***The Finisher of our Faith - PH14-01  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 1:6***

Paul's letter to the Philippians has reflected a very happy relationship with the Christians there. Paul remembers these people with some very fragrant and happy memories rather than with grief. Consequently, this reflects to us that the Philippians were a very spiritually stable group, and therefore one for whom Paul could pray with a degree of happiness. Paul knew the joy of working with believers who had Satan spotted for the main thing he is after--to keep knowledge of the Word away from you. Therefore, we have come now to outmaneuver our arch-enemy, the devil, and to bring information to you that he has done everything he can this week to keep you from getting.

Verse 6 reads, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." The object of Paul's confidence is our interest here in verse 6. The word "being confident" in the Greek is "peitho." It's in the perfect tense which means it was a confidence that began with Paul in the past, and it has continued. He has had no reason to change his confidence toward the Philippian Christians. It is active. It is a personal conviction to which he has arrived in his relationship with these Christians. He says, "I have a confidence, and a confidence concerning this very thing," or literally, "of this thing itself." What he refers to is a principle of doctrine which he is about to state which applies to the Philippian Christians.

Paul's confidence, let us make it clear, is not in the Philippians themselves. He is not saying that he has great confidence in the Philippian Christians. This is because he knows that as great as they have been; as wise as they have been in dealing with Satan; as receptive to the Word of God as they are; and, as spiritually stable as they are, they still have an old sin nature. Therefore, there is nobody in all the world who is a good person, including the Philippian Christians. He knows that if he places his confidence in people, he will sooner or later have occasion to be disappointed. As a matter of fact, if you put your confidence in a person, you make it really tough on that individual because you draw Satan's fire against him. If Satan knows that you have great confidence in this person, and that's what your walk with the Lord is dependent on, he's going to try shooting that person down; and, in the process, he shoots you down too.

No, Paul is not saying that he is confident in the Philippian Christians. Paul remembers Jeremiah 17:5 that says, "Thus says the Lord, 'Cursed be the man that trusts in man, and makes flesh his arm, and whose heart departs from the Lord.'" His confidence is not in these people. His confidence is in something else--a statement which he is about to declare. This principle he states in the words, "He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." "He who has begun" is the Greek word "enarchomai." This is aorist which means that there was a point of time, namely at your salvation, when God began something in you. It is active because it is God who started this thing in you, and it will be something that He alone can perform.

This aorist participle, "He who had begun," means that this comes in the grammar before the main idea of the sentence. The main idea of the sentence is that He will perform it. In other words, God first begins something in you, and then he says, "He will perform that thing on forever without stopping. God will carry to successful conclusion what He has previously begun in our lives." This is what Paul is referring to. There is a good work which God himself began in these believers as He has begun in us, and Paul says, "I am confident that what God began in you, He will carry to the very end--that point at which you enter heaven itself.

What is it that God has done for you? We say, "Yes, He has given us salvation. Grace is wonderful." I don't really think that we begin to enter into the magnificence of the grace of God. Do you realize that this little statement of Paul itself carries enough information that we could be here for days on end studying what it is that God has begun in us that He's going to continue to do? I'm going to try to summarize it here. It amounts to 37 different specific things. Some of them overlap. Some of them are somewhat interrelated. Here is the good thing that God has brought to us at the point of salvation. If you thought you knew what salvation was all about, I hope that when you finish this study, your head will be spinning, and you'll be up in the clouds, and you'll just be overwhelmed with what God did at that moment when you received Jesus Christ as your personal savior. It may be that never in your life before have you really understood what it is that the Lord did for you:

**Things that God Did for You at Salvation**

1. **The Plan of God**

At the time when you became a Christian, you entered the eternal plan of God. That involves several factors:

* + It meant that you were **foreknown** (1 Peter 1:2).
  + You were **predestined** to this plan (Romans 8:29).
  + You were **elect** of God unto this plan (1 Thessalonians 1:4).
  + You were **chosen** for this plan (Ephesians 1:4).
  + You were **called** to this plan (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

1. **Redemption**

You were redeemed. This includes the whole world (Romans 3:24). Everybody in the world has been purchased out of the slave market of sin by the payment of Christ on the cross (1 Peter 1:18-19, Colossians 1:14). That includes the redemption of your body which is yet future (Romans 8:23). When you received Christ, you experienced redemption. You are out of the slave market forever.

1. **Reconciliation**

You were reconciled. The whole world was made savable (2 Corinthians 5:18-19). It is possible for you to enter eternal life. Man is reconciled to God. It is not God being reconciled to man. There was nothing wrong with God. It is we who were adjusted to Him (Romans 5:10, 2 Corinthians 5:20).

1. **Propitiation**

We are related to God through propitiation. The justice of God against our sin was satisfied through the death of His Son Jesus Christ (1 John 2:2). The righteousness of a holy God was satisfied so that He is free now to show His mercy to sinners (Romans 3:24-26). Propitiation means that God is satisfied toward all the things of which you and I were guilty as sinners. Now He has nothing against us--absolutely nothing against us. We are related to Him through this propitiation.

1. **Forgiveness**

God has forgiven all of our trespasses. That includes your present as well as your past and your future sins (Colossians 2:13). This includes forgiveness unto salvation and unto temporal fellowship (Ephesians 1:7, 1 John 1:9). We have another study where we are learning how to biblically maintain temporal fellowship with God. Well, the reason this is possible is because He has already forgiven you all your sins. So it is possible for you, through confession of sins to Him, to come back into temporal fellowship.

1. **The Flesh is Annulled**

The old sin nature has been annulled. That is, its power has been broken. You no longer need to be a slave to the sin quality within you because we have been crucified with Christ (Romans 6:6); we died with Christ (Romans 6:8); we are buried with Christ (Romans 6:4); and, we are resurrected with Christ (Romans 6:4). We have come alive spiritually to God. We have a position in Christ.

1. **Freedom from the Law**

We are free from the law. The Mosaic Law never was a way of life that applied to the Christians. However, the Mosaic Law does express the righteousness of God which all of us face. The law pronounced a curse upon anybody who fails to live up to this divine standard (Galatians 3:10). The Christian is declared, in Christ, to be free from any judgment relative to the standards of righteousness which the law demands of us. This is because Christ has met it and provided it for us (Romans 6:14, Romans 7:4, and Galatians 5:1).

1. **Regeneration**

At salvation, you were regenerated. Sinners are born into the family of God as His children (1 John 3:2). The Bible describes this spiritual birth in several ways. It talks about our being born again; that is, in addition to our physical birth (John 3:6-7, 1 Peter 1:23). It speaks about the impartation of the divine nature (Titus 3:5). It speaks about our being made alive spiritually; that is, we get a living human spirit (Ephesians 2:1). It talks about our becoming the Sons of God in actual fact (2 Corinthians 6:18, Galatians 3:26).

1. **A New Creation**

We are declared to be a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). You and I have become genuine members of the family of God, and there is no way out.

1. **Adoption**

We are adopted. This means something a little different than what we mean by adoption when we speak about adopting a child. Adoption means some placing. We are placed as adult sons in the family of God (Ephesians 1:4-5, Romans 8:15). There are certain things you allow your children to do when they are small, and many things that you do not allow them to do. However, when they come to maturity, they are permitted to do certain things because now they are adults. Well, positional truth declares to us that we have a standing in Christ that gives us full privileges as adult sons in the family of God from the moment we believe. Now entering into the actual experience of those privileges requires developing spiritual maturity through the Word of God.

1. **Acceptance**

We are accepted to God. A believer is joined to Jesus Christ so that he receives to his credit all that Christ is. That happens at salvation. Here is the significance of this union. When you receive all that Christ is, it means that you are made righteous. You have the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 3:22, Philippians 3:9). This means that you are as good as Jesus Christ in the eyes of God. You are sanctified positionally; that is, you are set apart to God's purpose for you which is heaven (1 Corinthians 1:30). You are perfected forever. You share Christ's standing--not His state (Hebrews 10:14). You actually are absolutely perfect when God looks at you. You have been made accepted in the beloved. Remember that God the Father could not accept anybody in heaven who is less perfect than His Son (Ephesians 1:6. 1 Peter 2:5). You have been made just as perfect as His Son. You have been made fit, or qualified (Colossians 1:12) for entering eternal life.

1. **Justification**

We have been justified. This means to be declared righteous by God as judge. This is just as once he declared us guilty (Romans 3:26). To be justified means that you have secure the righteousness of Christ by imputation (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is declared of you as a believer, apart from any merit in yourself (Romans 3:24, Romans 4:5, Titus 3:7).

1. **Nearness**

You have been made near. Christians once were far off from God. Now you have been brought near to God through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:13). Because the Christian is infinitely perfect and complete in his standing, you can also draw near to God in your experience (James 4:8, Hebrews 10:22). In other words, there is no more trying to find God out there someplace. He is near unto you. He is actually indwelling your body as His temple.

1. **Deliverance**

You have been delivered from the power of darkness. A Christian is freed from the control of Satan and his demons (Colossians 1:13). Satan blinds the unsaved mind (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). The unsaved are directed by Satan (Ephesians 2:1-2). The whole unsaved world lies in Satan (1 John 5:19). Where is the Christian? He is in Christ. He has been delivered from the power of darkness. This is why a demon can influence you and Satan can influence you, but neither a demon nor Satan can indwell you. You share Christ's victory over the demons (Colossians 2:15). If Satan or a demon influences you, it is because you have willingly chosen to let him do so.

1. **The Kingdom of God**

You have been transferred into God's kingdom. You are now in the kingdom of God (Colossians 1:13). The Word of God calls us, therefore, to live as those who constitute God's royalty (1 Thessalonians 2:12). If you watched the wedding of the English princess, you were aware of all the pageantry and of all the ritual associated with a wedding which befits royalty. This is because royalty feels that it must act in a certain way. The time has come for Christians to realize that you are in the kingdom of God, and you have been constituted princesses and princes of that kingdom, and therefore you are a royal group. You should act in a way that is befitting your royal personage.

1. **A Secure Foundation**

You are on a secure foundation. Christians are on the foundation of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11, 1 Corinthians 10:4). This is the foundation of a Christian's life and what he builds thereon. His service is going to be tested (1 Corinthians 3:9-15).

1. **A Gift to Jesus Christ**

You are a gift from God the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ. You are the Father's love gift to His Son (John 10:29). John 17 reviews what is accomplished by Christ for those given to Him by the Father. You can imagine when you get a gift from someone who is dear to you, what it means to you. This gift, John 17:2 says, that we get eternal life. Verse 6 means that the Father is revealed to us. Verse 9 says that God prays for us. Verses 11-12 say that we have eternal security because we have been given to Christ by the Father. Verse 24 says we have heaven assured.

1. **Spiritual Circumcision**

We have spiritual circumcision in Christ. This signifies the positional removal from the control of the old sin nature (Colossians 2:11). This is not yet true in our experience. Positionally we have been removed from the old sin nature. This is viewed as spiritual circumcision. Ephesians 2:11 speaks about the un-circumcision, meaning the unregenerate gentile. Ephesians 2:11 speaks about circumcision in the flesh, referring to the Jews. Colossians 2:11 speaks about circumcision made without hands, and that refers here to Christians. This enables you to live above the influence of the old sin nature (Romans 6:6, Philippians 3:5). This thing has been removed. It has been cut away from you.

1. **Priesthood**

We have been appointed priests unto God at that point of salvation. Every Christian is his own priest before God (1 Peter 2:5-9, Revelation 1:6). We are called a holy and a royal priesthood. We're a very special kind of priesthood. A Christian priest is privileged to offer certain spiritual sacrifices. These include praise; his substance; his money; his service; and, his body. This priesthood you can only exercise for yourself. You cannot be someone else's priest. You can only be your own priest. Consequently, because it is such a personal matter, it is also a private matter. It can only be conducted between you and God. Anytime somebody else comes in and tries to act as your contact with God, meaning acting as your priest, that person is out of line. The personal individual priesthood of every believer of necessity requires that it be a private matter in its practice.

1. **A Distinct Category of Humanity**

We are a distinct category of humanity (1 Peter 2:9, Titus 2:14). We're called "a chosen generation" because we're the offspring of God in this unique age of grace. The Jewish people are not going to join us as part of that body unless they've been born again as Jews during this age. The Old Testament saints will not join us. We are a holy nation because we are a separate body from the rest of humanity forever. All through eternity, you will move as a Christian all over heaven. When people see you, the Old Testament saints will look at you and say, "Oh, there is a member of the body of Christ. There is a Christian." You will be a distinctive group, and you will forever be a distinctive part of that body. You will not be a mixture with the rest of the saints. For that reason, you are called "a peculiar people" in the Bible because you're under the special care and the special love of God. That's why we call this the dispensation of grace.

1. **Heavenly Citizenship**

You've been given a heavenly citizenship. Your homeland is heaven. Israel had an earthly citizenship which excluded gentiles (Ephesians 2:12), but the Christian has a heavenly citizenship (Philippians 3:20, Luke 10:20). Neither Jew nor gentile is excluded from this heavenly citizenship (Ephesians 2:19). However, you do not have this citizenship here on earth. This is a heavenly citizenship. Your homeland is assured (2 Corinthians 5:8). Right now you are foreigners on earth (1 Peter 2:11, Hebrews 11:13). Actually, you and I are ambassadors here on earth to a foreign country because we are citizens of heaven (2 Corinthians 5:20).

However, I would not push that as did one man who was coming across the border from Latin America. The border guard asked him, "What country are you a citizen of?" This fellow very piously said, "I am a citizen of heaven." The border guard said, "Well, you can turn right around and go right back there then." You might have a little trouble getting home. You do not exercise this citizenship now, but you yourself are an alien. When you get to feeling real comfortable and at home here in the world, remember that this is one of the 37 things that God did for you at the point of salvation. Remember who you are, and where your citizenship lies.

1. **Members of the Family of God**

We are members of the family and household of God. A Christian is a genuine part of God's family (Ephesians 2:19). Thus we hold a spiritual kinship with all believers everywhere. We also have a duty of concern for those believers (Galatians 6:10). Some Christians are more positive to the Word than others, but all of them are in the family of God (2 Timothy 2:20-21).

1. **The Fellowship of the Saints**

We are in the fellowship of the saints. Christians share a spiritual unity with all believers everywhere. We do this through the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 4:1-3). The Lord prayed that we would maintain this spiritual camaraderie (John 17:11, 21-23). Christian unity is not something you can create. It has already been created. All we have to do is respect it. That doesn't mean that you will be close to all the other Christians within your fellowship, but you will have a spirit of understanding that there is a common ground that you share as saints. You have been made part of that kinship group.

1. **Partnership in Christ**

There is a new partnership in Christ. We are partners with Christ in His life (Colossians 3:4, 1 John 5:11-12). We are partners with Christ in His position (Galatians 3:1, Ephesians 2:6). We are partners with Him in His service (1 Corinthians 3:9, 2 Corinthians 6:1). In that service, we have become ministers of the New Testament (2 Corinthians 3:6). We have become ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). We are ministers of God (2 Corinthians 6:4). We are also partners with Christ in his suffering (Philippians 1:29, 1 Peter 4:12-13, Colossians 1:24), Romans 8:18). We are partners with Christ in prayer (John 14:12-14). We're partners with Christ in betrothal (2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:25-27).

1. **Access to God**

We have been given access to God. You have full authority to enter the presence of God. We have been given access into His grace (Romans 5:2). We have access unto God the Father (Ephesians 2:18). We have access with boldness (Hebrews 4:16, Hebrews 10:19-20).

1. **The Much More Care of God**

We are within the "much more" care of God. He did the greatest thing for you when He saved you. Now you enter much more than the greatest thing that He's already done. For that reason you are objects of God's love (Romans 5:8-10, Ephesians 2:4, Ephesians 5:2); of His grace for salvation (Ephesians 2:8-9); for safekeeping (Romans 5:2, 1 Peter 1:5); for service (John 17:18, Ephesians 4:7); for instruction (Titus 2:11-13); of His power (Ephesians 1:19, Philippians 2:13); of His faithfulness (Philippians 1:6, Hebrews 13:5, Thessalonians 5:24); of His peace (Colossians 3:15, Romans 5:1); of His consolation (2 Thessalonians 2:16); and, of his intercession (Romans 8:34, Hebrews 7:25, Hebrews 9:24). All of this is because you are in the much more care of God. I realize that I've included a lot of Scripture verses here, but you should sit down and study them in order to realize in detail what happened to you at the point of your salvation.

1. **God's Inheritance**

We are God's inheritance. You have become the Father's own possession (Ephesians 1:18). The glories of this inheritance are described in John 17:22, Roman 8:30, and Colossians 3:4. You are God's inheritance.

1. **The Inheritance of the Saints**

We have the inheritance of the saints. God himself and all that He bestows on us has become our inheritance (1 Peter 1:3-4). Imagine that. You are a human being, and God and what He does becomes your inheritance. All the present blessings of the Holy Spirit are part of that inheritance (Ephesians 1:14, Colossians 3:24). We have an eternal inheritance by grace (Hebrews 9:15).

1. **Light in the Lord**

We became light in the Lord. God is light (1 John 1:5). However, the Christian was darkness, and he has now become light (Ephesians 5:8, 1 Thessalonians 5:4). Just remember that about yourself in your moments where you're sort of discouraged with yourself. Remember that you have become the light. You are to walk therefore as children of light (1 John 1:7).

1. **United with God**

We are united to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We are related to God the Father (1 Thessalonians 1:1). You're his relative. You're related to God the Son (John 14:20, Colossians 1:27). You're a member of Christ's body (1 Corinthians 12:13). You're a branch in Christ who is the vine (John 15:15). You're a stone in the building in which Christ is the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:18-20, 1 Peter 2:5). You're a sheep in Christ's flock (John 10:27-29). You're part of Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:25-27). You're a priest in the kingdom of priests, with Christ as the High Priest (1 Peter 2:5-9). You're part of the new creation with Christ as the last Adam (2 Corinthians 5:17). You are, of course, also related to God the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, 1 Corinthians 6:19).

1. **Ministries of the Holy Spirit**

You are the recipients of certain ministries of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a down payment on the future glories to be ours (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 1:14). You have certain blessings from the Holy Spirit. You're born of the Spirit (John 3:6). All of you have been baptized by the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5, 1 Corinthians 12:13). You are indwelt by the Spirit (Romans 5:5, Romans 8:9). You are sealed by the spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22, Ephesians 4:30). You have been given spiritual gifts for service (1 Corinthians 12:11, 27-31). You have available the filling of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

1. **Glorification**

You have been glorified. This means that every believer has a great heavenly glory of perfection and of honor which is awaiting him (Romans 8:18, Colossians 3:4). A Christian has a future glory which is now reckoned as a sure thing (Romans 8:30).

1. **Complete in Christ**

We are complete in Christ. This is true from God's point of view (Colossians 2:9-10). God the Father finds an infinite joy in making sinners just as perfect as His Son. How perfect do you have to be to go to heaven? You have to be as complete in every respect as Jesus Christ is. So you can see the hopelessness of human effort in that direction.

1. **Spiritual Blessings**

We have been made possessors of every spiritual blessing. This refers to all the riches of grace which have been deposited into the believer's account (Ephesians 1:3). It includes all of these 37 things as the package deal that we receive. God's grace through the cross is free to bestow all of these blessings on us at the point of salvation.

1. **All Sins have been Judged**

All sins were judged by the spiritual death of Christ on the cross. Christ bore our sins (1 Peter 2:24, Mark 15:34). Therefore, all condemnation is removed for the believer (John 3:18, Romans 8:1).

1. **Eternal Life**

We are the recipients of eternal life (John 3:15, John 10:28, John 20:31, 1 John 5:11-12).

1. **All Spiritual Calluses Removed**

Finally, all spiritual calluses have been removed from the facets of the soul (Ephesians 4:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17). When you are born again, you not only enter the outer circle of eternal fellowship, but you also immediately pop into the inner circle of temporal fellowship. No matter how much has been built up upon your soul in hardness toward God relative to your will; to your mind; and, to your emotions, it is peeled off with one blow, and you start fresh at the point of salvation.

All of these things are the things into which you may enter as a child of God.

**Philippians 1:6**

Therefore, Paul says that he is confident, not in the Philippians, but in this principle that He, God, has begun a good work represented by these things (and there probably are others that He has done), and He will perform it unto the day. The word perform is "epiteleo." It means simply "to carry out" or "to execute." He will execute this in the future. This is what God is doing, and this is what God is going to continue to do. He is going to carry it out. How far? He says, "Unto the day of Jesus Christ." I want you to notice that from salvation until the future moment of what he calls "the day of Jesus Christ," these things are going to continue in effect for you, in total. You will not miss at a single point.

**A Day**

The word "day" is used in 3 ways in the Bible.

1. **24 Hours**

First, it is used in terms of a 24-hour period. That's a solar day, such as the six days of earth's restoration (Genesis 1:3-31). This is the way that the word "day" is used of the Sabbath day which is a holy day designated for the Jews--not for Christians (Exodus 20:10). It is also used for the Lord's Day, Sunday, which Christians by tradition from the early New Testament church began to use as their day of worship in the dispensation of the church age (Revelation 1:10). It is also used of the days of our lives as Christians on the earth (Romans 14:5-6). Then it is used as a daily period also for learning the Word of God in Psalm 119:97. This is a 24-hour period within which we are to learn the Word of God. These are all 24-hour periods.

1. **More than 24 Hours**

Secondly, the word "day" is used as a period longer than 24 hours, such as "the day of redemption." This is a believer who is in eternity in his resurrection body. The day of redemption refers to eternity (Ephesians 4:30). That's longer than 24 hours. "The day of the Lord" is a technical term for the tribulation and the millennium put together. We have many verses that refer to "the day of the Lord" or some portion of it: Isaiah 2:12; Isaiah 13:6; Joel 1:15; Joel 2:1; Zachariah 14:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:1; and, 2 Peter 3:10. Then we have "the day of God" which is eternity (2 Peter 3:12). All of these are longer than 24 hours.

1. **Less than 24 Hours**

Then the word "day" is used of a period less than 24 hours. We have "the day of salvation" which is the moment of faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 6:2, Acts 16:31). We have also "the day of Christ." which is the rapture of the church, and that's the one that is used here in Philippians 1:6--"the day of Jesus Christ." He's talking about the rapture of the church. This is a split-second (1 Corinthians 15:52, Philippians 1:10, Philippians 2:16). "The day of wrath" is another technical term that refers to the Great White Throne judgment (Romans 2:5). "The day of declaration" is also less than the 24-hour period. This is the Judgment Seat of Christ for the evaluation of the Christian's service (1 Corinthians 3:13, 2 Corinthians 5:10).

**The Rapture**

Let's tie this up with a review of the day in which all this is going to be terminated, the day of Jesus Christ, which here means the day of the rapture. This is a twinkling of an eye--a very small portion. This is just to review what you should know about the day of the rapture. This is that next event that's going to take place in history. I find there are subtle ways of resisting this truth too.

I had some repercussions recently in Berean Academy where this doctrine was taught. The repercussions, I finally realized after talking with a person, came because the family was amillennial. They didn't believe there was going to be anything like a rapture event. They didn't believe that there was going to be anything like a tribulation. They didn't believe that there was going to be anything like a millennium. It was quite amazing to hear the defense in attempting to give a couple of reasons from the Word of God why this event is not going to take place. Here was another one of Satan's subtleties: "Well, as you know, there are many fine men who have a different view." That's right, and one of the finest of them is the devil himself. Don't ever be so foolish when you talk about the Word of God to bring up that argument and say, "Well, the reason I believe this is because there are so many sincere, fine, scholarly men who believe this error, and therefore that dignifies and makes the error right." Just understand that fine, dignified, scholarly men can be just as wrong as Satan was in the decision he made in rebelling against God.

In short, here's what the rapture is all about--this day of Jesus Christ:

1. **The Return of Christ for the Church**

The rapture of the church refers to the return of Jesus Christ for his believers, the body of Christ, at the end of the church age (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, Acts 1:11). At that time, Christ will be visible, but He will be visible to the Christians only. He will not touch the earth. They will meet Him in the air. That's what the rapture is all about. The word "rapture" simply means "catching away."

1. **Promised by Christ**

The rapture was prophesied and it was promised by the Lord Jesus Christ on the eve of His resurrection. You may read about this in John 14:1-3. The rapture fulfills this prophecy and this promise.

1. **Dead and Alive Christians**

The rapture includes the dead in Christ. This is church age believers only. Old Testament saints are not in Christ. The dead in Christ are raised to meet the Lord in the air first. Then Christians which are on the earth and alive at the time are caught up to join them with Him (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). First, the graves open; those Christians meet the Lord; then, those who are alive pop up together to meet the Lord in the air.

1. **Spiritual and Carnal Christians**

All believers of the church age go up in the rapture whether they are carnal or spiritual at the moment. There are some people who will teach you that only the nice Christians (the good Christians--the "fine" Christians) go up in the rapture. They say that the rest of them go through the tribulation. They say that, depending on how bad you are, you may either go halfway through the tribulation or all the way through the tribulation. Now you may make an evaluation for yourself as to how far you would get on that basis. You might want to evaluate some of the people around you and share your thoughts with them. However, I am happy to tell you that whatever you come up with, the Lord says, "Whether you are carnal or spiritual (in the inner circle or out of it at the moment) you are going up.

1. **The Judgment Seat of Christ**

Believers caught up in the rapture are taken directly in their physical bodies into heaven where their Christian service is evaluated for rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:10). You pop from this earth, and you stand right before the "bema," the Judgment Seat of Christ, and that's where the records are opened. They start going over those records and seeing how much divine good you produced with your service, and how much was human good trash. The human good trash is burned. The divine good comes up for reward.

1. **Enoch**

An example of the rapture event was Enoch, who was transferred alive from heaven to paradise in Hades (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5).

1. **Only Church Age Saints**

The rapture involves the church only, the body of Christ of which Christ is the head. Old Testament saints are raised at the end of the tribulation. Christians are raptured before the tribulation (1 Corinthians 12:12-13, Colossians 1:18).

1. **Christ Appears as the Head of the Church**

In the rapture, Christ appears as the head of the church--not as King of Israel as he will appear at the Second Coming.

1. **A Mystery in the Old Testament**

The church was a mystery that was not revealed in the Old Testament, so the rapture also was a mystery in the Old Testament (Ephesians 3:1-5, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). Remember that resurrection was not a mystery in the Old Testament, but the rapture event--that part of the resurrection story--that was a mystery.

1. **The End of Sufferings**

The church is the target in the angelic warfare, so it experiences sufferings which will end forever at the rapture.

1. **Hope and Comfort**

The rapture is the Christian's hope and source of comfort (1 Thessalonians 1:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:18, Titus 2:13). It's the expectation of the rapture that gives us ability here on earth (1 Corinthians 15:58). The rapture takes the sting out of death for us (1 Corinthians 15:54-56). The rapture removes hysteria and hopelessness at a funeral service in your time of bereavement (1 Thessalonians 4:13-15). The word "hope" is a technical designation for the rapture, and it means confidence. Therefore, we read about a living hope in 1 Peter 1:3. We know that we're going to see a resurrection. We've talked about a blessed hope (Titus 2:13). We anticipate the joy of a resurrection. We have a purifying hope (1 John 3:3). We receive a resurrection body that is free (purified) from all sins. The rapture is a source of confidence for the believer in everything he does (Philippians 1:6).

1. **A Reservation in Heaven**

The Christian has a non-cancelable reservation in heaven (1 Peter 1:4, Ephesians 2:6). The rapture is the way he's going to get there.

1. **A Resurrection Body**

The rapture is the completion of the redemption of the body. We receive a resurrection body like Christ's in ultimate sanctification (Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:1-2, 1 Corinthians 15:51-53), freed completely from all area of sin.

1. **No Dealing with Sin**

At the rapture, there is no dealing with sin on the earth. All goes on as it is into the tribulation period. God will deal with sin during the tribulation period, and ultimately after that period of human history.

1. **No Change in Nature**

At the rapture, there is no recorded change in nature as at the Second Coming. Everything in the natural realm continues as it is after the church has been removed. After the tribulation period, there are changes in nature, as well as during the tribulation.

1. **Israel's Covenants are Still Unfulfilled at the Rapture**

Israel's unconditional covenants are all still unfulfilled at the rapture. It is after the rapture that those covenants to Israel are fulfilled, particularly during the millennial era.

1. **The Time of the Rapture is Unknown, but Imminent**

The time of the rapture is unknown, but it is imminent; that is, it can happen at any moment. There is nothing standing in the way of the return of Christ for the church at this very moment.

So in Philippians 1:6, Paul says that he is absolutely confident, without any shadow of a doubt (it began in the past and he has had no reason to change his opinion), that this very thing refers to a principle. The principle is that He who had begun a good work in you, our Father who began a divine good work in us, which is summarized in 37 distinct points that constituted what we received at the moment of salvation, that He will continue to perform and to execute that right until the day when suddenly you are removed from this earth in the rapture, and you enter into heaven itself.

You're safe. You're just as safe as you can be. Whatever troubles you have; whatever trials you come into; or, whatever difficulties you face in life, God has covered everything for you. You can sit back. You can relax. You can find yourself in His will. You can start executing His will. You can start looking forward to what He's going to complete in you someday. You can anticipate this about others about you, that they're going to get better when these 37 things are brought to full fruition. You can move in the happiness and the joy and in the same confidence that Paul has toward the Philippians. What God has started in you, He will complete.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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