

Our Citizenship

Commentary for January 15, 2021 — ... Is in Heaven, Not on Earth

The apostle Paul gives us information we need to remember when political events, local, national, or worldwide, do not go as we might wish God had directed them. As believers we are **"little children"** of God,¹ and we must trust His decisions regarding **[1]** the people He puts in charge to govern us, **[2]** what borders countries have, and **[3]** what people reside there. All these are under the will and control of God (Acts 17:24–28).²

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [mature], be thus minded: and if in anything you be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me [Paul], and mark them which walk so as you have us for an example."

... For **our conversation** [citizenship, or realm] **is in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: 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."

• **Philippians 3:15–17, 20–21**

Paul was a mature believer to be imitated in how he lived his life. Our "conversation," or realm, or citizenship, is truly in heaven, and not on earth, for we will put on (like a cloak) our immortal spiritual body brought to us when Christ returns to earth.³ The things of physical life will pass and be replaced with a totally new life for all believers (and eventually for all human beings). We should live our lives as future heirs and children of God.

Around the same time Paul wrote his epistle to the Philippians, he wrote the epistle to the

¹ The apostle John wrote several passages that refer to believers as **"little children."** All were written when he was over 90 years old. John used the phrase in 1 John 2:1, 12–13, 18, 28, 3:7, 18, 4:4, 5:21. The term John used was the Greek word *teknon*. John quoted Jesus calling His disciples **"little children"** in John 13:33 of his Gospel: **"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, [teknon] you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."**

² See my October 2020 Commentary, "[Who Selects the U.S. President?](#)" What goes for the leaders of the United States is also true for all leaders of every nation.

³ Read 1 Corinthians 15:52–55, and other details of what will happen during "[Your Resurrection](#)" to glory. You will participate in and receive this glory if you believe in Christ's resurrection, and do not reject God's grace (see "[Losing Your Salvation](#)"). If you do so you will miss out on the Kingdom of God and go through the Great White Throne judgment just like those who never heard the Gospel. In the end, all will be saved; it is God's will (1 Timothy 2:4) for all to be reconciled to God (Colossians 1:20).

In life you can use advantages you are born with to help you and your family to flourish. Paul used his inherited Roman citizenship to avoid a scourging (Acts 22:25–29, 23:27). He was charged with a capital crime. Paul appealed the serious charge to Caesar (Acts 25:11, 28:19). Paul inherited his citizenship. At this time non-Romans obtained citizenship only if they performed a special favor to benefit the Empire. From then on for that family citizenship was hereditary.

“Ephesians” (which is not addressed to any *ekklesia*). In the second chapter Paul wrote:

“For through him [Christ Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore

[1] **you ARE** [at this moment] **no more strangers and foreigners** [to God], **but**

[2] [you **ARE**] **fellow-citizens with the saints** [Old Testament believers], **and**

[3] [you **ARE**] **of the household of God** [just like Jewish believers]⁴; **And**

[4] [you] **ARE built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;**

In whom [Christ Jesus] **all the building fitly framed together grows unto a holy temple in the Lord:**

In whom YOU also are built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.”

• *Ephesians 2:18–22*

The term **“fellow-citizens”** is a composite plural word in Greek. It refers to a person who is **“with-[the]people”** or **“of-[the]people.”**

We should rejoice because we have been called (predestinated) to know the truth now rather than later. We possess that inheritance now. We are heirs at this moment:

“In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will.”

• *Ephesians 1:11*

Conclusion

Be aware of events that happen in the world that may radically affect our lives and the lives of our family and friends. However, the evils that exist will influence us in this lifetime only, and will not harm us after we are given immortality.⁵ See my Commentary, [“Be Prepared.”](#)

We should live our lives, as much as possible, separate from evil and sin without isolating ourselves from other people. That is not easy to do. God put us in the world to experience life as we progress toward death, as God intended for every human being. We are to help others in their lives, and in so doing our experiences mature us in the faith God has given us.

David Sielaff
david@askelm.com

⁴ The **“household of God”** is made up of Jewish (Israelite) and Gentile believers in Christ’s resurrection. Most of Paul’s audience in Ephesians were Gentiles. These same Jewish and Gentile believers are also all members of the *ekklesia* of God.

Others in the household are angels who serve believers. After our resurrection to glory we will learn how angels serve us, yet we are told they are, **“... all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister [serve] for them who shall be heirs of salvation?”** (Hebrews 1:14). Angels are not children of God (Hebrews 1:5) but they will all be reconciled with God (Colossians 1:20). Angels will have a different reward and relationship with God than we will have as God’s children.

⁵ See my August 2012 Commentary, [“The god of this World.”](#) Just as there was [“Conspiracy in Scripture](#) and in history, there are conspiracies in the world today.