

7/12/26

Introduction To Philippians

We want to begin an introduction to the letter to the Philippians to become familiar with the city, the church and the epistle itself.

The epistle contains only four chapters comprising one-hundred-four verses.

The letter communicates to us the faithful commitment of a man sold out to Christ and his calling, living with great expectations and contentment, knowing that God is in control and that He is sufficient for the task He calls us to!

The letter to the Philippians is known as the epistle of joy for it speaks of the consecrated life having total dependency and confidence in the gospel for insulation, not isolation through personal fellowship with Jesus!

We want to divide up our introduction in three ways.

- I.** The city of the Philippians.
- II.** The church of the Philippians.
- III.** The epistle to the Philippians.

I. The city of the Philippians.

- A.** The founding of the city.

1. The city of Philippi was a fortified city of Macedonia.
2. The city was originally it was called "Daton", then "krenides", which means "little fountain" because of the springs that ran down from the mountains.
3. Philip II the father of Alexander the Great took possession of it from the Thracians in 358-7 B.C. and named it Philippi.
4. The city was located about eleven miles north of the Port of Neapolis on the Aegean Sea, the main route between Asia and Europe on the Egnatian Way that was the gateway to Europe.
5. The city had a small river Gangites a mile to the east which emptied into the Strymon thirty miles away, the region contained valuable gold and silver mines.
7. The city was divided into two parts, the upper city on the rocky slopes overlooking the fertile plains.
8. The lower city south of the Egnatian Way was later added extending into the plains, here were located the forum and the market place, the center of the city's life.
9. The population was mostly Gentile of the Roman colonist, old Macedonia in greater number and few Jews.
10. Once famous for its gold mines, even as far back as the time of the Phoenicians by the

time Rome controlled it they were exhausted.

11. Alexander's father drew 1,000 talents a year of gold.

B. The history of the city.

- 1 The Roman empire broke up Macedonia into four districts politically, Philippi was the first.
2. In 146 B.C. the entire territory was formed into the Roman province of Macedonia.
3. In 42 B.C. Octavian and Mark Antony defeated the Republican armies of Brutus and Cassius and the city was elevated to a colony under the name of, "Colonia Julia Philippensis".
4. Eleven years later in 31 B.C. Octavian defeated Antony in the battle of Actium, settling veteran soldiers in it.
5. Later in 27 B.C., Philippi was called, "Colonia Augusta Julia Philippiensis"
- 6 By Augustus settling veteran soldiers, he made it a Roman colony which gave it many advantages such as an autonomous government, exemption from tribute and treatment as if they were actually living in Rome. Acts 16:12, 21
5. A Roman colony was usually established by 300 veteran soldiers and their families as a reward for their service and to ensure the cohesiveness and control through the

Empire. (Mainly Italian, and Grecian Macedonians)

7. The official language was Latin,]] but a knowledge of Greek was necessary for all residents.
8. As a colony it was a miniature Rome, a small scale of the imperial city, exempting her citizens from poll and property taxes. providing land holdings and transfers, freedom from interference by providential governments ruling their own civil affairs, through two collegiate magistrates called.
 - a. The praetors "duumviri" combined civil and military authority in their persons.
 - b. The Lictors who attended the praetors, bearing official bundles of rods with a mace protruding from the center, a symbol of power and authority. Acts 16:22, 35, 36, 38

This was the city of the Philippians!

II. The church of the Philippians.

- A. The second missionary journey of Paul provides for us the setting for the birth of the Philippian church. Acts 16:1-12
 1. There had been a strong contention between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark, so the second journey was expanded, Barnabas took John Mark and Paul took Silas.

2. Paul took Timothy as his disciple and circumcised him due to his Jewish mother, not for justification. Acts 16:1-5
 3. They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia and Bithynia. Acts 16:6-7
 4. Paul receives the call to Macedonia in a vision from Troas. Acts 16:8-9
 5. Immediately they went to Macedonia and came to Philippi, the first city of that part of Macedonia, geographically coming from the East. Acts 16:10-12
 6. The city was called the foremost or chief city of the district of Macedonia. Acts 16:12
 - a. This does not mean that it was the capital of the province, Thessalonica held that position; nor does it mean Philippi was the capital of the district for Amphipolis held that.
 - b. The phrase “prote” was an honorary title given to certain cities, a leading city for Philippi was the only “colony” in the area.
 - c. The city's primary function was to defend any attacks from barbarian hordes and to preserve the Roman peace.
- B.** The first convert was Lydia, a wealthy woman from Thyatira, a seller of purple. Acts 16:13-15
1. The women met at the river, due to the fact that there were not enough Jewish men for a synagogue which was ten. vs. 13

2. The woman Lydia listened heard the gospel and the Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. vs. 14
 - a. She was a seller of purple from Thyatira, a dye obtained from shellfish and each would provide only one drop, therefore its rarity and beauty demanded it.
 - b. Since Philippi was a colony of Rome it loved the royal color using it to trim togas, tunics, rugs and tapestries.
 - c. She was a worshipper of God, a proselyte.
 3. The woman and her household were baptized and opened her house to the apostles. vs. 15
 4. The party consisted of Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke.
- C.** The second convert was a demon possessed girl. Acts 16:16-24
1. Paul and his companions were going to prayer when a demon possessed girl who brought great gain to her masters was proclaiming they were servants of the most High God declaring the way of salvation. vs. 16-17
 2. Paul after many days was annoyed and casted out the demon from her, delivering her. vs. 18

3. Her masters seeing their hope of gain gone brought Paul and Silas before the magistrates and accused them. vs. 19-21
4. They beat them with rods and put them in the stocks in prison. vs. 22-24

D. The third convert was a jailer and his family.
Acts 16:25-34

1. Paul and Silas at midnight were praying and singing to God, while all the prisoners were listening when an earthquake shook the prison, the doors were open and their chains were loosened. vs. 25-26
2. The jailer awaking from sleep thought the prisoners had escaped was going to take his life. vs. 27
3. Paul called out that he not do harm to himself, for all were present. vs. 28
3. The jailer trembling before Paul and Silas asked them, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” vs. 29-30
4. The jailer and his entire family were led to Christ, baptized and they washed the of Paul and Silas. vs. 30-33

E. The church was established and helped by Luke. Acts 16:35-40

1. The magistrates sent word to release Paul and Silas but Paul returned a message that they were not going to go quietly, seeing

- they had been beaten openly as uncondemned Roman citizens. vs. 35-36
2. The authorities feared hearing they were Roman citizen and pleaded with them to leave. vs. 38-40
 - a. They would be liable to severe punishment for beating a Roman citizen!
 - b. In verse forty Luke uses the third person “they” in contrast to “us” and “we” of verses ten and eleven, which does not appear again until chapter twenty, verse six, indicating that most likely Luke stayed behind to help.
 3. The church at Philippi was the first church planted in Europe.
 - a. The church was established under opposition, persecution and sufferings which I believe was a leading factor in the tender and loving fellowship they had with Paul around 50 A.D.
 - b. The church was predominately Gentile and a few Jews as it was a military colony and not a mercantile city.
 4. Paul was always concerned with the churches of Macedonia and had visited two other times including Philippi Acts 20:1-3, 6; 2Cor. 1:15, 17; 2:13; 7:5
 - a. Paul made a second journey to Philippi in A.D. 55-56 on his third missionary journey. Acts 20:1-6

- b. Paul must have passed twice, on his outward trip towards Corinth and again on his return at the time when he was on the way to Jerusalem. Acts 21
- 5. The last mention of the Philippian Church history is related to the visit of the Christian martyr Ignatius, early in the Second Century on his way to Rome under military guard.
- F. The church and Paul had a loving relationship.
 - 1. Paul expressed their love from the beginning. Phil. 1:4, 7, 8
 - 2. Paul uses the term “beloved” and “brethren” several times.
 - 3. Paul held a special place in their hearts as they sent to him a financial gift twice at Thessalonica. Phil. 4:16
 - 2. Paul had once again received another gift at Rome by the hand of Epaphroditus who had become deathly ill. Phil. 2:30; 4:10
 - 3. They had abounded in their liberality for the poor saints in Jerusalem. 2Cor. 8:1-5

This was the church of the Philippians!

III. The epistle to the Philippians.

- A. The authenticity.
 - 1. External evidence is overwhelming as a genuine letter from Paul.
 - a. Eusebius, Origen, Hippolytus, Clament of Alexandria, Irenaeus, Polycarp,

- Ignatius and Clament of Rome and Athanasius, from A. D. 170-367.
 - b. All of these quoted from or referred to the epistle and accepted it as Paul’s.
- 2. Internal evidence is also overwhelming.
 - a. The author is said to be Paul in his opening statement. Phil. 1:1
 - b. The apostle is a prisoner at the time of the writing. Phil. 1:7, 13, 14; 2:17; 4:22
 - c. The location without doubt is Rome, though some have proposed Caesarea or Ephesus. Acts 28:30-31
 - d. Personal knowledge and affection. Phil. 1:3-4, 12; 2:12; 3:1,13, 17; 4:1, 8
- 3. No one ever challenged the authenticity of the letter until the late 1700’s and early 1800’s by F. C. Baur.
 - a. Some have suggested a combination of two to three letters as the content of Philippians without great acceptance.
 - b. Philippians appears in the oldest text of the New Testament.
 - c. The “Muratorian Canon” of the late 2nd Century.
- B. The origin of the epistle.
 - 1. Some have proposed Caesarea, Paul’s first imprisonment.
 - a. At this time Paul was imprisoned for two years. Acts 24:27

- b. At this time he did not expect to be released, as in this epistle. Phil. 1:24-25; 2:24
- c. At this time all Paul could do was appeal to Caesar, which he did. Acts 25:11
- 2. Others have proposed Ephesus.
 - a. At that time there is no mention of Paul's imprisonment in Acts.
 - b. At Ephesus Paul could have appealed to Caesar, but there is no record in Acts.
- 3. Rome is the most favorable of the three,, having all the Biblical support.
 - a. He identifies himself as a prisoner as we have noted already. Phil.1 :7, 14; 2:17
 - b. He refers to the Praetorium Guard and Caesar's house. Phil. 1:13; 4:22
 - c. He was planning on sending Timothy to them as soon as he found out about his appeal. Phil. 2:23
 - d. He assessed that his appeal was going to be favorable and soon visit them. Phil. 1:24; 2:24
 - e. The date of the epistle is placed around 60-61 A.D.
 - * About ten years after Paul's first visit!
 - f. At this time Paul wrote three other prison epistles.
 - * Colossians, Ephesians, and Philemon.
- 4. The bearer of the letter was Epaphroditus. Phil. 2:25-28
 - a. Called a brother.

- b. Called a fellow worker.
- c. Called a soldier,
- d. Called a messenger from Philippi who ministered to Paul's needs.
 - * Not be confused with Epaphras of Colossee. Col. 1:7-8; 4:12-13
- C. The occasion for the epistle and issue treated.
 - 1. The occasion I believe are two primarily.
 - a. Their concern for his imprisonment. Phil. 1:12
 - b. Their concern about Epaphroditus being sick and to inform them of Epaphroditus' return with commendations, lest he be looked down upon. Phil. 2:25-26, 29
 - 2. The issues that appear are many, but certainly could not be the primary purpose.
 - a. To inform them of persecution and opposition. Phil. 1:28
 - b. To remind them of the unity in the body, hearing of two women had some differences. Phil. 2:3; 4:2
 - c. To prepare for Timothy's visit. Phil. 2:19
 - d. To warn against Judaizers and antinomianism. Phil. 3:2, 17; 4:1
 - e. To encourage them in their anxieties, to rest in God. Phil. 4:6
 - f. To thank them for their gift. Phil. 4:10, 14-16
 - 1) Has been called "Epistle of excellent things", "Epistle of joy".

- 2) The epistle is one of the most personal of all his letters.
- g. The letter to the Philippians as we have stated at the start of our introduction is known as the epistle of joy for it speaks of the consecrated life having total dependency and confidence in the gospel for insulation, not isolation through personal fellowship with Jesus!

D. The outline of Philippians.

I. Christ our life. Phil. 1

- A. The expressed confidence of Paul in the gospel, past, present and future. Phil. 1:1-11
 1. The greeting and salutation. vs. 1-2
 2. The thanksgiving, love and confidence about their final salvation. vs. 3-8
 3. The prayer out of love for their ongoing walk without offence in righteousness. vs. 9-11
- B. The expressed confidence of Paul in the furtherance of the gospel in prison. Phil. 1:12-18
 1. God had sent Paul. vs. 12

2. God was causing people to respond to the gospel and his imprisonment. vs. 13-14
 3. God was using good and bad intention of men to preach. vs. 15-18
- C. The expressed confidence of Paul in his deliverance. Phil. 1:19-30
1. Paul knew his deliverance would be come through their prayers in boldness be it in life or death. vs. 19-20
 2. Paul life and death were in view of Christ. vs. 21
 3. Paul was torn between the two but was confident he would be here a while longer for their benefit. vs. 22-26
- D. The expressed confidence of Paul in their conduct through sufferings. Phil. 1:27-30
1. To be worthy of the gospel. vs. 27
 2. To not be intimidated by the adversaries. vs. 28
 3. To endure suffering for Christ's sake. vs. 29
 4. To share in the same persecution as he had at Philippi. vs. 39

II. Christ our mind. Phil. 2

- A. The example of Christ in service and sufferings. Phil. 2:1-11
 - 1. Be like-minded. vs. 1-2
 - 2. Be humble esteeming others. vs. 3-4
 - 3. Be a servant like Christ to the point of death. vs. 5-11
 - B. The call to appropriate Christ-likeness. Phil. 2:12-16
 - 1. By yielding to God. vs. 12-13
 - 2. By being blameless as lights. vs. 14-15
 - 3. By being ready to rejoice in the day of Christ. vs. 16
 - C. The examples of such humility. Phil. 2:17-30
 - 1. Paul in prison, being poured out as a drink offering in service. vs. 17-18
 - 2. Timothy as a son in the gospel. vs. 19-24
 - 3. Epaphroditus as a sacrificial servant. vs. 25-30
- III. Christ our goal. Phil. 3
- A. The warning against self-righteous standing apart from Christ. Phil. 3:1-11
 - 1. The circumcision of Judaizers. vs. 1-3
 - 2. The human achievements are a pile of fertilizer. vs. 4-7

- 3. The excellence of the power of the resurrection. vs. 8-11
 - B. The pressing on in maturity. Phil. 3:12-16
 - 1. No man has arrived or finished the race while on earth. vs. 12-13
 - 2. Nothing will do but the upward call of God. vs. 14
 - 3. Nothing less than maturity according to age will do. vs. 15-16
 - C. The exhortation to walk as citizens of heaven. Phil. 3:17-21
 - 1. The pattern is after the apostles. vs. 17
 - 2. The destruction of those who do not walk so. vs. 18-19
 - 3. The citizen of heaven is looking for his Savior. vs. 20-21
- IV. Christ our strength. Phil. 4
- A. The exhortation for unity and God's peace. Phil. 4:1-9
 - 1. Walk in unity. vs. 1-3
 - 2. Walk knowing the Lord is at hand. vs. 4
 - 3. Walk in prayer and peace. vs. 5-7
 - 4. Walk in being a doer. vs. 8-9

- B.** The proclamation of contentment. Phil. 4:10-14
1. Thankfulness for financial help. vs. 10
 2. The attitude of contentment. vs. 11-14
- C.** The commendation for their generosity. Phil. 4:15-20
1. Their past gifts. vs. 15-16
 2. Their fruit to their account. vs. 17
 3. Their gift of by Epaphroditus. vs. 18
 4. Their sowing will return to them by God. vs. 19
 5. Their glory was to God. vs. 20
- D.** The benediction. Phil. 4:21-23
1. The saints. vs. 21-22
 2. The grace of God. vs. 23
- E.** Key Words
1. Gospel, the good news.
 - a. Fellowship in the gospel. Phil. 1:5
 - b. Confirmation of the gospel. Phil. 1:7
 - c. Furtherance of the gospel. Phil. 1:12
 - d. Defense of the gospel. Phil. 1:17
 - e. Worthy conduct and striving for the faith of the gospel. Phil. 1:27
 - f. Served with me in the gospel. Phil. 2:22
 - g. Labor with me in the gospel. Phil. 4:3
 2. Fellowship, sharing in common, partnership.
 - * Fellowship in the gospel. Phil. 1:5
 - a. Fellowship in the Spirit. Phil. 1:5

- b. Fellowship in the Spirit. Phil. 2:1
 - c. Fellowship of His sufferings. Phil. 3:10
 - * The gospel brings fellowship that produces joy, in spite of situations, circumstances, people or needs.
 3. Joy, the fruit of the Spirit.
 - a. Joy and rejoice is mentioned seventeen times in the epistle. Phil. 1:4, 18, 25, 26; 2:2, 16, 17, 18; 3:1, 3; 4:1, 4, 10
 - b. Joy is a result of the Spirit of Christ. Phil. 1:19
 - c. Joy is evidence and a virtue of the fruit of the Spirit. Gal. 5:22
 4. The names of Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, Lord Jesus Christ, Lord Jesus, Lord and Savior occur fifty-one times in the 104 verses of the epistle.
- F.** Key Verses
1. For me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Phil. 1:21
 2. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. Phil. 2:5
 3. That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death. Phil. 3:10
 4. I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13

This is the epistle to the Philippians!

Conclusion

Hopefully this introduction has given to us greater insight to the epistle, so that we will be better able to understand it's content as we have examined it.

- I.** The city of the Philippians.
- II.** The church of the Philippians.
- III.** The epistle to the Philippians.