

Subject: *Know Your Bible – Part 22*

Scripture: *Philippians 1:1-11*

Time, Place, and Purpose of Philippians

1. Paul wrote this epistle to the church in Philippi, a city in Macedonia (Greece). Paul established the church on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:9-40). This was the first church planted in the continent of Europe.
2. This epistle was written around 60-62 A.D. Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke first came to Philippi in A.D. 51, about ten years before Paul wrote this letter
3. This is the second of Paul's four prison epistles (with Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon). All of these letters refer to his imprisonment in Rome (Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; Phil. 1:7, 13-14; Col. 4:3, 10, 18; Philemon 9-10, 13, 23). During this time Paul was guarded by soldiers, was permitted to receive visitors, and had the opportunity to preach the gospel. Paul's hope that his case would soon be decided (Phil. 2:23-24) is an indication that this epistle was written near the end of his two-year imprisonment.
4. The city of Philippi was a Roman colony (Acts 16:12), and many veterans of the Roman army settled there. The Philippians prided themselves on being Roman citizens (Acts 16:21), so Paul's description of Christians as citizens of heaven (Phil. 3:20) was appropriate.
5. The first converts at Philippi were Lydia and the Philippian jailer. Lydia was a wealthy businesswoman who dealt in expensive purple dyed goods. She was converted as God opened her heart to the truths that Paul taught (Acts 16:14). It is likely that the church first met in her home (Acts 16:40). The conversion of the jailer and his family occurred after an earthquake (Acts 16:25-34).
6. Paul sent this epistle by Epaphroditus, Paul's beloved brother and fellow servant (Phil. 2:25). He had a near-fatal illness while on his way to Rome, or after he arrived to minister to Paul's needs.
7. Paul had several reasons for writing this letter:
 - A. He wrote to inform them about his own circumstances at Rome (1:12-26)
 - B. He wrote to urge them to have unity and humility (2:1-11; 4:1-2)
 - C. He wrote to relieve them about Epaphroditus (2:25-30)
 - D. He wrote to warn them about false teachers (3:1-2, 17-19)
 - E. He wrote to thank them for their financial support (4:10-18)
8. This epistle contains Paul's spiritual autobiography (3:4-11). Paul rejected his own self-righteousness and received the perfect righteousness of Christ by faith.
9. This epistle contains one of the most profound statements about Christ in the New Testament (2:5-11). This passage refers to Christ's preexistence, incarnation, humiliation, crucifixion, and exaltation, and was likely a hymn of the ancient church.

10. This epistle emphasizes Christian joy and encouragement in the midst of difficult circumstances (1:4, 18, 25-26; 2:2, 16-18, 28-29; 3:1, 3; 4:1, 4, 10). Paul enjoyed a very close and warm relationship with the church at Philippi. This church apparently had no major internal problems and remained sensitive and responsive to Paul's financial needs. Some of the dominant words in this epistle are *joy* or *rejoice* (16 times), *attitude* or *think* (10 times) and *gospel* (9 times).

Outline of Philippians

I. Paul's Account of His Present Circumstances (1:1-30)

- A. Paul's Praise and Prayer for the Church (1:1-11)
- B. Paul's Afflictions Promote the Gospel (1:12-18)
- C. Paul's Afflictions Magnify the Lord (1:19-26)
- D. Paul's Encouragement to Stand Firm in Suffering (1:27-30)

II. Paul's Appeal to Have the Attitude of Christ (2:1-30)

- A. The Need for Humility (2:1-4)
- B. Christ's Example of Humility (2:5-11)
- C. Paul's Exhortation to Work Out Salvation (2:12-13)
- D. Paul's Exhortation to Be Light-Bearers (2:14-16)
- E. Paul's Example of Humility (2:17-18)
- F. Timothy's Example of Humility (2:19-24)
- G. Epaphroditus' Example of Humility (2:25-30)

III. Paul's Appeal to Have the Knowledge of Christ (3:1-21)

- A. Warning against Confidence in the Flesh (3:1-9)
- B. Paul's Ambition to Know Christ (3:10-16)
- C. Warning against Living for the Flesh (3:17-21)

IV. Paul's Appeal to Have the Peace of Christ (4:1-23)

- A. Peace with Fellow Believers in Christ (4:1-3)
- B. Peace with the Lord (4:4-9)
- C. Peace in all circumstances (4:10-19)
- D. Conclusion (4:20-23)

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