

A Study in Philippians – Teacher’s Notes

Lesson One – Introduction

I. Author – Apostle Paul to the Church at Philippi in AD 61-63.

We know from 1:13-14 that Paul was imprisoned in Rome waiting to appear before the Emperor. He was not in the dungeon, but in his own rented house, where he was free for two years to receive visits from fellow believers.

II. Primary Purpose – To thank the Philippian church for their gift to him.

- He gives the church a report on his present circumstances
- He encourages them to stand firm in the face of persecution and to rejoice regardless of the circumstances.
- He exhorts them to humility and unity
- He warns them against the Judaizers (legalists) among them.

III. Characteristics of Philippians

- Contains no OT quotations
- Is a letter of “Joy” – “joy” or “rejoice” is found 16 times.
- Consists of 4 chapters, 101 verses
- The word “sin” is nowhere mentioned. Paul was very pleased with and blessed by the Philippian church.

IV. Philippi

- Philippi had gold and silver mines and very fertile soil.
- Was an important commercial city in the province of Macedonia. The capital of Macedonia was Thessalonica.

- The city had been founded by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. This is where it got its name.
- There is a long range of mountains running north-south dividing Europe from Asia. Philippi was situated at the pass through these mountains. This was not only good for commerce, but very strategic militarily, since it commanded the road through the pass.
- Became a Roman colony
 - A city was made a Roman colony by Julius Caesar to commemorate his famous victory of Brutus and Cassius.
 - Rome sent out a party of veteran Roman soldiers, who had served their time and been granted Roman citizenship. Usually 300 or so soldiers with their wives and children.
 - These Roman colonies were networked together with the famous Roman road system.
 - A Roman colony did not adopt the customs of the land around them. They established Roman government and customs. They spoke Latin and dressed as Romans. Their culture, religion, ceremonies, holidays, etc. were Roman.
 - Philippian citizens were Roman citizens. Philippi was very proud to be a Roman colony.
 - **Phil 3:20** – Paul reminds the Philippians, “**For our citizenship is in heaven, (You are a colony of heaven)**”
- There were not enough Jews in Philippi to have a synagogue
 - The city and eventually the church were primarily Gentile.

V. **The Church at Philippi**

(Locate Philippi on the map.)

- Paul and Silas brought the gospel to Philippi on their second missionary journey (AD51)
- **Acts 16:6-10**

Paul is stopped twice from going in the natural direction.

Paul has a night vision. A man from Macedonia calling him to come.

The vision is accepted as being from the Lord.

- Acts 16:11-13

Philippi is the leading city of Macedonia.

On the Sabbath they meet at the river where there was a place of prayer.

There were not enough Jews in Philippi to have a synagogue.

Philippi was almost entirely Gentiles.

- Acts 16:14-15

Lydia – the first convert in Europe, an upper-class merchant. (1)

- Acts 16: 16-18

Paul delivers slave girl from evil spirits. (2)

- Acts 16: 19-21

The accusation against Paul – “Proclaiming customs it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe being Romans.” They were a Roman colony and could only observe Roman customs and religion.

This explains why Paul was persecuted. Why the believers in God had to meet at the river. Why the Philippian church later suffered persecution.

- Acts 16:22-30

Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison.

At midnight they were praying and singing hymns of praise to God.
Why?

Earthquake! Jailer asks to be saved. (3) Why?

- Acts 16:31-40

The authorities never suspected that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens when they arrested them.

Public beating for Roman citizens was illegal, and Roman citizens could not be arrested without a trial.

Paul wanted to establish his innocence for the sake of the Philippian believers.

Why was Paul so easily convinced to leave the city?

- Paul's sufferings at Philippi strengthened the bond between him and his converts. There was a deep love between them. The Philippi church continued to experience persecution. The church at Philippi sent Paul supplies three times while he was imprisoned in Rome. This is the reason for his letter to them.
- What kind of people did the church in Philippi start out with?
 1. Lydia – upper-class merchant
 2. Jailer – middle-class Roman?
- Paul visited Philippi five years later on the way to Corinth and on the return trip (3rd missionary journey)

VI. Philippians, the letter

- **1:1** letter from Paul and Timothy
- Written 10 years later, AD 63 or 64
- Again the Philippians have sent him a gift by the hand of Epaphroditus.
- EP was probably a deacon or leader in the church at Philippi. Was sent to bring the gift and stayed to minister to Paul.
- Paul was imprisoned in Rome. He had possibly been moved from his own rented house where he lived for two years to the barracks prison.
- Paul wrote the letter to acknowledge their gift to him. Sent EP back with the letter.

VII. Phil 1:1-2 The Greeting

1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus. To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons:

2 Grace to you and peace from god our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- **Bondservant:** Deut 15:12-18

Willing service – a servant who chooses to serve his master for a lifetime.

Why did Paul call himself a bondservant?

What are the benefits of a bondservant?

Gal 1:10 *For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.*

How should a bondservant behave? Please God only.

- **Saints** – the holy ones in Christ, the ones who are different from other people, the ones who are set apart for Christ, those consecrated to Him.

In Christ Jesus occurs 48 times

In Christ occurs 34 times

In the Lord occurs 50 times

- **Grace and Peace** – can come only through Jesus Christ.

Grace = the Greek greeting

Means joy and beauty and pleasure to you, that which comes from being a child of God.

Peace = the Hebrew greeting

Means total well-being, everything that makes for your highest good, that which comes from being reconciled to God.