things without value. He says this not because of pique owing to a personal lack of distinction or because of failure in his occupational pursuits or religious

⁵⁸lit. literally

⁵⁹*CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly*

⁶⁰GOODSPEED *The Complete Bible: An American Translation*, E. J. Goodspeed

⁶¹BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (University of Chicago/University of Cambridge, 1961)

⁶²LXX The Septuagint, Greek translation of the OT

endeavors. By human standards he was the best of the best, the most religious of the religious, with every right to boast in himself and to believe in his own goodness. Rather, he says this in light of what occurred to him on the Damascus road and the life-altering happening that took place there. Suddenly he encountered the very Christ whose followers he had been harassing. As a result, his life was never to be the same again.

Immediately he experienced a radical transvaluation of values. At once he realized that those “good” things he had cherished and striven for were not “gains” at all. They were losses that had bankrupted him. They were “evil” things bent on destroying him, because they made him self-reliant, self-satisfied, content to offer to God his own goodness. They acted as an opiate, dulling his awareness of his need for the real righteousness that God requires and that only God can supply. The blinding light of the Christ-encounter (Acts 9:3–5) paradoxically opened Paul’s eyes to see everything clearly and in proper perspective. As a result he came to realize that to know Christ Jesus as *his* Lord was the one thing in life of ultimate worth—everything else that would compete for his allegiance was not only “loss” but “filth” by comparison, things to be abhorred and abandoned. And the actual loss of all those things he once lived for in no way altered his thinking. He continued with happy resolve to value only Christ. He considered himself a person who profited to the extreme by having gained Christ, by having become incorporate in him. Now there was no longer any doubt in his mind about whether his own goodness within the limits of Torah religion, based on keeping the law, was good enough for God; it was not. Instead, Paul came to see that by faith, that is, by his “yes” to the address of Christ, he stood now before God in Christ and in his goodness. He came to understand that the ultimate goodness that God demanded has been provided by God himself, but only in Christ. Thus, he came to understand that to have gained everything and lost Christ would have been to profit not at all, whereas to have lost everything and yet gained Christ was to have become the richest of the rich, not obviously in material possessions, but in spiritual enrichment (2 Cor 8:9).

Hence Paul desired to come to know Christ more fully, not as a theological topic to be discussed, much as he used to discuss different points of the Jewish law, but as a person to be enjoyed, echoing what Luther would later say in contrasting “using God” and “enjoying God.” He desired to experience in practice what he knew to be true in theory, i.e., that when Christ died, he died; when Christ was resurrected, he, too, was resurrected. He desired to sense within himself the power of the resurrected, living Christ. He desired to realize in personal experience the fact that Christ’s suffering for sin had indeed put to death his own sin. To this end Paul, although indeed dead to sin by virtue of Christ’s death for him, nevertheless, by his own continuous, conscious choice, was prepared to take this fact seriously, to take sides with Christ against himself, to bring his practice in the world in line with his position in Christ, to renounce his own selfish desires and say yes to Christ, who was calling him to conform himself to his death by daily taking up his cross in self-sacrificing service to others. Thus it was in a deep sense of humility and trust, expectation and hope, that Paul looked forward to the future and to his own bodily resurrection from among the dead. This thought points on to Phil 3:20–21.

The issue of “religion” is brought into prominence in this section. Here, while we should not seek to read Paul through Reformation spectacles and see the opposition to “works” as part of the debate between medieval Catholicism and the Protestant reformers, it still remains true that one’s trust in external props (for Paul, Torah religious observances, such as the distinctives

of circumcision, sabbath keeping, and kosher observance, and for Luther, his fierce polemic against papal Rome) may constitute a threat to living faith. Karl Barth voiced this reliance on externalities (in his day, of the Confessing Church in the Third Reich) as an evil to be resisted. Hence we may understand his stark axiom: “religion is a concern of the godless” (*Religion ist eine Angelegenheit ... des gottlosen Menschen; Church Dogmatics* 1.2, 299–300 [trans⁶³. G. T. Thomson and H. Knight, adapted]). The “godless” in this context were not evil people but religious folk, and especially speaks, then, with a timeless relevance to any situation in which Christ is being replaced by “religion,” whether Torah or civil or cultural-patriotic loyalty to which human beings cling for support and by which they seek to gain acceptance with God who “justifies the ungodly” (Rom 4:5).⁶⁴

Form/Structure/Setting

Paul’s Greek at this point is difficult. Hence it is not possible to see precisely how it relates to what has gone before. True, the new section does begin with a conjunction, ὅτι, but the ambiguous nature of this conjunction (it can mean “that” or “because”) does not permit one to speak with any assurance. This ambiguity of meaning and the fact that the several verbs in v 12 are without objects compound the problem of relationship. One can only hope, therefore, to make an intelligent guess as to how vv 12–16 fit with vv 4–11. One such surmise may be the common catchword διώκειν, rendered “persecute” (in v 6) and “keep pressing on” (in v 12).

The dominant theme in the previous section (3:4–11) was the superlative significance of Christ. Although Paul also recites his own worthy attributes, he does so simply to accentuate the values of Christ; for he considers these attributes of his to be worse than nothing when compared with Christ. They can be easily set aside, abandoned even, if this is necessary to gain Christ. Paul is obsessed with Christ. Nothing else matters but Christ. He can afford to lose all, but not Christ. For him to gain the world but not Christ is to have lost everything, whereas to gain Christ and lose everything is to possess all. Hence the apostle’s desire is to gain Christ, to be found in Christ. In a word, the total focus of his life is to know Christ intimately. Paul closes this section by giving expression to his hope of attaining the resurrection from the dead. But this mention of the resurrection is made more like an aside than anything else. Certainly it is not the burden of vv 4–11. Christ is the chief theme. Any hope for resurrection and standing before God in a goodness acceptable to God is based wholly upon Christ.

Hence vv 12–16 may be viewed as relating to the previous section in this way: they provide a caution about past experiences and a plan of action for the future. Paul has just said that his supreme desire is to know Christ (and this is a worthy goal for any Christian). But lest some should assume that he (or anyone else for that matter) had already attained complete knowledge of Christ, he immediately proceeds to disabuse them of such an assumption. Christ is too great to be grasped in a single lifetime. And yet this fact does not discourage Paul or dampen his ardor. Rather, it drives him on to know more. The more he knows about Christ, the more he wishes to know. Hence he views his future as a race course stretching out before a

⁶³trans. translation/transitive

⁶⁴ Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 196–202.

runner who is pressing on to reach the goal and win the prize. Thus, the incomprehensible majesty of Christ is no deterrent to Paul's quest, but a spur, urging him to press on to a still greater knowledge of Christ until it is finally complete when he is called up to receive the prize.

At the same time that Paul continues to bare his soul and disclose the motive that drives him, he may also intend his words to be a warning against any claim that "perfection" is possible in the present. Those same Jewish teachers, whom he attacked so vehemently in vv 2–3, were known to state repeatedly that a person who has been circumcised and is true to the law can reach perfection (Rigaux, *NT⁶⁵S* 4 [1957–58] 237–62). Hence if they were teaching this in Philippi, Paul, who now knows that "perfection" cannot be attained in this way, surely would wish to remind his friends that "perfection" comes only through Jesus Christ and at the resurrection at the last day (cf. Phil 3:21). There is no need, then, to suppose that in addition to such Jewish or Jewish-Christian propagandists the Philippian Christians were beset by still another group of opponents—gnostics, who also believed and taught that perfection could be attained on earth now without waiting for, or without any need for, the resurrection (Friedrich, 120; Koester, *NT⁶⁶S* 8 [1961–62] 324). This is not to say there was no gnostic influence present in Philippi or that Paul did not know and use gnostic key words and phrases in his teaching. But there seems little need here to ferret out a new opponent for Paul to attack in addition to the Jewish faction in order to justify the statements he makes.

Rather, the elegance of Paul's rhetoric, the depth of feeling he emotes, the unique intimate revelation of his own consuming desire to know Christ and to follow on to know him better—all breathe more the spirit of parenetic, or better, epideictic, rather than polemical rhetoric. Paul seems more like a pastor who gladly risks being ridiculed or misunderstood in order to care properly for his flock than a warrior fending off an enemy. He seems more concerned to consolidate converts to Christ than to win an argument with his opponents. (Yet he did face an array of deviationists who attacked his congregations [see Gunther, *St. Paul's Opponents*, for a survey; also see Sumney, *Identifying Paul's Opponents*].) His style of writing appears designed powerfully to affect his readers, to move them to change, to create within them the same appreciation for and pursuit of Christ that he himself experienced, rather than to put down any enemies one can imagine. Christ is so real to him and so ultimately significant that he wants the Philippians (and the whole world, for that matter) to know what he knows and feels.

Comment

12 οὐχ ὅτι ἤδη ἔλαβον, "I do not say that I have at this time grasped [the meaning of] Christ." Paul continues his passionate writing, beginning his new sentence abruptly with οὐχ ὅτι, "not that"—a distinctively NT formula, meaning "I do not say that" or "I do not claim that" (cf. John 6:46; 7:42; 2 Cor 1:24; 3:5; 2 Thess 3:9). But what is it that Paul here so emphatically disclaims? To answer this question is not an easy matter. First, it is difficult because the verb of the subordinate clause introduced by ὅτι, "that," is ἔλαβον, a verb with a wide range of meanings: "to take hold of," "to receive or accept," "to get or obtain," "to make one's own," "to apprehend or comprehend [mentally or spiritually]." Second, it is difficult because this verb has

⁶⁵*NTS New Testament Studies*

⁶⁶*NTS New Testament Studies*

no direct object to say what it was that Paul obtained or apprehended. As a consequence, many answers to the question have been suggested. (Further options in addition to what follows are mentioned by Bockmuehl, 221, with special reference to Qumran.) (1) Some say that Paul disclaims having already attained to the resurrection of the dead (cf. v 11; Lütgert, *Vollkommenen im Philipperbrief*). (2) Others say that he denies having fully achieved righteousness (Klijn, *Nov⁶⁷T 7* [1964–65] 281; Pfitzner, *Paul and the Agon Motif*, 142–53, supported by the variant reading of P^{46} and D, which add ἢ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι, “or have already been justified”; see *Note* ⁶⁸a), moral and spiritual perfection (Vincent, J. J. Müller), or the prize at the end of the race (Moule, Bonnard, Synge, Beare). (3) Still others say that Paul deliberately left the object of the verb unexpressed to counter the arrogance of the gnostics, who claimed to know everything, to have attained everything, to have reached the goal, to have become perfect (Haupt; Ewald; Gnlika; Collange; Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 97; Koester, *NT⁶⁹S 8* [1961–62] 317–32).

None of these interpretations of Paul’s concise statement, however, does justice to its vocabulary or to its context. Hence one more suggestion may be permitted: Paul means to say that he does not lay claim to having fully grasped the meaning of Christ at this point in his experience. Christ—the full significance of this person—is the missing object of the verb ἔλαβον, “I have grasped.” In justification of this interpretation we may note the following factors: (1) The verb λαμβάνειν can indeed mean, among other things, “to comprehend mentally or spiritually” (BDA⁷⁰G). (2) The strengthened form καταλαμβάνειν, which appears twice in immediately succeeding clauses (καταλάβω, “I may apprehend”/κατελήμφθην, “I was apprehended”), also carries the idea of “to grasp” in the sense of “to comprehend” (cf. John 1:5; Acts 4:13; 10:34; Eph 3:18; Plat⁷¹o, *Phaedr*⁷². 250d; Polybius 8.4.6; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant. rom*⁷³. 5.46.3; Josephus, *Life* 11 §56; see also the helpful remarks in R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, trans⁷⁴. G. R. Beasley-Murray [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971] 47–48; Dyer, *JB⁷⁵L 79* [1960] 170–71). (3) The aorist tense ἔλαβον, “I have grasped,” that is used here is a constative aorist, collecting Paul’s past experiences up to the time of the present and viewing

⁶⁷*NovT Novum Testamentum*

⁶⁸a P^{46} D and a few other witnesses add ἢ ἤδη δεδικαίωμαι, “or have already been justified,” perhaps influenced by 1 Cor 4:4 or compensating for the lack of any objects for the verbs in this verse. If this phrase is an omission, it can be explained as an error due to homoioteleuton (see Silva, 203–4). Its inclusion would provide a good example of paronomasia with διώκω, “I keep pressing on” (see Fernández, *Est Bib* 34 [1975] 121–23). For a defense of the inclusion of this phrase (as in NA²⁷), see Bockmuehl, 220.

⁶⁹*NTS New Testament Studies*

⁷⁰BDAG Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1999.

⁷¹Plato *Apology of Socrates*

⁷²*Phaedr. Phaedrus*

⁷³*Ant. rom. Antiquitates romanae*

⁷⁴trans. translation/transitive

⁷⁵*JBL Journal of Biblical Literature*

them as a single whole. This is confirmed by the temporal adjunct ἤδη, “at this time,” that accompanies it (BD⁷⁶F §332[1]). (4) The past experiences that are especially envisaged are those described in Phil 3:8–11, but especially the experiences involving Christ—gaining Christ, being found in Christ, and coming to know Christ. Paul’s encounter with the resurrected and living Christ created within him not only a consuming desire to know Christ intimately and fully, but also an awareness that this was something that could not be achieved in a moment. To know the incomprehensible greatness of Christ demands a lifetime of arduous inquiry.

ἢ ἤδη τετελείωμαι, “or that I have already become perfect [in my knowledge of him].” It is in just such a context of thought that the next verb, τετελείωμαι, “I have become perfect,” must also be interpreted. With it Paul carries further and underscores his disclaimer by saying that he is not “perfect” in his knowledge and understanding of Christ. (Cf. ἤδη τέλειος, “already perfect,” which seems to have been a catchphrase of the gnostics, who considered themselves the only ones to have been fully instructed and so to have reached the proper level of illumination, knowledge, or understanding, especially at Corinth. See Schmithals, *Paul and the Gnostics*, 99; idem, *Gnosticism in Corinth*, 30; cf. also J. B. Lightfoot, *Saint Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 3d ed. [London: Macmillan, 1879] on Col 1:28.) The apostle is keenly aware that his knowledge of Christ is partial and that he must wait for a future day, the eschatological day (?), when the partial will give way to the perfect (τὸ τέλειον, “the perfect,” in 1 Cor 13:9–10, although the allusion here may be christological: when the returning Christ brings God’s purposes to fulfillment [1 Cor 15:20–28]). The sights of the apostle are evidently trained on those who espoused some form of “realized eschatology” (which may provide another link uniting Paul’s opponents at Corinth and Philippi, if his intention includes the polemical along with the hortatory).

διώκω δὲ εἰ καὶ καταλάβω, “but I keep pressing on to see whether I may apprehend Christ Jesus.” The realization that there is too much to know about Christ for one’s knowledge of him ever to be complete this side of the future resurrection incites Paul to keep pressing on to see how much understanding he can achieve. The adversative conjunction δέ, “but,” emphasizes this determination: the immensity of the task might indeed paralyze some, *but* not Paul. διώκειν, “to keep pressing on,” belongs to the world of the hunter rather than that of the athlete. It does not properly mean “to run”; rather it means “to pursue,” “to chase,” “to hunt down.” Nevertheless, because Paul uses διώκειν, “to keep pressing on,” in v 14 of an athlete running a race, it is quite likely that he already had this metaphor in mind in v 12 (Beare, Caird). In any case this verb gives expression to the greatness of the effort required, whether it is to make a catch, to win a race, or, in this instance, to know Christ.

διώκω, “I keep pressing on,” is followed by εἰ ... καταλάβω, “whether I may apprehend,” an example of the subjunctive employed in a dependent construction to express a deliberative question (BD⁷⁷F §368). εἰ, therefore, is to be translated “whether.” καταλαμβάνειν, which is the truly difficult word, may mean “to seize, win, attain,” as a runner in a race might run to win the prize (1 Cor 9:24). But it can also have the very different meaning, even in its active form, of “to

⁷⁶BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (University of Chicago/University of Cambridge, 1961)

⁷⁷BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (University of Chicago/University of Cambridge, 1961)

grasp an idea with one's mind," hence "to understand" (BDA⁷⁸G; Dupont, *Gnosis*, 501–21). It is this latter meaning that makes the most sense here. Paul's one desire is to know Christ. But he is keenly aware that he has not yet grasped (οὐχ ... ἔλαβον, "not [that] I have grasped") the full import of the significance of Christ. As a consequence, he sets out, very much like a runner, to see whether he might at last be able to comprehend (καταλάβω, "I may apprehend") Christ fully.

ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην ὑπὸ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, "inasmuch as [or, since] I was indeed apprehended by him." The reason Paul gives for this lifetime quest is stated in this clause. (For ἐφ' ᾧ as an idiom meaning "because" see BD⁷⁹F §235[2]. For its use in the theologically important phrase in Rom 5:12 see J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, A⁸⁰B 33 [New York: Doubleday, 1993] 413–17; idem, *NT⁸¹S* 39 [1993] 321–39, where he argues for a consecutive reading more than a causal one. Bockmuehl, 221, agrees. For a full discussion of this text, whose significance for "Ambrosiaste⁸²r" and Augustin⁸³e, was momentous, see Williams, *Ideas of the Fall*. See Fee, 346⁸⁴n. 31, 430⁸⁵n. 28.) Once again Paul's rhetorical skill becomes obvious as he plays with two forms of the same verb: καταλάβω, "I may apprehend"/κατελήμφθην, "I was apprehended." First, Paul states his goal: it is to grasp Christ Jesus for good and all, but to grasp (καταλάβω, "I may apprehend") him with his mind and heart and to comprehend him with the full comprehension of faith (cf. R. Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, trans⁸⁶. G. R. Beasley-Murray [Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971] 48). But second, in giving a motive for this driving force within him, Paul states that it was because he himself had been grasped (κατελήμφθην, "I was apprehended") by Christ. Now the meaning of this verb shifts slightly. As Paul uses it here, he may intend it to retain some overtones of grasping with the mind, hence of being known by Christ, i.e., of being chosen by Christ for a specific task (Gal 1:15–16; 4:9; cf. Amos 3:2). But Paul seems now to be using it primarily to refer to that Christ-encounter he experienced on the Damascus road, at which time Christ laid hands on him, so to speak, forcefully arresting him and setting him off in a new lifelong direction (1 Cor 15:8–10; Michael; Dupont, "Conversion of Paul"). Perhaps, then, the English verb "to apprehend" is the one best suited to express the idea involved in Paul's use of καταλαμβάνειν. For "to apprehend" can mean both "to lay hold of with the understanding" as well as "to arrest or seize."⁸⁷

⁷⁸BDAG Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1999.

⁷⁹BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (University of Chicago/University of Cambridge, 1961)

⁸⁰AB Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday)

⁸¹*NTS New Testament Studies*

⁸²*Ambrosiaster Letter to the Philippians*

⁸³*Augustine Admonition and Grace*

⁸⁴n note

⁸⁵n note

⁸⁶trans. translation/transitive

⁸⁷Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 204–208.

3:10 Paul turned his thoughts to knowing Christ. Some understand the words “know Christ” (which are an infinitive in Greek) to express the purpose of gaining Christ and being found in him. In this sense, the purpose of being found in him would be to come to know him. That seems somewhat awkward for Paul but is a possibility. A better approach is to understand the infinitive as consecutive, further defining “to be found in him” (v. 9). This, then, gives the content of Paul’s deep desire, i.e., to come to know Christ in a life-shaping way.

In this verse two ideas complement each other: the power of Christ’s resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings. They provide a theological foundation for Paul’s thought, as well as a model for Christian growth. Christians must be like their Lord.³⁸⁸⁵ Here another chiasm occurs. The first elements are the power of his resurrection (v. 10) and attaining the resurrection from the dead (v. 11). The second elements are fellowship of sharing in sufferings (v. 10) and becoming like him in his death (v. 10). The literary arrangement indicates that Paul’s deepest ambition was resurrection power. While the chiasm expresses these four statements in two, the logical order preserved Paul’s theology.

3:11 The definition of resurrection power depends on Christ’s experience since the only available model is Christ. The power displayed through Christ’s resurrection is also available through Christ. It is divine power and all of God’s attributes appear in Christ. Resurrection power has two phases. First, at conversion believers experience the power of a spiritual resurrection. They are given new life.³⁸⁹⁶ A new spiritual energy characterizes the new life in Christ. Yet this powerful life only begins at conversion. Successively and progressively the moral life must be changed, the physical body ultimately transformed, and believers brought to the

⁸⁸³⁵ The frequent references to Christ in this passage unmistakably speak to this point.

⁸⁹³⁶ See the commentary on Col 2:8–3:4.

eternal resting place of resurrection, heaven itself. The transformation does not happen at once. It culminates in the attaining of the resurrection from the dead. The resurrection occurs at the time of the Lord's return to earth. (1 Thess 4:13–18). That will finalize the application of resurrection power to the Christian.

Paul longed for the complete resurrection in his own life. Any contemplation of existence without the completed process made him uncomfortable because no one can conceive of himself without a body.⁹⁰⁷ Resurrection power achieves the entire process. Paul's longing to know Christ, therefore, was a longing to be like Christ in his glorified state.

Knowing Christ also meant identifying with his death. This involved participating in suffering and being conformed to his death. Paul spoke of sharing in Christ's sufferings in various ways,⁹¹⁸ but here he paralleled Rom 6:1–11. In Romans the suffering was the death of Christ into which Paul had been baptized. He thus participated in what Christ did for him when he died.⁹²⁹ Paul did not expect to contribute to Christ's sufferings, i.e., by taking on himself some redemptive suffering as Jesus did, neither did he mean that he would suffer and die as Jesus did. The theological substructure of this passage is the Christian's identification with Christ.⁹³⁰

Paul also spoke of his identification with Christ's death. Being united with Christ in his death was a spiritual reality, but being conformed to his death was the daily process of living. Again Rom 6:11 provides the theological parallel. The task of the Christian is, in part, to realize that the nature of salvation is a death. By constantly choosing that death to sin and self, a conformity to Jesus' death occurs. Jesus completely died to self and became a sacrifice for others. It was the greatest demonstration of commitment to the will of God, and it was that death which brought his resurrection life. Paul realized that conformity to Jesus' death made him a candidate for resurrection power. This helps explain the spiritual discipline mentioned in 3:12–16.

In longing to know Christ, therefore, Paul sought a complete relationship with him. Situations may differ, but each Christian has the hope that resurrection power results from death and that conformity to Jesus' death brings life. In fact, the more obedient one is to Christ, thus conformed to his death, the more resurrection power becomes available. Further, Paul longed for the completion of his Christian hope. Someday he would enjoy complete

⁹⁰⁷ This is the burden of 2 Cor 5:1–10. He longed there to be clothed with the new body, at which time the work of salvation will be complete. In that text, he also implied that he expected a time when he would be in heaven without his body, i.e., a "naked state." Since the body is both the vehicle through which we communicate and receive communication and the "housing" which shapes our self-identity, we cannot conceive of existence without it. The dead in Christ will have an intermediate state of existence, but Paul looked forward to the completion of salvation.

⁹¹⁸ See, for example, Rom 8:17; 2 Cor 1:5; Col 1:24; Acts 9:16. See also the commentary on Col 1:24.

⁹²⁹ This preserves the basic meaning of "participation" which the Greek *κοινωνία* implies. It has little to do with "completing tribulations," as Col 1:24 states. Rather, it is expressive of "benefitting from" by participation.

⁹³⁰ W. Grundmann, *TDNT*, 7:786–87, provides a full range of compound words used to express the theology of identification with Christ.

transformation of character, newness of body, and a perfect environment. He would live in heaven with his Lord.

TRUE ZEAL (3:12–16)

Paul's attention turned to true zeal in living the Christian life. He continued his argument against his Jewish opponents through his personal experience. What should occupy the thoughts and focus the energy of genuine Christians?

The passage falls into two distinct parts. First, in 3:12–14, Paul expressed his desire to achieve what God had in store for him. Then, in 3:15–16 he issued a call to follow his pattern of living. The Greek of this section is particularly difficult, but the thrust is abundantly clear. Paul was in the process of achieving. In case he was misunderstood in 3:4–11, he clarified that he had not yet arrived. One of the key words of the passage is "pursue" ("press on," NIV; *diōkō*, 3:12, 14). It stresses an active commitment to the call of Christ.

Some commentators suggest that in this section Paul addressed his opponents. They say that he consciously countered a perfectionistic group, sometimes called "divine men," who claimed their own completeness. Others suggest that Paul produced this section because the Jewish opponents of 3:2 taught that perfection could be achieved by keeping the law. Still others see Paul continuing the logic of 3:4–11, issuing a warning because of a tendency to misunderstand his teaching. His introduction of 3:15 with the words "all of us who are mature," (lit., "perfect"), however, suggests that there may have been some irony in his tone. The context does not require an opponent, and it is unlikely that he envisioned one. A group within the church may have misunderstood his teaching on justification and taken it to their own "logical" conclusions, which were theologically unacceptable.

Paul's Desire to Fulfill His Call (3:12–14)

3:12–13a Twice, in similar terms, Paul expressed his imperfection. The first expression presents this in three ways (v. 12), and the second expression summarizes the three ways into one (v. 13). The three are: "Not that I have already obtained," "have already been made perfect," and "I press on." The basic question is, What did Paul lack and, therefore, seek? Three times the word root for "received" occurs (3:12; *lambanō*; *katalambanō*, twice). The word is ambiguous, and no object occurs with it.

The precise definition may refer to mental or experiential attainment. Used of the mind, it means *to understand* (or *understand fully* with *katalambanō*).⁹⁴⁴¹ This would mean that Paul did not yet understand the significance of Christ or that he did not know him completely. If the use were experiential, "to grasp something," Paul stated that he did not yet have in hand what he desired. The understood object of the verbs would determine which definition applies.

What did Paul hope to attain? In these verses two phrases suggest an answer: "have already been made perfect" and "Christ Jesus took hold of me." "Have already been made perfect" (*teteleiōmai*) occurs only here in the Pauline corpus. It contrasts with the verb "obtained." Through his past experiences ("obtained," aorist tense), Paul had not yet achieved completion

⁹⁴⁴¹ See, e.g., John 1:5; Acts 4:13; Eph 3:18. *BAGD*, 464–65, lists several meanings for the term. It states that Phil 3:12 means "to make one's own, apprehend or comprehend mentally or spiritually."

(*katalambanō*, perfect tense).⁴⁹⁵² The question is whether Paul referred to a perfect knowledge or experience. Was his call to a complete knowledge of Christ or to a complete identification with him in character?

The context has a bearing on the problem (3:9–11).⁴⁹⁶³ Those who understand Paul's desire in the mental sense, to know Christ completely, point out that the primary verb in these verses is "that I may know him" (see 3:10). That knowledge, then, involved knowing Christ's power and suffering. Because that knowledge was related closely to experience, clearly he wanted to know in his experience the full implications of his union with Christ. However, the text seems to argue against that understanding.⁴⁹⁷⁴

Those who understand Paul's desire in the experiential sense point out that the object of the verb "obtained" is "the resurrection from the dead" of 3:11. It seems best, therefore, to understand Paul as saying he had not completed the experiential process begun in his salvation. He looked forward to the resurrection from the dead and, secondarily, to the process of conformity to death which would bring it forth.

"The resurrection" fits this context and answers the problems raised in the text. First, it easily explains why Paul had not attained. He looked to the end of time when the resurrection would occur. Second, it is helpful to remember that a first-century heresy stated that the resurrection was already past. Paul countered it in 2 Tim 2:18 (cf. 1 Cor 15:12ff.; 2 Thess 2:2). Something similar may have concerned Paul here when he pointedly affirmed the necessity of continued growth.⁴⁹⁸⁵ Third, this fits well with Paul's prayer in 1:9–11. He hoped to be pure and blameless at the day of Christ. Fourth, the idea of "the power of the resurrection" (v. 10) must be taken with the death that precedes it. Thus the thought of conformity to the will of God ("becoming like him in his death," v. 10) continued to be a goal because resurrection power is available in death. The best explanation of this desire is that Paul looked ahead to the completion of his salvation.⁹⁹

⁹⁵⁴² See A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman, 1934), 901.

⁹⁶⁴³ This is known by the flow of thought and the fact that the objects of these verbs are omitted. The rule of thumb is that no object needs to be supplied if the existing subject naturally supplies it. That rule applies here. Thus the Greek text looks back to these verses to find its object.

⁹⁷⁴⁴ This objection is that, in typical Jewish fashion, Paul thought of knowledge as applied to action; it was experiential. Therefore, even if the stress of these verses is on knowledge, it is on knowing by experience, a concept quite in keeping with the meaning of the verb chosen, γινώσκω. For a complete defense of the "knowledge" position, see Hawthorne, 151ff.

⁹⁸⁴⁵ The theological misunderstanding involved the denial of a physical resurrection, which Paul countered by implication here as well.

⁹⁹ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 135–138.

10. τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτόν: ‘that I may come to know him.’ Taken up from the γνώσεως of vs. 8, and explaining it. Τοῦ γνῶναι is the infinitive of design, setting forth the end contemplated in the righteousness of faith. For this usage see Mt. 24:45; Lk. 2:24, 27; Acts 26:18; 1 Cor. 10:13; Gal. 3:10; and Burt¹⁰⁰. 397; Win¹⁰¹. xliv. 4 *b*.

Lips¹⁰². and Kl¹⁰³. coördinate τοῦ γν. with ἵνα εὔρεθῶ, as representing, not the purpose of being found in Christ, nor the object for which Paul possesses the righteousness of faith, but the *mode* in which he desires to be found in Christ. But the dependence on what immediately precedes is most natural. In τὸν Χιτὸν κερῶ. and εὔρεθῶ two elements are given which do not furnish a parallel to τοῦ γνῶναι, and Paul’s habit is to join two parallel clauses of design with a double ἵνα. (See Rom. 7:13; 2 Cor. 9:3; Gal. 3:14.) The difference, however, is not important. Calv¹⁰⁴., Grot¹⁰⁵., Beng¹⁰⁶., make τοῦ γν. dependent on τῇ πίστ., describing the power and the nature of faith. But this construction with πίστ. has no parallel in N.T. The change of construction from ἵνα in vs. 9 to the infin. of design is not uncommon in Paul. (See Rom. 6:6; Col. 1:9, 10.)

For γνῶναι, see on 1:19. Paul’s end is, indeed, εἰδέναι, the absolute knowledge; but he is here speaking rather of his *coming into* a knowledge of the riches of Christ in the *process* of his experience. See Lightf¹⁰⁷. on Gal. 4:9; and comp¹⁰⁸. Jn. 7:27; 1 Cor. 2:11; Gal. 4:8, 9; Eph. 5:5; 1

¹⁰⁰Burt. Burton: *N. T. Moods and Tenses*.

¹⁰¹Win. Winer: *Grammar of N. T. Greek*. 8th ed. of Eng. Transl. by Moulton. *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms*, 8 Aufl., von P. W. Schmiedel. 1 Theil, 1894.

¹⁰²Lips. Lipsius.

¹⁰³Kl. Klöpffer.

¹⁰⁴Calv. Calvin.

¹⁰⁵Grot. Grotius.

¹⁰⁶Beng. Bengel.

¹⁰⁷Lightf. Lightfoot.

¹⁰⁸comp. Compare.

Jn. 2:18, 29, 3:1, 16, 4:16. It should also be noted that, in N.T. Greek, γινώσκειν often implies a personal relation between the knower and the known, involving the influence of the object of knowledge upon the knower. (See Jn. 2:24, 25; 1 Cor. 2:8; 1 Jn. 4:8.) In Jn. the relation itself is expressed by the verb (Jn. 17:3, 25; 1 Jn. 2:3, 4, 5:20). Here, therefore, ‘that I may come to know,’ appropriating with the increase of knowledge.

The two following details are involved in personal knowledge of Christ:

καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ: ‘and the power of his resurrection.’ Καὶ is more than a simple connective. It introduces a definition and fuller explanation of αὐτὸν. Δύναμις is not the power by which Christ was raised from the dead (Chr¹⁰⁹., Œc¹¹⁰.), nor, as Theoph¹¹¹., “because to arise is great power”; nor Christ’s power to raise up believers. Like the preceding expressions, it describes a subjective experience. It is the power of the risen Christ as it becomes a subject of practical knowledge and a power in Paul’s inner life. It is thus within the same circle of thought as Rom. 6:4–11. (Comp¹¹². Col. 3:1 ff.) The resurrection is viewed, not only as something which Paul hopes to experience after death, nor as a historical experience of Christ which is a subject of grateful and inspiring remembrance, but as a present, continuously active force in his Christian development. The beginning of the life of faith is a moral resurrection, a rising with Christ (Rom. 6:5; Col. 3:1), inaugurating ‘newness of life’ (Rom. 6:4),—life in the Spirit (Rom. 7:6), a life essentially identical with the ζωὴ αἰώνιος and ἔπουράνιος of the glorified Jesus. Comp¹¹³. Eph. 1:19, 20, 2:5, 6; and see the very suggestive remarks of Pfleiderer, *Paulinismus*, ch. v. “The rising with Christ is put, not as an object of hope, but as belonging to the present, from the moment when ‘the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead’ (Rom. 8:11) takes up its abode in believers; so that the rising with Christ is so far a fact as that for them a new life is opened (2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:19). Thus, equipped with the death-overcoming, spiritual life-power of Christ, they enter upon a condition in which they are enabled to overcome the power of sin in their members, so that sin shall not have dominion over them (Rom. 6:13, 14; Col. 3:5).” —Klöpper. Thus the knowledge of the power of Christ’s resurrection appears as an element of the righteousness of faith. This explains Paul’s phrase ‘justification of *life*’ (Rom. 5:18). This knowledge includes the assurance of immortality.

καὶ κοινωνίαν παθημάτων αὐτοῦ: ‘and the fellowship of his sufferings.’

¹⁰⁹Chr. Chrysostom.

¹¹⁰Œc. Œcumenius.

¹¹¹Theoph. Theophylact.

¹¹²Comp. Compare.

¹¹³Comp. Compare.

¹¹⁴D¹¹⁵F¹¹⁶G¹¹⁷K¹¹⁸L¹¹⁹P τὴν before ΚΟΙΥ.

Comp¹²⁰. 2 Cor. 1:5, 4:10, 11; Gal. 6:17; Col. 1:24; 1 Pet. 4:13. A participation in the sufferings which Christ endured in his mortal life. (Comp¹²¹. Heb. 12:2, 3.) Such participation is involved in the knowledge of Christ. It is not merely ethical. It does not refer, except by implication, to the victorious power of suffering. Nor is a mere likeness to the sufferings of Christ intended. Like the knowledge of the power of the resurrection, the fellowship of the sufferings is involved in the mystical union with Christ, and is treated by Paul as a verification of this “at its hardest and most decisive point” (Weiss). Being in Christ involves fellowship with Christ at all points,—his obedient life, his spirit, his sufferings, his death, and his glory. The order of arrangement here is the true one. The fellowship of the sufferings follows the experience of the power of the resurrection. For the power of the resurrection appears in justification of life; and the new life in and with Christ puts its subject where Christ was,—in that attitude towards the world which engenders contradiction, reproach, and persecution. As Mey¹²². truthfully observes: “The enthusiastic feeling of drinking the cup of Christ is not possible unless a man bears in his heart the mighty assurance of resurrection through the Lord.” One who is not under the power of the resurrection will not share Christ’s sufferings, because his moral attitude will not be such as to call out the assaults of the world. (Comp¹²³. Jn. 7:7.) How this desire was fulfilled in Paul appears in the Acts, and in allusions in his letters. (See 1 Cor. 4:10–13, 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:8–12; Gal. 6:17.) Christ had said of him, ‘I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake’ (Acts 9:16).

συμμορφιζόμενος τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτοῦ: ‘becoming conformed unto his death.’

¹¹⁴D *Cod. Claromontanus*: 6th century. Græco-Latin. National Library, Paris. Contains both epistles entire. Corrector: D^b, close of 6th century.

¹¹⁵F *Cod. Augiensis*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Philippians entire; Philemon wanting in the Greek from πεποιθῶς (vs. 21) to the end.

¹¹⁶G *Cod. Boernerianus*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Dresden. Wanting Greek and Latin, Philem. 21–25.

¹¹⁷K *Cod. Mosquensis*: 9th century. Moscow. Contains both epistles entire.

¹¹⁸L *Cod. Angelicus*: 9th century. Angelican Library of Augustinian monks at Rome. Wanting from ἐξουσίαν (Heb. 13:10) to the end of Philemon.

¹¹⁹P *Cod. Porphyrianus*: beginning of 9th century. Palimpsest. St. Petersburg. Both epistles entire, but many words illegible.

¹²⁰Comp. Compare.

¹²¹Comp. Compare.

¹²²Mey. Meyer.

¹²³Comp. Compare.

¹²⁴κ^c ¹²⁵D^c ¹²⁶Κ¹²⁷L συμμορφουμενος.

¹²⁸F¹²⁹G συνφορτειζομενος, 'being burdened together.'

The conception of fellowship with Christ's sufferings is further unfolded to its last point—even unto death. (Comp¹³⁰. 2:8.) Συμμορφίξεσθαι not elsewhere in Bib¹³¹. The adj. σύμμορφος occurs 3:21; Rom. 8:29. The participle is in apposition with the subject of τοῦ γνῶναι. (Comp¹³². Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:10.) Not middle, 'conforming myself to,' but passive. The conformity is not ethical, as Rom. 6:3–11, but is a conformity with the sufferings of Christ's earthly life, even unto death. It does not necessarily indicate, as Mey¹³³., a distinct contemplation of Paul's martyrdom. (Comp¹³⁴. 1:25, 26, 2:23, 24.) The thought is rather that of 1 Cor. 15:31; 2 Cor. 4:10. (Comp¹³⁵. Rom. 8:17.) The suffering of this present time works together with all things for the good of those who love God (Rom. 8:28); and such God ordained to be 'conformed [συμμόρφους] to the image of his Son' (Rom. 8:29). The participle indicates the process of development.

11. εἴ πως κατανήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν: 'if possibly I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.' The words connect themselves most naturally with συμμορφ. τῷ θαν. αὐ., according to Paul's habitual association of resurrection with death. Resurrection, physical or ethical, is attained only through death.

Lips¹³⁶., without assigning any reason, and Kl¹³⁷. for reasons which seem fanciful, connect with γνῶναι.

¹²⁴κ *Cod. Sinaiticus*: 4th century. Discovered by Tischendorf in the convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, in 1859. Now at St. Petersburg. Contains both epistles complete. Correctors: κ^a, nearly contemporary; κ^b, 6th century; κ^c, beginning of 7th century, treated by two correctors,—κ^{ca} κ^{cb}.

¹²⁵D *Cod. Claromontanus*: 6th century. Græco-Latin. National Library, Paris. Contains both epistles entire. Corrector: D^b, close of 6th century.

¹²⁶Κ *Cod. Mosquensis*: 9th century. Moscow. Contains both epistles entire.

¹²⁷L *Cod. Angelicus*: 9th century. Angelican Library of Augustinian monks at Rome. Wanting from ἐξουσίαν (Heb. 13:10) to the end of Philemon.

¹²⁸F *Cod. Augiensis*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Philippians entire; Philemon wanting in the Greek from πεπιοιθῶς (vs. 21) to the end.

¹²⁹G *Cod. Boernerianus*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Dresden. Wanting Greek and Latin, Philem. 21–25.

¹³⁰Comp. Compare.

¹³¹Bib. Bible.

¹³²Comp. Compare.

¹³³Mey. Meyer.

¹³⁴Comp. Compare.

¹³⁵Comp. Compare.

¹³⁶Lips. Lipsius.

¹³⁷Kl. Klöpffer.

For εἴ πως see Acts 27:12; Rom. 1:10, 11:14. Much unnecessary difficulty has been made over the apparent uncertainty expressed in these words, and the fancied inconsistency with the certainty elsewhere expressed by Paul, as Rom. 8:38, 39, 5:17, 18, 21; 2 Cor. 5:1 ff.; Phil. 1:22, 23. He elsewhere urges the necessity of caution against a possible lapse from faith (2:12; 1 Cor. 10:12; Gal. 3:3, 5:4), and he takes the same caution to himself (1 Cor. 9:27). His words here are an expression of humility and self-distrust, not of doubt. Weiss remarks that while, on the human side, the attainment of the goal may be regarded as doubtful, or at least conditioned upon humble self-estimate, on the side of the working of divine grace it appears certain.

καταντᾶν: Only in Paul and Acts. In Paul, of persons, 1 Cor. 10:11, 14:36; of ethical relations, Eph. 4:13. In Acts always of places, except 26:7.

καταντήσω is aor. subj., as καταλάβω (vs. 12). Εἰ with the subj. is rare in good class¹³⁸. prose, but occurs in LX¹³⁹X, and is common in later Greek. (See Burt¹⁴⁰. 253, 276.)

τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν:

¹⁴¹Κ¹⁴²Λ, Arm¹⁴³., Cop¹⁴⁴., read ἐξαν. των νεκρων. So T¹⁴⁵R.

Ἐξανάστασις occurs only here in Bib¹⁴⁶. The verb ἐξανιστάναι is found Mk. 12:9; Lk. 20:28; Acts 15:5, but in neither of the passages of the rising of the dead. Why the compound word was selected instead of the simple ἀνάστασις, we cannot explain. Possibly, as Mey¹⁴⁷., in order to give greater vividness to the image; but this is far from satisfactory. Beng¹⁴⁸.'s explanation, that it is intended to mark the resurrection of believers as distinguished from that of Christ, is arbitrary and fanciful. Ἀνάστ. or ἐξανάστ. ἐκ is found only three times in N.T. (Lk. 20:35; Acts 4:2; 1 Pet. 1:3).

Lightf¹⁴⁹. says: "The general resurrection of the dead, whether good or bad, is ἡ ἀνάστ. τῶν νεκ. (e.g. 1 Cor. 15:42); on the other hand, the resurrection of Christ and of those who rise with Christ is generally [ἡ] ἀνάστ. [ἡ] ἐκ νεκ." This can hardly be borne out. See Rom. 1:4, ἀνάστ. νεκ., of Christ,—so Acts 26:23; 1 Cor. 15:42, 43, ἀνάστ. τ. νεκ., of a resurrection which is in incorruption, glory, and power; Acts 17:31, ἐκ νεκ., of Christ; vs. 32, ἀνάστ. νεκ.

¹³⁸class. Classics or Classical.

¹³⁹LXX Septuagint Version.

¹⁴⁰Burt. Burton: *N. T. Moods and Tenses*.

¹⁴¹Κ *Cod. Mosquensis*: 9th century. Moscow. Contains both epistles entire.

¹⁴²Λ *Cod. Angelicus*: 9th century. Angelican Library of Augustinian monks at Rome.

Wanting from ἐξουσίαν (Heb. 13:10) to the end of Philemon.

¹⁴³Arm. Armenian.

¹⁴⁴Cop. Coptic, Memphitic, or Bohairic.

¹⁴⁵TR *Textus Receptus*.

¹⁴⁶Bib. Bible.

¹⁴⁷Mey. Meyer.

¹⁴⁸Beng. Bengel.

¹⁴⁹Lightf. Lightfoot.

It is true that in every case where ἐκ occurs the reference is to the resurrection of the just, but three instances are not enough to build such a distinction upon.

The reference here is clearly to the resurrection of believers. The question of the resurrection of the wicked is irrelevant; and the idea of a reference to a spiritual resurrection while still in the body is entirely without support.

12. οὐχ ὄτι: See on 4:11. Supply λέγω, 'I say not that.' (Comp¹⁵⁰. Jn. 6:46; 2 Cor. 1:24, 3:5; Phil. 4:17; 2 Thess. 3:9.)

ἤδη ἔλαβον: Ἡδη 'now,' marks the point of time at which all the past experience has arrived. Ἐλαβον covers Paul's entire past up to the time of writing. Its object is not expressed, but is all that is included in vs. 8–11.

Lightf¹⁵¹. is wrong in insisting that the aorist points to a definite past epoch, and translating 'Not as though by my conversion I did at once attain.' The aorist is frequently used to express duration extending to the present. See Ellic¹⁵². on 1 Thess. 2:16, and comp¹⁵³. Lk. 14:18; Rom. 3:2; Gal. 5:24; Eph. 3:5; 1 Thess. 2:16. See also Beet, *Expositor*, 1st ser. xi. p. 375, 6.

The variety of objects suggested for ἔλαβον is bewildering. A favorite one is βραβεῖον from vs. 14. So Chr¹⁵⁴., Œc¹⁵⁵., Theoph¹⁵⁶., Beng¹⁵⁷., Ellic¹⁵⁸., Mey¹⁵⁹., Ead¹⁶⁰., Beet, Ril¹⁶¹. Meyer says that βραβεῖον is the bliss of Messiah's kingdom, and that ἔλαβον is to be explained of his having attained in ideal anticipation(!); Beet, "the full blessedness of the kingdom of Christ for which he must wait till the resurrection from the dead." But who could possibly have imagined that he *had* attained this? There is no reason for anticipating βραβεῖον.

ἤδη τετελείωμαι: 'am already made perfect.'

¹⁵⁰Comp. Compare.

¹⁵¹Lightf. Lightfoot.

¹⁵²Ellic. Ellicott.

¹⁵³comp. Compare.

¹⁵⁴Chr. Chrysostom.

¹⁵⁵Œc. Œcumenius.

¹⁵⁶Theoph. Theophylact.

¹⁵⁷Beng. Bengel.

¹⁵⁸Ellic. Ellicott.

¹⁵⁹Mey. Meyer.

¹⁶⁰Ead. Eadie.

¹⁶¹Ril. Rilliet.

¹⁶²D¹⁶³F¹⁶⁴G add η ηδη δεδικαιωμαι.

Τετελ. explains ἔλαβον more definitely, or puts literally what ἔλ. had put figuratively. "Ἐλ. regards the whole past as a completed act; τετ. the whole past gathered up in its relation to the present. The perfection referred to is moral and spiritual perfection. (Comp¹⁶⁵. Eph. 3:17–19, 4:13–16; Col. 1:28; and Ign¹⁶⁶. Eph. iii. Οὐ διατάσσομαι ὑμῖν, ὡς ὢν τι· εἰ γὰρ καὶ δέδεμαι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι, οὕτω ἀπήρτισμαι ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ: 'I do not command you as though I were somewhat, for even though I am in bonds for the Name's sake, I am not yet perfected in Jesus Christ.' Comp¹⁶⁷. Philad. v.) The verb is used by Paul only here, but is common in Heb.

διώκω δὲ: 'but I pursue,' or as A.V¹⁶⁸., 'follow after'; better than R.V¹⁶⁹., 'press on.' The eagerness of Paul to attain his ideal is emulated by that of some of the commentators to bring βραβεῖον up into this verse. There is no need of supplying it with διώκω, nor need διώκω be taken absolutely. Its object lies in ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην, etc., and is the same as that of ἔλαβον. The pursuit is no groping after something undefined, nor is it prosecuted with any feeling of doubt as to the attainment of its end. Though he had zealously pursued the 'law of righteousness' (Rom. 9:31) as a son of Israel, he was now pursuing the righteousness of faith with even greater zeal, under a mightier impulse, and with a clearer view of his goal. It is doubtful whether the metaphor of the race comes in here (as Ellic¹⁷⁰., Mey¹⁷¹., Alf¹⁷²., Ead¹⁷³.): κατελήμφθην does not suit it. Διώκειν is often used by Paul, without that reference, for striving after the blessings and virtues of the Christian life. (See Rom. 9:30, 31, 12:13, 14:19, 1 Cor. 14:1; 1 Thess. 5:15.) Instead of the idea of the race giving color to διώκω, it is quite as likely that διώκω suggested the metaphor in vs. 14. For διώκειν with καταλαμβάνειν, see Rom. 9:30; LX¹⁷⁴X; Sir. 11:10, 27:8.

εἰ καὶ καταλάβω ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην: 'if I may also grasp that for which I was grasped.'

¹⁶²D *Cod. Claromontanus*: 6th century. Græco-Latin. National Library, Paris. Contains both epistles entire. Corrector: D^b, close of 6th century.

¹⁶³F *Cod. Augiensis*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Philippians entire; Philemon wanting in the Greek from πεπτοιθῶς (vs. 21) to the end.

¹⁶⁴G *Cod. Boernerianus*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Dresden. Wanting Greek and Latin, Philem. 21–25.

¹⁶⁵Comp. Compare.

¹⁶⁶Ign. Ignatius.

¹⁶⁷Comp. Compare.

¹⁶⁸A.V. Authorized Version.

¹⁶⁹R.V. Revised Version of 1881.

¹⁷⁰Ellic. Ellicott.

¹⁷¹Mey. Meyer.

¹⁷²Alf. Alford.

¹⁷³Ead. Eadie.

¹⁷⁴LXX Septuagint Version.

Tisch¹⁷⁵. omits καὶ before καταλάβω with ¹⁷⁶κ^{177*} ¹⁷⁸D¹⁷⁹F¹⁸⁰G, Syr., Cop¹⁸¹., Arm¹⁸²., Goth¹⁸³., Æth¹⁸⁴. και is found in ¹⁸⁵κ^c ¹⁸⁶A ¹⁸⁷B ¹⁸⁸D ¹⁸⁹Κ ¹⁹⁰L ¹⁹¹P, Syr¹⁹². ¹⁹³P. So WH¹⁹⁴., R.T., Weiss.

καὶ: 'if I may not only pursue but *also* attain.' For εἰ καὶ, see on 2:17. For the progression from διώκειν to καταλαμβάνειν, comp¹⁹⁵. Rom. 9:30. From λαμβάνειν to καταλαμ., and from τρέχετε to καταλαμ., 1 Cor. 9:24. Καταλαβεῖν is 'to overtake and seize.' (See Jn. 1:5, 12:35; Rom. 9:30; 1 Cor. 9:24.)

ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ κατελήμφθην: The divine grace in Paul's conversion is the moving power of his Christian development. The fulfilment of the ideal contemplated by Christ when he transformed him from a persecutor to an apostle is the goal which invites him. He desires to grasp that for

¹⁷⁵Tisch. Tischendorf: *Novum Testamentum Graece. Editio Octava Critica Major.*

¹⁷⁶κ *Cod. Sinaiticus*: 4th century. Discovered by Tischendorf in the convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, in 1859. Now at St. Petersburg. Contains both epistles complete. Correctors: κ^a, nearly contemporary; κ^b, 6th century; κ^c, beginning of 7th century, treated by two correctors,—κ^{ca} κ^{cb}.

^{177*} the title of a MS.

¹⁷⁸D *Cod. Claromontanus*: 6th century. Græco-Latin. National Library, Paris. Contains both epistles entire. Corrector: D^b, close of 6th century.

¹⁷⁹F *Cod. Augiensis*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Library of Trinity College, Cambridge. Philippians entire; Philemon wanting in the Greek from πεποιθώς (vs. 21) to the end.

¹⁸⁰G *Cod. Boernerianus*: 9th century. Græco-Latin. Dresden. Wanting Greek and Latin, Philem. 21–25.

¹⁸¹Cop. Coptic, Memphitic, or Bohairic.

¹⁸²Arm. Armenian.

¹⁸³Goth. Gothic.

¹⁸⁴Æth. Ethiopic.

¹⁸⁵κ *Cod. Sinaiticus*: 4th century. Discovered by Tischendorf in the convent of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, in 1859. Now at St. Petersburg. Contains both epistles complete. Correctors: κ^a, nearly contemporary; κ^b, 6th century; κ^c, beginning of 7th century, treated by two correctors,—κ^{ca} κ^{cb}.

¹⁸⁶A *Cod. Alexandrinus*: 5th century. British Museum. Contains both epistles entire.

¹⁸⁷B *Cod. Vaticanus*: 4th century. Vatican Library. Contains both epistles entire. Correctors: B², nearly the same date; B³, 10th or 11th century.

¹⁸⁸D *Cod. Claromontanus*: 6th century. Græco-Latin. National Library, Paris. Contains both epistles entire. Corrector: D^b, close of 6th century.

¹⁸⁹Κ *Cod. Mosquensis*: 9th century. Moscow. Contains both epistles entire.

¹⁹⁰L *Cod. Angelicus*: 9th century. Angelican Library of Augustinian monks at Rome. Wanting from ἐξουσίαν (Heb. 13:10) to the end of Philemon.

¹⁹¹P *Cod. Porphyrianus*: beginning of 9th century. Palimpsest. St. Petersburg. Both epistles entire, but many words illegible.

¹⁹²Syr. Harclean.

¹⁹³P Harclean.

¹⁹⁴WH. Westcott and Hort: *The New Testament in the Original Greek.*

¹⁹⁵comp. Compare.

which he was grasped by Christ. The aorist marks the time of his conversion, which was literally a seizure. Not, however, as Chr¹⁹⁶. and Thdrt¹⁹⁷., that Paul is conceived as running to destruction and pursued and seized by Christ.

To view his conversion as a seizure is not to deny the work of previous influences upon his mind preparing the way for the crisis of the journey to Damascus. (See Pfeleiderer, *Paulinismus, Einl.*; Bruce, *St. Paul's Conception of Christianity*, ch. ii.; Matheson, *Spiritual Development of St. Paul*, ch. ii., iii.,—see especially pp. 46, 47.)

Ἐφ' ᾧ is relative to a suppressed antecedent, ἐκεῖνο, as Lk. 5:25, 'that for which I was grasped.'

Weiss refers the relative to καταλάβω simply, and renders 'wherefore.' So Lightf¹⁹⁸. Others, as Chr¹⁹⁹., Thdrt²⁰⁰., Mey²⁰¹., Lips²⁰²., make ἐφ' ᾧ²⁰³ = ἐπὶ τούτῳ ὅτι, and render 'because,' taking καταλάβω absolutely. Calv²⁰⁴., 'quemadmodum, just as.'

Καὶ refers to ἐφ' ᾧ, adding the purpose of his being grasped to the assertion of his effort to grasp: 'which I not only strive to grasp, but for which *also* I was grasped.'

The next two verses substantially repeat the assertions of vs. 12—the disavowal of satisfaction with his attainment, and the declaration of his strenuous pursuit of his spiritual ideal.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁶Chr. Chrysostom.

¹⁹⁷Thdrt. Theodoret.

¹⁹⁸Lightf. Lightfoot.

¹⁹⁹Chr. Chrysostom.

²⁰⁰Thdrt. Theodoret.

²⁰¹Mey. Meyer.

²⁰²Lips. Lipsius.

²⁰³= Equivalent to.

²⁰⁴Calv. Calvin.

²⁰⁵Marvin Richardson Vincent, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*](#), International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1897), 103–109.

3:10–11. These verses contain an open and honest confession to the Philippians. Paul already knew Christ as his Savior. But he wanted to know Him more intimately as his Lord. **To know** (v. 10) means “to know by experience” (*gnōnai*). The noun (*gnōseōs*) is used in verse 8. The “surpassing greatness of knowing Christ” is now elaborated in verses 10–11. This is how Paul wanted to know Him. More of what he desired in his Christian life follows.

To experience **the power of His resurrection** was also the apostle’s goal. The power which brought Christ forth from the dead now operates in believers’ lives since they have been “raised with Christ” (Col. 3:1). “Power” (*dynamis*, also used in Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16) means ability to overcome resistance. By setting forth his own goals and ambitions Paul gave the Philippians an example to follow. His example was, of course, in stark contrast to the Judaizers whose example they were not to follow.

Paul also longed to share in the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings and in so doing to become **like Him in His death** (Phil. 3:10). These sufferings were not Christ’s substitutionary sufferings on the cross. Paul knew that those could not be shared. But he did desire to participate with Christ, since he was one of His, in suffering for the sake of righteousness (cf. 1:29). God had used Ananias to tell Paul that this is precisely what he would do as a servant of Christ (Acts 9:16). The apostle did indeed suffer for Christ because he represented Him so openly and truly (cf. Rom. 8:36; 2 Cor. 4:10).

The words “becoming like Him” translate *symmorphizomenos*, which means “being conformed inwardly in one’s experience to something” (cf. Phil. 3:21), in this case, to Christ’s death. As Christ died *for* sin, so a believer has died *to* sin (Rom. 6:2, 6–7; Col. 3:3). He should exhibit that cutting off from his former sinful way by daily being set apart from sin (Rom. 6:1–4, 11–14) and living a new life by means of Christ’s resurrection power (Rom. 6:4).

“Resurrection” (Phil. 3:11) is the translation of *exanastasin*, a Greek word used nowhere else in the New Testament. It means a partial resurrection out from among other corpses, literally an “out-resurrection.” But why did Paul say he wanted **somehow, to attain to the (out-) resurrection from the dead**? Did he doubt he would be raised from the dead? Hardly. Perhaps he was using this word to refer to the Rapture, thus expressing the hope that the Lord would return during his lifetime.

3:12–14. Though Paul was a spiritual giant in the eyes of the Philippian saints, he wanted them to know that he had not yet attained the goals stated in verse 10. He was still actively pressing on toward them. He had by no means reached the final stage of his sanctification.

Paul’s salvation experience had taken place about 30 years before he wrote to the Philippians. He had won many spiritual battles in that time. He had grown much in those years, but he candidly confessed he had not **obtained all this**, nor was he yet **made perfect** (v. 12). He still had more spiritual heights to climb. This testimony of the apostle reminded the saints at

Philippi—and it serves to remind believers today—that there must never be a stalemate in their spiritual growth or a plateau beyond which they cannot climb.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁶ Robert P. Lightner, [“Philippians.”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 661.