

Philippians 3:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Who shall change our vile 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.

Analysis

Who shall change our vile 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 (ὅς μετασχηματίσει τὸ σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως ἡμῶν σύμμορφον τῷ σώματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν ἐνέργειαν τοῦ δύνασθαι αὐτὸν καὶ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, hos metaschēmatisei to sōma tēs tapeinōseōs hēmōn symmorphon tō sōmati tēs doxēs autou kata tēn energeian tou dynasthai auton kai hypotaxai autō ta panta)—Metaschēmatisei ("will transform")—radical change, not mere improvement. To sōma tēs tapeinōseōs ("body of humiliation")—present lowly, mortal bodies. Symmorphon tō sōmati tēs doxēs ("conformed to the body of glory")—future glorified bodies matching Christ's resurrection body. Kata tēn energeian ("according to the power")—divine enabling. Hypotaxai autō ta panta ("subdue all things to Himself")—cosmic lordship. The same power subduing all creation transforms believers' bodies. This concludes ch. 3: righteousness by faith (vv. 9-11), Christ-pursuit (vv. 12-16), heavenly citizenship (v. 20), bodily glorification (v. 21). Gospel encompasses justification, sanctification, glorification.

Historical Context

Greek philosophy denigrated body, seeking escape to immaterial soul-existence. Paul's bodily resurrection-hope is Jewish (Dan 12:2) and Christian (1 Cor 15). Christ's resurrection-body is prototype (1 Cor 15:49; 1 John 3:2); believers will have glorified, imperishable bodies. This undergirds Christian ethics: bodies

matter (1 Cor 6:19-20), holiness includes physicality, redemption is cosmic (Rom 8:18-23). The power subduing all things (including death, 1 Cor 15:25-26) guarantees believers' transformation.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does hope of bodily glorification ('conformed to His glorious body') affect present bodily stewardship?
2. What is the relationship between Christ's cosmic authority ('subdue all things') and believers' transformation?
3. How does bodily resurrection-hope distinguish Christianity from Gnostic escape-from-body spiritualities?

Interlinear Text

ὅς	μετασχηματίσει	τὸ	σώματι	τῆς	ταπεινώσεως	ἡμῶν	
Who	shall change	G3588	body	G3588	vile	our	
G3739	G3345		G4983		G5014	G2257	
εἰς	τὸ	γενέσθαι	αὐτὸν	σύμμορφον	τῷ	σώματι	τῆς
that	G3588	it may be	his	fashioned like unto	G3588	body	G3588
G1519		G1096	G846	G4832		G4983	
δόξης	αὐτὸν	κατὰ	τὴν	ἐνέργειαν	τοῦ	δύνασθαι	
glorious	his	according to	G3588	the working	G3588	is able	
G1391	G846	G2596		G1753		G1410	
αὐτὸν	καὶ	ὑποτάξαι	ἐαυτῷ	τὰ	πάντα		
his	even	to subdue	unto himself	G3588	all things		
G846	G2532	G5293	G1438		G3956		

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 3:4 (Glory): When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

1 John 3:2 (Parallel theme): Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Isaiah 26:19 (Parallel theme): Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

Romans 8:29 (Parallel theme): For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Matthew 17:2 (Parallel theme): And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Matthew 28:18 (Parallel theme): And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Revelation 1:8 (Parallel theme): I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Isaiah 25:8 (Parallel theme): He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

Matthew 22:29 (Parallel theme): Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

Hosea 13:14 (Parallel theme): I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

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