

THE PHILIPPIANS STUDY

AUTHOR:

The Apostle Paul, along with Timothy

DATE:

Probably the early 60s AD



BACKGROUND:

The city of Philippi was named after Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. He fortified it and exploited its mineral wealth, having conquered it in 360 B.C. The city became a Roman colony in 167 B.C. Its population was a mixture of indigenous Thracian, Greek and Latin families. Consequently there was a great variety of divinities and religious cults. There was a Jewish community to whom were attached the Gentile "God-fearers", who worshipped the God of the Jews.

A description of the foundation of the church at Philippi is found in Acts 16:9-40. Here we learn that Paul was specifically instructed to go into Macedonia region to preach the gospel there.

When he preached in Philippi and founded a church there he was accused of introducing an alien cult. This was because Christianity, unlike Judaism and other religions, did not have the sanction of the state as a religion and was thus technically unlawful.

Having founded the church Paul kept in touch with it and, as this letter reveals, received various gifts from the members. The letter has been dated around 62 A.D while Paul was imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28:16).

When he was in prison there, His imprisonment was more like what is called today "house arrest" and so he was free to employ a scribe and obtain papyrus to write his letters.

The obvious reason for his writing this letter was to thank the Philippians and the church for various aids given to Paul through Epaphroditus when he was in need. It is also a very personal letter sent to his first converts on European soil.

The book of Philippians is known as a letter of joy or friendship between the apostle Paul and a beloved church in the Philippi. It is impregnated with the themes of joy, confidence in God, Christ-centred Humility, Security in Christ, Purpose of Gospel-driven living, our Faithfulness to God's work, Unity in Christ and Perseverance in the Christian life and faith as Paul urges the Christians to live humbly and worthy of their calling as disciples of Christ.

READ: Philippians Chapter THREE

EXAMINE:

In the previous of chapters of the Philippians, the Apostle Paul urged the believers at the Philippi to remain steadfast (1:27-30) and joyful (1:19, 28-30; 2:17-18) in the face of opposition to the Gospel.

In the Philippians Chapter 3, he began with a charge for Christians to rejoice in the Lord and urged them to press on towards the heavenward prize and calling in Christ Jesus. He ended the section by reminding the believers to hold fast to the heavenly citizenship as well as to eagerly await for Christ's return.

DISCUSS:

PHILIPPIANS THREE can be broken into 4 sections

I. A Warning Against 'Religion' (Judaism VS Christianity) (3:1-2)

1. What is 'Joy'? What should be our basis of true joy? (v.1)
2. Whom do you think 'those dogs' in verse 2 refers to?

II. "The Work of the Flesh VS Grace-oriented Salvation" (3:3-11)

1. What are the distinctive marks of spiritual worship? (v.3)
2. What did Paul mean when he said that Christians shouldn't put our confidence in 'Flesh'? What does 'Flesh' refer to? (v.3-6)
3. What is now the most valuable thing in the Apostle Paul's life? (v.7-8)
4. In verse 9-11, Paul acclaims his new life ambition in Christ, what would that be?
5. What does mean to 'KNOW' Jesus Christ as Lord? (v.10)

III. "Pressing On Towards the Goal" (3:12-16)

1. What should we as Christians press on to take hold of? (v.12-14)
2. What does 'the prize' refer to? (v.14)
3. What is the mark of maturity? (v.15-16)

IV. "Awaiting for Christ's Return" (3:17-21)

1. Who would be considered as "enemies of the cross of Christ"? (v.18)
2. What are things that Christians can get side tracked with and our focus is being taken away from God as a result? (v.19)
3. What does it mean by 'our citizenship is in heaven'? (v.20)
4. How can we live our lives as we are eagerly awaiting for Christ's return? (v.20-21)