

*CALLED  
TO*

# **ACT**

*FOLLOWING JESUS IN TODAY'S CULTURE*

*CULTURE FOLLOWING  
JESUS IN  
TODAY'S*



As followers of Jesus in today's culture, we  
assume we have the options to:

- Pretend
- Ignore
- Hope

**Instead, the Savior calls us to ACT**



The first week...

# Subjects of the King

Leviticus 19:1-18



Two weeks ago...

# Fishers of Men

Matthew 4:17-22



Last week...

# Makers of Disciples

Matthew 28:18-20



And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28:18-20



## What are followers of Jesus called to be?

- Makers of Disciples

## What are followers of Jesus NOT called to be?

- Hateful
- Social media warriors
- Political bullies
- Politically apathetic
- Fearful
- Absent
- Christian Jerks

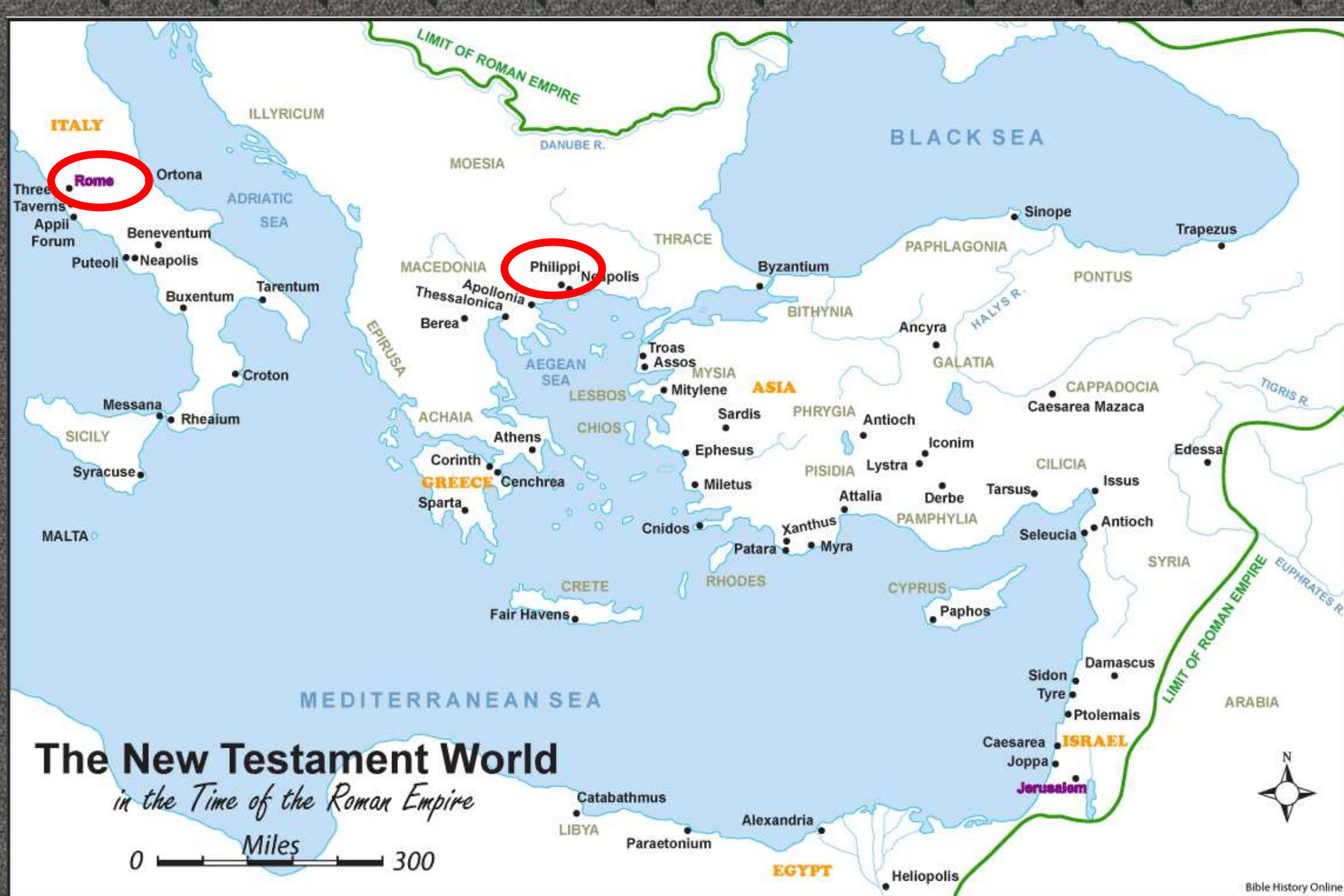


This week...

# Citizens of Heaven

Philippians 3





Estimates of the distance from Rome to Philippi range from 700 to 1,200 miles depending on the route taken. In the best conditions such a trip could be made by foot in about six weeks. In less favorable circumstances, it could take three months.

<https://matthewsharmon.com/2012/10/05/fridays-in-philippians-pauls-circumstances/>



# Who was the Apostle Paul?

According to Acts (21:39; 22:3), Paul was born Jewish in approximately 5 AD in Tarsus, an important city of Cilicia (modern day Turkey). In Acts 22:28, Paul claimed that he had been born a Roman citizen, meaning he had inherited citizenship from an ancestor who had done meritorious service for the Romans. Paul's use of Greek confirms his origin as a Hellenistic Jew of the Dispersion, at home in the Greco-Roman world. Paul's earliest education would have been in the home, with his father as instructor. At about age six, Paul would have attended the synagogue school for instruction in the Scriptures and Hebrew. Paul, according to Acts 22:3, was educated in Jerusalem under the important Rabbi Gamaliel. Like most rabbis, he was a member of the Pharisees (Phil. 3:5). Unlikely is the possibility that Paul, as a young student in Jerusalem, had seen Jesus. Nowhere does Paul mention such an encounter, and his letters evidence little knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus. Early in life, Paul learned the trade of tentmaking and other leatherwork (Acts 18:3). This trade provided Paul later with means to support his missionary activity (1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Cor. 9:6). - Harper's Bible Dictionary

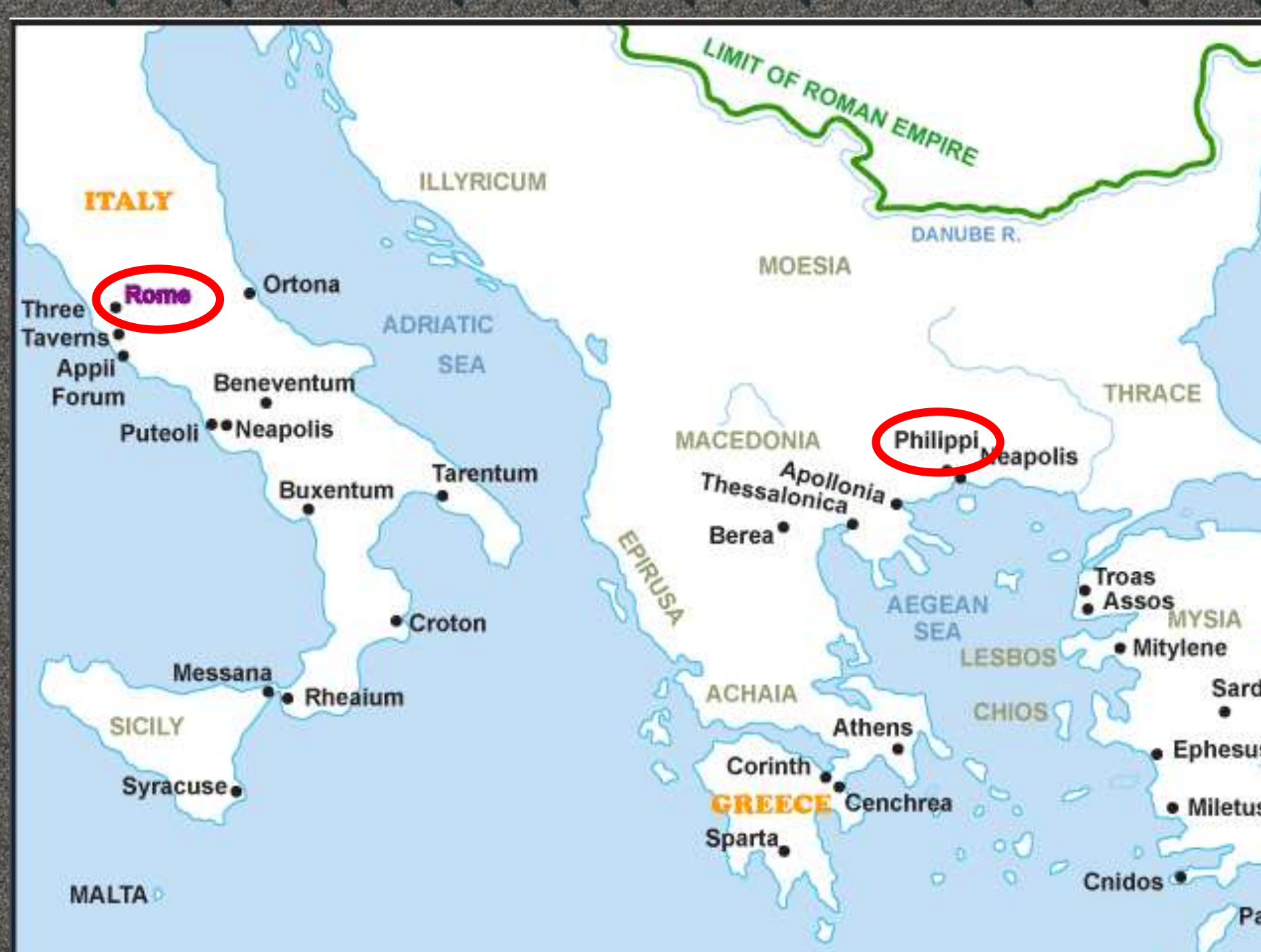


# Who was the Apostle Paul?

It is quite possible that Saul (later using Paul, the Roman version of his name) was present for the trial of Stephen—a trial that resulted in Stephen becoming the first Christian martyr (Acts 7:54–60). Luke tells us that Stephen’s executioners laid their garments at the feet of Saul (Acts 7:58), who was in full approval of the mob’s murderous actions (Acts 8:1). Saul later ravaged the church, entering the homes of believers and committing them to prison. Saul’s anti-Christian zeal motivated him to arrest and imprison male and female believers (Acts 8:3).

While on his way to Damascus to arrest and extradite Christians back to Jerusalem, Saul was confronted by the very One whom he was persecuting (Acts 9:3–9; 22:6–11; 26:12–18). What followed was a dramatic conversion. Saul of Tarsus became the apostle Paul, an ardent missionary to an unbelieving world and a fine example of faithful service in the face of fierce persecution (Acts 14:19; 16:22–24; 2 Corinthians 11:25–26).





This letter was written to the believers in Philippi in ca. 61 AD while Paul was still under house arrest in Rome, awaiting his trial before the emperor Nero. Paul is writing to the church he had established in Macedonia (northern Greece) during his second missionary journey in 50 – 52 AD (see Acts 16:12-40) and had visited at least twice more during his third missionary journey in 52 – 56 AD (see Acts 20:1-6). The letter was taken from Rome to Philippi by Epaphroditus (see Philippians 2:25-30) who had recently brought a gift from the Philippian believers to Paul at his rented house in Rome (see Philippians 4:18).



Finally, my brethren, **rejoice** in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. Philippians 3:1

*Χαίρω chairo to rejoice, to be glad*

It is easy for believers to let circumstances discourage them. The cure for discouragement is to rivet one's attention on the Lord and rejoice in Him. It is significant too that a Roman prisoner would beseech people who were free to be joyful in their Savior. Paul learned what every child of God needs to learn—there can be rejoicing in the Lord even when outward circumstances are contrary to a spirit of rejoicing. — Bible Knowledge Commentary



Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision; for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory [boast] in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh, Philippians 3:2-3

Paul, as apostle to the Gentiles, believed that if non-Jewish people turned to the Lord in repentance and faith they were to be accepted as members of God's people, without the necessity of their becoming Jews and of males being circumcised. There were Jewish followers of Jesus in Antioch (Acts 15:1) and in Galatia who insisted that these Gentile Christians should become Jews. So the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15 was called, and to deal with the same issue Paul wrote his letter to the Galatians. Paul was so incensed against those who pressed for Gentiles to become Jews that he called them dogs, the name that Jews gave to Gentiles. – New Bible Commentary



although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: circumcised the eighth day [see Leviticus 12:3; not a convert or Ishmaelite], of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin [like Saul, Israel's first King; many Jews by this time could not trace their genealogy, or were descended from proselytes], a Hebrew of Hebrews [native speaker who refused to adopt Greek culture]; as to the Law, a Pharisee [strictest sect of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Judaism, see Acts 23:6 and 26:5, Galatians 1:14]; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church [see Acts 9:1-2]; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless [trying to be right with God on the basis of obedience to the law]. **Philippians 3:4-6**



Paul devalued any earthly successes that might generate spiritual self-confidence

- \*Heritage/background
- \*Spiritual accomplishments
- \*Legalistic righteousness
  - \*Popularity/fame
  - \*Financial security



But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, Philippians 3:7-8

\*Paul had come to see his accomplishments as a false basis of confidence and even a hindrance to him. – New Bible Commentary



and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know [γινώσκω *ginosko* to know by experience] Him and the power [δύναμις *dunamis* power, strength, ability to overcome resistance] of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings [dying to the self-centered life and being willing to face difficulty and hardship that the gospel of salvation may go out to all people], being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection [ἀνάστασις *anastasis*, a Greek word used nowhere else in the New Testament] from the dead. Philippians 3:9-11

And He (Jesus) summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me.” Mark 8:34



Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on [pursue] so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
Philippians 3:12-13





“I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:14

What is the upward call? Life in heaven for eternity



Let us therefore, as many as are perfect  
[τέλειος *teleios* mature, fully grown], have this attitude;  
and if in anything you have a different attitude,  
God will reveal that also to you; however, let  
us keep living [mutual cooperation] by that same  
standard to which we have attained.

Philippians 3:15-16



Brethren, join in following my example [in relentlessly pursuing after Christlikeness; there were so few role models for Christ-followers in these early days of the church], and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us. For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction [because they place their faith in their own accomplishments instead of the saving grace of Jesus], whose god is their appetite [stomach... physical desires], and whose glory [boast] is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. Philippians 3:17-19



For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait [ἀπεκδέχομαι *apekdechomai* ... anticipation and longing] for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform [μετασχηματίζω *metaschematizo* change the outward form of] the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Philippians 3:20-21

\*The people of Philippi were living there as colonists while their citizenship was in Rome. Similarly Christians, while living on earth, have their citizenship elsewhere—in heaven. – Bible Knowledge Commentary



# What are the roles of a citizen?

- Pray
- Protect
- Serve
- Pay taxes
- Run for office
- Speak up
- Vote



# Who Is In Charge?

“By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, all who judge rightly.” Proverbs 8:15-16

“It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.” Daniel 2:21





# The Practical Effects of Citizenship

The Philippi to which Paul went in the course of his missionary work was a significant place in a number of ways. Not only was it an important city in the Roman province of Macedonia, but it had the special status of being a Roman colony (Acts 16:12). This meant that it was like a little piece of Rome abroad. The Latin language was used; Roman law controlled local administration and taxes; many aspects of public life went on as in Rome itself and most of the officials had the same titles as in Rome. - Harper's Bible Dictionary

\* Citizens of Heaven... Live HERE like you will live THERE



For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Philippians 3:20-21

- \*I don't have to reject or ignore my earthly citizenship – my earthly citizenship should reflect my heavenly citizenship
- \*Live like you are there even when you are here
- \*Glorious bodies... a foreshadowing of the Rapture



As Christian citizens, the Word of God directs us to these responsibilities to our country.

**1. Pray for government**

*1 Timothy 2:1-3*

Why does God allow evil people to rise to offices of authority? We get the leaders we deserve.

**2. Pay for government**

*Romans 13:1-7*

Just as we give our tithe, we are to pay our taxes. Jesus did it, so must we.

**3. Preach to government**

*Ephesians 4:15*

We are to speak truth to our leaders. We dare not be silent.

**4. Participate in government**

*1 Peter 2:12*

When you were saved, you weren't disenfranchised from the world. You were saved to impact the world for Jesus Christ.



# Citizens of Heaven... a glimpse of home

Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4

Philippians could be proud of their citizenship in a Roman colony, just as we all have an earthly citizenship which has its privileges and its obligations. But they, and we, have to value above all the gift of a heavenly life and citizenship, and we live in hope of our future inheritance that we will receive in its fulness in the future. Thus we eagerly await the reappearing from heaven of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. – New Bible Commentary



# Christians, Citizenship, and Rights

by Rodney Nelson

Loving God first must have no competitors. Nationalism, patriotism, and political activism are not competitors for Christian loyalty. While Christians can be thankful for citizenship in a particular country, they must always remember that citizenship in heaven is their first loyalty.

Christians have a mandate from their Savior that transcends any obligation to the state. Indeed, that obligation continues irrespective of any and every form of government devised by humanity. The American experiment in religious freedom and republican democracy must not be allowed to hold that mandate hostage or confuse the issues. Christians must continue to be vigilant in their commission to represent their heavenly King in a sinful and fallen world.



**If we want our earthly home to be more like  
our heavenly home...**

God said to the Jewish exiles in Babylon...

**“Seek the welfare of the city where I have  
sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord  
on its behalf; for in its welfare you will  
have welfare.” Jeremiah 29:7**



**What does heaven look like?**

Revelation chapters 21-22



Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away."

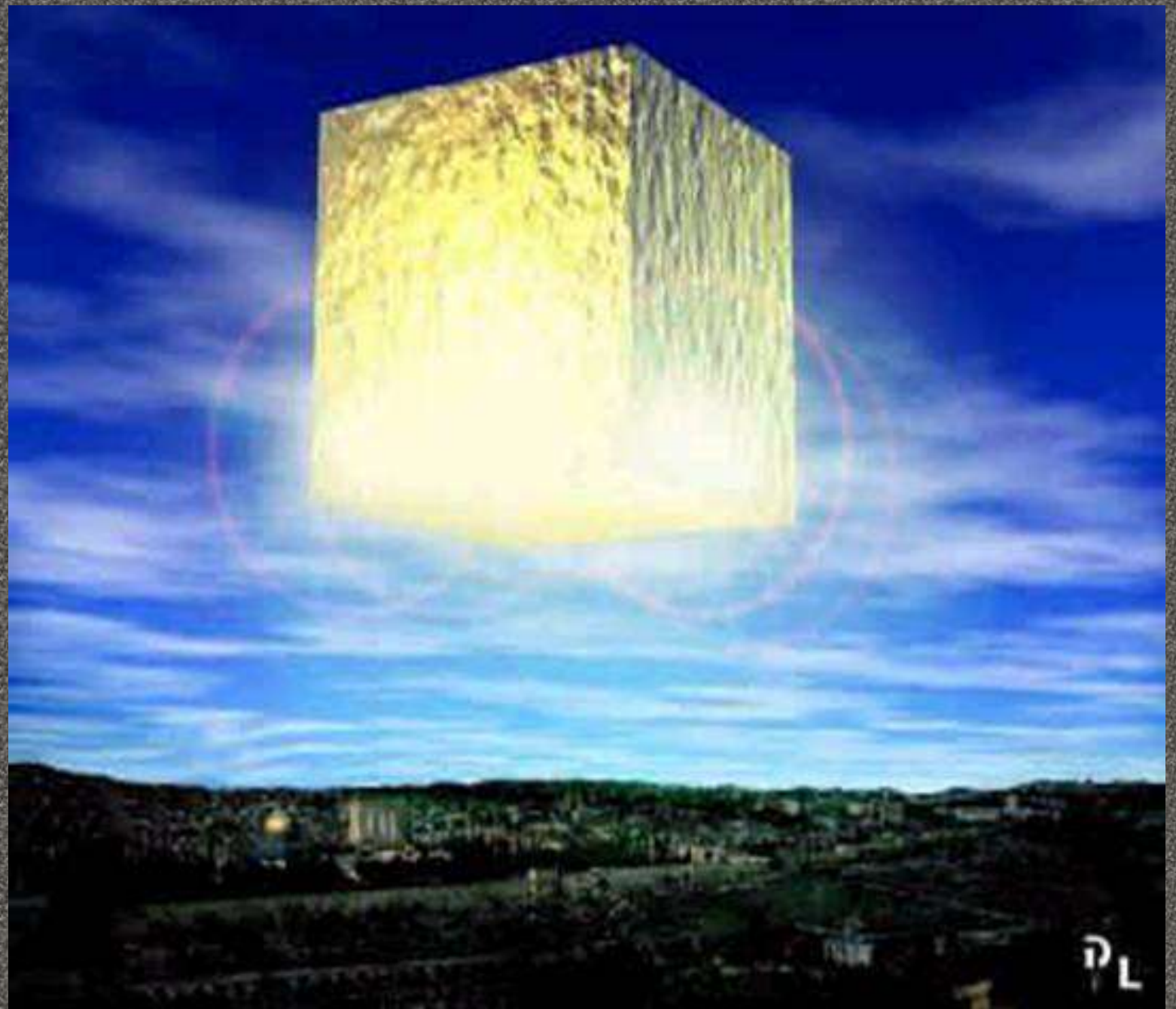
Revelation 21:1-4



And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. The one who spoke with me had a gold measuring rod to measure the city, and its gates and its wall. The city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as the width; and he measured the city with the rod, fifteen hundred miles; its length and width and height are equal. Revelation 21:10-16



Revelation 21:2  
“I saw the Holy City,  
the new Jerusalem”





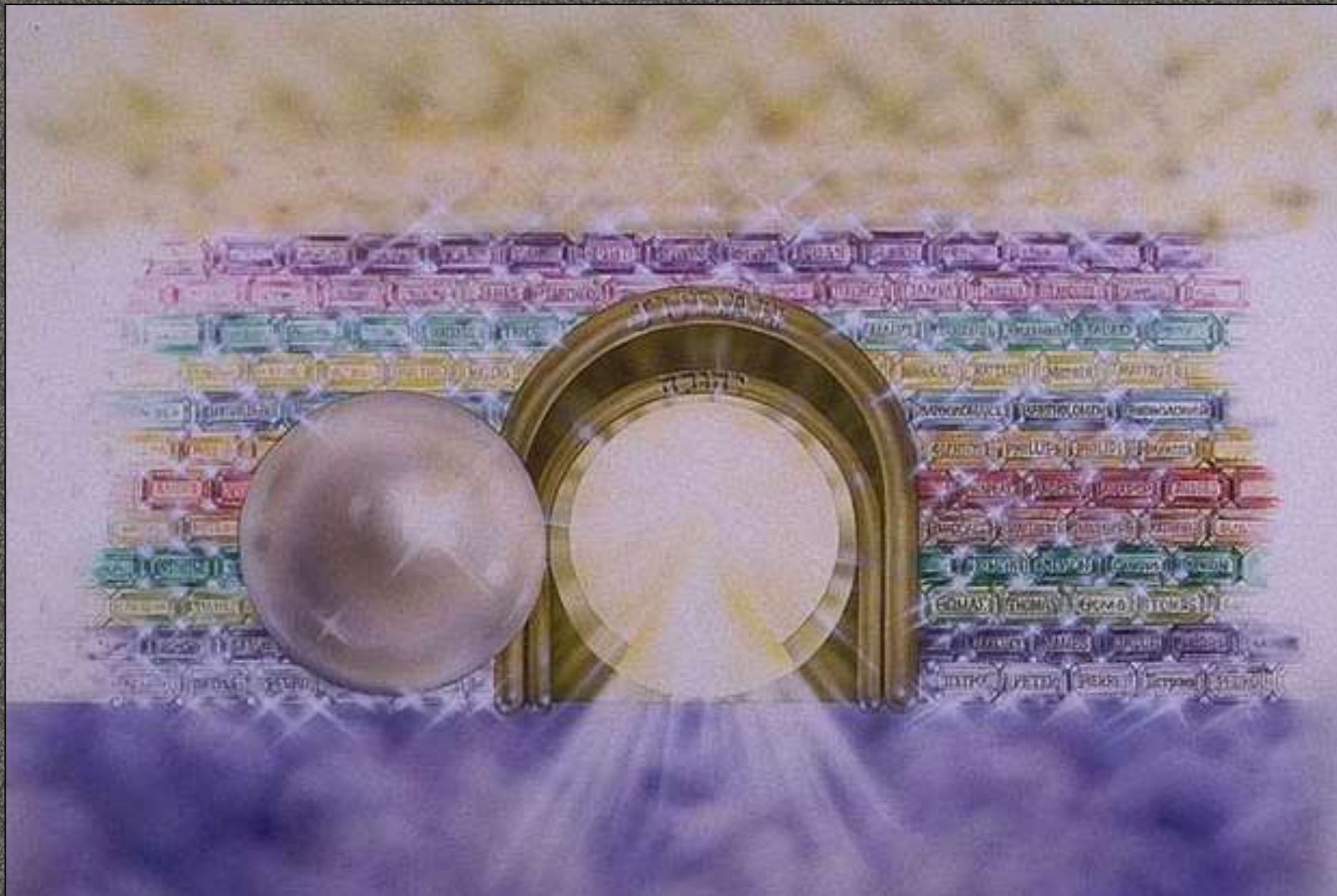
And he measured its wall, seventy-two yards, according to human measurements, which are also angelic measurements. The material of the wall was jasper; and the city was pure gold, like clear glass. The foundation stones of the city wall were adorned with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation stone was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprase; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. Revelation 21:17-23



Walls of Heaven

The foundations  
of the city

Revelation  
21:12-14 and  
Revelation  
21:19-20





Then he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever. Revelation 22:1-5



City of Gold  
through the gate  
of the eternal  
city

Revelation  
21:21-27 and  
Revelation 22:1-6



Art By Pat Marvenko Smith Copyright 1982/1992  
1-800-327-7330 [www.revelationillustrated.com](http://www.revelationillustrated.com)



# How can I go to heaven?

“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.”

Romans 10:9-10



# How do followers of Jesus live on earth as citizens of Heaven?

## Remember...

- God is Creator and King, not an American
- God is not Republican or Democrat or Independent
- God loves the world, including America
- God loves the world, not just America
- God loves the world, so He gave Jesus
- God loves America, so He gave Jesus
- If we love America, we should give Jesus



# A Prayer for Leaders to Rise Up in America

Lord God, we desperately need your wisdom. You have given us a great country, founded on principles and truths from Your Word. We need men and women who will honor You, trust You, and lead us once again back to You. We pray for servant leaders who love the things You love and who care more about others than themselves.

Raise up leaders with the greatest potential of godly leadership, those who can ease confusion, expose illusion, and heal delusion. You alone hold the power to turn the hearts of leaders, but You listen and use our prayers to move them into right action. Help us to be faithful to care and to pursue Your heart in prayer.

- Rebecca Barlow Jordan



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