

“The Crisis of the Time”
Christmas Day, 2022

Introduction:

- ***Whether we live or die, Time is the greatest discriminator of all. And what we have all learned over the course of our lives, whether young or not so young, is that it is the “intersections” in our lives that make all the difference. And for many, what we have learned that is most significant is how the Lord God has intersected in our lives from even when some of us were quite young. But none of that working of God in our lives, to mold us, to guide and lead us, to protect us, or to save us, would have been possible without the true message of this day, of Christmas Day, having become a reality in human history. For it is all based on the coming of***
- ***Christmas 2022! We will be with loved ones and friends, some believers, some not, today. But in order that our gatherings might not become something less than they really ought to be, let us today reflect on the true meaning of Christmas, again.***
- ***This can be approached in many ways. In the recent past (15 years or so), we here in Grace Bible Fellowship have had these focal points:***
 - ***The Rightness of the Time (last year) or the Fullness of the Time as Gal. 4:4 puts it — all things came together in prophetic history - “The Hourglass of Time” — The sand of time had run their course in the Hourglass of Time and the focus had come necessarily now to the Incarnation, not actually on the birth, by the way, as certain religious systems have designated it, since they changed the calendar to conform to the Roman paganism once “Christianity” had been declared the official state religion. This the earthly side of the redemptive plan was now a reality, at least in part...***
 - ***The Reasons for the Time (2008), as Paul wrote of it in 1 Tim. 1:15, the condition of man as the Lord God saw it demanded redemption and that demanded a redeemer who could be only God in the flesh***
 - ***The Plan for the Time (not yet, maybe another time) — But Before the Foundation of the World — Looking back to even before the foundation of this world, back to the Council of the GodHead when all three persons of the Triune God agreed on the ultimate plan for the creation. That creation would include heavenly spirit beings and***

earthly spirits, the one included angels, seraphim, and cherubim, and the other beginning with Adam made of earthy elements as he was constituted physically out of clay in the Garden of Eden. That Adam nature, tarnished and fallen such as it was, then propagated generation after generation to all of humanity today, sin-cursed and in need of a Savior and Redeemer. Amen.

- *The Ceremonies of the Time (2018) — In 2018, our focus was on the ceremonies, the pomp and circumstances, as it were, and its legitimacy in a pagan world where pomp and show has taken the place nearly everywhere of the proper worship due our Lord Jesus. But however it may be on the earth, it is not necessarily also so in the heavens as we shape see today, as we consider ...*
- *The Crisis of the Time (today) — Finally, the Godhead had determined to execute the plan for the creation, whether that might be in regard to the heavenly creation or to the earthly creation, even sinful man, for rebellion and sin had been allowed in that plan of creation for both the heavenly and the earthly ones, but the plan was incomplete until that stain had been effectively removed, at least, by the redemption of sinners. This would be only for (mankind only, not heavenly fallen spirit beings) required that God himself enter into the human race.*

That was truly the crisis point of the ages, for everything depended on what had been planned from before the foundation of the world and then what was executed of that plan at this critical moment when the fate for all eternity of all intelligent created beings would be established. The plan of redemption required that God intersected with mankind in exactly the way foreordained. And that will be our focus today, to see from the heavenly perspective what was required for the God-man to be realized, to see the incarnation unfold, and then, once that had occurred, to bring forth the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ as the Christian religions of the world honor today, each year.

- *So we have already addressed here in our meetings, many dimensions of the truth concerning Christ's coming into this sin-cursed world. And we will continue that today with "The Crisis of the Time".*

Our Scriptures (Phil. 2 & 1 Tim. 1):

Phil. 2:4-11

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:
10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;
11 And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Tim. 1:15-16

15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.
16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

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I. The Crisis of the Time, Its Relevance Exhorts Us: Christ's "Mind" Should Be Theirs (and Ours):

Phil. 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

- ***How Was Paul Motivated 'To Live AND to Die — Christ'?***

There is a question of very great magnitude set before us all. It is the question of "how shall we die." And, then as saw as we spent much valuable time in Paul's marvelous letter to the Philippians, there is another question of equally great magnitude and importance as well: "How shall we live." In the opening to that letter to the Philippians he, as apostle of the Gentiles, is offering himself as an example of the risen Christ himself, the risen Christ who dwells today in the temple of God which is not a building in Jerusalem (or Rome), but our own hearts.

The glory of what Paul has written here is so evident and clear. To

live and to die, all for his eternal glory, yes, but also for our gain!
This is simplicity indeed, but the details of it are unquestionably challenging and theologically so profound that we risk missing altogether the full teaching of this letter. It is in the details given here that we see how directly relevant the second chapter of Paul's letter to the Philippians is to us today as we consider well the Crisis of the Time of the coming of Christ into this sin-cursed world.

Let's look at what leads up to the second chapter as we begin today with that challenging verse 21 we have just now read:

[READ] Phil. 1:19-21

19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ. ***[And then, he adds even more ...]***

20 According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it* be by life, or by death.

21 **According to my earnest expectation and [my] hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed but [that] with all boldness, as always, [so] now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether [it be] by life, or by death. For to me to live [is] Christ, and to die [is] gain.**

- *What we see here therefore, is that Paul's Desire Was to Glorify Christ in All Things, even if his death were next on the divine calendar as it were. Whether in living or in dying, he writes: Here he widens the focus considerably. He in effect says, look at my entire "living" or life and even my "dying" and you will see Christ magnified, Christ glorified.*

[READ] Phil. 2:5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

- *The Role of the Mind in Living Christ as Those That Have Died, and Are Risen Again:*

So this is at the heart of what he writes here, the proper role of "the mind" in our living as those that have already died [with him] and are also [with him] risen again. Whether he lives or dies Christ is his focus and at the center of his life. And so he should be for us as well. But there is more here for there are several dimensions to his thinking here, I am sure. And our scripture today provides the answers:

- *Earlier here the apostle had already used this word that he used here, translated “mind”. The word so often in Romans and Philippians but is used rarely elsewhere. In 1:7 it was used of Paul’s heartfelt attitude toward the Philippian believers, then here in verse 2 it is translated “being ... of one mind”. But here in our verses for today the apostle further develops his central theme in this letter regarding the mind and the living out of the Christian life. And like a bolt of lightning coming out of nowhere, he now in verse 5 writes this: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus!!*
- *The word “mind” here is in its verbal form but the root word used often by Paul in particular, in Romans 10 times. But here in Philippians it is used even more often, 11 times. Understanding Paul’s use of the word is fundamental if we would comprehend his concern for the Philippian church and for those believers he so dearly loved. In fact, though he undoubtedly had several reasons for writing that letter, a primary reason had to do with the conflict between two women mentioned by name in chapter 4, Euodias, and Syntyche.*

We use this word in the same way still in contemporary English though that usage seems to be slowly passing away. For example, “please mind the store for me while I am out on an errand”, or, “I don’t mind doing it, I would actually enjoy it”.

So simply put, sharing in the “mind” of Christ is our opportunity. And, yes, Paul is our example. But what is he really saying here, that is the question. As Paul wrote in many scriptures, he himself is our example of the heavenly Christ: “to follow, to imitate” him therefore is our privilege AND responsibility. See 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Heb. 2:14; 5:1; 6:12.

- *So here in Philippians 2 and verse 5 we are all exhorted to follow after or imitate Paul, having the same “mind”, and in so doing that, also to imitate Christ Jesus. Surely this is among one of the greatest of all subjects for our study in all of the Bible.*

II. The Crisis of the Time, Its Knowledge Enables Us: What Was Christ’s “Mind” as He Exhorts Us Here?

- *This is all about Christ’s “mind”. But in what sense? What specifically is the apostle referring to here? Let’s read the passage and consider what is written. Let’s consider this carefully in order*

that we might not skip past the profound truth expressed here and also miss therefore Paul's point altogether. What a shame that would be if we should fail to grasp firmly on to that knowledge that he states so strongly here would enable us to live a transformed life before others, a true and authentic testimony to the miraculous work of God in us.

[READ] Phil. 2:6-8

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- *We see that the background of all of this takes us back in God's "heavenly time" to a "moment" in heaven before the incarnation had become reality:*

We must read in Heb. 10 (which quotes Ps. 40) to see the context of that:

[READ] Heb. 10:5-10

5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

6 In burnt offerings and [sacrifices] for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. *[actually this is revealed in Psalms 40:5-8, though that is NOT the book referred to here, which is the record in heaven of the decrees of Almighty God!!]*

8 Above *[not meaning in the above verse, but above in heaven]* when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and [offering] for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure [therein]; which are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all].

- *So like a lightning bolt Paul refers back to this event in pre-history here in Philippians 2:5ff. But what is the "will" referred to in Heb. 10:9-10 by these words: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first,*

that he may establish the second. By [the] which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all]?”

It is the will mentioned in Ps. 40:8, the will of God as exemplified we read in the coordinated will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Ps. 40:8 “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law [is] within my heart.”

- So we now know what the “mind” of Christ was referring to here. **BUT DO WE COMPREHEND THE FULL DIMENSIONS AND MAGNITUDE OF IT?**

It was his willingness to leave behind not absolutely everything that he was as the Eternal Son of God and a person of the Holy Trinity... Not everything of what he was as God, .. but rather [what does it actually say?]:

[READ Phil:2:6-8] [Now we see the seven degrees of humbling of the Son of God in detail set before us]

6 Who, being [originally] in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

**7 But made himself of no reputation (1)
and took upon him the form of a servant (2)
and was made in the likeness of men (3)**

**8 And being found in fashion as a man (4)
he humbled himself (5)
and became obedient unto death (6)
even the death of the cross (7)**

- So verses 7 & 8 give us an in depth insight into exactly what was involved here when Christ recognized in heaven’s glory that it was now “the appointed time”, even “the fullness of time” to bring to pass that which was written. And his “mind” was set on exactly that, the incarnation with everything that that would mean.

As we see written here, he knew all that it would mean because it had been already well established in eternity past, far before the actual creation of the universe, of Lucifer and the angelic host, of then Adam and Eve, and what came after that. All this was known from before the foundation of the world.

All this had already been agreed upon between the members of the Holy Trinity. But now the execution of the plan came into clear vision. It was now the occasion of ACTING out that plan.

- *Now, recognizing the gravity of what our Lord undertook as stated here, we must stand in awe of it and grasp to comprehend its full meaning as it relates directly to us, as the apostle defines this challenge here. That we must share in this mind or we will surely be missing what is most important in this life — the living out of newness of life in Christ Jesus. Amen. BUT THAT’S NOT ALL!!*

III. The Crisis of the Time, Its Consequences Transform Us: Through Christ’s Incarnation & Sacrifice All Enemies Shall Be Defeated!

[READ] Phil. 2:9-11

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

11 And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- *Here we have the great and general statement of Christ’s victory over all his enemies. It is a summary. All of it will be based on Christ’s work on the cross for our sins but there is more when we consider satan’s enemies. There is much truth here and elsewhere that Christ’s death goes beyond the redemption of sinners since also the entire creation will be delivered and satan and his emissaries will be brought to full justice in God’s due time.*

Application:

What does this revelation here mean to you, to me? Is the fact of this truth as stated here enough to motivate us (and enough to motivate Euodias and Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord)? Or is this not particularly relevant to us today in our so-called “post-Christian”, “post-modern” even world and culture? What about now, this Christmas Day, 2022, with all of the hustle and

bustle, all of the pomp and circumstance that many are immersed in today, is this aspect of the true meaning of Christmas so established in our hearts that we can live above and beyond the things of this world? Do these words, “let this mind be in you

Now that would be heavenly indeed, would it not. “... while the things on earth grow strangely dim, in the light of his glory and grace.”

What would Paul say if you asked him this today? What would Euodias and Syntyche say if they were here today? What song will they be singing throughout eternity? What song will we sing?

How about this one, one among many, but well known to us all? This recording by Rosemary Siemens from the Internet has the info online as to the musician and her work. The note at the end of our handout today has that information, in case you are interested.



“TURN YOUR EYES UPON JESUS”, by Helen Lemmel

1. O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,

And life more abundant and free!

Refrain:

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.

2. Through death into life everlasting
He passed, and we follow Him there;
O'er us sin no more hath dominion—
For more than conqu'rors we are!
3. His Word shall not fail you—He promised;
Believe Him, and all will be well:
Then go to a world that is dying,
His perfect salvation to tell!

IS THE EXALTED CHRIST JESUS SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER HAVING OFFERED HIMSELF “ONCE FOR ALL”, AND THEREBY WAITING FOR THE RIGHT TIME TO CALL US TO HIMSELF IN HEAVEN’S GLORY - IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THIS ENOUGH?

ARE WE WILLING TO CAST OFF BONDAGE OF TEMPORAL AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE TO LIVE GODLY IN CHRIST JESUS SHARING HIS MINDSET? ARE WE WILLING TO LIVE AS THOSE ALWAYS DYING TOGETHER WITH CHRIST THEREBY SHARING IN HIS RESURRECTION GLORY EVEN NOW? ARE WE WILLING TO “LET THIS MIND[SET] BE IN US THAT WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS? IT WAS ENOUGH FOR PAUL. WHAT ABOUT US?

INDEED, AS PAUL WROTE TO TIMOTHY SO VERY LONG AGO,

1 Tim. 1:15-16

15 This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.

16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.

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The Internet video of the musical rendition of “Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus” linked to above is found on Youtube with this annotation by the musician:

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