

Philippians

Original Historical Setting

Author: Paul

Written: ~61 A.D.

Audience: Christians living in the city of Philippi

Occasion: Epaphroditus, whom the Philippians had sent with a gift for Paul and to minister to his needs in prison, had recovered from a serious illness and was about to return to Philippi. Paul built up Epaphroditus in the eyes of his readers which suggests that they may not have appreciated him adequately for some reason. A secondary occasion was so Paul could express thanks for the Philippians' gift to him while he was in prison.

Timeline:

~35 AD – Paul's conversion

~50 AD – Paul starts the church at Philippi

~56 AD – Paul's revisits Philippi

~60 AD – Paul writes Philippi from Roman prison

World Events that occur simultaneously

~54 AD – Death and deification of Claudius.

~54 AD – Nero ascends to the throne.

~62 AD – First signs of volcanic activity recorded in Mt. Vesuvius

~64 AD – Rome burns, Christians blamed and persecuted

Key text(s)

1:21 – For to me to live is Christ...

2:3 – Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus

2:10 – At the name of Jesus every knee will bow

3:12 – I press on...

4:6 – Be anxious for nothing

4:8 – Finally brethren, whatever things are true...

4:13 – I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me

Genre/Literary style

An epistle (letter) written in (Koine) Greek

Features and Structure:

Philippians is structured a little looser than is usual for Paul. In simple terms the book can be divided as

CH 1- Personal

CH 2 -Teaches about Humility

CH 3 -Teaches about True Righteousness

CH 4 - Paul's Thank-you note

What to look for

- Notice a different way to divide the book than above. It is based on Paul's references to Christ:
 - CH 1** – Christ our life **v. 21**
 - CH 2** – Christ our mind **v.5**
 - CH 3** – Christ our goal **v. 10**
 - CH 4** – Christ our strength **v. 13**
- Notice how often "joy" or "rejoice" are used throughout this book. Take special note of the fact that Paul writes this while he is in chains.

Interesting facts

- Philippi was named after the father of Alexander the Great, King Philip
- Paul went to Philippi and the surrounding province of Macedonia only after seeing a vision of a man begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" **Acts 16:9**
- At Philippi, Octavian's soldiers were able to capture the gates of Brutus's camp before the routing army could reach this defensive position. Brutus was able to retreat into the nearby hills with the equivalent of only 4 legions. Seeing that surrender and capture were inevitable, Brutus committed suicide.
- Paul quotes what many believe is an early hymn/song about Jesus (**2:6-11**)

Memory Verse: Philippians 2:3-4