

Philippians 3 - Christ our Goal

3:1-3 REJOICE IN CHRIST, TRUST NOT IN THE FLESH

v1 Rejoice: Theme previously in **1:18;26; 2:2,16-18,28.** This is the answer to Judaism. If we truly appreciate our salvation in Christ there is no room for boasting. **Is not grievous:** Gk. tedious. It was not tedious for him to speak about this because he was extremely concerned for their welfare. **For you it is safe:** There was no problem of Judaism in the Philippian ecclesia. **v2 Beware of dogs:** Used of Gentiles because of their scorn for Jews: **Mt 7:6; 15:26; Mk 7:27.** Used of Jesus Christ's persecutors in **Psa 22:16.** Of Judaisers: **Gal 5:15.** Filthy animals: **2 Pet 2:22. Concision:** Literally *mutilation*. Refers to the fact that Judaisers taught you had to be circumcised to be saved: **Gal 5:1-4; 6:15.** Repudiated at the Jerusalem conference: **Acts 15.**

v3 We are the circumcision: In **Rom 2:26** Paul says that an uncircumcised Gentile in Christ had truly cut off the flesh in **true spirit** of the principle. **Worship God in spirit:** Jesus taught the woman at the well in Samaria that Gentiles could worship God in **spirit and truth:** **Jn 4:24** or, as in **Josh 24:14** *sincerity and truth.* **Rejoice in Christ Jesus:** Here a different word, meaning *to boast.* Ironic, because his point is that if you want to boast in something, then it should **only** be in Christ, teaching that we must not boast!

No confidence in the flesh: When Circumcision was given in **Gen 17** it was to teach Abraham he should not trust in the flesh, particularly in relation to the birth of Isaac: **Acts 7:8; Col 2:11-13.** This **principle** remains fundamental for us. Believers today have at their disposal the easiest form of boasting ever, in the form of social media. Our focus must always be on giving glory to God and Jesus Christ, not our own achievements. We may laugh about the stupidity of these Judaisers, yet be guilty of parading our own talents and achievements, such as musical ability, academic success, self-image or even "good works" in the ecclesia: **Mt 6:1-5.** God hates pride and went to great lengths to teach this principle to Nebuchadnezzar: **Dan 4:30-37; 5:20-22.** Consider also **Psa 10:3; 12:2-4; Prov 8:13; 15:25; 16:5,19; 21:4; Jer 9:23-24.**

FINALLY, my brethren, **rejoice** in the Lord. **To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.**

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might **trust in the flesh,** I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

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

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

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already



3:4-9 TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS IS OF GOD

v4 I might also have confidence: If anyone wanted to put trust in the flesh, it was Paul. He now lists 7 credentials which could have made him the perfect Judaisier.

v5 Circumcised: Covenant to Abraham and the Law: **Gen 17:9-13; Lev 12:3. Tribe of Benjamin:** From Benjamin came Israel's first king: **Acts 13:21.** Benjamin's territory included Jerusalem: **Josh 18:11-28. A Pharisee:** Paul was of their strictest sect: **Acts 22:3; 26:5.** They destroyed the original true intention of the law.

v6 Zeal, persecuting: He was their foremost persecutor: **Acts 8:1-4; 9:1-3; 22:20. Righteousness:** Thought this could be attained by keeping law: **Rom 9:31.** Now he appreciated he was a wretched sinner: **Rom 7:18-25.**

v7 Counted loss for Christ: Humility and faith is fundamental to our life in Christ: **Rom 3:20-28; Eph 2:8-10.** We all have to make sacrifices in life that to start with may not be easy. As with the athlete, daily **discipline** and sacrifice is fundamental to running the race: **4:14; 1 Cor 9:25-27.**

v8 Excellency: Gk. to be superior or excel. **Knowledge of Christ Jesus:** Fundamental for salvation: **Isa 53:11; Hos 4:6; 2 Cor 4:6; Jn 17:1-3.** Knowing Christ outworks true love in life: **Jn 14:6-7,21-24; 1 Jn 2:3; 4:7.** Knowing God and His Son means appreciating and living God's character, such as His care for the poor and needy and the fact that He is our Father: **Psa 103:7-18; Jer 9:3, 23-24; 22:16.** In **John 10:4,11-18** we see what it means to really know him. Jesus Christ is the good shepherd and he willingly gives his life for the sheep. He has a personal relationship with his brethren, as we do with him through the experiences of life: **Phil 3:10. Loss of all things:** There are many earthly goals and pleasures we must set aside for the Kingdom: **Mt 19:29. Win Christ:** Analogy of a runner winning the race. **v9 Found in him:** Common term ("in Christ") Paul uses for those baptised into Christ by faith: **Rom 3:24; 8:1,39; 12:5; 1 Cor 15:22; Gal 3:26; Eph 2:10,13; 3:6; Col 1:2; 1 Pet 5:14.**

3:10-16 STRIVING TOWARDS THE MARK OF CHRIST

v10 Power of his resurrection: Grave could not hold him: **Acts 2:24.** His resurrection is a powerful motivation to change us: **Rom 6:1-6; Col 3:1-4; Gal 2:20; Eph 2:5-6.**

a attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus;

15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.

16 Nevertheless, whero we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

21 Who shall change our body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

3:17-21 ETERNAL LIFE THE HOPE OF BELIEVERS IN CHRIST

v17 Be followers of me: In that he followed Christ: **1 Cor 11:1. v18 Even weeping:** Paul is a man of great feeling and often expresses his grief for the ecclesia: **Acts 20:29-31. Enemies of the cross of Christ:** Straight to the point for wolves in sheep's clothing in the ecclesia. **v19 Whose end is destruction:** If our life is lived for the flesh we reap what we sow: **Gal 6:8. Mind earthly things:** Real challenge today! Everyone is so focussed on the here and now, yet Christ is at the door! No man can serve two masters: **Mt 6:24. v20 Conversation:** Gk. *citizenship.* Our hope is in a **future** kingdom. Believers therefore take no part in voting or politics. **We look:** Our focus is on Christ's coming. **v21 Fashioned:** Contrast to those in **3:18-19.** Our hope is an amazing one: **1 Cor 15:51-54.**

Colour code: Blue (God and Jesus Christ); Red (sin/devil/judgment of wicked); Green (Kingdom); Orange (important words and phrases); Purple (return of Jews to the land); Yellow (practical exhortation). Prepared for 2017 Perth Youth Conference. These notes are based on the 1983 Adelaide Youth Conference notes. For a pdf file email acdanglerfield@webshield.net.au.