

## Christ is my Life—studies in Philippians (2)

# Ready for the Day of Christ Philippians 1

Part of having Christ as our life is to look forward to his 'Day'. There is a coming 'day of Christ' (1:6, 10; also 2:16).

- The prophets announce a coming 'day of the Lord'.
  - When God defeats his enemies.
  - When those who trust God are saved.
  - When God is known as God.
- This day is now the day of Christ.
  - All authority and judgement is entrusted to him (Matt. 28:18; John 5:22, 27).
  - God's salvation is in him.
  - God will be known through who Christ is and what he does—by everybody.
- We may say 'This is my day!'
  - We could mean everything has gone well, that our hard work has paid off, that our longings have come to pass, that we are truly being ourselves, or many other things.
  - Better to live and long for the day when Christ is seen to be who he is and when he shows that all he has done has been right and good. This will not only be his day but our day in him.

## Jesus talks about his day

Jesus often talks about his coming kingdom, or 'day'.

- Our life here may be impoverished and contested but our reward will be great in heaven (Matt. 5:3-12).
- We are to pray for this day to come (Matt. 6:10).
- The powers of this age to come are already present (Matt. 12:28; cf. Heb. 6:5).
- When asked when the kingdom would arrive, Jesus explained that there will be times when we will long for 'days of the Son of Man'—days when Christ comes and is clearly seen as the Christ. At present, he seems not to be in charge. And he dies. But he will have his 'day'—unmistakably and unavoidably (Luke 17:20-30).
- We must trust that God will 'avenge his elect' (Luke 18:1-8).
- We need to be ready for that day, not lost in this world's pursuits.

Those who refuse the revelation of God sever themselves from the world's one hope.

- The world makes plans, projections and promises based on science, and its own social theories.
- It mandates compliance of the masses with these findings and theories to vindicate them—and squanders personal freedoms.
- The world will always wobble without the truth for which it was created—it is not *going* anywhere!
- Knowledge of our future is only available by revelation, and a secure future is only available through Christ and living for what *he* is making.
- The confidence we have to work steadily towards a goal arises from the life and the promises of Christ and of the Father who sent him.

- Our Christian living should aim to please God and man (Luke 2:52; Rom. 15:2; 1 Cor. 10:33), but when the world wants our conformity to its ethos and goals, we must ask the question, 'What will stand on the last day? What will please the Lord?'

## Paul speaks about Christ's day

The present is a time to be prepared for the day of Christ.

- God is doing something in us that won't be finished until the day of Christ (v. 6).
- We must pray for one another—those who share in receiving the grace of God (vv. 7-11).
  - To grow in love.
  - To choose what is excellent—that is, what is truly part of God's creation and what will survive the judgement.
  - We may encourage young people to make choices that they will be glad they made 10 years later. Better still if we all struggle to learn the difficult lessons of love, pick the difference between what is real and what is self justifying, and so, recognise what will be seen to be good when Christ comes.
  - Cf. C. S. Lewis' 'The great divorce' in which a bus load of people from hell visit heaven and find the grass so solid that it pierces their feet—they don't want to be there!
  - In this life, God helps us decide if his kingdom is what we really want.
  - How we live now is *preparation* for the day of Christ—we need everything that is happening now.
  - The coming kingdom, or day of Christ, is not an escape. We need to be in training to be ready for it's delights!
- In this way we are 'filled with the fruits of righteousness'. This is what *Christ* is doing in us now so that on his day it will clear that *he* has succeeded. No-one will say they deserve to be in the kingdom!
- Christ who died and rose to reach the goal for his people, works now to reach the goal in his people, and will finally reach the goal with his people (Adrio Konig, *The Eclipse of Christ in Eschatology*).

The day of Christ is the hope we need to be properly about the present

- The Marxist world-view is critical of a future vindication promised by Christ. It believes this closes down social action to improve things for people in the present world.
- In fact, living for Christ's coming 'day' frees believers to do what is good rather than what is expedient, what is real rather than superficial and what is eternal rather than transitory.
- This is what is best for this present world because this is what the world was made for.
- Preaching of the gospel is not vindicated by full auditoriums or packed programmes but by blameless living now and our holding on to the word that produces it (2:14-16).

## Christ the desire of our hearts

- Being with Christ will be 'better' than being here but being in this world is 'necessary' for the sake of service to the church (1:21-24).

Life without a hunger to be with Christ demeans the gospel—what we see now is not the goal. What is mortal must be swallowed up with life. What we have in this world is what we know by faith, and in one sense, we are 'away from the Lord' so being 'at home with the Lord' is 'far better' (2 Cor. 5:4-8).