

Philippians 3:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ (ἡμῶν γὰρ τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει, ἐξ οὗ καὶ σωτῆρα ἀπεκδεχόμεθα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, hēmōn gar to politeuma en ouranois hyparchei, ex hou kai sōtēra apekdechometha kyrion Iēsoun Christon)—To politeuma ("citizenship, commonwealth")—believers are citizens of heaven, not earth. This is potent in Roman colony Philippi, where citizenship was prized. En ouranois hyparchei ("exists in heaven")—present reality, not future hope. Ex hou...apekdechometha ("from which we eagerly await")—apekdechomai ("wait eagerly, expect") combines anticipation and patience. Sōtēra...kyrion Iēsoun Christon ("Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ")—titles claiming deity and salvation, countering emperor-worship (Caesar was called sōtēr kai kyrios, "savior and lord").

Historical Context

Philippi was Roman colony (colonia) with ius Italicum—citizens enjoyed Roman law/privileges despite living far from Rome. Paul subverts this: Christians' true citizenship is heavenly; earthly cities are temporary. This is radical: Rome claimed ultimate allegiance; Paul claims heaven's. Politeuma appears in Stoic philosophy (cosmopolitanism) and Jewish texts (Philo), but Paul gives it eschatological, christological meaning. The Savior/Lord titles directly challenge Caesar's claims—only Jesus saves and rules.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Study Questions

1. How does recognizing 'our citizenship is in heaven' (politeuma en ouranois) reshape earthly priorities?
2. What does it mean to 'eagerly await' (apekdechometha) Christ's return in daily living?
3. How does confessing Jesus as Savior and Lord challenge contemporary idolatries and false gospels?

Interlinear Text

ἡμῶν	γὰρ	τὸ	πολίτευμα	ἐν	οὐρανοῖς	ὑπάρχει	ἐξ
our	For	G3588	conversation	in	heaven	is	from
G2257	G1063		G4175	G1722	G3772	G5225	G1537
οὗ	καὶ	σωτῆρα	ἀπεκδεχόμεθα	κύριον	Ἰησοῦν	Χριστόν	
whence	also	the Saviour	we look for	the Lord	Jesus	Christ	
G3739	G2532	G4990	G553	G2962	G2424	G5547	

Additional Cross-References

Ephesians 2:19 (Parallel theme): Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Hebrews 12:22 (Parallel theme): But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

Colossians 1:5 (Parallel theme): For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

Ephesians 2:6 (References Jesus): And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

2 Corinthians 5:8 (References Lord): We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

2 Timothy 4:8 (References Lord): Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

1 Thessalonians 1:10 (References Jesus): And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.

Hebrews 9:28 (Salvation): So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Galatians 4:26 (Parallel theme): But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

1 Corinthians 1:7 (References Jesus): So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: