

“Apprehended”

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Phil 3:12 KJV “Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”

Paul says, “I was laid hold of (apprehended) by Jesus Christ.”

The word “apprehended” is powerful—It means “to seize tight hold of, to capture, to lay hold of.”

Interestingly, King David also testified that he had been apprehended by God:

“Nevertheless I *am* continually with you; you have apprehended *me* by my right hand” (Ps. 73:23 JB).

Paul says in the text that he looks forward to the day he is perfected in glory, and that he was “apprehended” by Jesus to ultimately enjoy that experience in heaven.

But he also knows that Jesus apprehended him for more than heaven....He had a PURPOSE for him to fulfill on earth.

Paul was also keenly aware that he would never have ‘turned’ to the Lord unless the precious, nail-scarred hand of Jesus had touched him.

Jesus Himself said, “No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him;” (John 6:44 NKJV)

God initiates and we must respond.

God knocks and we must open the door by:

***Submitting to His call to repent of our sins,**

***Then receive Him into our heart,**

And then we’re to make Paul’s aim in life our own...that is to *“lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of us!”

For all of us there is a “that” for which Jesus saved us—He had a purpose in mind when He saved us, not just ultimately going to heaven, but things we’re to do in His name for His glory while on earth!

ILLUS: Katie

We know from Scripture that Paul was apprehended to be an Apostle, and that he was apprehended to reach the Gentiles, he was apprehended to preach to Caesar, and he was apprehended to write 2/3 of the NT!

The Book of Acts gives us the powerful account of Saul's apprehension by Jesus Christ:

Saul was traveling down the road with a little group of men, headed to the town of Damascus with official authority from the high priest to persecute and imprison Christians.

Suddenly he saw a bright light shining around him from heaven followed by a voice that spoke saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"

And Saul, trembling and astonished, said: "Who are you, Lord?"

The voice replied, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." (Acts 9:4-5 NKJV)

Saul's immediate response was to submit to the Lord Jesus's "apprehension" of him by saying, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" (Vs.6)

That, by the way, is the most important question you will ever ask after your salvation—What, Lord, do you want me to do?

At that very moment, Saul was *apprehended*, and he submitted to the Lord's apprehension of him by giving his entire life to one burning passion—"laying hold of that for which Christ Jesus laid hold of me."

Oswald Chambers wrote, "We are not here to work for God because we have chosen to do so, but because God has apprehended us."

That was Paul!

Now, the truth is that every single born again Christian on earth has the same testimony—we were all *apprehended* by Jesus Christ!

He came knocking first...He made the overture...He approached us first, not the other way around.

We love Him because He **FIRST loved us.**

And He saved us, not just for heaven, but for a purpose here on earth that God conceived for each of you before the world was even created!

His plans for us began before there was an earth, sky, sun, moon, or universe.

Eph. 1:4 “Long ago, even before he made the world, God chose us to be his very own...”

Eph. 1:11 “we were chosen from the beginning to be his,”

But His plan included, not only that we would be His, but also our purpose here on earth!

Eph. 2:10 AMP “For we are His workmanship [His own master work, a work of art], created in Christ Jesus [reborn from above—spiritually transformed, renewed, ready to be used] for good works, which God prepared [for us] beforehand [taking paths which He set], so that we would walk in them (the good works)...”

“God has made us what we are. In Christ Jesus, God made us new people so that we would spend our lives doing the good things he had already planned for us to do.”—ERV

“He creates each of us by Christ Jesus to join him in the work he does, the good work he has gotten ready for us to do, work we had better be doing.”—MSG

So over and over again we see that when God apprehends a person—convicting them of sin, pointing them to the Cross, and saving them through His shed blood—it is not just to get us to heaven one day.

There is a PURPOSE God has in mind for each of us on this earth before we die!

And that purpose is that we JOIN HIM in the work He does!

The Bible calls it “good works.”

James makes the case that, while good works can’t save you, they testify that you are saved!

He writes “So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless. 18 Now someone may argue, “Some people have faith; others have good deeds.” But I say, “How can you show me your faith if you don’t have good deeds? I will show you my faith by my good deeds” (2:17-18 NLT).

Paul instructed Timothy to tell believers that were well off financially to, “do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.” (1 Tim. 6:18 NIV)

“prepared for every good work.” (2 Tim 2:21 NLT)

Paul writes that the whole Bible was given:

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Heb.13:16 NKJV “But do not forget to do good (works) and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Paul instructed Titus to tell the church, “Let our people also learn to maintain good works...that they may not be unfruitful” (Titus 3:14 NKJV).

“Ships are designed to sail on water. Cars are designed to run on highways. Christians are designed for good works!

I close with mentioning 3 things good works accomplish:

- 1. God is glorified through our lives. “By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples” (John 15:8 NKJV).**
- 2. Our faith is perfected by works. James wrote of Abraham:**

“...faith was working together with his works, and by works (his) faith was made perfect.” (James 2:22 NKJV)

3. Good works fulfill your divine destiny. Paul wrote at the end of his life, “I have finished my course (my assignment from God).”

Is it your goal today to “lay hold of that for which Jesus laid hold of you?

Let’s pray!