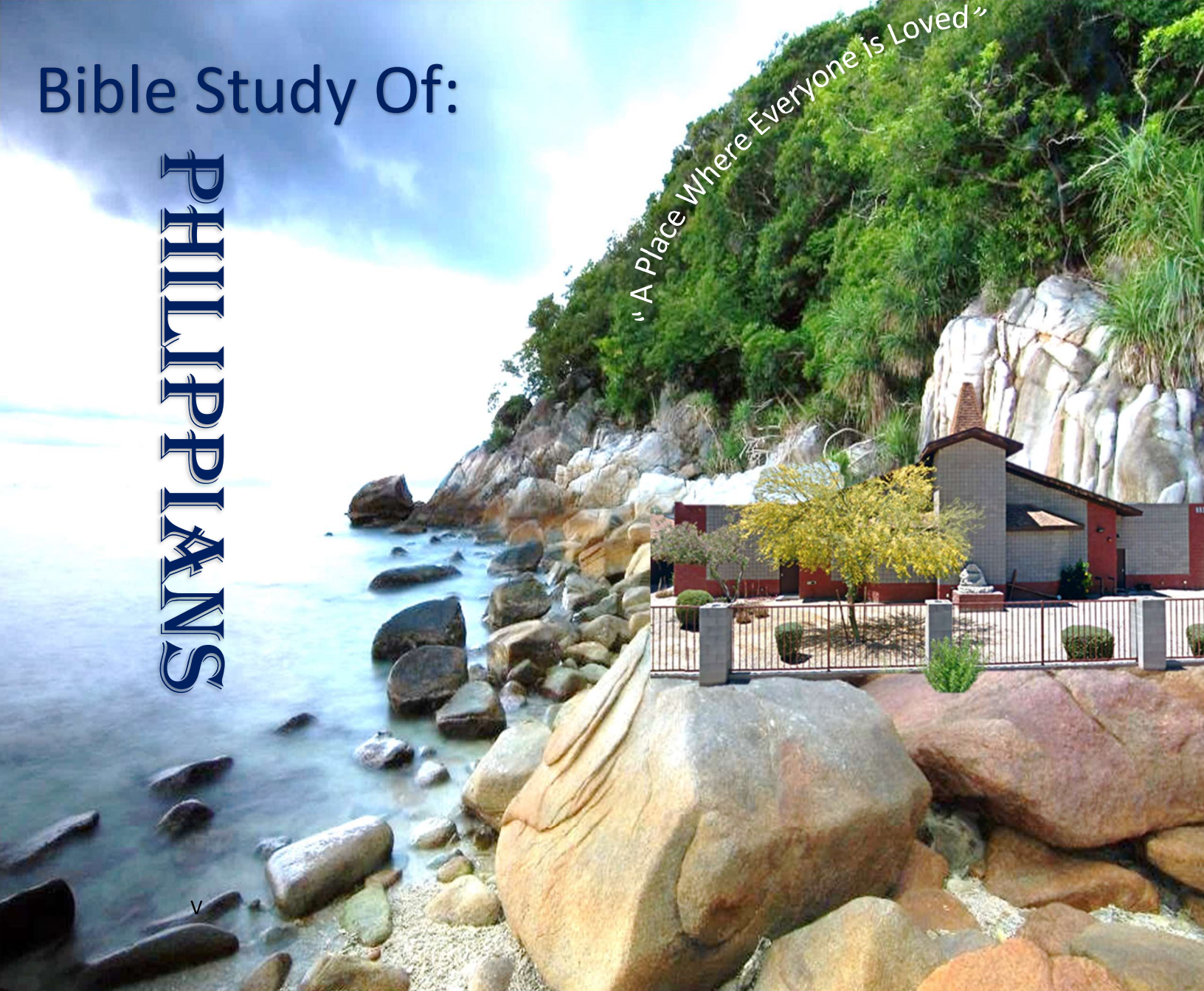


Bible Study Of:

PHILIPPIANS

*"A Place Where Everyone is Loved"*



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## Philippian History, Religious Influence and Economy

Philippi was a Roman "colony" and its inhabitants were Roman citizen, with voting rights and governed by their own senate and magistrates. Paul, Silas and Timothy saturated the area with the gospel during their second missionary journey. When Paul arrived in the city of Philippi he stayed there several days (Acts 16:12).

The religious life of those in Philippi was marked by a diversity of religions, cultures and schools of thought. This included worshipping the emperor (Julius, Augustus, and Claudius) and the Egyptian gods Isis and Serapis representing the underworld and the sacred bull. Paul was looking for a place to prayer and went to the river. There may not have been an established place of worship. Paul may have gone to the Gangites River about 1.5 miles away, looking for a meeting place. Since there were very few Jews in Philippi to sow traditionalism, distrust and suspicion the opposition came due to a loss of revenue from a dispossessed woman.

The economy of the Church referenced from 2 Cor. 8:1- 2, indicates the members were poor, yet liberal in their giving. Philippians 1:28-30 They were being persecuted and there was discord and conflicts that caused disunity.

## AUTHOR AND DATING

The author of Philippians is generally agreed on as the Apostle Paul and was written during his Roman imprisonment. (Acts 28:30). Philippi was located in north eastern Greece (Macedonia) and Paul missionary journey there was about 49 CE according to Acts 16:11-40.

The Philippian church was founded by the Apostle Paul on his 2<sup>nd</sup> missionary journey. Paul originally went to Macedonia after a night vision. In it Paul saw a man of Macedonia standing and asking him to come over to help them. Paul responded and so the gospel went to Philippi as the first city evangelized in Europe.

When Paul arrived it was a urban center at the eastern end of the plain, a few miles northwest from Neapolis. The people were both Romans and Greeks speaking predominantly Greek.

## Philippians Chapter One

Paul greets the church of Philippi as one of the first churches established on the continent of Europe with thanksgiving and prayer reflections. These Philippians had a partnership in the gospel and were generous and giving when he was with them [Acts 16:15, 16:32-34] and when he was away from them [2 Cor. 8:1-7, 9:1-4, and 11:9]. With every memory, every recollection of them, Paul was incarcerated and praying joyfully and confidently God would complete the good work He has begun in their lives. Paul is pursuing them in love, praying their love becomes fully developed and mature. Praying upon the return of Christ, He will collect the product, the evidence of His effectual work in their lives. Paul is evidencing how life and fellowship in Christ triumphs in adverse situations to unite the Body.

Paul's imprisonment provided Christians around him a greater confidence and boldness. They saw joy in Paul even in adversity, God took care of him. Paul sees positivity in his incarceration as profitable for the gospel, reaching many. Others incarcerated were now using this as an opportunity to preach Christ boldly. Everyone knows his imprisonment is for Christ and not criminal activity and it has shifted the atmosphere of the prison population. There is a mixture of motives and although some are selfish ambition and others add humiliation to Paul, he sets his attention on the positivity of Christ being preached.

Paul is confident the results of his incarceration will be liberation and deliverance because of the effectual and fervent prayer of the church. God was orchestrating all the events of Paul's life for His glory and furtherance of the gospel. It will be through prayer and the supply of the Holy Spirit deliverance will come. There is the filling of the Spirit and also a continual flowing supply, which meets the needs and replenishes. In spite of all his personal challenges, the Holy Spirit is flowing, facilitating his needs and encouraging him to persevere. Paul discovered the greater his need, the more of the Holy Spirit he receives. The river of the Spirit is increasing and Paul is being carried away in the current and flow.

Paul's deliverance if he is released alive, or by death. No matter which, he is sure Christ will give him strength to be faithful. He will have sufficient courage in every challenge. It is his intention Christ is exalted and the Body of Christ equipped by his life or death. If Paul escapes alive, he will praise Christ and if he dies in faith, that will also be a witness for Christ. He knows he will receive more eternally than he has ever had in this life. He trusts God for eternal life, so he uses this mortal life to serve Him and if he dies, he will be assured of a greater reward.

Paul reminds the Philippian church their conduct, their pattern of behavior should be worthy of the gospel. The everyday life of a believer should show they trust in Christ even when pressured or threatened. Paul want the church to have a witness of faith, that they are standing firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel. He encourages them to imitate him and face trials just as he is facing his and rejoicing in Christ while holding fast to the faith.

## Philippians Chapter Two

Charles Spurgeon says, "The Holy Spirit consoles, but Christ is the consolation". We are to extend to others the consolation, encouragement, solace and refreshment you have received. Paul is instructing the Philippians in how to stand strong against external conflicts and how to act against internal conflicts in the body of Christ. He reiterates the gospel message of love Jesus delivered. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." [Mark 12:30-31] Paul wanted to encourage the Church in knowing how to put to work the love and care they have for themselves in the unification and love for the body of believers.

It is essential the Church have the mindset of Christ, receiving son-ship authority and yet to respond in humility. We have the greatness of God at work in us and this knowledge should humble us to become obedient to the will and work of ministry within the body. The sacrificial love of Christ, in having equality and service must be actively at work for the building or edification of the Body. There is a dying to self that is profitable and serving within the body as we exemplify the effective ministry of Christ. The humility and sacrifice of Christ promoted Him and elevated His name in Lordship over every power and principality causing them to bow and humble themselves before Him.

There will be adversity, difficulties, challenges and oppositions to the faith in us. We are to overcome them by the faith active in us. The fear and trembling of the conscious awareness of the presence and power of God working through us is fuel to help us accomplish His purpose in us and our assignment. The darkness invading and penetrating the world demands we continue on the path designed by God. His Word being the light and lamp on the pathway to avoid stumbling and unnecessary detours. [Psalms 119:105] We must be assured the illumination of the gospel destroys the power and effectiveness of darkness. Paul anticipates the finality and eternity of his rejoicing in the completion of his assignment. [2 Timothy 4:7]

Paul recognizes God has given him Timothy and Epaphroditus with the same spirit of service and humility he has to complete the work of this assignment to the Church. He sacrifices his own comfort to send them to the church to spiritually reinforce and encourage them. Their concern for the wellbeing of Paul and those working alongside him exemplifies the bond of unity and love he is sharing through his letter with the church.

## Philippians Chapter 3

Paul begins his first closing by using the phrase, finally (as for the rest) whatever your challenge rejoice, thrive and be exceedingly confident, God is in control. This will test your confidence if like Paul you are temporarily confined or locked into your situation. Having the mindset of Christ, giving God full control is a confident trust Him. As a farmer stands expectantly before a field, he knows his work is to cultivate (sow, break up the ground, tend) the field. In like manner we must tend, provoke and stir up the joy of our salvation, like a fire it must be stoked.

There will be infiltrators, vermin, spoilers who creep into the congregation or gathering of believers with false teachings. Surrounding eastern cities were herds of dogs, homeless and prowling without an owner. They feed on the refuse of the streets, quarreling among themselves, and attacking. Like vicious dogs, false teachers first appear as harmless pets, but grow to be territorial predators. Watching, protects the body from their vicious attacks and our gospel cultivated fields. In reviewing his own development, history and position of prestige he measures God's effectiveness. It is imperative to be watchful and aware as watchmen who watch for intruders attempting to dilute and make less potent the authenticity of the gospel. Instead of mutilation of the flesh let us cut the excess flesh from our heart, as we mature in worshipping God in and by the Spirit. We will put less emphasis on the work of the flesh and more on the transformational power of the gospel.

Paul reviews his faith development, he always was zealous, fierce, defensive and excited in his faith and submission. Paul doesn't mourn the loss of what was, instead he rejoices in being completed in Christ, undergirded in His righteousness. Nothing he previously experienced can be compared to the possession of the priceless privilege, value/worth and advantage of knowing Christ. It cannot be compared to the overflowing richness of the resurrection power available to him in Christ Jesus. It includes fellowship in His suffering being rewarded by an eternal weight of glory laid up for him. Whatever has been loss is nothing compared to knowing and being found in Christ. It is through the supply of the Holy Spirit that we understand Him more fully and clearly. Paul has discarded the rubbish of his former accomplishments, discarding them in order to gain Christ the Anointed One.

Paul is consistently, progressively working toward his eternal goal and doesn't assume his current apostolic position is his final achievement. Instead with every bit of his physical and spiritual energy he strains, presses forward to capture Christ, Who has captured him. Let all who are maturing hold on to this conviction of being reliant upon God to give us clarity as we press forward to know Him. Paul lays out his life and the lives of other faithful believers as a pattern to follow. The grief in his spirit is for those who have made a detour and do not walk after the Spirit but after the flesh, circumcising the flesh and not the heart. Those who live according to the appetites of the flesh seeking self-glorification, exalting themselves and not Christ. They are content with earthly citizenship instead of heavenly which they will receive when Christ returns. They will receive the total transformation and become completely one with, in and like Him.

## Philippians Chapter Four

Paul begins this final chapter making verbally visible his pastoral heart. He speaks gentle and cherishing tones to the Church as being his delight, a crown as given in athletic accomplishment (a *stephanos*) and victory in his apostolic assignment. He sees a Church firmly positioned and adhering in faith with resurrection confidence.

Paul reflects on a quarrel between Euodia and Syntyche two women in the congregation. Paul's resolution was to reset their minds to one mindedness in Christ. Paul urges others, possibly leaders to assist these women who worked diligently in the gospel to reconcile their issues.

Paul returns to rejoicing, delighting in the Lord Who benefits us by giving the desires of the heart. [Psalms 34:7] This is only accomplished with one mindedness in Christ. We take off the mind of the flesh and re-dress in the mind of Christ, putting Him on display in our everyday character and life responses to adversity. The prayer of confidence with thanksgiving evidence the sufficiency of Christ and keeps us from becoming fretful, anxious or doubting. Many of our prayers go unanswered because we do not ask God for anything, Paul invites us to let our requests be made known, revealing God wants to know what we are seeking. When adversity comes do not stop praying, continue being persistent in prayer and thanksgiving confident of God's intervention.

Confidence in God's provision ushers in His peace, a gift from and with God. We enter His peace through Christ's finished work. We have assurance, tranquility and are undisturbed by adversity complicating our lives. We fear nothing from God as He has militarized and surrounded us with incomprehensible peace guarding our heart and mind. This military enforcement is set against agents of disruption that come to undermine our confidence in God's provision. God is protecting our sanity, the state of our mind against alien invasion.

Our mind state should be filled to capacity, overflowing in God's peace and filled with the good things of God, taking residence in our thinking. When adversity comes we can pull from our guarded arsenal storehouse of God's peace, kept close as a ready resource available as needed. Meditating on the elements making up God's peace renews and refreshes our resistance and brings our thoughts into captivity into obedience of Christ and arms us against enemy invasion.

The financial giving of the Philippians has again begun to flourish regardless of their financial condition. Paul is very clear in advising his sufficiency is in Christ and he lives in the completeness of Godly provision with contentment. Paul knows God will provide all his needs abundantly in Christ. The blessing to the Church was in their sacrificial giving and he knew their account with God was being enriched as they took the Word of God to heart and mind. Paul is confident he can accomplish all things through Christ His strength. The sweet-smelling aroma of sacrificial giving arose to God's attention Who provided an abundant supply for all their needs. [Luke 6:38] They had surrendered their finances and material possessions to God's service, giving with a cheerful heart.