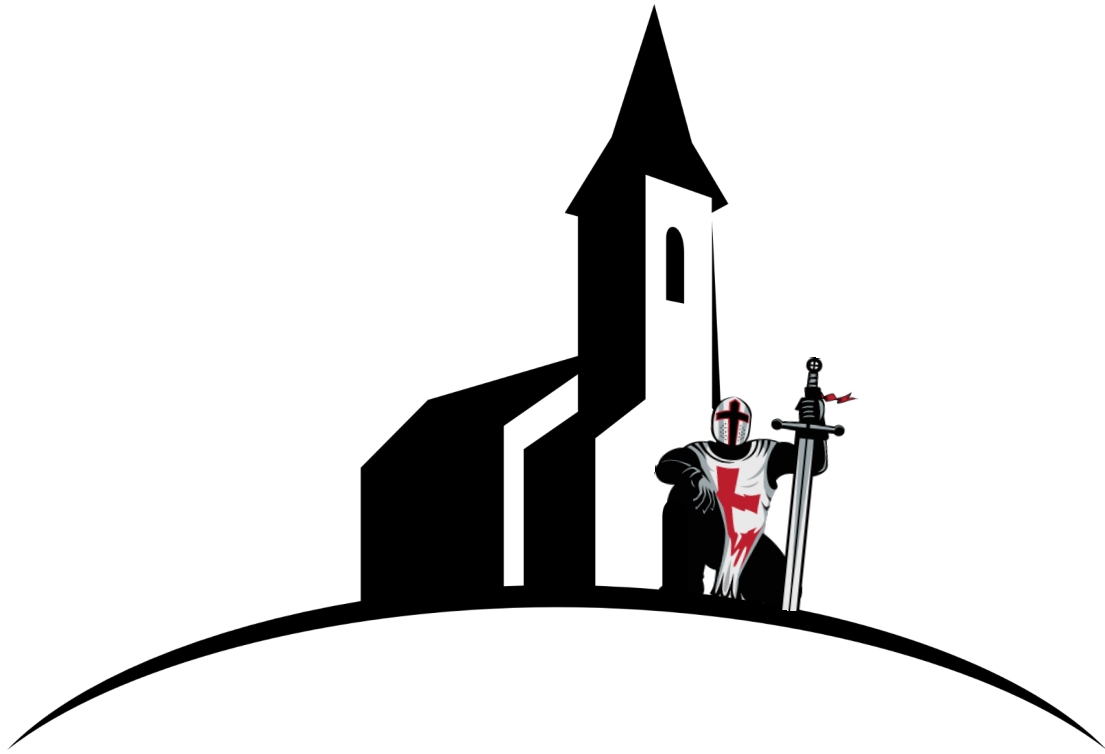


CITIZENS OF HEAVEN

AND SOLDIERS OF CHRIST



1. We who are citizens of heaven eagerly wait for our Lord to return, Philippians 3:20-21.

- (Philippians 3:20–21 NLT) **But we are citizens of heaven**, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. **And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior.** 21 He will take our weak mortal bodies and change them into glorious bodies like his own, using the same power with which he will bring everything under his control.

We live here on earth as foreigners, but our official, eternal residency is in heaven. Let that blessed thought soak in for a moment. This reality prompts us to live in eager anticipation of our Lord returning and transforming our bodies in preparation for our eternal home.

2. We who eagerly wait for our Lord to return willingly suffer together as good soldiers of Christ Jesus, 2 Timothy 2:3-4.

- (2 Timothy 2:3–4 ESV) **Share in suffering as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.** 4 **No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits**, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him.
 - a. "Share in suffering" is one word that means literally to "suffer together."
 - b. Good soldiers anticipate and accept suffering together as faithfulness to Christ.
 - c. Suffering together is set in contrast to becoming entangled in civilian pursuits—everyday life.

The person who chooses to suffer together as a good soldier does this only by setting his or her mind on things above.

- (Colossians 3:2 ESV) **Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.**

d. The blessings we enjoy of everyday life “under the sun” are the gift of God.

- (Ecclesiastes 5:19 ESV) Everyone also to whom **God has given** wealth and possessions and power to enjoy them, **and to accept his lot and rejoice in his toil—this is the gift of God.**

e. But it is wrong—as *in sinful*—to prefer the blessings of everyday life over suffering together for the gospel and faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It seems we are all susceptible (*and understandably so*) to seeking refuge and escape in the everyday blessings of life at the expense of faithfulness to our Lord. And that is why it is so important that we remind each other to obey the word of God and set our minds on things above.

f. We are called to “suffer together” for the gospel.

- (2 Timothy 1:8 ESV) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, **but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God.**
- (1 Timothy 6:12 ESV) **Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called** and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

3. We who eagerly wait for our Lord to return live as fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, Ephesians 2:19-20.

- (Ephesians 2:19–20 ESV) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, **but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,** 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

4. We who eagerly wait for our Lord to return live in obedience to him as we look forward to the city that God has built, Hebrews 11:8-10.

- (Hebrews 11:8–10 ESV) By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an

inheritance. **And he went out, not knowing where he was going.** 9 By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. 10 **For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.**

5. It becomes increasingly clear that we who eagerly wait for our Lord to return have turned our hearts toward our heavenly country, Hebrews 11:13-16.

- (Hebrews 11:13–16 ESV) These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, **but having seen them and greeted them from afar,** and **having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.** 14 **For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.** 15 If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 **But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one.** Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

6. We who eagerly wait for our Lord to return know that here on earth we have no lasting city so we seek the city that is to come, Hebrews 13:13-15.

- (Hebrews 13:13–15 ESV) Therefore let us go to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured. 14 **For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.** 15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

7. We who eagerly wait for our Lord to return will one day see the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, Revelation 21:1-2.

- (Revelation 21:1–2 ESV) Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. 2 **And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God,** prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.