

18 – What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Messiah is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,

Paul now expresses his own affirmation to trust in God's all encompassing power and promises. Instead of harboring ill feelings against those who were seeking to undermine his authority and position as an Apostle of Yeshua, he commits himself to rejoicing! This is a genuine display of faith, for the whole reality of eternal salvation is, in every aspect, the work of God. And He will lose none of those He has chosen.

But what is the very basis of Paul's joy? That Yeshua is proclaimed to be the true, eternal, promised Messiah of the Tanach, and that He has proven this conclusively by His incarnation, His death and resurrection on the third day.

So here we have an excellent example of how all who are in any position of leadership ought to feel toward those who may seek to undermine their work or to diminish their effectiveness. If we are truly depending upon the Lord, than we are able to rejoice even when others may seek to diminish our effectiveness. We must set our focus upon the very thing Paul emphasizes and find true joy in this, that the Messiah Yeshua is proclaimed and that His work of procuring salvation for all who have been given to Him will be accomplished, even as the prophets foretold and the inspired Scriptures make clear.

... *whether in pretense or in truth, Messiah is proclaimed* – This phrase expounds upon the previous “Only that in every way” (πλὴν ὅτι παντὶ τρόπῳ) by indicating that even those who seek to discount the message of the Gospel as Paul was presenting it may, in God's sovereignty, actually be used to cause others to investigate why they are so intent on discounting Paul and his message. Then, in their seeking to know what all the turmoil is about, God may use such searching to open their eyes to the truth about Yeshua and draw them to saving faith. Thus, though the enemies of God may think they are surely able to defeat the gospel, they fail to realize that their war against the truth can even be used of God to cause a desire in people to find out what the gospel actually is. As Calvin, considering the turmoil that followed the great reformation, notes:

For God sometimes accomplishes an admirable work by means of wicked and depraved instruments. Accordingly, he says that he rejoices in a happy result of this nature; because this one thing contented him — if he saw the kingdom of

Christ increasing... and at this day we rejoice that the progress of the gospel is advanced by many who, nevertheless, had another design in view. But though Paul rejoiced in the advancement of the gospel, yet, had the matter been in his hand, he would never have ordained such persons as ministers. We ought, therefore, to rejoice if God accomplishes anything that is good by means of wicked persons; but they ought not on that account to be either placed by us in the ministry, or looked upon as Christ's lawful ministers.¹

Thus, we may be encouraged by Paul's words here, for even in our own times there are those who give their energy to discounting the truth of God and the good news of salvation in Yeshua, yet such false teachers cannot diminish the power of the gospel message, for the gospel is empowered by the Ruach Himself, opening the minds of all who are called to receive it.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it [the gospel] is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom 1:16)

This reality, that God will use the gospel message to bring the elect to Himself and grant them eternal life, ought to encourage us all the more to share the gospel with others as often as possible. In so doing we are God's servants working together with Him to accomplish eternal realities.

19 – [Yes, and I will rejoice,] for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Messiah Yeshua,

The final clause of v. 18, as found in our English translations, seems most likely to be directly connected to v. 19, as describing Paul's joy, knowing that even though he is currently incarcerated, this does not and will not impede the furtherance of the gospel message. As a result, he proclaims that regardless of the outcome of his pending trial, whether he would be acquitted or receive the death penalty, he is able to rejoice. This clearly demonstrates the strong and maturing faith he possessed, and thus presents to us an example of maturing faith for which we all must desire and strive.

¹ Calvin, *Philippians*, p. 39.

Such faith in God which allowed Paul to rejoice in spite of his life-threatening situation was not some kind of morbid “nothing matters anyway” perspective! Rather, he shows that faith allows a firm and solid knowledge that whatever the outcome may be, he would be able to bring glory to Yeshua which is the ultimate goal a believer must have.

...for I know that this will turn out for my deliverance – It appears likely that Paul has Job 13:16 in mind as he pens the last part of this phrase, for his words here are identical with the Greek of the LXX (καὶ τοῦτό μοι ἀποβήσεται εἰς σωτηρίαν).

How does Paul have confident assurance that he knows (οἶδα, *oida*) his current circumstances will eventuate in his deliverance?

The verb *oida* as distinguished from γινώσκω (*ginōskō*) is the knowledge of intuition or satisfied conviction, or absolute knowledge.

His unshakable confidence is because, by faith, he knew that God would use his situation for His glory, regardless of what took place in the future. Thus, we should not take his words here to indicate that somehow he had received some special revelation from the Lord regarding the outcome of his impending trial. Rather, the Greek word translated “deliverance” by most English translations (NASB, ESV, NIV, NET, etc.) is actually σωτηρία (*sōtēria*) which can carry the sense of “salvation” in a spiritual sense, i.e., eternal salvation for all who are “in Messiah,” but may also be used to denote being “saved” physically from a bad situation in this life. For instance, Luke uses *sōtēria* in Acts 7:25 when he writes about Moses who was appointed by God to lead Israel out from under the bondage of the Egyptians.

And he [Moses] supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance [*sōtēria*] through him, but they did not understand. (Acts 7:25)

Thus, it seems very likely that Paul chose to use the Greek word *sōtēria* here because it can describe both eternal salvation as well as being rescued from a very difficult situation in this life. This becomes clear in the following verse where Paul writes “whether by life or by death.” This teaches us that the more we grow in our faith, the more we will be enabled fully to entrust our future to the Lord knowing that as we walk the life of faith, He will be glorified regardless of what difficulties we may face in the future, for He will enable us to endure

whatever may come for His glory and our good.

Thus we see, once again, that Paul offers a true example of a godly leader, for rather than concerning himself about his own reputation which others were attempting to tarnish, he maintains the ultimate goal of his life to be honoring and glorifying Yeshua and thus fully depending upon what God has promised.

Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand. (Is 41:10)

In like manner we remember the words of John the Baptizer, who was informed by some of his followers that Yeshua was also baptizing people, and that many of those who were previously following John were now following Yeshua. While his friends thought this would alarm John, he rather assures them of his life's mission.

You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah,' but, 'I have been sent ahead of Him.' He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. So this joy of mine has been made full. He must increase, but I must decrease. (Jn 3:28–30)

All who truly desire to be used of the Lord in whatever aspect they may fulfill within the local body of believers, must have this same perspective. Ultimately our goal in life must be to give Yeshua the glory and to help each other grow in our ability to honor Him in all things.

... *through your prayers* – Paul now gives two factors which will bring about his “deliverance.” The first is prayer. The Greek word here translated “prayers” is δέομαι (*deomai*) which often carries the sense of “to ask for something pleadingly”¹ and thus to request the specific hand of the Lord in a given situation. Here, once again, we see that the Scriptures teach us the efficacy of prayer, for God has determined to bring His own people to partner with Him in accomplishing His sovereign will and providential plan. Surely in all of our prayers we must pray that God's will should be accomplished, but even in the discipline of prayer, we recognize more and more that we are His servants to do His bidding and thus to partner with Him in accomplishing His purposes in

1 BDAG, “δέομαι,” p. 218.

the sphere of our own lives.

... and the provision of the Spirit of Messiah Yeshua – The second factor which will bring about his “deliverance” is the very presence and leading of the Ruach HaKodesh, the Holy Spirit. The word here translated “provision” by the NASB is the Greek ἐπιχορηγία (*epixorēgia*) which is not found in the Lxx but does occur one other time in the Apostolic Scriptures, in Eph 4:16.

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Messiah, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies (ἐπιχορηγία), according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Eph 4:15–16)

The verbal form (ἐπιχορηγέω, *epixorēgeō*) is used by Paul in Col 1:19.

Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied (ἐπιχορηγέω) and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. (Col 1:18–19)

Thus, by understanding how this word is used, we understand that Paul is not speaking here of a special “anointing” of the Ruach, that is, some kind of special “second filling” of the Ruach. Rather, he is describing the work of the Spirit in the believer’s life Who strengthens and guides the believer as we seek His wisdom and the direction He gives in decision making, supplying the necessary spiritual strength to endure and gain the victory in times of trials. Surely the Ruach strengthened Paul, enabling him to overcome any fear of what would be his lot in the future. But the work of the Ruach also enabled him even to rejoice knowing that what ever would come to pass, it would be the Lord’s doing and would therefore give the opportunity to glorify Him.

This is the only place in the Apostolic Scriptures that we find the exact combination “the Spirit of Messiah Yeshua” (τοῦ πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). Twice we find “the Spirit of Yeshua” (Rom 8:9; 1Pet 1:11), once “the Spirit of Messiah” (Rom 8.9) and once “the Spirit of the Son” (Gal 4.6).

The fact that the “Spirit of Messiah Yeshua” is found in our text made it one of the texts that were central to the theological controversy in the early Christian Church. In this regard, we should note that in Gal 4:6, Paul states:

Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” (Gal 4:6)

The giving of the Spirit is here attributed to God the Father, Who sends the “Spirit of His Son.” In the history of the Christian Church, the issue of the “procession of the Spirit” became a hotly debated topic, sufficient to produce severe and lasting division between the Greek and Latin Church of the 9th Century. The Eastern Church regards the doctrine of the single procession of the Spirit (that the Spirit was given by the Father alone) as the cornerstone of orthodoxy. The Western Church held that the Spirit proceeds both from the Father and from the Son. This debate came to be known as the *filioque* controversy, the Latin term meaning “of the Son.” In 589 CE, the Nicene Creed was expanded to include the *filioque* clause, so that the confession read: “And we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life; Who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son],” and the division over the issue ensued. The whole matter was primarily an argument of metaphysical theology, and an extension of the Trinity doctrines against the Arian heresies of the day. The primary texts upon which the controversy raged were John 14-16.¹

Here, once again, we see the mystery of the Godhead, for the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are together infinitely One while yet having individual personage, and thus, according to Paul in Gal 4:6, by the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, we are enabled to address our God as “Abba,” the Aramaic word (אבא) which originally was a “term of endearment.”²

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory. (1Tim 3:16)

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.... (Matt 28:19)

1 For a complete discussion of the *filioque* controversy, see Schaff, *History of the Christian Church 8 vols* (reprinted by Hendrickson, 1996), 4.476ff.

2 BDAG, אבא, p. 1.

20 – according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Messiah will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Here, once again, we see the core of Paul’s faith, for he had fully given Himself to the care and providence of the God he knew to be His Lord and Savior and therefore had entrusted his future to Him, knowing by faith and by the inner work and power of the Ruach, that whatever he would face, he would be enabled to glorify the One Who had redeemed him and Whom he served to bring Him glory.

according to my earnest expectation and hope – By “earnest expectation” (*ἀποκαταδοκίαν, apokaradokian*) Paul is describing that which he eagerly awaited. This clearly describes his faith in God and the promises of the Scriptures, for he could only anticipate two possible outcomes: that he would be vindicated and set free, or that he would be found guilty and executed. The only other time this word describing “earnest expectation” is used in the Apostolic Scriptures is in Rom 8:19, and here it is attributed to “the whole creation.”

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. (Rom 8:19)

It is interesting to contemplate the fact that in the same way that the whole creation anticipates the final consummation of all things and in that anticipation still “groans” even as a woman giving birth to a new life (Rom 8:22), so Paul likewise anticipated the future in which, whatever would come to pass, he would be kept and empowered by God to glorify Him.

Moreover, when Paul writes here of his “hope,” (*ἐλπίς, elpis*) this does not mean he is “hoping for something of which he is not certain,” as we often use the English word “hope.” Rather, the two terms, “earnest expectation” and “hope” are clearly used together as describing Paul’s full confidence that God would enable him to be a witness of His power and glory, no matter what the future events held. As Fee writes:

These two words presume a near unity of ideas, so that “hope” does not mean “wishfulness,” but something like “hope-filled expectation.” As in most cases in the NT, therefore, “hope” is full of content, in the sense that it reflects the highest degree of certainty about the future.¹

1 Gordan Fee, *Philippians* in *NICNT*, p. 135.