Philippians*

Philippians 1:1-11 (1) Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:
(2) Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.
(3) I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,
(4) Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,
(5) For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;
(6) 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:
(7) 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.
(8) For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ.
(9) And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;
(10) That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;
(11) Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.
The letter to the Philippians does not reveal any serious problems in the congregation, in contrast to the problems that had developed in Corinth and Galatia, although there was a certain amount of disharmony that Paul sought to correct before it could develop into something serious. He also warned them of any potential false teachers from outside, and tried to encourage them in relation to the persecutions which were confronting them, turn to;
Philippians 3:1-7 (1) 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.
(2) Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.
(3) For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.
(4) Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:
(5) Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;
(6) Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
(7) But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.
Concision is a term used by Paul in contempt of those who were zealots for circumcision. Instead of the warning, "Beware of the circumcision," in addressing the party who pressed on Gentile converts the necessity of observing that ordinance, Paul says, "Beware of the concision;" as much as to say, This circumcision which they vaunt, is in Christ as the gashings and mutilations of idolatrous heathen. In Archaic times the meaning of concision is a cutting up or off; a mutilation. Philippi was the site of Paul's first missionary activity in Europe. He entered Macedonia through this city, which was an official Roman colony, prosperous because of its location on a key overland trade route between Rome and Asia. The church he established there began with Lydia and certain other women, and shortly afterwards included the Philippian jailer and his family. The story of Lydia and the jailer are in;
Acts 16:11-33 (11) Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

(12) And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.
(13) And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.
(14) And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.
(15) And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.
(16) And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:
(17) The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.
(18) And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.
(19) And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,
(20) And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,
(21) And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.
(22) And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.
(23) And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast

them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:
(24) Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.
(25) And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.
(26) And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.
(27) And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.
(28) But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
(29) Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,
(30) And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?
(31) And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.
(32) And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.
(33) And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.
Historical matters sometime seems to be jumbled up and admittedly historians do not always know. For instance, Philippi, was a chief city of Macedonia, also referred to as a colony. What does that mean? Acropolis was founded in the 4th century B.C. and renamed Philippi after King Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Philippi was an important outpost on the Egnation Way. The Egnatian Way was built beginning in 145 BC and this route was Rome's primary artery to the east and Philippi was an important outpost along the road. The Egnatian Way made it easier for Rome to move troops throughout the empire and it was the route that Paul traveled on from Neapolis to Philippi. Two

important battles were fought here in 42 B.C. resulting in the defeat of Cassius and Brutus, conspirators in the assassination of Julius Caesar. After these battles, Philippi became a Roman colony encompassing 700 square miles. Archaeological work has revealed a large and well-preserved forum, a theater, the alleged jail that Paul was cast into and several Byzantine church buildings, including one of the earliest known in Greece. The Byzantine Empire was the natural continuation of the Roman Empire, after the latter split into the Western Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire in the 3rd century AD. The Byzantine Empire began around 324 AD, with the establishment of the new capital, Constantinople, named after the Emperor Constantine. While Constantine legalized Christianity, Theodosius declared it to be the state religion. Through the Edict of Milan (313 AD) that legalized Christianity, Constantine effectively ended the cultural discord that had existed between Christianity and the State on such issues as worship of idols and the Emperor's claim to divinity. Constantine and his successors did not claim to be divine but rather to represent the divine. They claimed they were Christ's vicars on earth. He declared that Christ, as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, is enthroned in heaven and all earthly rulers are subject to his authority. In the West, after the fall of Rome, the Popes enjoyed this status as the Vicar of Christ. In that context, eventuality the Bible was taken from the people in what became known as the "dark ages." A series of earthquakes apparently destroyed many of the buildings and probably contributed to the city's decline.
Philippi apparently had only a small number of Jewish inhabitants and no synagogue. Consequently Sabbath worship was held outside the city on the Gangitis River. Here Paul met a group of women to whom he preached the gospel. Paul's first European convert, Lydia of the town of Thyatira in the province of Asia Minor, came to Philippi because she was a dealer in purple dyed cloth, a business which had flourished in

her native province from ancient days. Thyatira today is the Turkish town of Akhisar, well known as a center for carpet making. Since Lydia was a householder and her husband is not mentioned, it is assumed that she was a widow. The reference to her as a believer in God suggests she may have accepted the Jewish faith in Thyatira where a Jewish colony existed. St. John, the Seer of Patmos, addressed one of his seven letters to the church of Thyatira, in which we are informed of the attempted religious reconciliation of different beliefs in this city. Lydia was not the only representative of her trade in Philippi. In 1872 Professor Mertzides discovered in Philippi the following text in Greek inscribed on a piece of white marble: 'The city honored from among the purple-dyers, an outstanding citizen, Antiochus the son of Lykus, a native of Thyatira, as a benefactor.' *The marble with this inscription, which has unfortunately disappeared, indicates that the purple-dyers of Thyatira may have worked in Philippi as a guild and that their profession was held in high esteem. (Otto F. A. Meinardus, St. Paul in Greece, pp. 13-14). It is interesting to note that a Church had been established in both Philippi and Thyatira, two cities in which Lydia was associated by her trade. This merchant-woman from Thyatira proved to be one of the greatest trophies in Paul's ministry and the Church at Philippi became the joy and crown of Paul. Let's turn to;*
Philippians 4:1-3 (1) Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.
(2) I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.
(3) 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.
However, as a result of their preaching, Paul and Silas were arrested and thrown into prison; And when they had laid many

stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: (Acts 16:23). *Paul was very humiliated by his treatment, for he tells how he was shamefully treated;* But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention (1Thessalonians 2:2). *But the good news is, as a result of imprisonment, the jailer and his household heard the gospel and were converted.*
Catastrophic earthquakes in the early 7th century A.D., together with invasions by Slavs and Bulgars brought Philippi into a state of decline. After the Turkish conquest (after 1387 A.D.) the city and its fortifications were abandoned and fell into ruin. Having a great past does not guarantee a good future. Like so many places in the lands of the Bible, you can see great monuments and relics of the past, but in the background you will see the minaret of the local mosque from which the muezzin calls Muslims to prayer. This is what happens when people cease searching the Scriptures daily. Because a considerable portion of the citizenry in Philippi were Romans who enjoyed special privileges as colonists, Paul encountered there a community with a pronounced devotion to and pride in the Roman Empire. The political and religious loyalties of the people appear to have been an issue for Paul. Only in Philippians does he use language that speaks of civil or political identity, when he tells his readers to live in a way that is worthy of the gospel of Christ, let's read;
Philippians 1:23-26 (23) For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better:
(24) Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.
(25) And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith;
(26) That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

*Paul appears to have been trying to get the Philippian Christians to see themselves as Christians first and Romans second, not Romans first and Christians second; Epaphroditus is mentioned only in Phil 2:25 and 4:18. The name corresponds to the Latin Venustus (= handsome), and was very common in the Roman period. Epaphroditus was the delegate of the Christian community at Philippi who was sent with their gift to Paul during his Roman imprisonment. Paul calls him "my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier." The three definitions are arranged in an ascending scale: 'common sympathy', 'common work' and 'toil and suffering'. On his arrival at Rome, Epaphroditus devoted himself to "the work of Christ," both as Paul's attendant and as his assistant in missionary work. So diligently did he labor that he lost his health, and "was sick nigh unto death." He recovered, however, and Paul sent him back to Philippi with this letter to quiet the alarm of his friends, who had heard of his serious illness. Much of the New Testament after Christ's sacrifice deals with Paul's Ministry. Paul the Pharisee, became a giant of Christianity but he had many associates and helpers who were the "unsung heroes" of the Scriptures. They often faced the same dangers and were eventually persecuted in the same way as those whose names are known to everyone. One of those was Epaphroditus, a Philippian, who carried the letter, the epistle to the Philippians, that we have in the Bible today. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, when it comes to individuals with attractive and godly hearts like Epaphroditus, we must be sure that they are not unsung. Paul writes of him in Philippians 2:29, "**honor such men!**" So when you find a modern-day Epaphroditus, be sure he is not an obscure or unsung character in the story of your life. Let's turn to;*

Philippians 2:25-30 (25) 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.

(26) For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.
(27) 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.
(28) I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.
(29) Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:
(30) Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.
Many follow what they consider the "law of tithing" and consider this to be meritorious. The fact is, however, that giving for the Christian is not a law to be obeyed, but a grace to be cultivated. God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work. Let's turn to and read;
Philippians 4:15-20 (15) 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.
(16) For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.
(17) Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.
(18) 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.
(19) But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
(20) Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.
This grace of giving is thus displayed when one gives (even in times of affliction and poverty) out of a whole-hearted

devotion to the Lord and for the spiritual enrichment of those who are spiritually impoverished. As Paul went on his missionary journeys, he never asked for money for himself from the people to whom he preached. This act of generosity of the Philippians came about, Paul recognized, because they; first gave their own selves to the Lord (II Cor 8:5). *Therefore, let each of us give in the name of the Lord;* Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver; (2 Cor 9:7).

Paul commends the generosity of the churches at Philippi. However it is even more important, every day, to call to remembrance the unfathomable sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ who died, to give us eternal freedom, providing everlasting life to all baptized believers.

The Apostle Paul by faith, obeyed the ordinance of baptism that Jesus established while He was on earth. And Paul said, those things which ye have seen in me, do: (Philippians 4:9).

This is what Paul did;

*Paul developed **faith**, the effect of belief (Acts 9:6),*
*Paul **repented** by faith unto salvation (Acts 26:20),*
*Paul **confessed** Jesus is the Son of God by faith (Acts 8:37),*
*Paul was **baptized** by faith into Jesus Christ (Acts 9:18).*

The Spirit and the bride say, come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. If one is in need of prayer, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Whether it's baptism request for the believer or prayer for the Saint, the spirit and the bride say, come.

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