

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



"A Total Transformation"

Rabbi Cosmo Panzetta

Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Phil. 3:20-21; 3:7-14; 2:5-11; 1:27; 1 Cor. 15:42-54; Rev. 12:11

Have you ever been somewhere for a long time and yet never quite forgotten that it wasn't home? Maybe you were traveling, staying with someone else, or living somewhere temporarily. You could unpack your bags, get comfortable, learn the roads, and settle into a routine—but somewhere in the back of your mind you knew, "This isn't home." When that happens, you don't become so attached to the temporary place that you forget where you actually belong. Paul is saying something very similar to the believers in Philippi. They lived in a city that was extremely proud of its Roman citizenship, but Paul reminds them that there is a greater reality: *"For our citizenship is in heaven, and from there we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah."* (Phil. 3:20)

That statement really brings the whole chapter together. Paul has been saying, "I want to know Him." He has counted everything else as loss compared with knowing Messiah. He is pressing forward, following the example of Yeshua, and warning against those whose minds are set on earthly things. Why? Because this isn't home. We belong to another Kingdom. And because our citizenship is rooted in heaven, we live differently while we are here, we wait differently for the One who is coming, and we have a completely different hope for where all of this is going. Our story does not end with the breakdown of these weak bodies or even with death. Yeshua is bringing about a **total transformation**.

1. OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN

Paul writes, *"For our citizenship is in heaven."* (Phil. 3:20) That would have landed powerfully in Philippi. Philippi was a Roman colony, an outpost of Rome in Macedonia. Its citizens were proud of Rome, took their identity from Rome, and looked to Rome for direction about how they should conduct themselves. Paul takes that familiar picture and says, in effect, "That's what you are—but on a much greater level. YOU, followers of Yeshua, are not a colony of Rome; YOU are a colony of heaven." Their earthly citizenship was real, but it was not their ultimate identity. Their highest allegiance belonged to Yeshua. Caesar was not their Savior and Lord; Yeshua was. Their values, their way of walking, and their understanding of life were to come from the heavenly Kingdom to which they belonged.

That's so relevant for us now. If our citizenship is heavenly, then our lives here should reflect the values of heaven. Earlier Paul had said, *"Only live your lives in a manner worthy of the Good News of the Messiah."* (Phil. 1:27) What does that life look like? It looks like the cross. It looks like selfless love. It looks like laying down self and considering others before ourselves. It looks like having the same mind that was in Messiah Yeshua,

who *“humbled Himself—becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”* (Phil. 2:8) We don’t just wear a cross; we allow the cross to shape the way we live. We are citizens of heaven living as an outpost of His Kingdom here on earth.

2. WE EAGERLY WAIT FOR OUR SAVIOR

Paul continues, *“and from there we eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah.”* (Phil. 3:20) There is a beautiful intensity in those words: **we eagerly wait**. This isn’t casual waiting. It isn’t indifference. Our hope is fixed on Someone. We are looking for Him, longing for Him, and living in expectation of Him. Just before this, Paul describes those whose minds are set on earthly things and says their end is destruction. But not us. Our citizenship is different, our hope is different, and our end is different. Out of the reality of our heavenly citizenship comes this expectation: Yeshua is coming.

But waiting for Yeshua is not passive. Paul has spent this chapter saying, *“I press on.”* He isn’t sitting on the side of the road waiting for heaven. His eyes are fixed ahead because he wants to know Messiah wholly—in the power of His resurrection and in the fellowship of His sufferings, *“becoming like Him in His death.”* (Phil. 3:10) That is how we wait. We keep our eyes on Him. We keep becoming like Him. We keep dying to self. We keep walking according to the values of our true Kingdom. We can say, “I’m almost home,” but while we are still here, we press on toward the upward calling of God in Messiah Yeshua.

3. HE WILL TOTALLY TRANSFORM US

Then Paul tells us what we are waiting for Yeshua to do: *“He will transform this humble body of ours into the likeness of His glorious body, through the power that enables Him even to put all things in subjection to Himself.”* (Phil. 3:21) There is something beautiful in the language Paul uses. Earlier, in Philippians 2, Yeshua took on our human likeness. He humbled Himself and became like us, even to the point of death. Now Paul reverses that picture: **the One who became like us will ultimately transform us to become like HIM**. He came into our lowly state so that He could bring us into His glorious one. This is not merely an internal adjustment or a little spiritual improvement. This is a total transformation.

Paul describes that hope more fully in 1 Corinthians: *“Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption! Sown in dishonor, raised in glory! Sown in weakness, raised in power!”* (1 Cor. 15:42–43) And then he says, *“We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be **changed**—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar.”* (1 Cor. 15:51–52) The salvation that Yeshua has begun in us will one day be fully realized. Right now He is transforming our minds, attitudes, desires, and way of walking. But the day is coming when He will transform us completely—even these humble bodies—into the likeness of His glorious body. And Paul says He will do it by the same power by which He is able to bring **all things** under His authority. That gives us tremendous assurance: the One who began this work is more than powerful enough to finish it.

CONCLUSION

Paul's message at the end of this chapter is really very simple: keep your eyes on Him. Don't let your mind become fixed on earthly things. Don't follow the path of those who are ruled by their appetites, living according to whatever self wants in the moment. That road may promise pleasure, freedom, or escape, but its end is destruction. Yeshua calls us to another way—the way of the cross. It may mean saying no to self, laying things down, and sharing in His sufferings, but it is the way that leads to life. There is a wholeness there. There is a peace that passes understanding there.

And we are not yet finished. Paul says, *"I have not attained it yet, but I press on."* That should be our pursuit too! We have been saved, and yet He is still transforming us. So keep pressing on. Keep your citizenship rooted in heaven. Keep your eyes fixed on Yeshua. Keep becoming like Him. Keep waiting for Him—but not passively. Let the Holy Spirit search your heart today. Is there an area where your mind has become set on earthly things? Is there something self is still demanding to control. Say, "Lord, change me from the inside out. Teach me to live as a citizen of Your Kingdom now, while I eagerly wait for the day when You will make me completely new." **He became like us so that He could transform us to be like Him.**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did heavenly citizenship mean to the believers living in the Roman colony of Philippi?
2. According to Phil. 3:20–21, what are believers eagerly waiting for Yeshua to do?
3. How does Yeshua's humility in Phil. 2:5–8 help us understand the transformation promised in Phil. 3:21?
4. Where are you most tempted today to set your mind on earthly things rather than live according to your heavenly citizenship?
5. What is one area of your life where Yeshua may be asking you to die to self so that His character can be formed more fully in you?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, thank You that through Yeshua our citizenship is rooted in heaven. Help us not to become so attached to this world that we forget where we truly belong. Give us the mind of Messiah. Teach us to lay down self, to love sacrificially, and to walk in the way of the cross. Search our hearts and reveal every place where our appetites, desires, or earthly priorities have begun to rule us.

Yeshua, we want to know You—truly and fully. We want to know the power of Your resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in Your sufferings. Keep our eyes fixed on You as we eagerly wait for Your coming. Transform us now from the inside out, and thank You for the promise that one day You will transform these humble bodies into the likeness of Your glorious body. Until that day, help us press on, faithfully reflecting Your Kingdom wherever You have placed us.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.