

# A Study of Philippians

## I Unique Place in the Canon

The “First Church” in any town or city has a special place in the eyes of its citizens. Imagine, then, the importance of the first known church - before there were any denominations - not merely in a single town, but in all of Europe! Such was the congregation at Philippi, birthed in ancient Macedonia (northern Greece). How Christians should rejoice that Paul heeded “the Macedonian call” and turned west, instead of east, in his evangelization of the Roman Empire!

The Philippian assembly (church) was generous in sending support to Paul time and again. Their generosity is his reason for this “thank you letter.”

But Philippians is truly the Epistle of joy - forms of “joy” and “rejoice” occur over twelve times in its four chapters. Paul knew how to rejoice in good times or hard times (Philippians 4:11). There is very little controversy or negative admonition in this “upbeat” Letter.

The key reason Christians can rejoice is that the Son of God was willing to come to earth as a Man - and a Bondservant at that! Not stopping at healing and teaching, He went all the way to death - even death on a cross. Philippians 2:5-11 expresses this great truth in a beautiful paragraph that many believe is an early Christian hymn, either quoted by Paul or original with him. Even this passage is included to teach unity through humility. Doctrine is never divorced from duty in the NT, as it often is among modern church people - with sad results.

This, then, is Philippians, one of the most cheerful and attractive books in the whole word of God.

## II Authorship

Most scholars regard the Pauline authorship of Philippians as indisputable. Some scholars think they see traces of two letters combined in Philippians, or at least that the Bondservant passage (Philippians 2:5-11) is inserted. No manuscript evidence exists for these theories.

The external evidence is strong. Those who quote the Letter early - often specifically mentioning it as by Paul - include Ignatius, Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian. Both Marcion’s “canon” and the Muratorian Canon ascribe the book to Paul.

Besides the obvious reference to Paul in Philippians 1:1, the entire style and wording ring with Paul’s tones. The arguments against Pauline authorship tend to be petty, such as maintaining that the reference to “bishops and deacons” in Philippians 1:1 demands a date later than Paul’s lifetime. But Paul uses bishops (episkopoi, the Greek work for overseers or superintendents) both in the Pastoral Epistles and Acts 20:28 as synonymous with elders. Also, it should be noted that this single congregation had multiple bishops.

## III Date

Like Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon, Philippians was written from prison, hence the category “Prison (or Captivity) Epistles.” While the other three were almost assuredly written and sent at nearly the same time (about 60 A.D.), Philippians is clearly written a little later. Paul evidently wrote Philippians from Rome. This fits well with Philippians 1:13 and 4:22, which suggest Rome as the place of origin. Paul spent two years under arrest in Rome. Hints found in this Letter suggest that Philippians was written near the end of that time. For example, Philippians 1:12-18 would imply a certain length of time for preaching in the Eternal City since Paul arrived. It seems that Paul’s case was about to be decided in a positive way (by release) seems indicated in Philippians 1:12-13, 1:19, 1:23-26.

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These facts, plus allowing time for letters, visits, and gifts of money that are alluded to in the Epistle, give us a date of late 61 A.D.

## IV Background and Theme

It was a momentous day in the history of Christian missions when the Apostle Paul came as far as Troas on his Second Missionary Journey. Troas was located on the northwest coast of Asia Minor, across the Aegean Sea from Greece. One night, in a vision, Paul heard the call to "Come over to Macedonia, and help us" (Acts 16:9). Immediately Paul arranged to sail for Macedonia with Timothy, Luke and Silas. They first set foot on European soil at Neapolis, then journeyed inland to Philippi. The city was at that time a Roman colony, governed by Roman officials, and granting the rights and privileges of Roman citizenship to its inhabitants.

On the Sabbath (Saturday), the gospel preachers went down by the riverside where a group of women were in the habit of gathering for prayer (Acts 16:13). One of these was Lydia, a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira. When she accepted the gospel message, she became the first known convert to Christianity on the continent of Europe.

Paul's stay in Philippi did not prove entirely peaceful. A young woman possessed with a spirit of divination (foretelling future events) met the servants of the Lord and for some time followed them, crying out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17). Not willing to accept the testimony of one possessed by an evil spirit, the apostle commanded the demon to come out of her. When her masters, who had profited from this girl's predictions, saw what had happened, they were furious with Paul. They dragged him and Silas into the market place to face the representatives of Rome. These magistrates, in turn, commanded that they should be beaten and thrown into prison.

What happened in that Philippian jail is now well-known. At midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, opening all the doors of the prison and causing the prisoners' chains to be loosed. The jailer, thinking that the prisoners had escaped, was about to kill himself when Paul reassured him that his inmates had not fled. Then the jailer cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The memorable answer came back, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). God's grace had won another trophy at Philippi. In the morning, the local authorities urged Paul and his companions to leave town as quickly as possible. Paul refused to go quietly. He reminded them that they had beaten him, a Roman citizen, and had imprisoned him without a fair trial. After continued appeals from the magistrates to leave the city, Paul and his companions first went to visit in the home of Lydia and then took their leave (Acts 16:40).

About ten years later, Paul wrote to the Philippians. He was in prison again. The Philippians had heard that Paul was in prison, so they sent a gift of money to him. Epaphroditus had been commissioned to carry this gift to Paul. After delivering it, he decided to stay there a while and help the apostle in his troubles. Epaphroditus became ill in carrying out these duties; in fact, he nearly died. But God had mercy on him and raised him back to health once again. He is now ready to go back to Philippi, to his home assembly, and so the apostle is sending back this Letter of acknowledgment with him.

Philippians is one of the most personal and affectionate of Paul's Epistles. It reveals clearly that this congregation held a very special place of esteem in his affection. As we read it, we detect the very tender bond that existed between the great apostle and this church which he had founded.

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## Philippians 1

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: <sup>2</sup> Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.

- 1 Paul and Timothy consider themselves “servants” (slaves with no will of their own) in the service of Jesus Christ.
- 2 This letter is written “to all the saints”. The greek word translated as “saint” is elsewhere translated as “holy”. It literally means to be physically pure, morally blameless or religious and ceremonially consecrated. Its fundamental idea is one of separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement. A stark reminder of what God thinks His children ought to be. All those who are not really saints on earth, will never be saints in heaven.
- 3 This letter is also directed to the “bishops and deacons”.
  - a There were the bishops (also translated as overseers - superintendents) whose office it was to teach and administrate. They were concerned with the souls and spiritual estate of the members of the church.
  - b There were also the deacons (also translated as ministers or servants - attendants or caretakers) who took care of the outward business of the house of God: the place, the furniture, the maintenance of, and provision for other saints - particularly orphans and widows. They took care of the secular affairs of the church, received and disbursed moneys, kept the church's accounts, and provided everything necessary for its temporal good. Both of these offices were of divine appointment.
- 4 “Grace and peace”. Grace - that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness: grace of speech. Peace - meaning health, welfare, prosperity, every kind of good.

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, <sup>5</sup> For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; <sup>6</sup> Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: <sup>7</sup> Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. <sup>8</sup> For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.

- 1 “In every remembrance”. The walls of the Philippian jail had echoed the songs of Paul and Silas on their first visit. As he writes these words, he is probably a prisoner in Rome - but he is still singing. Every remembrance of the Philippians awakened thanksgiving in his heart. Not only were they his children in the faith, but in many ways they had proved to be a model church.
- 2 “In every prayer”. He interceded in prayer for the Philippians with joy. To him it was a sheer delight to pray for them - not dull drudgery. From this and many similar passages in Paul's writing, we learn that he was a man of prayer. It is not necessary to search further for the reason he was so wonderfully used of God. When we remember the extent of his travels and the host of Christians he knew, we marvel that he maintained such a personal, intimate interest in them all.
- 3 The specific reason for his thanksgiving was their fellowship in furthering the gospel from the first day until now. Fellowship might include financial assistance. It also extends to their prayer support and a wholehearted devotion to the spread of the good news. When Paul mentions the first day, one cannot help wondering if the jailor was still alive when this letter was publicly read to the assembly at Philippi. If so, this mention of Paul's introduction to the Philippian believers would certainly have struck a responsive chord in his heart. Paul cherished the truth of Romans 8:28 ...”all things”.
- 4 As the apostle thinks of the good start the believers have made in the Christian life, he is confident that God will finish the good work He has begun. The “good work” may refer to their salvation, or it may mean their active financial participation in the furtherance of the gospel. The day of Jesus Christ refers to the time of His coming again to take His people home to heaven (the Rapture) and therefore also includes the Judgment Seat of Christ, when service for Him will be reviewed and rewarded.

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- 5 Paul feels justified in being thankful for the Philippians. In his heart he treasures a lasting memory of how loyally they stood with him, whether he was on trial, in prison, or traveling about in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. The “defense of the gospel” refers to his ministry of answering the critics, while the “confirmation of the gospel” relates to establishing the message more firmly in the hearts of those who are already believers.
- 6 “Partakers of my grace” means the undeserved strength from God to carry on the work of the Lord in the face of severe opposition. The gospel both overthrows its foes and strengthens its friends.
- 7 The memory of their faithful cooperation makes the apostle long to be with them again. He calls God to witness how greatly he yearns for them with the affection of Jesus Christ. Paul's expression of love is all the more remarkable when we remember that he had been born a Jew and was writing to people of Gentile descent. The grace of God had broken down the ancient hatred, and now they were all one in Christ.

<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and *in* all judgment; <sup>10</sup> That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; <sup>11</sup> Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

- 1 Paul has stated that he regularly rejoices in prayer over them. Here, he states three things he is praying for them.
  - a A love that abounds in knowledge (the insight obtained by penetrating knowledge, going down to the foundation) and judgment (Involves knowledge based upon experience). These two (knowledge and judgment) stand shoulder-to-shoulder with each other. Not only does Paul prays for them to have a full, experiential understanding of spiritual things.
  - b Approve all things that are excellent. He does not want them to love and approve all things indiscriminately, but to “inspect, approve and utilize” those spiritual things that are of real value.
  - c That they be sincere and without offense until the Rapture. Literally, “without wax” (wholesome) and not leading to something that is less than honorable. We could say a person who is sincere and without offense is like this:
    - (1) that his motives are pure;
    - (2) that his conduct is free from double-dealing, trick, and cunning;
    - (3) that his words express the real sentiments of his heart;
    - (4) that he is true to his word, and faithful to his promises; and,
    - (5) that he is always what he professes to be. A sincere Christian would bear to have the light let in upon him always; to have the emotions of his heart seen; to be scanned everywhere, and at all times, by people, by angels, and by God.
- 2 As they live out their Christian lives, they are to live righteously (like Christ). The fruits of their lives (their deeds done in this body) should demonstrate that they are Christians, through-and-through.
- 3 What is the reason for a saint to live such a spiritually rich life? Because it brings glory and praise to God.

<sup>12</sup> But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things *which happened* unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; <sup>13</sup> So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other *places*; <sup>14</sup> And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- 1 It would be easy for the Philippians to be discouraged that their spiritual father was imprisoned. Under most circumstances, the very act of imprisonment usually implies guilt. Although they were certain that Paul had done nothing wrong, they probably had feared that his imprisonment would hinder the spread of the Gospel; he therefore removes this fear.
- 2 Not only had his imprisonment NOT caused harm to the Church, it had actually HELPED. Paul cites his influence in Caesar's Palace and everywhere else as an example of how Christianity was growing through his persecutions.
- 3 Rather than hindering, persecutions were actually having a positive effect on the spread of the gospel. Christians were becoming BOLD and FEARLESS in presenting their testimonies.

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<sup>15</sup> Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: <sup>16</sup> The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: <sup>17</sup> But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel.

- 1 “Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife”... What the ground of this “envy and strife” the apostle does not mention. It would seem, that even in Rome there was a party which was jealous of the influence of Paul, and took this opportunity to challenge his influence. He is imprisoned and unable to meet and refute them. They had the advantage of freedom. He had the advantage of being right. It seems most likely that these “preachers” were Judaizing teachers, professing Christianity but insistent on the keeping of the Law and Moses.
- 2 Others had sincere and pure motives; they preached Christ “of good will”, in an honest effort to help the apostle.
- 3 One group was preaching Christ in a way to hurt Paul and his cause. The others were preaching Christ in a way that would help Paul and his case, carrying on because Paul could not openly preach.

<sup>18</sup> What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. <sup>19</sup> For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, <sup>20</sup> According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death.

- 1 Regardless of which “side” the preachers were on, Paul rejoiced because Christ was being truthfully preached.
- 2 Paul is NOT ignoring or excusing their motives. He is merely holding to the greater good - that Christ is preached.
- 3 Often, we find that our “fights” with other Christians are because of methods or motives. We should learn from Paul. There was something of much greater importance and Paul took both the abuse and help in stride. He was neither overly discouraged or proudly encouraged by any of this. Nothing would discourage him from pursuing what Christ had commissioned him to do - preach the gospel.
- 4 “the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” means the power of the Holy Spirit stretched forth in his behalf - the strength which the Spirit would supply to him. In general, it refers to the boundless resources which the Spirit supplies to enable believers to stand fast, regardless of what their circumstances may be.
- 5 “in nothing shall I be ashamed”. That I shall do nothing of which I shall later be ashamed. In these heavy trials, I may not be left to deny the truth of the Christian religion; that, even before the emperor, I may maintain its principles; and that the dread of death may not lead me to do a dishonorable thing, or in any way so to shrink from an avowal of my belief, as to give me or my friends occasion of regret.
- 7 He had not yet been put on trial, and whether that trial would result in his acquittal or not, he did not know. But he felt assured that if he was acquitted, the effect would be to honor Christ.
- 8 If his trial should result in his death, then he believed he would be able to show such a spirit that would do honor to Christ and His cause. He was not afraid to die. He was persuaded that he would be enabled to bear the pains of death in such a manner as to show the sustaining power of a relationship with Christ and the value of Christianity.

<sup>21</sup> For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. <sup>22</sup> But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. <sup>23</sup> For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: <sup>24</sup> Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you. <sup>25</sup> And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; <sup>26</sup> That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

- 1 Paul had a purpose in his life:
  - a a purpose to know as much of Christ as it was possible to know - to become as fully acquainted as he could with his character, his plans and with the relationship which he had to the Father.

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- b a purpose to imitate Christ - to make him the model of his life. It was a design that Christ should reign in his heart, that the same desires should drive him.
  - c a purpose to make Christ known, as far as possible, among mankind. To this, Paul seriously gave his life, and devoted his talents. His aim was to see how many he could reach with the Christian religion; to see to how many he could make Christ known.
  - d it was a purpose to enjoy Christ. He drew his comforts from him. He found his happiness in communion with him.
- 2 Paul had a profit in his death:
- a he will be freed from sin. Here it is the source of perpetual humiliation and sorrow; in heaven we will sin no more.
  - b he will be freed from doubts about his condition. Here, we are liable to doubts about our personal piety, and often experience many an anxious hour in reference to this point; in heaven, doubt will be known no more.
  - c he will be freed from temptation. Here, no one knows when he may be tempted, nor how powerful the temptation may be. In heaven, there will be no temptations to lead him astray; no artful, cunning, or skillful enticements before him to sin. And no heart to yield to them if there could be such temptations.
  - d he will be delivered from all his enemies - external and internal. Here the Christian is constantly liable to have his motives called in question, or to be met with detraction and slander. In heaven, there will be none to do him injustice; all will rejoice in the belief that he is pure,
  - e he will be delivered from suffering. Here he is constantly familiar with it. His health fails, his friends die, his mind is sad. There, there shall be no separation of friends, no sickness, and no tears.
  - f he will be delivered from death. Here, death is always near. There, death will be known no more. In all heaven there will never be seen a funeral procession.
  - g to all this may be added the fact, that the Christian will be surrounded by his best friends; that he will be reunited with those whom he loved on earth; that he will be associated with the angels of light; and that he will be admitted to the immediate presence of his Saviour and his God! Why, then, should a Christian be afraid to die? And why should he not hail that hour, when it comes, as the hour of his deliverance, and rejoice that he is going home? Does the prisoner dread the hour he is permitted to return to his family and friends? Why then should the Christian dread the hour which will restore him to immortal strength; which shall remove all his sorrows; which shall introduce him to everlasting day?
- 3 Paul does not know which of two choices to make (though the choice is not up to him). He would prefer to die and be "with Christ". The work here requires him to "sacrifice" his own desires and continue as an Apostle of Christ.
- 4 Death is not to be confused with the coming of the Savior. At the time of death, we go to be with Him. At the time of the Rapture, He comes to us.
- 5 Paul is convinced that it is necessary that he should live longer for the spreading and defense of the Gospel. This was in fact the case, for after having been in bonds for two years at Rome, he was released.
- 6 "That your rejoicing may be more abundant". Men rejoice more in recovering a thing that was lost, than they do in a continual possession of what is of much greater value.
- <sup>27</sup> Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; <sup>28</sup> And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.
- 1 An appeal for Consistency. Christians should be Christlike. Citizens of heaven should behave accordingly. We should be in practice what we are in position.
  - 2 An appeal for constancy. He desires that whether he comes to them personally or hears reports about them, he wants to know that they are standing fast, laboring earnestly for the Christian faith. Christians face a common foe; they should not fight each other but should unite against the enemy.
  - 3 Fearlessness in the face of persecution has a twofold meaning. First, it is an omen of destruction to those who fight against God. Secondly, it is a sign of salvation to those who brave the wrath of the foe. Salvation is probably used here in its future tense, referring to the eventual deliverance of the saint from trial and the redemption of his body as well as his spirit and soul.

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<sup>29</sup> For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; <sup>30</sup> Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

- 1 It is a privilege to suffer for Christ as well as to believe in Him. When it is God Himself that allows this advantage to us, why do we often view it as a tragedy? The sentiment of “suffering for Christ” occurs frequently in the New Testament.
- 2 It should also be noted that this is a great honor ONLY if we are suffering for His sake. If we are suffering for our own actions, then there is no honor, only justice. However, when we so resemble the Lord Jesus that the world chooses to unite us with Him in trials, then it is a great honor indeed.
- 3 The privilege of suffering for Christ has been granted to us if we are engaged in the same kind of conflict as Paul was in Philippi (and and was still waging).

## Philippians 2

<sup>1</sup> If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, <sup>2</sup> Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

- 1 The “if” at the beginning of verse 1 is not to express doubt, but should be considered a strong affirmation “since there is”.
- 2 Many people, even Christians, live only to make a good impression on others or to please themselves. Don't be so concerned about making a good impression or meeting your own needs that you strain relationships in God's family.
- 3 To be like-minded really means to have the mind of Christ, to see things as He would see them, and to respond as He would respond. To have the same love means to show the same love to others that the Lord has shown to us, a love that did not count the cost. To be of one accord means to work together in harmony toward a common goal. Finally, to be of one mind means to act so unitedly as to show that Christ's mind is directing our activities.

<sup>3</sup> *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. <sup>4</sup> Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

- 1 When we work together, caring for the problems of others as if they were our problems, we demonstrate Christ's example of putting others first, and we experience unity.
- 2 “In lowliness of mind” does not mean that we think others are better morally than we are, but that we should put the interests of others above our own. It is one thing to read an exhortation in the Bible and quite another to put it into actual practice.
- 3 Selfish ambition is the desire to be number one, no matter what the costs; therefore, selfishness brings discord. Paul stresses spiritual unity, asking the Philippians to love one another and to be one in spirit and purpose.

<sup>5</sup> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: <sup>8</sup> And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

- 1 Paul holds up Christ Himself as our example of being “selfless”.
- 2 Christ is both “personally” and “positionally” equal with God (God the Father and God the Holy Spirit).
  - a Christ maintained His “personal” equality with God even though He gave up His “positional” equality when He became flesh and blood.

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b He did not consider His position something that He had to hold on to at all costs in order to continue to be God. He relinquished His positional equality for a time because of His desire to put the needs of others above His own needs (our need for Salvation above His need to be viewed as God).

3 When He says “made himself of no reputation”, we must understand that Christ did NOT strip Himself of His attributes of Deity. Even while in human form, He was still all-knowing, everywhere-present, all-powerful, holy, etc. What He DID do was to empty Himself of His positional equality with God and chose to veil the glory of His Deity in a body of human flesh. His glory was there (although usually hidden).

4 He came not to be served, but to serve. He gave His life in sacrifice for others. If we would take the same approach (position in our minds and actions), then we would truly be like He wants us to be.

<sup>9</sup> Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; <sup>11</sup> And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1 Note the sudden change between vs 8 and 9. The previous verses describe what the Lord did. Now we see what God has done.

a Christ humbled Himself, God exalted Him.

b No one was amazed at His name, but God has given Him a name ABOVE all others.

c He bowed in service to others, yet God has decreed that every knee shall bow to Him.

d Here, many deny that He is The Christ (Messiah). One day, EVERY person will admit that He is The Messiah.

2 ALL creation (in Heaven and Earth) shall bow before Him and admit the truth of who He is. Every created being that has knees (Holy Angels, Demons, Saints, and Sinners) will perform what God has decreed.

<sup>12</sup> Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. <sup>13</sup> For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.

1 What does it mean to “work out our own salvation”?

a It could mean that we are to work out the salvation which God has placed within us. God has given us eternal life as a free gift. We are to live it out by lives of practical holiness.

b It could refer to the desires that God places within our hearts to do His will and accomplish His purposes for us.

2 It is not saying that we are to “earn” or “keep” our salvation. Salvation is by, of and through God’s grace. It is neither deserved or kept by our efforts.

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without murmurings and disputings: <sup>15</sup> That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; <sup>16</sup> Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. <sup>17</sup> Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. <sup>18</sup> For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

1 Complaining (murmuring and disputing) usually lead to greater offenses. It was the repeated murmuring of the Israelites that caused God to judge them in the wilderness for 40 years.

2 We are to be both blameless and harmless in our Christian lives.

3 We are to “hold forth” like the shining of a light, so that our salvation experience can be reproduced in others.

4 Paul uses a beautiful imagery from the Old Testament. Their “service of faith” (their faithful walk before God) reminds him of a sacrifice and his life (Paul’s life) is a drink offering that is poured out (mingled with) their sacrifice so that their mutually exclusive sacrifices become one upon the altar.

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<sup>19</sup> But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. <sup>20</sup> For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. <sup>21</sup> For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. <sup>22</sup> But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. <sup>23</sup> Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

- 1 Up to this point, Paul has cited two examples of self-sacrificing love - the Lord Jesus and himself. Both were willing to pour out their lives to death. Two more examples of selflessness remain - Timothy and Epaphroditus.
- 2 The apostle hopes to send Timothy to Philippi in the near future so that he may be encouraged by news concerning them.
- 3 Timothy was unique in his unselfish care for the spiritual condition of others (especially the Philippians). There was no one else whom Paul could send to them with the same confidence. This is a high commendation.
- 4 They knew Timothy's proven character, his real worth. As a son serves with his father, so Timothy had served with Paul in the work of presenting the gospel.

<sup>24</sup> But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly

- 1 Paul was a prisoner at Rome, and there was some uncertainty whether he would be condemned or released. He was released after his first trial. He hoped to be able to send Timothy to them at any rate. If he was condemned and put to death, he would have no further need of his assistance. If he was released, he could spare him for a season to go and visit the churches.
- 2 He says this to let them see that he still has a secret hope in his own mind that he will be released and be able to pay them a visit himself.

<sup>25</sup> Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. <sup>26</sup> For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. <sup>27</sup> For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. <sup>28</sup> I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. <sup>29</sup> Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: <sup>30</sup> Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

- 1 Though mentioned last, Epaphroditus has already been sent to Philippi. They had first sent him to Rome with some sort of present for the Apostle Paul. He had been detained there for a time (for some reason - perhaps sickness) and then returned to them to minister with them.
- 2 Paul uses three interesting word-phrases to describe his relationship with Epaphroditus: 1) brother, 2) co-laborer, and 3) fellowsoldier.
  - a "Brother", yet they do not have the same physical parents so they are "spiritual" brothers.
  - b "Co-laborer", because the ministry of the Word is work (that's why it's called the "work of the ministry"). Paul considers him a good man and as putting forth good effort.
  - c "Fellowsoldier" because our spiritual life is a warfare. Christians battle the world, the flesh and the Devil. The choice of battles is not ours, it is our Captain's (Jesus Christ). We are on equal footing. Each doing His bidding in battles here.
- 3 Paul then uses a single word to describe their relationship to Epaphroditus: "minister". He may have been a Pastor to them, but the implication of these verses is that he had been sent to physically "minister" (take care of) Paul on their behalf. Paul is not scolding them for their lack of care, but is instead thanking them for sending such a wonderful person to meet his physical needs.
- 4 Epaphroditus's service to Paul came at great physical cost personally. Whether because of the climate, or the conditions that Paul was in, or because of personal sickness, he had worked himself almost to death to care for Paul.

# A Study of Philippians

## Philippians 3

<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed *is* not grievous, but for you *it is* safe.

- 1 He exhorts them to rejoice in the Lord. The Christian can always find real joy in the Lord, no matter what his circumstances may be.
- 2 The apostle writes on and apologizes for writing the same things again. Things which he had either written to other churches, or which he had preached when first among them, or which he had written to them in other letters (not all of Paul's letters are considered "inspired" and worthy of being placed in our Bible).
- 3 Sometimes it is necessary to say (or write) the same things over and over again. So they can be better understood or so that they may be more strongly planted in the memory.

<sup>2</sup> Beware of dogs, beware of evil-workers, beware of the concision. <sup>3</sup> For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

- 1 Paul calls the false teachers "dogs". To the Jew, a dog was an unclean animal. It is the term they used to refer to Gentiles (Gentile Dogs).
- 2 Paul calls the false teachers "evil-workers". Though they professed to be true believers, they wormed their way into Christian fellowships in order to spread their false teachings. The results of their "works" could only be "evil".
- 3 Paul calls the false teachers "concision" (a now un-used word meaning "the mutilators"). This is a sarcastic term to describe the false teacher's attitude toward circumcision. They insisted that a person must be circumcised in order to be saved. However, all they meant by this was the physical, literal act of circumcision. They were not at all concerned with its spiritual meaning. Circumcision speaks of the "cutting away of the flesh" and shows that the actions and habits (sins) of our flesh should not be allowed in a Christian's life.
- 4 Paul argues that "we" (true believers) are the circumcision (of the heart: Romans 2:29; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:3; Hebrews 4:12; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:4). We rejoice in Christ Jesus. We do not trust in any fleshly efforts or actions to earn or keep our salvation.

<sup>4</sup> Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath reason to trust in the flesh, I more: <sup>5</sup> Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, *of* the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; with respect to the law, a Pharisee; <sup>6</sup> Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; with respect to the righteousness which is by the law, blameless.

- 1 To further counter the "claims" of the false-teachers, Paul recounts his heritage and personal achievements. These were renounced for Christ.
- 2 He was a Jew by the law - circumcised on the eight day after birth according to Leviticus 12:3.
- 3 He was a Jew by birth - a member of God's chosen earthly people.
- 4 He was of the tribe that was considered a leader (Judges 5:14). King Saul was a Benjamite.
- 5 He belonged to the segment of the nation that had held onto its original language, customs and habits (a Hebrew of the Hebrews).
- 6 He was a Pharisee - a master of the Old Testament. He had progressed from being a scribe (a teacher of the law) to being a Pharisee (a master of the law).
- 7 Concerning his zeal for Judaism, Paul tried to personally exterminate the early Church.
- 8 Paul calls himself "blameless", not "sinless". When he violated the law, he brought the correct sacrifice. He gives his personal success concerning "keeping the law" in Romans 7:9-10.

# A Study of Philippians

<sup>7</sup> But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. <sup>8</sup> Yes doubtless, and I count all things *to be* loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *to be* dung, that I may win Christ, <sup>9</sup> And be found in him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith:

- 1 All financial gain, all material gain, all physical gain, all intellectual gain, all moral gain, all religious gain - all these are no gains at all compared with the Great Gain.
- 2 As long as he trusted in these things, he could never have been saved. Once he was saved, they no longer meant anything to him because he had seen the glory of the Lord, and all other glories seemed like nothing in comparison.
- 3 In order to gain Christ, he had had to turn his back on the things he had always been taught to prize most highly. If he wanted to have Christ as his gain, he had to say “goodbye” to his precious Jewish heritage, and his own personal attainments.
- 4 He completely severed his ties with Judaism as a hope of salvation. In doing so, he was disinherited by his relatives, disowned by his former friends, and disenfranchised by his fellow countrymen. He literally suffered the loss of all things when he became a Christian.
- 5 In verse 8 it sounds like Paul is still seeking to gain Christ. Actually, he had won Christ when he first acknowledged Him as Lord and Savior. The use of the present tense indicates that this is still his attitude - he still counts all else as rubbish when compared to the value of knowing the Lord Jesus. You would use the same “present tense” on your 50th Wedding Anniversary when you say “I did all of this because I love her/him” (present tense), not “I loved her/him” (past tense). Your present love is still your attitude.
- 6 Paul is looking back to the tremendous decision which faced him before he was saved. Was he willing to abandon his own efforts to earn salvation, and simply trust in Christ? He had made his choice. He had abandoned all else in order to be found in Christ. The moment he believed on the Lord Jesus, he stood in a new position before God. No longer was he seen as a child of sinful Adam, but now he was seen in Christ, enjoying all the favor which the Lord Jesus enjoys before God the Father.

<sup>10</sup> That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable to his death; <sup>11</sup> If by any means I may attain to the resurrection of the dead.

- 1 The most frequent treatment of this passage is to “spiritualize” it. That means that sufferings, death, and resurrection are not to be taken literally. Rather, they are used to describe certain spiritual experiences, such as mental suffering, dying to self, and living the resurrected life. However, we should take the passage literally. Paul is saying he wants to live as Christ lived. Did Jesus suffer? Paul wants to suffer too. Did Jesus die? Then Paul wants to die by martyrdom in his service for Christ. Did Jesus rise from among the dead? Then Paul wishes to do the same. He realized that the servant is not above his Master. Thus, he desired to follow Christ in His sufferings, death, and resurrection. He does not say that all must adopt this view, but for him there could be no other pathway.
- 2 To know Him means to gain practical day-by-day acquaintance with Him in such an intimate way that he would personally become more Christlike. He wants the life of Christ to be reproduced in himself.
- 3 This same power that raised Christ from the dead is placed at the disposal of all believers (Ephesians 1:19), if we appropriate it by faith. Paul is stating his desire to experience this power in his life.
- 4 The apostle wanted to be conformed to Christ. Since Christ had suffered, died, and been raised from among the dead, Paul wanted the same thing.
- 5 Paul is speaking of participating in the resurrection from among the dead. This is not a resurrection of **all** the dead. Rather, it describes a resurrection in which some will be raised but others will remain in the grave. We know from 1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 4:13-18 and 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:51-57 that believers will be raised at the coming of Christ (some at the Rapture and some at the end of the Tribulation), but the rest of the dead will not be raised until after Christ's Thousand-Year Reign on earth; Revelation 20:5.

# A Study of Philippians

<sup>12</sup> Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I pursue, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended by Christ Jesus.

- 1 Attainment and perfection refer not to the resurrection in the previous verse, but to the whole subject of conformity to Christ.
- 2 The apostle had been apprehended by Christ Jesus on the road to Damascus. What was the purpose of this momentous meeting? That God might show through him what Christ can do in a human life. He was not yet perfectly conformed to Christ. The process was still going on, and Paul was deeply exercised that this work of God's grace might continue and deepen.

<sup>13</sup> Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but *this* one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things which are before, <sup>14</sup> I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

- 1 Paul clearly states that he has not yet reached his goal but he keeps his focus on one thing.
- 2 He forgets what is behind (not his "sins" but his works of righteousness since conversion) and describes himself as exerting all of his efforts toward the goal of being called home by Christ.
- 3 Paul views his Christian life as a race and "death" as crossing the finish line.

<sup>15</sup> Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you.

- 1 Paul calls this view of Christianity a mature view (perfect) .
- 2 If you really want to know if you are a "mature" Christian, God will reveal it to you. Today, we have many immature Christians. Christians that do not really want to know the truth about themselves. God only shows the truth about you to yourself if you are willing to deal with it and grow.

<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, to what we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. <sup>17</sup> Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who walk so as ye have us for an example. <sup>18</sup> (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: <sup>19</sup> Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.) <sup>20</sup> For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: <sup>21</sup> Who will change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself.

- 1 We are responsible to walk by the light and teaching that we have already received.
- 2 If a man does not see things just as I do, I should try with mildness to teach him. Let me believe that, if he is a Christian, God will make this known to him yet; but let me not quarrel with him. In the meantime, there are many things in which we can agree. In them let us work together, and strive, as far as we can, to promote the common object. Thus we shall save our temper, give no occasion to the world to reproach us, and be much more likely to come together in all our views. The best way to make true Christians harmonious is, to labor together in the common cause of saving souls. As far as we can agree, let us go and labor together; and where we cannot yet, let us "agree to differ." We shall all think alike by-and-by. (Albert Barnes' "Notes On The Bible".)
- 3 There are usually two kinds of professing Christians in every church - those who imitate the Saviour, and those who are worldly and vain. The exhortation here is, to "mark" - that is, to observe with a view to imitate - those who lived as the apostles did. We should set before our minds the best examples, and imitate the most holy people. A worldly Christian is a very bad example to follow. Young Christians especially should imitate and associate with, the most spiritual Christians. Our personal religion takes much of its form and complexion from those with whom we associate. It will be the most holy Christian who associates with the most holy companions.

# A Study of Philippians

## Philippians 4

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, *my* dearly beloved.

- 1 The word “therefore” refers to the remarks already made in this letter. Paul is continuing to present his closing arguments (begun in 3:1) so this is part of his “summation”. As a reminder, he has said that there were many professed Christians who were not sincere. The “citizenship” of all true Christians is in heaven and Christians should look for the coming of the Lord Jesus, who will make us like to himself.
- 2 The term “longed for” expresses his strong affection for them.
- 3 The apostle encourages them to stand fast (persevere) in the Lord.
- 4 The accumulation of endearments in this verse shows his tender memories of them. The word “crown” is the greek word used for the wreath given to Olympic winners.

<sup>2</sup> I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. <sup>3</sup> And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and *with* other my fellowlabourers, whose names *are* in the book of life.

- 1 Much debate has been spent over the identity, gender and significance of Euodias and Syntyche. Three options exist and each has a great bearing over “whom” Paul was referring to in verse 3 as his “true yokefellow”.
  - a They were both females. This is the generally accepted view. If it is correct, then their place in the church must have been one of great influence. Whether they were married to church leaders or leaders in their own right, we do not know. One thing is certain. If they were women, their personal disputes were affecting the church and Paul was gently admonishing them for it. Remember, he has already indicated that he intends to come if he is released from prison. Presumably, a rebuke in person would be much more severe if this was not corrected by the time of his arrival.
  - b One was male, one was female (and probably married to each other). This is the least likely interpretation for their dispute would have been causing problems not just within the church but also in their home. If they were not married, then there would likely have been four people involved. Paul gives no indication that these two had much of anything to do with each other outside of their common church membership.
  - c They were both males. Though less popular, this is a very possible scenario. The spelling for these two names can be either male or female (like Pat, Drew, Sandy, Lynn, Casey, Sam, etc). If they are men, then they were likely church leaders (maybe pastors or deacons) and their dispute needed to be settled for church unity. This view has greater weight because Paul refers to a “true yokefellow” in verse 3. The true yokefellow was either Euodias, Syntyche or an un-named church leader. Most likely, it was another church leader.
- 2 Paul encourages his true yokefellow to help the women that laboured with him. We are not told what their labor was, but we can safely presume that it was “normal Christian work”. Inviting, serving, visiting, etc. just like the work of a Christian man is supposed to be. Remember, Paul instructs us that “in Christ” there is neither male or female, we are equal before God (Galatians 3:28).
- 3 Paul makes specific reference to Clement as a helper. This may have been the same Clement that became Clement of Rome, one of the early church fathers.
- 4 Paul calls these particular saints, those “whose names are in the book of life”. This is the only time this phrase is used outside of Revelation. The other references are: Revelation 3:5, 13:8, 17:8, 20:12, 20:15, 21:27, 22:19.
- 5 There is a literal Book of Life. Jesus apparently keeps it as a personal possession.

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord *is* at hand. <sup>6</sup> Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

# A Study of Philippians

- 1 How often do we misunderstand Paul's statement "Rejoice in the Lord always"? Even though everything in life may change, yet the Lord does not change. If all other sources of joy are dried up, yet this is not. There is not a moment of a Christian's life in which he may not find joy in the character, work and promises of God. Therefore, Paul's command is not to "Rejoice, always" but to "Rejoice IN THE LORD, always". Joy is within a Christian because he has allowed God to put it there.
  - 2 "Moderation" means reasonableness and gentleness. It should be upon our lives so that others cannot but help to see it. Not in a showy kind of way, but a genuine, reasonable, gentle response in all things.
  - 3 "The Lord is at hand (near)" appears to have been a commonly used phrase in the early church. It was designed to keep before their minds necessity of "moderation". Whether in our death, or His return for the church (rapture), this phrase keeps our heart and mind tuned to His presence and that moment in our life when we will see him with our own eyes. He is indeed "at hand".
  - 4 "Be careful for nothing" does not mean that we are to not care about any earthly affairs. Rather we should have such confidence in God that our minds are free from anxiety. We should be so dependent upon Him that we are continuously calm.
  - 5 "By prayer and supplication". What is the difference between the two? Prayer would indicate what mature Christians understand it to be - personal time spent with God thanking and asking of certain things. Supplication is a much stronger word. It indicates those "prayers" that are so personal and so intense that we literally beg God to answer them the way that we would prefer they be answered (spare my life from cancer, don't let me go bankrupt).
  - 6 Whether prayers or supplications, both are to be brought to God with a spirit of thankfulness.
  - 7 God promises that His peace (that we cannot fully understand) will keep our hearts (emotional response) and minds (logical thought). Mature Christians are often surprised at their own lack of anxiety in the face of tragedy or adverse circumstances (much like Paul's experience in prison as he wrote this letter).
- <sup>8</sup> Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. <sup>9</sup> Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

- 1 The Apostle Paul gives some closing thoughts about a Christian's Thought Life:
  - a Everything that is true (not false or unreliable) but genuine and real.
  - b Everything that is honest (Noble, morally attractive).
  - c Everything that is just (righteous, both toward God and man).
  - d Everything that is pure (high moral character in a person's life).
  - e Everything that is lovely (admirable or agreeable to behold or consider).
  - f Everything that is of good report (of good repute or fair sounding).
  - g IF there is any virtue (moral excellence) or
  - h IF there be any praise (something that deserves to be commended).
  - i THINK ON THESE THINGS.
- 2 The Apostle Paul also gives some closing thought about a Christian's Walk:
  - a The things you have learned (with a moral bearing).
  - b The things you have received (possessed to yourself).
  - c The things you have heard (with your ears, but not necessarily "learned").
  - d The things you have seen (with your eyes, but not necessarily "received").
  - e DO THESE THINGS.
- 3 The lesson is clear: Right living results from right thinking. If a person's thought-life is right, then his life will be pure. On the other hand, if a person's mind is filled with wrong thinking (not just "vile", but thinking that is contrary to God's Word and God's Way) then eventually, that person will DO those very wrong things.
- 4 It's not enough to "talk the talk", we must "walk the walk". Doing either one without the other is not what a mature Christian (one who pleases God) does.

# A Study of Philippians

<sup>10</sup> But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. <sup>11</sup> Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. <sup>12</sup> I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. <sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. <sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.

- 1 They had helped him before, they had ceased for a time, and now they began again. For the time in which they were apparently remiss he makes an apology: Ye were careful, but ye lacked opportunity (or you lacked the ability or the means).
- 2 It is a blessed secret when the believer learns how to carry a high head with an empty stomach, an upright look with an empty pocket, a happy heart with an unpaid salary, joy in God when men are faithless.
- 3 A contented mind is an invaluable blessing. It arises from the belief that God is right in all his ways. Why should we be impatient, restless, and discontent?
- 4 So many Christian's mis-apply verse 13. It is not a promise that we can do anything that we choose, but a promise that we can do anything that He chooses for us. Paul may have been recalling Jesus' words from John 15:5 **I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.** Anything the "grape" needs to do, it can do because it is attached to the "vine".
- 5 In having stated his contentment with what he had without their gifts, he does not want to slight them, so he tells them that they have "done well" to help him. It is wrong to not accept the help of other like-minded believers when we are trying to do a work for the Lord.

<sup>15</sup> Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. <sup>16</sup> For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. <sup>17</sup> Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. <sup>18</sup> But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things *which were sent* from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. <sup>19</sup> But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

- 1 It is remarkable how these seemingly unimportant details of "giving" are recorded forever in God's Word. This teaches us that what is given to the Lord's servants is given to the Lord. He is interested in every gift.
- 2 Paul compares their gifts (presumably their prayers and monetary gifts) to the offerings in the Old Testament. Specifically the "sweet smell" to God. Paul also uses these same words to describe Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:2). In so doing, he is comparing these believers to Jesus Christ.
- 3 God records ALL that we give and He rewards with good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over. You cannot out-give God.

<sup>20</sup> Now unto God and our Father *be* glory for ever and ever. Amen. <sup>21</sup> Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren which are with me greet you. <sup>22</sup> All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household. <sup>23</sup> The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen. **To the Philippians written from Rome, by Epaphroditus.**

- 1 Paul closes the epistle in these verses with: 1) praises to God, 2) salutations to his friends at Philippi, 3) salutations from those at Rome and 4) his usual apostolic blessing.
- 2 "The greatest of humans has written his warmest of letters. The love-task is finished. The day is done. The chain is still there upon the apostolic wrist. The soldier is still on guard. Never mind! Paul's spirit is free! His mind is clear! His heart is glowing! And next morning Epaphroditus strides away to Philippi!"

# A Study of Philippians



Notes:

- 1 Introduction taken from the Believer's Bible Commentary.
- 2 Resources used: The Believer's Bible Commentary, Albert Barnes' Notes, and Adam Clarke's Commentary.