

## Philippians 2

### Bible Study

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Last year, a few weeks before Trish and I left for the UK, I contacted “our” English brethren and asked them if there was anything specifically that they’d like me to cover with them during our visit.

They sent me four excellent subject suggestions, three of which I spoke on whilst there; plus one of which I’d like to repeat here today and for the next two times I speak.

The subject of this sermon – or more accurately – Bible study – is the favourite Bible chapter of English church member, Bill Rees.

So then, let’s wade right into it, beginning with verse 1:

**1a: If there be *therefore* any consolation in Christ...**

The Greek word for “*therefore*” is “*oun*” (Strong’s 3767) and can also mean: *then, so, now, wherefore, but, accordingly, consequently, and these things being so.*

### *Connection to the Previous Chapter*

Because of Paul’s use of this word “*therefore*,” before continuing in chapter 2, we really should, for the purpose of understanding the context, read at least the last few verses of chapter 1:

#### **Philippians 1:**

**27: Only let your *conversation* {and/or “*conduct*”} be as it becomes the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in *one spirit*, with *one mind* striving together for the faith {Greek: *pistis*: belief} of the gospel;**

The word “spirit” here is, as usual in the New Testament, translated from the Greek “pneuma.”

It *could* be referring to the Holy Spirit; or it *could* be referring to the general agreement, on doctrinal and other matters between the Philippian brethren – but, of course, greatly influenced by the Holy Spirit.

O that the brethren of God’s true church *today* might also have one mind and one spirit and be striving together, at least in all the important matters!

That is the kind of unity that we all need to be praying for and striving for, practically.

But such unity can only come through Jesus and His Father being *with* and *in* each and every one of us; and through us being *with* and *in* them – yes, through the indwelling of their Holy Spirit.

This kind of unity must also be based on the adherence and obedience of every church member to God's Word – as best and as accurately as we each understand what it says – again, with the guidance and indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

**28a: And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to *them* {the adversaries} an evident token of perdition...**

With Jesus and our Father dwelling in us through their Spirit, and with their holy, righteous angels looking after us (Psalm 34:7), why should God's people be terrified by our enemies? Even including the enemy of death? Even including our *primary* adversary – Satan?

These adversaries are very strong, it's true. But those who are with us – who love us dearly and look after us – are *far* stronger!

This reminds me of one of my favourite passages of scripture:

**2 Kings 6:**

**11: Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, “Will you not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?”**

**12: And one of his servants said, “None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the words that you speak in your bedchamber.”**

**13: And he said, “Go and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him.” And it was told him, saying, “Behold, he is in Dothan.”**

**14: Therefore sent he there horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.**

**15: And when the servant of *the man of God* {Elisha} was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, “Alas, my master! How shall we do?”**

**16: And he answered, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”**

**17: And Elisha prayed, and said, “LORD, I pray you, open his eyes, that he may see.” And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.**

Please always remember Elisha's words: “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”

What about death? Yes, death *is* a strong enemy. But Jesus has overcome it! And, when His time is right, it will be totally destroyed:

**1 Corinthians 15:**

**24: Then comes the end, when *He* {Jesus} shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and**

**power.**

**25: For He must reign, till He has put *all enemies* under His feet.**

**26: The *last enemy* that shall be *destroyed* is *death*.**

By Jesus' own sacrifice, by His own death and resurrection, He and His Father have set the wheels in motion for the destruction of death. And, no matter what tricks Satan might try to pull (as he did with Peter and Jesus), the destruction of death is already "a done deal"!

As Gustav Mahler wrote in the words of his wonderfully inspiring Second Symphony – the "Resurrection Symphony":

**"O all-conquering death – now art thou conquered!"**

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Back in Philippians 1:28, the English word "perdition" is translated from the Greek noun "apoleia," which, in its simplest form, means "destruction"; but can also be expanded to mean "damnation."

I believe that this perdition, destruction and damnation can be applied to Satan and his demons, as well as to the *human* enemies of God and His people.

Whether or not you believe in the eventual death and total destruction of Satan and his demons (which I personally don't, by the way), I believe that this word "perdition" still *can* and *does* apply to them.

Even if they *can't* be killed, once they've been cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, I believe that they'll be rendered totally immobile and ineffective, just as if they *were* dead – as described in the latter chapters of the book of Revelation.

But continuing now, still in verse 28 of Philippians 1:

**28b: ... But to you of salvation, and that of God.**

In the first part of verse 28, perdition is promised for the unrepentant enemies of God. But here, the true friends of Jesus and the Father are promised the very opposite: salvation!

And just to make sure that we understand this, Paul repeats that our salvation is "of God" – not of our own works (Ephesians 2:8-9), even though our own good works *are* still necessary (James 2:14-26).

Continuing in Philippians 1:

**29: For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe {Greek: *pisteuo*: to have faith} on Him, but also to suffer for His sake;**

What is given to us "in behalf of Christ"?

Paul tells us right here that it is our belief/faith on/in Jesus.

Yes. Our faith and our very calling were *given* to us – by the Father, of course (John 6:44, 65; Ephesians 2:8).

Not only that, though; but also, a certain level of *suffering* – of various severities, apparently – has been given to every Christian – “in behalf of Christ.”

By the way, cannot such suffering be a kind of “works”?

The opening word of this verse is “For” – which refers us back to the previous verse (28) – firstly to the salvation that is promised us “of God.” But perhaps it also refers to the animosity of the aforementioned enemies who would like to terrify us. The attacks of such enemies certainly *would* constitute “suffering for His sake.”

Here and in other scriptures, we get the idea that, if we desire to be the brothers and sisters of Jesus, and if we desire to have Him living within us, we must also be willing to share His suffering. To some extent anyway.

But *how* can that happen? How *can* we share Jesus’ suffering? After all, Jesus’ tremendous human suffering has been finished – over and done with – for almost two thousand years!

Also, has *any* true Christian *ever* suffered to anywhere near the extent that Jesus suffered?

**Isaiah 52:14:**

**As many were astonished at you; His visage was so marred *more than any man*, and His form *more than the sons of men*:**

**Lamentations 1:12a:**

**Is it nothing to you, all you that pass by? Behold, and see if there be *any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me...***

Oh yes. It *may* be true that there *may* have been some true Christians throughout history who *may* have been tortured to an extent even worse than Jesus was tortured – even though His torture certainly *was* very severe.

But, as is revealed in the gospel accounts of Jesus’ agony at Gethsemane, His *physical* torture was *not* the worst of it for Him. There were two other items of great suffering that, for the Son of God, were *far* worse than the approximately fifteen hours of physical torture that He suffered and than the seventy-two hours of His total unconsciousness.

The first was having every sin of the whole world, throughout all human history thrust onto His perfectly sinless head and into His perfectly pure blood.

The second – even worse still – was being totally cut off from His beloved Father for those fifteen or so conscious hours.

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Back to Philippians 1:

### **30: Having the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear to be in me.**

Conflict? *What* conflict had Paul been going through? And with whom?

As we read in his epistles and in Luke's book of Acts, Paul had major conflicts with the Jewish and Roman authorities, as he stood up for his new, inspired, sincere beliefs, and those of his Christian brothers and sisters. Conflicts that led to his own torture, imprisonment and, as we've traditionally believed, his execution. Conflicts that some of his Philippian, Roman and other brethren would also suffer at the hands of the cruel Jewish and Roman leaders.

But Paul also wrote – most notably in Romans 7 – but in other places too – of his own *inner* conflicts – with himself and his own human nature.

Paul didn't want his brethren to give in to the pulls of their own human nature. He *wanted* them to *have* conflict with those pulls. To wage war with them! To fight the good fight against them (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7).

#### ***On into Chapter 2***

Armed with that background from chapter 1, we'll now move into chapter 2. Let's continue as though there were no chapter break, as there, of course, would not have been as Paul wrote his letter:

**1: If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,**

I find the term “bowels and mercies” interesting.

Why would Paul connect a normally unmentionable part of the digestive tract with the concept of mercy?

The perception of *bowels* in Bible times was somewhat different than ours. To the people of that era, bowels were more than just a person's intestines. To the people of that time and area, as well as intestines, bowels included all the major internal organs, including the heart, lungs, liver, etc. But perhaps especially, the *spleen!*

Perhaps surprisingly, the word “bowels” is used as many as eleven times throughout the New Testament. The almost unpronounceable Greek word translated into the English “*bowels*” is “*splangkhnōn*” (Strong's 4698).

The “*splan*” suffix refers to the *spleen* which, in humans and many mammals is primarily a kind of blood filter and processor.

But even today, the word ‘*spleen*’ is synonymous with anger, irritation, malice, annoyance and temper. In Bible times too, the internal organs were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, such as anger, etc. But also, as the seat of the more *tender* affections, especially love, kindness, benevolence and compassion.

The KJV translators knew this, of course; and in some of the eleven New Testament appearances of the Greek term *splangkhnōn*, it was translated as “*tender*” or “*inward affection*.”

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As we just read in chapter 1, because of the sufferings – both actual and potential – both of Paul and of his Philippian brethren – there certainly *was* a *great* need for consolation, comfort and mercies.

But where would these *come* from?

Yes. As we just read in verse 1, they’d be provided “in Christ” – by Jesus. Also, by Christian love and fellowship – through the Holy Spirit.

But, as we move into verse 2, we see that there is also an implication that, through Paul, God was telling the Philippian brethren – and is telling us! – that, as we have the Holy Spirit dwelling and working in us, we must be doing these very same things – providing consolation, comfort, mercies, love, kindness, benevolence and compassion – for one another:

**2: Fulfil you my joy, that you be *likeminded*, having the *same* love, being of *one* accord, of *one* mind.**

The phrase “my joy” jumps out at me. Paul’s joy! We find lots of joy and rejoicing in this chapter, despite the trials. More on this later.

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Paul’s admonition here for unity hearkens back to the “one spirit” and the “one mind striving together” that we read about in verse 27 of chapter 1.

When we see the tragedy of the divisions between the Church of God branches in our day and age, it is hard for us to understand how the early church groups were blessed with *almost* perfect unity.

I say “*almost* perfect” because we know that disagreements certainly *did* exist in the early Church of God. The rift between Paul and Peter over the treatment and acceptance of gentile Christians is perhaps just one of the better-known examples.

We also know of vain, ungodly people who crept into God’s true church in Jude’s time with their damnable heresies. Hence the reasons for Jesus’ frequent urging, through His apostles, for the same unity that He’d stressed during His own human ministry.

I believe that one of the main differences between the early church and the church today is that they were blessed to have the benefit of the presence and counsel of Jesus’ original apostles – plus Paul too, of course – men who’d been personally taught by Jesus. And we *don’t*! We must rely on the *written* Word of God (John 17:20) – plus, whether or not we like to admit it, our own individual (or in some cases, collective) interpretations of it.

Such is the present state of God's church. What can we do about it?

The best advice I can give – based on God's Word – is simply to love one another and to “agree to disagree without being disagreeable.” If other brethren want to spurn us because we might not agree exactly with their interpretations of God's Word, that's up to them. But let us be guided by Paul's well-known admonition to his Colossian brethren:

**Colossians 2:**

**16: Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:**

**17: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.**

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Back to Philippians 2, continuing in verse 3:

**3: Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.**

This, too, is written in the spirit of church unity.

No strife! The literal meaning of the Greek word for “*strife*” – “*eritheia*” – is “*electioneering*” or “*intriguing for office*,” which might give the implication that Paul's admonition here appears to include the ministry too!

In both the English and the Greek (*kenodoxia*), the word “vainglory” is a very unusual one. It means a vain, groundless level of self-esteem. You've probably heard phrases like:

- He's a nobody!
- Who does she think she is?
- What does he think he has to be so high and mighty about?

And, as the last phrase of verse 3 clearly says, we're to put others first. That's what the late Herbert Armstrong used to call “God's way of give.”

But it's easier said than done! It's *not* easy to put into practice! It requires the power of God's Spirit.

We're not, of course, to esteem others before ourselves to the point of having *no esteem at all* for ourselves. But whatever esteem we *do* have for ourselves must not be vain.

There's nothing wrong with a certain level of self-esteem. God doesn't want us to be “shrinking violets.” This is implied by Him, through Paul, in Ephesians 5:28-29 and in the following verse of Philippians 2:

**4: Look not every man on his own things {the NKJV adds the word “only”}, but every man *also* on the things of others.**

The word “also” (Greek “*kai*”) makes the meaning clear.

**5: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

In all these things, we’re to seek the indwelling and example of our Elder Brother who was, of course, the greatest human being who ever drew breath.

But He was *more* than *just* a human being. He had been – and is again – a “founder member” of the “God Family”:

**6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:**

Yes. He’d spent the previous eternity of time “in the form of God” – as a full member of the God Family. But, for a short period of thirty-three years, He divested Himself of His “Godship” and became a human being.

Why? So that He could become a *begotten* Son of God – at the instant of His conception – and a *born* Son of God – at the instant of His resurrection.

Why? So that, in *all* things, He could be the Forerunner, the primary example, and the First of the firstfruits – for all of *us!* (I Corinthians 15:20-23).

**7: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him {upon Himself} the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:**

From “the form of God” to “the form of a servant”!

Yes. He *had* been in in the form of God. Then, all of a sudden, He came to be in the form of a lowly, human servant!

Please notice the phrases “*made Himself*” and “*took upon Him.*”

Did God the Father coerce Him to do all that He did? Was it God the Father who actually “did the deed” – making/changing the LORD/YHVH/Word/Logos into the human Jesus? Was it the Father who made/changed the formerly mighty LORD/YHVH/Word/Logos into a being “of no reputation”? Was it the Father who put onto the LORD “the form of a servant” and “the likeness of men”?

No! What the LORD did was *not* just a set of *partially* voluntary deeds – in which the Father saw the necessity, made the decision, made the change, put it into effect, while the LORD merely agreed with – and went along with – the Father.

No! Although we can be sure that the Father certainly *was* included in *all* the planning, the wonderful sacrifice was *totally* voluntary on the LORD’s part!

Try to imagine Jesus prior to His human conception as the mighty LORD/YHVH/Word/Logos with the Father, planning every fine detail of His transition – from the ultra-powerful God-being that He had been for all eternity to the weak and lowly human being that He had to become in

order to fulfil this great purpose. (Some of the details of this are prophesied in some detail by David, Isaiah and others).

But then, at the instant that He reduced His formerly glorious self down to a tiny human male sperm, which He had pre-arranged to have miraculously planted into the healthy, fertile womb of a young woman by the name of Mary...

***Bang!*** His powerful God-ship and glory was *gone!* And His relatively weak humanity was *here!*

It was likely part of the LORD's (and the Father's) perfect planning that He came to earth as such a tiny, young baby. This would have given Him time to get used to the limits of His new human existence.

If He'd have come as a grown man, can you imagine Him suddenly becoming subject to, for instance, the law of gravity? Gravity, which He and His Father had created. Yes; but to which, as the LORD, He had never before actually been subject – even during His previous visits to earth.

Also, imagine Him suddenly, for the first time, becoming subject to the necessity for the breathing of air!

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Still in Philippians 2; let's move on to verse 8:

**8a: And being found in fashion as a man ...**

Please think about this! At some point of time during His boyhood – probably very early in His boyhood, with the help of His heavenly Father, His human parents and the unlimited supply of the Holy Spirit within Him – He came to understand that He had been a glorious, powerful God-being; but that He now *found* Himself to be “in fashion as a man.” i.e. He now found Himself to be a human being.

**8b: ... He humbled Himself, and became *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross.**

Back in heaven, prior to His change from divine to human, He'd already made the decision to humble Himself.

Also, the supreme law-giver – the One who is to be *obeyed* – had voluntarily agreed to *become obedient!* Obedient unto *death!* The “way of give” doesn't get any more wonderful than this aspect of Jesus' example.

Paul's phrase “obedient unto death” can be understood in at least two different ways:

1. That Jesus became obedient to all His own laws up until the time of His own death,
2. That He became obedient to the human necessity of death itself.

I believe that both of these are valid – as is borne out by many other scriptures.

Jesus' example of obedience is a very significant one for us, as Paul stated later in this epistle.

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I find it interesting to think that, as the LORD/YHVH/Word/Logos, He had created into the human condition this enemy that we call "death."

Although it might be hard for us to believe, our Creator created this enemy of death! And that He did so as a gesture of *love!* Love for His future brothers and sisters!

Yes! Astonishing though it may seem, He created death so that we might have life! Eternal life! (John 12:24-25).

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Prior to Jesus' death, millions – perhaps billions – of human beings had already succumbed to the enemy of death. But His death was the one death that would lead to – and make possible – the eventual destruction of that very same enemy!

Through Jeremiah and others, our Creator tells us that He retains the authority to create and, according to His own perfect will, to destroy some of what He has created:

**Jeremiah 45:4:**

**Thus says the LORD, "That which I have built {yes, including death} will I break down."**

Back to Philippians 2:

**9a: *Wherefore* {i.e. for which reason} **God** {the Father} **also has highly exalted Him** {Jesus}...**

Yes, *for that reason*, the Father took His beloved Son – who had lovingly and totally voluntarily made Himself of no reputation and humbled Himself right down into the form of a servant – all the way to the other extreme – to being "highly exalted" – second only to the Father Himself! (I Corinthians 15:27)

Yes. For *that* reason!

*What* reason? The reason of the foregoing verses. The reason that the mighty LORD/YHVH/Word/Logos voluntarily took Himself from being the Highest of the high (with His Father, of course) and made Himself the lowest of the low – voluntarily accepting the lowliness of the "temporary chemical existence" of human life; and for accepting one of the most ignominious and painful deaths imaginable.

For these reasons, the Father highly exalted Him back to His former highness and God-ship.

Actually, it appears that the Father may have raised Jesus – now as His *Son* – which He evidently hadn't been before – to an even higher level than where He'd been before His human sojourn.

And again, why? For *what* reason?

Because of all He'd done and endured – in His love for mankind; but again, also as an example for *us!*

If *we* – like He did – in emulation of Him – although a mere fraction of all He did, of course – if we would accept the lowliness and temporary nature of *our* chemical existence, and if we would bravely face the relatively trivial sufferings of our Christian lives and the pangs of the first death, our Father will give us – His *subsequent* sons and daughters – something very similar to what He gave His Firstborn!

And that's a promise!

### ***Our Saviour's Name***

Still in Philippians 2, continuing in the second half of verse 9:

**9b: ... and given *Him* {*Jesus*} a name which is above every name:**

What *is* that “name which is above every name”?

I'm certainly not knocking the concept; but there are some folks who believe that people who don't call Jesus by one or more of His Hebrew names – e.g. Yahshuah, Mashiyach, etc – or however these names really are to be spelled and pronounced – might somehow be less knowledgeable, or even lesser-quality Christians, or even not Christians at all and that we shouldn't even be recognized as His brothers and sisters.

To do it justice, a complete discussion of this topic would probably take a lengthy sermon series to cover. I have promised to cover the subject; and I will do so when the time is right – once I've studied it sufficiently. But for now, I'm still seeking further information and inspiration on it.

Still, with regard to the anglicized Greek name of the human Jesus – the name that we're all most familiar with, let's go briefly to Matthew 1:

#### **Matthew 1:**

**16: And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was *born* “*Jesus*”, who is called “*Christ*”...**

**Verse 20: But while *he* {*Jesus' human step-father, Joseph*} thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, you son of David, fear not to take unto you Mary your wife: for that which *is* conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit...**

This “visitation” by the angel evidently took place *after* the sacred baby’s *begetting*, but *before* His human *birth*.

**21a: And she shall bring forth a son, and you shall call His name ‘Jesus’ ...**

Why?

**21b: ... for He shall save His people from their sins.”**

**22: Now *all this* {including the naming of the sacred baby!} was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet {Isaiah 7.14}, saying,**

**23: ‘Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name “Emmanuel” which, *being interpreted* is, “God with us”’ ...**

The phrase “being interpreted” is interesting. If the book of Matthew was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, as some say, why would any interpretation be necessary?

The Greek for “being interpreted” is “methermeneuo” {Strong’s 3177} which literally means “to translate into the language of the one with whom I wish to communicate.” And this, I believe, is an excellent phrase to keep in mind whenever we’re thinking about the “sacred names” issue.

When Matthew wrote “being interpreted,” what did he mean? Interpreted *from what* language *to what* language? Maybe from Hebrew to Aramaic, perhaps?

Probably not – because the Aramaic word “*Emanuiyl*” is almost the same as the Hebrew “*Immanuw’el*” or “*Imanu-el*” and would, therefore, require no interpretation.

More likely from the Hebrew to Greek!

Still in Matthew 1, continuing in verse 25:

**25: And knew *her* {Mary} not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and *he* {Joseph} called His name “Jesus”.**

There are *three names* in this short passage from this one chapter: in the anglicized Greek rendering, *Jesus*, *Christ* and *Emmanuel*! So then, *which one* of these *three names* is “*the name that is above every name*”?

In verse 16, Matthew wrote that the Holy Child was *born* with the name *Jesus* (in its anglicized Greek rendering). In the Greek: *Iesous*. In the Hebrew: *Y<sup>e</sup>howshuwa* – or any one of the many other Hebrew renderings of this name.

But! Matthew adds that He was *called* “*Christ*” – in the familiar anglicized Greek. In the Greek: *Christos*, which means “*Anointed*” – as does the Hebrew equivalent, “*Mashiyach*” – or in its more familiar anglicized Hebrew form, “*Messiah*.”

Why “anointed”? Because the kings and priests of ancient Israel were normally the *anointed ones*. And as our Forerunner, Jesus, was and is the *ultimate* King and Priest. He was and is the King of *all* kings – the greatest King ever, of which all Judah’s kings were mere symbols. And

He was and is the greatest *Priest* ever – the High Priest of His own Melchizedek priesthood – the High Priest of which all Levitical-Aaronic High Priests were mere symbols.

We just read in Matthew 1:21 that one of God’s angels (probably Gabriel) told Joseph that the name that he (Joseph) was to give to the baby – the Son of God was – again in its anglicized Greek rendering, *Jesus*. In Greek, *Iesous*. In Hebrew, *Joshua* or *Jeshua* or *Yashua* or *Yahshuah* or *Yehowshua* or any one of the many preferred versions of our Saviour’s name.

But whichever one – if any – is correct, *why* this name? *Why* “*Jesus*”?

In verse 21, Matthew quotes the angel as giving the answer to this question to Joseph: that it is because “He shall save His people from their sins.”

What is the connection between the name and this phrase?

The various Hebrew versions of this name – *Yehowshua*, etc. – mean “*the LORD is salvation.*”

*Yehowshua* is a contraction and compound of two Hebrew words: YHVH (the *LORD*, or the *I AM*, or *the Eternal One*) and *Yasha* (in its noun form: *Saviour* or *Deliverer*; in its verb form: *to save*, *to help* or *to deliver*).

But! In the very next verse (22), Matthew wrote that “all this” (which would logically include the naming of the Holy Child) was done as a fulfilment of the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14 in which the instruction was given (hundreds of years in advance!) to name the Holy Child “*Immanuw’el*” or “*Imanu-el*” in the Hebrew and “*Emmanouel*” in the Greek. This name means “*God with us.*”

The Hebrew name is another compound of two words: “*Im*” (*with* or *among*) and “*El*” (*God*).

But! The name “*Imanu-el*” is very different to “*Yehowshua.*” And “*God with us*” is very different to “*The LORD is salvation*”!

This would logically indicate that it is acceptable for us to believe that Jesus can have multiple names and that Jesus *did/does* have multiple names.

But again, which one of these three names is “*the name that is above every name*”?

And, whichever one it is, *what about* that name?

Back to Philippians 2, where we’ll continue the thought in verse 10:

**10a: That at the name of *Jesus* ...**

This logically implies that *Jesus* (or *Yehowshua*, *Joshua*, etc.) is the primary one of the three names that we read in Matthew 1 and that *this* is the name that is above every other name.

Okay then. So, at the name of Jesus... *what*?

**10b: ... every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;**

Although this bowing of all knees by all living things *should* be happening now – today – and *should* have been happening for the past two thousand years, in actuality, we can be sure that this is *not* the case, so that this must be a prophecy for the future.

At that time, whenever that name is formally proclaimed, every living thing in creation, whether angelic, human, or even animal, all that have knees will fall down and bow the knee before Him.

By the way, the “things under the earth” are not “souls in hell” or anything like that. They could be creatures such as moles, rabbits and other animals that live below ground.

**11: And that every tongue should confess that “Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

In the Greek: *Iesous Christos Kurios eis doxa Theos Pater.*

In the Hebrew: *Yahshua Meshiyach YHVH kabowd Elohiym Ab.*

Yes, the Father *will* be greatly glorified at the same time as every living thing confesses that Jesus Christ (Yahshua Meshiyach) is LORD (YHVH)!

*Every* knee and *every* tongue! Please notice once again that both these terms are symbols of the total *unity* mentioned in earlier verses.

But again, looking at this wretched world today, and even at the Church of God today, it should be painfully obvious that this perfect unity hasn't yet come to pass – and likely won't come to pass even during the Millennium! Probably not until after the time of the Second Resurrection – by which time any unrepentant people who refuse to confess that Jesus is LORD and who refuse to bow the knee before Him will, sadly, have become mere memories.

***Work out your own salvation!***

**12: Wherefore {for this very reason}, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

*What* very reason?

Probably the same reason Paul had referred to back in verse 9 – the reason that Jesus voluntarily took Himself from being the Highest of the high and made Himself the lowest of the low – voluntarily accepting the lowness of the “temporary chemical existence” of human life and a terribly painful “first” death.

In a nutshell, because He had humbled Himself so very much; and yet was – and *is* – really so very great!

But again, *what* was Paul advising the Philippian brethren to *do* – due to aforementioned reason?

Two things – both of them in emulation of things Jesus had done Himself – voluntarily:

1. To continue in obedience,
2. To work out their own salvation.

The phrase “*work out*” is translated from the Greek verb “*katergazomai*” (Strong’s 2716) which means *to work, to do, to do deeds, to cause, to accomplish, to achieve and to get results.*

In other words, just as was repeatedly admonished through the apostle James, we’re not to think that we can leave it *all* for Jesus and the Father to do it all for us.

Yes, they *have* done the lion’s share of it for us already! But the New Covenant is *two-way* agreement, in which Jesus and His Father perfectly do their perfect part and, as long as *we* do *our* very best to do *our* part, even though imperfect (because we are still human), Jesus has promised us that His grace will “make up the difference” and will “fill in the blanks” – or “lacks” as mentioned in many New Testament scriptures.

Neither can we leave it all to one or more Church of God ministers or organizations to do our part – or to do our thinking and decision-making for us. That’s not their job!

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It seems that, because Paul was unable to be present with the Philippian brethren, He was advising them here, in his absence, to continue in their following of Jesus’ aforementioned example of *obedience* to *His own* laws – just as, according to Paul’s words here, the Philippians had formerly done so well; but also to work out their own salvation – specifically with an appropriate level of the right kind of “fear and trembling.”

Many other scriptures make it obvious that our loving Father and Elder Brother don’t want us to be in a constant mode of quaking in our boots! But also, just as with the Philippian brethren, *our* fear and trembling shouldn’t be toward any human being or human organization. Rather, it should be a healthy and appropriate fear toward our Father and Elder Brother – whose supreme greatness Paul had just highlighted.

Also, this appropriate fear for Jesus and His Father should lead to and grow into a more and more effective obedience to their holy laws.

**13: For it is God which *works in* you, both to *will* and to *do* of His good pleasure.**

Yes, the Father and Jesus are *in* us – *working in* us – through the indwelling of their Holy Spirit, which *is* – and *has* – the inherent power of God – who is willing to give us some (an “earnest”) of that power – if we’ll *use it properly*, as Paul wrote here.

What does it *mean* to be *using it properly*? What *is* the proper use of our “earnest portion” of God’s power – of His Holy Spirit? He tells us! Right here – in verse 13:

- To do godly works,
- To do the Father’s will,

- To allow Him to do His work – in and through us – via the earnest of His Holy Spirit within us,
- To get our wills and our ideas of pleasure in line with His perfect will and “His good pleasure”

How? Again, by doing our best in following Jesus’ perfect example.

Hence Jesus’ words: “*Thy will* be done in earth as it is in heaven” and “Not *my will*; but *thine* be done” (Luke 11:2; 22:42).

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“His good pleasure”? Some of what Jesus and Father consider as “pleasure” can be so very foreign – and even unacceptable – to our limited human minds. For example, their willingness for the perfect, sinless Jesus to be belittled to the human equivalent of less than a worm (Psalm 22:6), in effect, to *become* sin, and to be brutally sacrificed. And why? For their love of their people:

**Isaiah 53:10:**

**Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief: when you shall make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.**

As we are in the *process* of *becoming* perfect, as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48), it is necessary for us to come more and more:

- To His and Jesus’ “mind-set”
- To *their* way of thinking
- To what pleases *them*,

Even if and when it might be (temporarily) *un*-pleasant for ourselves.

Here’s what Paul wrote on this point to the Corinthian brethren:

**2 Corinthians 12:10:**

**Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

How many of *us* have come to that point yet? I’m sure I haven’t!

Back to Philippians 2:

**14: Do all things without murmurings and disputings:**

Yes, without the very Israelitish trait of grumbling, complaining, arguing, disputing, bickering, second-guessing, grudging and being contentious!

How many of us have come to *this* point yet? Again, I’m sure I haven’t!

It's not wrong to respectfully voice disagreement about something we believe to be incorrect or unscriptural; but it *is* wrong to be a “chronic complainer.” A whiner. A “Mary, Mary quite contrary”!

A person who is continually taking issue against the beliefs and teachings of the church group that he/she attends *may* be in the wrong place and *may* need to make a move. In such cases, as many of us have already discovered, such a move might be spiritually and mutually beneficial. God's Word *does* allow for such moves – for the right reasons.

**15a: That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons {Greek: teknon: children} of God,**

Yes, with the help and power of the Holy Spirit, we children of God must strive to be blameless and harmless – not inflicting harm on one another, of course. Not within our church family. Nor in our own physical families! No Christian man should *ever* lay a hand on his wife! And even the use of the scriptural authority to spank our children should be very limited and tempered with parental love and concern.

But there's more to this admonition than its application within our own physical and church families only. As we continue in verse 15, we see that Paul extends this warning of us being blameless and harmless to our relationships with “the world”! Repeating the first half of verse 15:

**15a: That you may be blameless and harmless, the children of God ...**

Continuing in the second half:

**15b: ... without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world;**

The whole world today is a series of crooked and perverse nations that are enveloped in deep, thick, spiritual darkness. Sadly, this includes our modern Israelitish nations – yes, including the UK and Canada, both, I believe, members of Ephraim's “silly dove” (Hosea 7:11).

So, as long as we children of God are in the midst of these crooked and perverse nations-in-darkness, we've been given the responsibility to shine God's spiritual light to them. But! In non-rebuking, blameless and harmless ways!

“Without rebuke” means just that. Not rebuking! Being “blameless” and “harmless” mean not inflicting harm and not even attributing blame – even on those to whom it may rightly belong!

All three of these are not our responsibilities; but are those of the two great, perfect Judges – Jesus and our Father. *They'll* look after these things in *their* own good time.

Yes, we *are* to “watch” and to know at least the basics about what's going on around the world. We're *not* to be like ostriches, burying our heads in the sand. And yes, we *are* to “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24). And yes, we *are* to “sigh and cry” over the abominations that

are increasing in our Israelitish nations (Ezekiel 9:4). And yes, God's people *are* to come out of the spiritual Babylon of this world (II Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 18:4), although *not completely*, according to Jesus (John 17:15).

Although we *are* to keep on preaching and publishing the gospel – the good news – of the Kingdom of God – to the very end of the age (Matthew 24:14), from what God is telling us here through Paul, it appears that the “crying aloud and sparing not” mentioned by Isaiah was commanded more for his (Isaiah's) own time – and also perhaps for the very end times under God's two witnesses (Revelation 11); but *not* so much for our time!

Even in our relatively free countries whose governments boast about our so-called “freedom of speech,” the freedom to “cry aloud and spare not” is increasingly being taken away from God's people anyway.

### ***The Word of Life***

So then, if God's people of our “pre-last days” era are not to get involved in the harming, blaming and rebuking of the darkening world around us, what *are* we to do? What does God *want* us to be doing?

We're given the answer in the very next verse. Actually, part of the answer is given in this same verse:

#### **15b: ... among whom you shine as lights in the world;**

Yes, we're to *shine* – as *lights* – in this ever-darkening world around us.

This sub-topic is one for yet another sermon (series) all by itself! But how does our shining God's light in this dark world relate to us not harming, blaming and rebuking it?

How do we – spiritual lights – illuminate this dark world without inflicting harm, blame and rebuke on it?

We find a more complete answer in the next verse:

#### **16a: Holding forth the Word of life...**

Paul encouraged these Philippian brethren (who he'd tutored spiritually) to hold forth the Word of life.

That sounds simple, doesn't it? But what does it *mean*?

Two questions:

1. What *is* “the Word of life”?
2. What does it *mean* to “hold it forth”?

First, what *is* “the Word of life”?

The Greek is “*Logos-zoe.*”

We all know – from many, many scriptures – that Jesus was/is *the primary* “Word” – the Logos – the Spokesman – the Word of God.

But also, more than once, Jesus said that, amongst many other things, He was/is “the life”:

**John 11:25:**

**Jesus said unto *her* {Lazarus’ sister Martha}, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believes in me, though he were dead, yet shall he *live*.”**

**John 14:6:**

**Jesus said unto *him* {Thomas}, “I am the way, the truth and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.”**

Also, later, in the apostle John’s first epistle, he actually, specifically referred to Jesus as “the Word of life”:

**1 John 1:1:**

**That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of *the Word of life*;**

Again, Jesus was/is the primary “Word” – the Logos. And also, in many scriptures, “the Word” often refers to Jesus’ words and/or the written Word of God.

In reality, they’re all one and the same thing! Herbert Armstrong used to say (quite rightly, I believe) that Jesus was/is “*personal*” Word of God, that the Holy Bible is the *written* Word of God, and that owning a Bible is like having one’s own copy of Jesus in print!

I believe this. Do you? For those of us who do, the Holy Bible needs to be our *primary* text-book, guide-book and manual for living – not books, booklets, tracts, magazines, web-sites composed and written by mere men (although some of these can serve as *secondary* helps).

Please read your Bible! Study it! Believe what it says! Yes, of course, as near to its original grammar and intent as you can determine.

And if *your* determination of what *you* believe it says happens to be different to mine – or that of any other human being, then that’s fine! *Your* understanding and interpretation of God’s Word is between *you* and God. *Not* between you and me; nor between you and any other human being!

However, please remember God’s many warnings through Paul against “vain contentions,” including this one that we discussed back in verse 14 of Philippians 2:

**14: Do all things without murmurings and disputings.**

But let's not stray too far off our present sub-topic. We were in verse 16, asking what it means to "hold forth the Word of life."

Repeating the first part of the verse:

**Holding forth the Word of life...**

Then continuing with the second part:

**16b: ... that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.**

Just like the Philippian brethren, *we too* are to do all we can to be "holding forth the Word of life." First, the *personal* Word – Jesus. Second, the *written* Word – the Holy Bible. And if we do this, our faithful teachers – just like Paul with his Philippian brethren – will rejoice that we did so.

But *when* will they rejoice? After all, many of the ministers who first introduced *us* to the truth are now separated from us – either by time, by distance, by organizational preference, or by death.

Paul specifies here that this rejoicing will take place "in the day of Christ" – often referred to as "the Day of the Lord" – the time when we'll be reunited with them in the First Resurrection.

Paul wrote here that, at that time, the time of our reunification, those ministers and teachers will rejoice that their efforts – their labours – for our spiritual welfare and growth weren't expended in vain.

When I read these verses, I think about the late Walter Johnson, the wonderful loving and beloved minister who counselled and baptized Tricia and me – so long ago now! The last time we saw him in 1991, shortly before he died (faithful to the very end), it was plain that he rejoiced that we – a couple of his former "pupils" – had remained, as he had, with "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), despite the apostasy that was just getting in full swing at that time.

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But again, *how* are we to be "holding forth the Word of life"? And what does it *mean* to "hold forth"?

The English term in the KJV (and other Bible versions too) appears to mean that we're to *hold it out* to others – to *offer* it – perhaps mainly to the unconverted.

That's okay, I suppose; but the Greek verb for "holding forth" – *epecho* (Strong's 1907) – gives some additional, expanded meaning. Most predominantly, it can mean *to give heed to, to give attention to, to apply* and *to observe*. The main idea here seems to be that we're to hold it forth to others (again, maybe specifically to the as-yet unconverted) by our own personal examples of

giving heed and giving lots of attention to the Word of life. By observing it and by applying it ourselves – in our own lives.

Moving on:

**17: Yes, and if I be *offered* upon the sacrifice and service of your *faith* {*belief*}, I *joy* {*chairō*} and *rejoice* {*sug-chairō*} with you all.**

There are those words “joy” and “rejoice” again! Paul used these words *sixteen* times in this epistle and *seven* times in this second chapter alone!

Here we see, once again, that amazing God-like concept of deriving pleasure from seemingly, humanly very un-pleasant experiences! Paul wrote here that he even *rejoiced* at the opportunity to effectively sacrifice himself in service to the Philippians (as well as other brethren).

Paul wrote here that, emulating Jesus, his sacrifice and service to the Philippians was “*of*” their faith. More accurately, it was actually *for* their faith. To *help* their faith. To help their *belief* (as the Greek language uses the same word (*pistis*) for *faith* and *belief*). To help them to grow in faith. To help them to more effectively believe.

The Greek verb for “*offered*” here in verse 17 is “*spendo*,” which refers to liquid “libation” offerings. This indicates that Paul was comparing his own personal sacrificial offering to God via his serving of the brethren to the Old Covenant Israelites’ drink offerings (“libations”) that were commonly offered along with various sacrifices, likely symbolic of the pouring out of Jesus’ blood (and other bodily fluids).

Also, in this case, Paul may have been likening these liquid sacrifices to *his* own eventual, future sacrifice by the shedding of *his* own blood.

But, as shown in this and other scriptures, by this time in Paul’s life, he was okay with that possibility/probability. His Christian life had been a rough one (to say the least). Because he’d outspokenly “changed sides” from being fiercely *anti-Christian* to zealously *pro-Christian*, he’d been physically mistreated in so many different ways; not to mention his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7) which *may* have been the result of one or more of the tortures that had been inflicted on him.

Because Paul likely suffered constant pain, he might even have thought of the first death as being something of a welcome relief to himself!

Whether this is true or not, Paul’s priorities had been so very much changed – from very human ones before his conversion to godly ones, so that to literally sacrifice his human life in service for God and His people would even have been counted by Paul as a *double* joy!

He even asked his Philippian brethren to join him in this double joy:

**18: For the same cause also *do you* joy and rejoice with me.**

This was not a question; but probably a suggestion, an invitation or even a command!

Of course, Paul wasn't asking his Philippian brethren to volunteer to be executed with him. Nor would he expect them to put themselves purposely in harm's way in order to have his own sufferings duplicated in themselves. Nor would he expect them to rejoice at the news of his execution.

But they certainly *would* rejoice with him when his ongoing sufferings were over and done with. Also, that the cause and results of his sacrifice – i.e. their salvation and eventual resurrection – were *great* reasons for them to rejoice.

Look how this lines up with what he wrote to Timothy:

**2 Timothy 4:**

**6: For I am now ready to be offered { 'spendo' again }, and the time of my departure is at hand.**

**7: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:**

**8: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing ...**

Also, please note verse 9:

**9: Do your diligence to come shortly unto me:**

Paul's words to Timothy here lead us right into the next section of Philippians 2:

***Timotheus***

At this point, Paul's letter to the Philippians changes – from being largely exhortative to being somewhat administrative. However, there's still lots we can learn from this latter portion of the letter:

**19: But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send *Timotheus* {Timothy} shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.**

We see from this that Timothy was with Paul at this point.

The implication here is that Jesus Himself would make it possible for Timothy to leave Paul again – in order to pay a visit to their brethren in Philippi – and that Timothy would communicate the details of their physical and spiritual condition back to Paul.

Paul seemed sure that the news of the Philippians' spiritual condition would be very positive, because he seemed to have some confidence that he'd be comforted by the news.

However, tempering that same confidence, we read this in the next verses:

**20: For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.**

**21: For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.**

This reads as if intended as a criticism – perhaps what we might think of as a “comparative criticism.”

But to be fair, at the time of this writing, Paul had no one else there with him who *could* have made a better ambassador between the Philippian brethren and himself – no one better than Timothy. No other local church member he knew possessed more natural and sincere concern for the “things of Jesus” – things which would have included the Philippians’ spiritual welfare. None other than Timothy was available, willing and able to “shuttle” back and forth between Paul and the Philippian brethren on behalf of their Saviour.

**22: But you know the proof of him {Timothy}, that, as a son with the father, he has served with me in the gospel.**

Paul wasn’t comparing Timothy and himself with Jesus and His Father here. Neither is this some kind of support for a ministerial ranking system within God’s church. Nor is it a suggestion that un-ordained, non-ministerial church members should be serving ministers – at least not in the normal course of things!

On the contrary, Timothy served God and His people *with* Paul! And Timothy served in such a similar manner as Paul did that the two of them could be compared to a “father-and-son” team or business!

**23: Him {Timothy} therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.**

**24: But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.**

If it *wasn’t* the Lord’s will for the authorities to give Paul the freedom to travel, he’d free up and send Timothy to the Philippian brethren as soon as possible. This also, perhaps, might have been to get Timothy away from Paul’s captors and the “clear and present danger” that he was in due to his association with Paul.

But, on the other hand, if it *was* the Lord’s will, Paul would visit the Philippians himself – likely with Timothy. I don’t know whether or not that visit ever took place.

### ***Epaphroditus***

Despite what Paul wrote in verses 20 and 21, Timothy *wasn’t* Paul’s *only* friend and helper. Paul now mentions another faithful brother-in-Christ who, apparently, had also made himself willing and available to serve in a similar manner as Timothy:

**25: Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, fellowsoldier, but your messenger {Greek: apostolos}, and he that ministered to my wants.**

The Greek word for “wants” here is “*chreia*” – a better translation of which is *needs* or *necessities*.

Once again, this is not an authorization for ministers to demand that members pander to them - like one example I heard - of a minister who demanded that the ladies after services bring him cups of tea using a Bible as a tray!

Yes. Timothy and Epaphroditus *did* help Paul who, as we understand, had some serious health problems. But they were not treated like servants! They were both like brothers to Paul - fellow-labourers, fellow-soldiers, serving as messengers (Greek: apostolos) between Paul and the Philippians - and perhaps with various other congregations too, when he was unable to visit them - possibly when he was a prisoner at Rome. (See verses 1 to 18 of chapter 1).

On Epaphroditus' return to Philippi, he acted as "postman" - the bearer - and possibly also the "secretary" who wrote this letter on Paul's behalf to the church members in Philippi

Epaphroditus' name is very interesting. It is derived from *Epi-Aphrodite* and means *Belonging to Aphrodite (Venus)* - a pagan Greek goddess associated with love, beauty, pleasure, passion and sexuality! We can only assume that Epaphroditus had been given this name as a baby by heathen parents - prior to his conversion to Christianity. I think that if I'd been given a name like his, I'd have had it changed as soon as God called me into His church! But that's not a criticism. Perhaps name-changes were trickier back then than today. Neither should Epaphroditus be included in Paul's earlier "comparative criticisms," because Paul mentions him in glowing words of great esteem and affection, as we'll see as we continue:

**26a: For he longed after you all...**

Understandably, Epaphroditus sorely missed his brethren back in Philippi.

**26b: ... and was full of heaviness, because that you had heard that he had been sick.**

What true, reciprocal Christian love! Epaphroditus was the one who was ill; but he was in anguish because he learnt that his brethren at home in Philippi had heard that he was ill and were likely in anguish for him!

**27: For indeed he *was* sick, nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.**

By mercifully healing Epaphroditus, God was also merciful to Paul, who would have suffered "sorrow-upon-sorrow" had his beloved friend and helper died.

Compare this sharing of potential "double sorrow" with the sharing of the "double joy" that was mentioned in other parts of this chapter. This sharing in one another's sufferings is another example of the "way of give" - of true Christian love.

**28a: I sent him...**

Better: "I am sending him" - because Epaphroditus obviously hadn't left yet.

**28b: ... therefore *the more carefully*...**

The almost unpronounceable Greek word *spoudaioteros* means “with haste,” “diligently” or “earnestly,”

**28c: ... that, when you see him again, you may rejoice {chairō}, and that I may be the less sorrowful.**

There’s that contrast once again between rejoicing and sorrow!

**29a: Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness {chara} ...**

Because of Epaphroditus’ recent serious illness and because he missed his home brethren so much, Paul was urgent to get him on his way home to Philippi, which was likely the best place for him to recuperate. Paul’s mind would be more at ease for him and he knew that Epaphroditus’ home brethren would rejoice at their beloved brother’s return.

Paul wouldn’t be left alone because, at this point at least, he still had Timothy with him to help him out.

**29b: ... and hold such in reputation:**

This *doesn’t* mean that Paul was encouraging a wrong kind of “respect of persons,” which is forbidden in many scriptures, including some by Paul himself.

The Greek word translated here as “reputation” is “*entimos*” (Strong’s 1784), which means *precious, dear, honorable and prized*.

Why would Paul want the Philippian brethren to consider Epaphroditus – and others like him – as precious, prized, dear and honorable?

He tells us why in the next verse, which is that *last* verse of chapter 2:

**30: Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.**

Epaphroditus risked his very life by his willingness to travel to be with Paul, to help Paul do his part in the “work of Christ” and to serve God by helping Paul – perhaps in the role of a deacon.

We don’t know the details; but it would appear that Epaphroditus, doing his part in the work may have been the main – or partial – cause of his life-threatening illness.

Paul’s phrase “to supply your lack of service toward me” reads again like another “comparative criticism” of the Philippian brethren not attempting what Epaphroditus had been doing.

However, it may just mean that Epaphroditus had been serving as they weren’t able to – perhaps because of their geographical separation from Paul in Rome – an 800-mile journey by road and sea. Much longer – 1,200 miles – by the land route around the Adriatic Sea.

Whatever was Paul’s meaning here, it seems that the bottom line is that, even though all church members don’t have the same function in the Body of Christ and even though we can’t all be

doing the same job, every one of God's people *should* be striving to find out what our place and function is in the Body – finding out what our job is – and *doing* that job with all our might!

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So that's it for our study of Philippians 2. A very diverse and interesting chapter, I believe, with lots of excellent exmples for the people of God's church today!

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