

Philippians 3:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead (εἴ πως καταντήσω εἰς τὴν ἐξανάστασιν τὴν ἐκ νεκρῶν, ei pōs katantēsō eis tēn exanastasin tēn ek nekrōn)—Ei pōs ("if somehow") expresses not doubt but humility and eagerness. Katantēsō ("I might attain") is subjunctive—Paul presses toward but doesn't presume. Exanastasin ("resurrection," intensified form with ex-prefix, rare word) emphasizes rising out from among the dead—bodily resurrection, not mere soul-survival. Verses 10-11 summarize Christian teleology: know Christ through resurrection-power and conformity to His death, culminating in final bodily resurrection. This is inaugurated eschatology—already/not yet tension. Paul experiences resurrection-power now (v. 10) while awaiting resurrection-body then (v. 11, 21).

Historical Context

Jewish belief in bodily resurrection (Dan 12:2) distinguished them from Greeks who despised body and expected only soul's immortality. Paul's Christian resurrection-hope adds Christ's resurrection as firstfruits (1 Cor 15:20-23)—believers will be raised like Christ (Phil 3:21). 'If somehow I might attain' doesn't doubt salvation but expresses humble longing and diligent pursuit (v. 12-14). Ancient stoics sought apatheia (passionlessness); Paul pursues resurrection with passionate intensity.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's 'if somehow' balance assurance of salvation with humble striving?
2. What is the relationship between present resurrection-power (v. 10) and future resurrection-body (v. 11)?
3. How does hope of bodily resurrection motivate your present pursuit of holiness?

Interlinear Text

εἴ	πως	καταντήσω	εἰς	τὴν	ἐξανάστασιν	τῶν	νεκρῶν
G1487	G4459	I might attain	unto	G3588	the resurrection	G3588	of the dead
		G2658	G1519		G1815		G3498

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 20:5 (Resurrection): But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

Acts 26:7 (Parallel theme): Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

Acts 23:6 (Resurrection): But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

