



Past, Present and Future

By
Robert C. Archer

Our Text Phil. 3:12-14

Philippians 3:12-14 (NKJV)

- 12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.
- 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,
- 14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

In our text, Paul speaks of three phases in his life

- Past - as a Jew
- Present - as a Christian
- Future - as redeemed

Phase one – THE PAST

Paul speaks of his past religion

- **Philippians 3:4-6 (NKJV)**
 - 4 though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so:
 - 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee;
 - 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

We make several mistakes concerning the past

Fail to compare our beliefs with the scriptures

- Romans 8:16 (NKJV)
 - ¹⁶The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

Mistakes concerning the past

Live in the old days

- **Ecclesiastes 7:10 (NKJV)**

10 Do not say, "Why were the former days better than these?" For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.

Mistakes concerning the past

Live in the old days

- As we get older we often become intolerant
 - Of the young
 - Of change
 - Of life

Mistakes concerning the past

Think that somehow, we can change the past

- **Ecclesiastes 11:3 (NKJV)**

3 If the clouds are full of rain, They empty *themselves* upon the earth; And if a tree falls to the south or the north, In the place where the tree falls, there it shall lie.

Can't change the past, but we can learn from it

- Learn from it (1 Cor. 10:1ff)
- Trust God that He has forgiven us
(Psa. 32:1-11)

Can't change the past, but we can learn from it

- Allow it to spur us on to greater service

- **1 Corinthians 15:9-10 (NKJV)**

9 For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was with me.*

Mistakes concerning the past

Rest upon what we have done in the past

- **Revelation 3:1 (NKJV)**

1 "And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are

Phase TWO – THE PRESENT

- Paul didn't rest upon the past (v. 7)
- His desire was:
 - **To be in Him**
 - **Philippians 3:9 (NKJV)**
9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;

How do we get into Christ

We get into him by baptism

- **Galatians 3:26-27 (NKJV)**

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Phase TWO – THE PRESENT

To know Him (v. 10)

- **Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)**

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

- **John 6:51 (NKJV)**

51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

Phase TWO – THE PRESENT

To move on to maturity

- **Philippians 3:12 (NKJV)**

12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Phase three – The FUTURE

Paul's motivation was THE PRIZE

- **Philippians 3:14 (NKJV)**

14 I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Phase three – The FUTURE

Paul's motivation was THE CROWN

- **2 Timothy 4:6-8 (NKJV)**
 - 6 For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure is at hand.
 - 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. >

Phase three – The FUTURE

Paul's motivation was THE CROWN

- **2 Timothy 4:6-8 (NKJV)**
 - 8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness (crown of eternal righteousness, Mac), which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Phase three – The FUTURE

Paul's motivation was FELLOWSHIP

- **The presence with the Lord (2 Cor. 4:16-5:8)**



Conclusion

What is your Past? Present? Future?