**Participation in the Race**

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*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*

*looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* ([Hebrews 12:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1-2&t=NKJV))

Christians are in a race, and the highest of all possible prizes is being extended as an encouragement for them to run the race after a manner that will result in victory. In [Hebrews 12:1-2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1-2&t=NKJV), the Spirit of God has provided Christians with instructions concerning how this race is to be run, and any Christian running the race after the revealed fashion can be assured that he will finish the contest in a satisfactory manner. On the other hand though, any Christian not so following these provided instructions can, under no circumstances, expect victory in the contest.

If ever there was a group of individuals who should be preparing themselves for that which lies ahead, it is Christians. God has set aside an entire dispensation lasting 2,000 years to acquire a bride for His Son, who will rule the earth during the coming age as co-regent with Him. Positions among those who will form the bride are to be earned, not entered into strictly on the basis of one’s eternal salvation. And even among those who eventually enter into these positions, there will be no equality. Rather, there will be numerous gradations of positions held by those occupying the throne as co-regents with Christ in that day.

Christians will receive positions in Christ’s kingdom exactly commensurate with their performance in the race. That is to say, positions with Christ in the coming age will be assigned to household servants in perfect keeping with their faithfulness to delegated responsibility during the present dispensation, for faithfulness after this fashion is how Christians run the race.

There will be “*a just recompense of reward*” for each and every Christian after the race has been run ([Hebrews 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.2&t=NKJV); [11:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.26&t=NKJV)), which is the biblical way of saying that exact payment will be given for services rendered. And such payment will be dispensed at the judgment seat following an evaluation of the services rendered in the house.

The one thing that consumed Paul, governing his every move following the point of his salvation, was being able to successfully complete the race in which he had been entered. Paul knew that he was saved and that he would go to be with the Lord when he died ([2 Corinthians 5:6-8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+5.6-8&t=NKJV); [1 Timothy 1:15-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+1.15-16&t=NKJV)). He spent no time rethinking circumstances surrounding his salvation experience to make certain he was really saved; nor did he live after a certain fashion out of fear that he could possibly one day lose his salvation — something which Paul knew to be an impossibility ([Romans 8:35-39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.35-39&t=NKJV)). Rather, Paul set his eyes on a goal out ahead, a goal that salvation made possible ([Philippians 3:7-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.7-14&t=NKJV)).

The race in which Christians presently find themselves is, in the light of [Hebrews 11:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11.1ff&t=NKJV) and other related scriptures, *a race of the faith* (*cf*. [2 Timothy 4:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+4.7&t=NKJV)). The “saving of the *soul*” is in view ([Hebrews 10:39](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.39&t=NKJV)), which is what Peter in his first epistle referred to as “*the end* [goal]” of the Christian’s faith as he runs the race — “*Receiving the end* [goal] *of your faith, even the salvation of your souls*” ([1 Peter 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+1.9&t=NKJV)). And the saving or losing of one’s soul has to do with occupying or being denied a position with Christ in His kingdom (*cf*. [Matthew 16:24-17:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-17.5&t=NKJV); [25:14-30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+25.14-30&t=NKJV); [Luke 19:12-27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.12-27&t=NKJV)).

Thus, the race in which Christians are presently engaged is being run with *a kingdom in view*; and it is being run, more specifically, with a view *to proffered positions on the throne with God’s Son in that kingdom*.  *This is what is at stake*. And there can be no higher prize than that of one day being elevated from a servant in the Lord’s house on this earth to a co-regent with Christ on His throne in the heavens.

How many Christians though know these things? How many, for that matter, are even interested? Christians talk about being saved and going to heaven, though most don’t have the slightest idea concerning what is involved in saved man’s association with the heavens.

Being saved, with a corresponding assurance of heaven, is often looked upon as an end in itself. However, if such were the case, where would the race in which we are presently engaged fit in the Christian life? It couldn’t, for one’s eternal salvation and assurance of heaven are based entirely on Christ’s finished work, completely apart from the race.

One is saved with the race in view, and the race is for a revealed purpose. The teaching so prevalent today that views salvation *only* in the light of eternal verities — *i.e.*, one’s eternal destiny is either Heaven or Hell, depending on the person’s saved or unsaved status, with that being the end of the matter — is a theology that completely ignores and obscures the Word of the Kingdom. Teachings concerning the *importance of salvation* have not been balanced with teachings concerning the *purpose for salvation.*

If ever there was a group of individuals on the earth with something to live for or something to die for, it is Christians. They are in possession of the highest of all possible callings. But in spite of this, the world has never seen a group quite like those comprising Christendom today — a group of individuals who *could profess so much but really profess so little.*

The message is there, but where are the Christians who know and understand these things? The race is presently being run, but where are the serious contenders? The offer to ascend the throne with Christ has been extended, but where are those who have fixed their eyes on this goal?

**Run with Patience**

After one lays aside “every weight” (any encumbrance that could prevent maximum efficiency in the race) and “*the sin that so easily ensnares us*” (lack of faith [*ref*. [Hebrews 11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+11&t=NKJV)]), he is then to run the race “*with endurance.*”

“*Endurance*” is a translation of the Greek word *hupomone*, which could perhaps be better translated, “patient endurance.” The thought has to do with patiently enduring whatever may come your way (trials, testing) as you run the race and keep your eyes fixed on the goal.

*Hupomone* is the word used in [James 1:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.3-4&t=NKJV):

*Knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience* [patient endurance].

*But let patience* [patient endurance] *have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

*Trials and testing* are a means that God uses to work *patient endurance* in the lives of His people; and a person, in turn, is to patiently endure through whatever trials and testing the Lord may send his way. Patient endurance is to be exercised at all times, and patient endurance through trials and testing of this nature will gradually result in the person reaching the desired goal in the race of the faith.

One is to allow *patient endurance* to “*have her perfect* [end-time] *work*.” This is *not* something that occurs overnight or in a short period of time, but this is something that progressively occurs during the entire course of the race.

And, with respect to the preceding, as seen in [Romans 8:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.28&t=NKJV), “*all things* [trials, testing, patient endurance]” *are working together for good* in the lives of those called according to God’s purpose. Nothing happens by accident within God’s sovereign will and purpose for an individual; everything occurs by divine design. Man can see only the present while patiently undergoing trials and testing (except that part of the future revealed in God’s Word, which he sees “by faith”). But God sees the complete future, along with the present. He sees the complete outcome of that which is presently occurring.

(Note, for example, men such as Joseph and Moses. Joseph couldn’t see the end result of God working in his life while in an Egyptian prison; nor could Moses see the end of the matter while herding sheep in Midian. God though ultimately exalted Joseph to a position on the throne in Egypt, and He later used Moses to lead His people out of Egypt.

And God is working after a similar fashion in the lives of Christians today, calling upon them to patiently endure trials and testing, *all for a revealed purpose*.)

Patient endurance being allowed to have its end-time work will result in the individual being “*perfect and entire, wanting nothing*.” That is, it will result in the individual being brought to the desired goal through the progressive working of the transformation (*the metamorphosis*) in [Romans 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+12.2&t=NKJV) (a work of the Spirit of God within the life of a Christian as he patiently endures through trials and testing, bringing about a progression from immaturity to maturity). The goal of the Spirit of God working in the life of a believer after this fashion is to ultimately produce a mature Christian, who lacks nothing.

Thus “patience” and “endurance” are the two inseparable key words in this respect. A Christian is to *always exercise patience*, and he is to always exercise *endurance* with his patience. The race in which we are engaged is not one to be run over a short period of time but one to be run over the long haul. It is not a race for sprinters, though one may be called upon to sprint at times in the race. Rather, it is a race for marathon runners, set over a long-distance course. This is the reason *one must run with patient endurance.*

Sprinting doesn’t really require patience of this nature; nor does it require one to pace himself after the fashion required to be successful in a long-distance race. In sprinting, one exerts a maximum burst of speed over a short distance, knowing that his body can endure for the short time required to run the race. However, one has to properly pace himself in the long-distance race in order to endure, exercising patience throughout the course of the race.

If he allows himself to drop below his pace, he will not be continuing to exert the maximum effort his body can endure for the distance required, possibly resulting in defeat in the race. He may come in second or third rather than first, or he may not come in high enough to win a prize at all. Or, on the other hand, if he pushes himself above his pace, he will be placing a strain on his body beyond what it can endure for the distance required, possibly resulting in his having to drop out along the way and not finish the race at all.

The statement is sometimes heard in Christian circles, “I would rather burn out than rust out.” This, of course, is an allusion to how one paces himself in the race of the faith; and those making this statement usually look upon “burn out” as something to be desired.

However, there’s a problem with the pace that would be exhibited by either “burn out” or “rust out.” “Burn out” is something that a person would experience who tried sprinting the long-distance race, and “rust out” is something that a person barely running would experience. Neither would allow the runner to reach the goal.

This whole overall thought is alluded to by Paul in [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV) where he sets forth one requirement for reigning with Christ: “*If we endure, we shall also reign with Him*…” The word “endure” in the Greek text is the verb form of the same word translated “patience [‘patient endurance’]” in [James 1:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.3-4&t=NKJV) and [Hebrews 12:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1&t=NKJV) — *hupomeno*. Thus, [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV) should literally read,

*If we patiently endure, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him* [remaining within context, “if we deny Him with respect to patient endurance”], *He will deny us* [again, remaining within context, “He will deny us with respect to reigning with Him”].

Understanding that which the writer of Hebrews teaches about the race in [Hebrews 12:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.1&t=NKJV) and that which James teaches about progression in growth from immaturity to maturity in [James 1:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.2-4&t=NKJV), one can easily see what Paul had in mind when he used the verb form of this same word in [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV). It’s very simple. As noted in the previous comments within the verse, if we patiently endure in the race of the faith, we’ll be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ, for the one patiently enduring will have run the race after the correct fashion and will have finished his course in a satisfactory manner.

The same word translated “patience” in [James 1:3-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.3-4&t=NKJV) also appears in its verb form in [James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV) (same as [2 Timothy 2:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+2.12&t=NKJV)):

*Blessed is the man that endures* [patiently endures] *temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those that love Him.* ([James 1:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.12&t=NKJV))

Thus, patient endurance in the race of the faith during the present time, allowing the runner to complete the race after the correct fashion and in a satisfactory manner, will result not only in the runner being approved before the judgment seat but also in his receiving the crown of life.

And James, as all other New Testament epistles, deals *centrally* with the salvation of the *soul*. In [James 1:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.21&t=NKJV), after the author has dealt with patient endurance and the end result of such endurance — *i.e.*, has dealt with how the race is to be run, along with the outcome of satisfactorily running the race — he then refers to “*the implanted Word* [that Word that is compatible with and natural for the new nature, the living Word of God]” as that “*which is able to save your souls*.”

The reception of the Word of God is able to bring about the salvation of one’s soul because it is this Word that the Spirit of God uses as He effects *the metamorphosis* of [Romans 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+12.2&t=NKJV). And in association with this *metamorphosis*, the trying of one’s faith in [James 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=James+1.3&t=NKJV) cannot be done apart from a reception of the Word of God.

*Faith* “*comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*” ([Romans 10:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+10.17&t=NKJV)). A Christian receives that which is compatible with and natural for his new nature. He receives the living Word of God into his saved human spirit. The indwelling Spirit of God then takes this living Word and progressively works the metamorphosis in the Christian’s life, progressively moving him from immaturity to maturity. And a Christian passing through this experience correspondingly exercises patient endurance in the trials and testing of his faith, which is the manner in which he is to run and properly pace himself in the race of the faith.

*The Christian life, the race in which we are presently engaged, progression from immaturity to maturity*, and *the goal of faith* are all inseparably linked together after this fashion.

(For a more detailed discussion of *the metamorphosis*, refer to in this site, [The Metamorphosis](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/gods-word-three.php#The%20Metamorphosis), or the author’s book, also in this website, [Salvation of the Soul](https://www.koffeekupkandor.com/salvation-of-the-soul.php), Chapters 3-5.)

**Looking to Jesus**

The writer of Hebrews instructs Christians, during the course of the race, to keep their eyes fixed *on Jesus*. The Greek text though is much more explicit than the English translation. There are two prepositions used in the writer’s instructions concerning “*looking to Jesus*”; and the first preposition, prefixed to the word “looking,” has not been translated at all. The literal word-for-word rendering from the Greek text reads, “looking *from to* Jesus.” The person *looking to Jesus* is to correspondingly *look away from* anything that could, at any time, result in distraction.

Jesus referred to this same truth when He said,

*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.* ([Luke 9:62](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+9.62&t=NKJV))

Such an individual would have begun after the correct fashion by putting his hand to the plow. He would be looking straight ahead to a point at the end of the row he was plowing, which, in the light of [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV), would presuppose that he had looked away from surrounding things. Should he though, during the course of plowing a row in the field, begin to look around or look back, he would be taking his eyes off the point toward which he was moving at the end of the row. He would no longer be *looking away* from anything that could distract and be *looking toward* the goal.

The distraction away from the goal would invariably result in the person straying off the course leading toward the goal. And Jesus said that a man who could not keep his eyes fixed on the goal was not fit for the kingdom of God.

Paul stated the matter in these words in [Philippians 3:13-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.13-14&t=NKJV):

*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting those things that are behind and reaching foreword to those things that are ahead,*

*I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call* [high calling] *of God in Christ Jesus.*

And Paul, within this same framework in [1 Corinthians 9:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.26&t=NKJV), said, “*I therefore so run* [run to obtain an incorruptible crown ([1 Corinthians 9:24-25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+9.24-25&t=NKJV))], *not as uncertainly .* . . .” That is, he didn’t run aimlessly; he didn’t wander back and forth from lane to lane on the track. Rather, he had his eyes fixed on a goal, and he strained every muscle of his being as he moved straight ahead toward this goal. His every action centered around one thing: completing the race in a manner that would allow him to win the prize.

The race of the faith in which Christians are presently engaged is thus not only to be run with “patient endurance” but the runners are to keep their eyes fixed on the goal out ahead. And the manner in which the runners are to do this is to *look away* from anything that could distract as they *look to Jesus*.

1) Knowing Christ

In [Philippians 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.10&t=NKJV) Paul wrote, “*That I may know Him* . . . .” Paul, of course, “knew” Christ insofar as his eternal salvation was concerned. Thus, he had to be referencing to something beyond that which he had already experienced. The remainder of the verse, along with the context, shows that Paul had in mind a progression in spiritual growth from initially knowing Christ to that of coming into possession of a knowledge that afforded him an intimate relationship with Christ; and he counted *all things in his life* “*but loss*” to accomplish this end ([Philippians 3:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.8&t=NKJV)).

One attains knowledge of and begins to understand different things in life by spending time in the realm where he desires familiarity. And knowledge gained is invariably commensurate with the time invested. This is true in any aspect of life.

Christians attain *knowledge of Christ* through time invested in studying God’s Word, through time invested in studying *the written Word*, which reveals *the living Word*. Christians begin to understand more and more about Christ, about God’s plans and purposes surrounding His Son, through gaining knowledge of that which God says in His revelation to man.

There is a rudimentary knowledge of things, gained by investing a limited amount of time; and there are varying degrees of knowledge beyond that, gained by investing varying amounts of time.

A Christian cannot “know” Christ without spending time in *the written Word*, which reveals *the living Word*; and the more time one spends in this realm, the more he will move toward that intimate relationship that Paul, above everything else, sought.

This is the reason Christians are to *look away* *from* anything that could prove to be a distraction as they *look unto Jesus.*

According to [Philippians 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.10&t=NKJV), Paul sought to know Christ after this fashion in three realms:

*a) “the power of His resurrection”*

*b) “the fellowship of His sufferings”*

*c) “being conformed to His death”*

*a) The power of His Resurrection*

Death could not hold the One Who had come to accomplish the will of the Father ([John 4:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+4.34&t=NKJV); [6:38](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+6.38&t=NKJV)). This was the Father’s “*beloved Son* [the One who would one day exercise the rights of the firstborn],” in whom the Father was “*well pleased*” ([Matthew 3:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+3.17&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Psalm 2:7](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+2.7&t=NKJV); [Acts 13:33-34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13.33-34&t=NKJV)). And this was the One who, at the end of His earthly ministry, could say, “*I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work that You gave me to do*” ([John 17:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+17.4&t=NKJV)).

God raised Him from the dead ([Acts 13:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13.30&t=NKJV)), the Spirit raised Him from the dead ([Romans 8:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Romans+8.11&t=NKJV)), and Christ raised Himself from the dead ([John 10:17-18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+10.17-18&t=NKJV); [11:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+11.25&t=NKJV)). He then sat down at the Father’s right hand awaiting a future day — that day when His enemies would be made His “*footstool*” and He would rule the earth with “*a rod of iron*” ([Psalm 2:6-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+2.6-9&t=NKJV); [110:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1ff&t=NKJV); [Hebrews 1:13-2:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.13-2.10&t=NKJV)).

According to [Acts 13:30-34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13.30-34&t=NKJV), Christ’s resurrection is inseparably connected with that future day when He will rule and reign. The quotation in verse thirty-three, “*You are my Son, this day have I begotten You*,” refers, not to Christ’s resurrection per se, but to the *purpose* for His resurrection. This is a quotation from the Psalm chapter two, which is clearly Messianic (*cf*. [Psalm 2:6-9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+2.6-9&t=NKJV)); and Christ was raised from the dead in order that God might fulfill His *promise* to His people ([Acts 13:33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13.33&t=NKJV)) by giving to Christ “*the sure mercies of David* [*lit*., ‘the holy things of David’]” ([Acts 13:34](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+13.34&t=NKJV)). That is, Christ was raised from the dead in order that God might fulfill His promise concerning a coming Redeemer who would ascend “*the throne of His father David*” and “*reign over the house of Jacob forever*” ([Luke 1:32-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+1.32-33&t=NKJV); *cf*. [2 Samuel 7:12-16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Samuel+7.12-16&t=NKJV)).

“*All power*” *has been delivered into the hands of the Son* ([Matthew 28:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+28.18&t=NKJV)), and He has been raised from the dead and positioned at God’s right hand, the hand of power. And in this *position*, with His Son in possession of *all power*, God has clearly stated to His Son:

*Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool . . . .* ([Psalm 110:1ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.1ff&t=NKJV))

The Son seated at His Father’s right hand is not presently exercising the power that has been delivered into His hands; nor is He presently fulfilling the purpose for His resurrection as given in Psalms chapter 110. But one day this will all change.

A day is coming when the Son will take possession of the kingdom that He has gone away to receive ([Luke 19:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.12&t=NKJV), [15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+19.15&t=NKJV)). The Father will give the kingdom to His Son ([Daniel 7:9-14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Daniel+7.9-14&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Revelation 11:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+11.15&t=NKJV)), and the Son will then come forth as *the great King-Priest “after the order of Melchizedek,”* exercising power and authority as He sits upon His Own throne ([Psalm 110:2-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Psalm+110.2-4&t=NKJV); *cf*. [Hebrews 5:6-10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.6-10&t=NKJV); [6:20-7:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.20-7.21&t=NKJV); [Revelation 3:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+3.21&t=NKJV)).

It was these things that Paul had in mind when he said that he wanted to know Christ in “*the power of His resurrection*.” As Christ was (and still is) seated with His Father on a throne from which power and authority emanates, awaiting the day of His own power on His Own throne, Paul wanted to be among those who would one day be allowed to ascend the throne with Christ and have a part in the exercise of that power.

*b) The Fellowship of His Sufferings*

Sufferings followed in the wake of Christ’s ministry, and they followed in the wake of Paul’s ministry as well. And sufferings will follow in the wake of anyone’s ministry who seeks to come into an intimate knowledge of Christ.

*Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.* ([2 Timothy 3:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Timothy+3.12&t=NKJV))

*Persecution is the natural outcome of godly living*. And the “*fellowship*” of Christ’s sufferings has to do with possessing the mind of Christ concerning His and our sufferings (the word “fellowship,” from the Greek word *koinonia*, means to be “like-minded”). It is looking upon our sufferings the same way Christ looked upon His sufferings.

And how did Christ look upon His sufferings? Note [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV). Christ, relative to His sufferings,

. . . *for the joy that was set before Him* [the day when He would rule and reign] *endured the cross, despising the shame* [considering it to be a thing of little consequence in comparison] . . . . ([Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV))

The apostles in the early Church rejoiced that “*they were counted worthy to suffer shame*” for Christ’s name. Why? Because they knew what lay beyond the sufferings.

*1) Godliness, 2) Sufferings, and 3) Glory* constitute the unchangeable order. This was true in the life of Christ ([Luke 24:25-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Luke+24.25-26&t=NKJV); [John 17:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+17.4-5&t=NKJV)); and it will be equally true in the lives of His followers ([Matthew 10:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+10.24&t=NKJV); [Acts 14:22](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Acts+14.22&t=NKJV); [1 Peter 4:12-13](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+4.12-13&t=NKJV)), for He has left us “*an example*” that we “*should follow His steps*” ([1 Peter 2:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Peter+2.21&t=NKJV)).

*c) Being Conformed to His death*

The Greek word that Jesus used relative to laying down His life ([John 10:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+10.15&t=NKJV), [17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+10.17&t=NKJV)) is *psuche* in the Greek text. This is the same word translated “*soul*” numerous places throughout the New Testament.

This is the word used in [Matthew 16:25-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.25-26&t=NKJV), translated “life” twice in verse twenty-five and “soul” twice in verse *twenty-six*. “Soul” and “life” are used interchangeably in this respect.

Christ *laid his life* down in order that He might “*take it again*” ([John 10:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+10.17&t=NKJV)), which is essentially the same truth taught in [Matthew 16:25-26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.25-26&t=NKJV) — “. . . *whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.*”

“*Conformed*” in the text is the translation of a Greek word that means *to take on the same form.* A Christian is to conduct his life after the same fashion that Christ conducted His life, which moves toward *death* rather than life, *for a revealed purpose* (*cf*. [John 12:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=John+12.24&t=NKJV)). He is to take the same form as Christ in this respect in order that through losing his life during the present day he might gain his life during that coming day.

And the entire matter is in connection with Christ coming “*in the glory of his Father with His angels*,” rewarding “*every man according to his works*,” and *reigning* in the “kingdom” that follows ([Matthew 16:24-17:5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Matthew+16.24-17.5&t=NKJV)).

2) Attaining the Goal

Paul sought to “know” Christ in “*the power of His resurrection*,” “*the fellowship of His sufferings*,” and through conformity to “*His death*” *for a revealed purpose*, expressed in verse eleven:

*I may attain to the resurrection* [out-resurrection] *from the dead*. ([Philippians 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.11&t=NKJV))

And this out-resurrection to which Paul sought to attain had to do with “*the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*” ([Philippians 3:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.14&t=NKJV)).

The word “resurrection” in verse eleven is a translation of the Greek word, *exanastasis*. This is the same word used in the preceding verse relative to Christ, but without the preposition *ek* prefixed to the word, as in verse eleven (*ex* is the form this preposition takes when prefixed to words beginning with a vowel — thus, *exanastasis*).

The preposition *ek* means “out of,” and when prefixed to *anastasis*, as in [Philippians 3:11](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.11&t=NKJV) (the only occurrence in the New Testament), the word should properly be translated “out-resurrection” (*ref*. The New Testament, an Expanded Translation, by Kenneth Wuest).

The compound word, *anastasis* (“resurrection” [[Philippians 3:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Philippians+3.10&t=NKJV)]), literally means “to stand up” (*ana* means “up,” and *stasis* means “to stand”). When referring to the dead, it means “to stand up” from the place of death (“to be resurrected”). *Exanastasis*, on the other hand, means “to stand up out of”; and if a deceased person were in view, the word would have to refer to that person *standing up out* (“being resurrected out,” an “out-resurrection”) from among others (others not raised from the dead at this time).

The word *exanastasis* though is *not* used referring to bodily resurrection in verse eleven, for there is no such thing in Scripture as selective resurrection among Christians. Rather it is used referring to certain Christians being allowed “to stand up out of” (*i.e.*, being elevated above) other Christians. This is something that will occur as a result of decisions and determinations made at the judgment seat. This is where the separation of Christians will occur (set forth by the word *exanastasis*), not at the time of the previous bodily resurrection of Christians.

**The Author and Finisher of the Faith**

“Faith” in [Hebrews 12:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+12.2&t=NKJV) is not “our faith,” as in the English translation, but “the faith” (note that “our” is in italics [KJV], indicating that it has been supplied by the translators). The word is articular in the Greek text and is a reference to the same faith seen in both [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV) and [Jude 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3&t=NKJV). [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV) reads,

*Fight the good fight of* [the] *faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto you are also called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

This verse could be better translated,

*Strive* [Strain every muscle in your being] *in the good contest* [the race] *of the faith; lay hold on life for the age, whereunto you are also called . . . .*

The word “strive” in the latter rendering is a translation of the Greek word, *agonizomai*, from which we derive our English word, “agonize”; and the word “contest” is from the Greek word *agon*, the noun form of the verb *agonizomai*.

Then [Jude 1:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Jude+1.3&t=NKJV) reads,

*Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.*

The words “*contend earnestly*” are a translation of the Greek word *epagonizomai*, an intensified form of the word *agonizomai* used in [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV). This part of the verse could be better translated, “*earnestly strive* [‘earnestly strain every muscle of your being’] *for the faith*”; and understanding this passage in the light of [1 Timothy 6:12](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Timothy+6.12&t=NKJV), earnestly striving for the faith is not defending the faith, as some expositors suggest, but a striving *with respect to the faith*. Such a striving has to do with remaining faithful to one’s calling within the house, properly running the race, *i.e.*, earnestly striving in the race of the faith.

Christ is both the “*Author* [the Originator, Founder]” and “*Finisher* [the One who carries through to completion]” of “*the faith*.” He is the “*Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending* . . . .” ([Revelation 1:8](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Revelation+1.8&t=NKJV)). And we are to fix our eyes upon Him, as we look away from anything that could distract, and run the race with patient endurance.