

palace. . . ." The words "the palace" in Greek signify "the Imperial Guard." This "Imperial Guard" was a well-known part of the household of Caesar in Rome. Once again, in 4:22 we read, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."

In the light of this evidence (and much more which has not been included here), we would date the writing of Philippians as late as A.D. 61 and insist it was written from Rome.

► On the blank, write the correct answer:

- (1) The fundamental scholars are in general _____ as to the date of the writing of Philippians.
- (2) They agree it was one of the four _____.
- (3) It was written during Paul's first _____.
- (4) The scholars do not agree as to whether it was written at the (a) _____ or near the (b) _____ of that imprisonment.
- (5) If the epistle was written sometime near the beginning of Paul's first Roman imprisonment, it was written from _____.
- (6) If it was written near the end of his imprisonment, it was written from _____.
- (7) We would date the writing of Philippians as late as (a) _____ and insist it was written from (b) _____.

The Personal Occasion of the Epistle

It is fairly certain Paul became quite ill some time during his two year stay in prison. In some way, unknown to us, the church at Philippi heard of Paul's illness and immediately sent Epaphroditus to Rome with a very substantial financial gift for Paul and possibly a letter as well. (4:10-14, 17-18) The generosity of this welcome gift, along with the thoughtfulness which it expressed, so moved Paul that he wrote the epistle as a simple letter of appreciation and sent it back to Philippi by Epaphroditus. For this reason, the book of Philippians is the most warmly personal of all the writings of Paul. It is more of a personal "thank you note" than a formal treatise. There is hardly a "sour note" in the entire epistle, with the possible exception of his veiled words of warning to Euodias and Syntyche. (4:2)

► Answer true or false:

- (1) _____ The church at Philippi sent Titus to Rome with a financial gift for Paul.
- (2) _____ Paul wrote this epistle as a simple letter of appreciation.
- (3) _____ Titus brought the letter back to Philippi.
- (4) _____ This book is a formal treatise.
- (5) _____ There is hardly a "sour note" in the entire epistle.

The Prominent Word of the Epistle

The prominent word of Philippians is the word "joy" along with its companion words "rejoice" and "gladness." (1:4, 18, 25-26; 2:2, 16-18, 28-29; 3:1, 3; 4:4, 10)

Another prominent word of Philippians is the word "Gospel." (1:5, 7, 12, 17, 27; 2:22; 4:3, 15)

► On the blank, write the correct answer:

- (1) The key word in the book of Philippians is _____.
- (2) This key word is also translated (a) _____ and (b) _____.
- (3) Another prominent word of Philippians is the word _____.

The People to Whom Written

The city of Philippi was named after its founder, Philip of Macedon who was the father of Alexander the Great. At the time of Paul's ministry, all Roman colonies were miniatures of the Imperial City, and Philippi was no exception.

As to the population of the city, Philippi consisted of a rich and varied life. The people of the city could be classified in three groups: first, the Roman colonists who were the dominant group; second, the native Macedonians who were the most numerous; third, a considerable admixture of Orientals including only a few Jews. At the time of Paul's ministry there, Philippi was indeed the meeting place of the East and the West. The city was visited daily by travelers from all over the civilized world.

Paul's ministry in Philippi was the result of his vision in Troas of "a man of Macedonia" who said to Paul in the vision, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." It is hardly possible to estimate the importance of the change in plans which Paul's vision occasioned. This is the first time the Gospel was brought to the western world. When Paul came to Philippi, there was apparently no Jewish Synagogue in the city. This was probably true because the Jews were in the minority there. Thus, Paul and his company resorted to the riverside for prayer and for ministering the Word to the few Jews who congregated there. The first European convert was a female Jewish proselyte, named Lydia, who was a "seller of purple" from the city of Thyatira.

Shortly after the conversion of Lydia, Paul cast a "fortune-telling demon" out of a slave girl. The slave-masters immediately seized Paul and Silas and dragged them before the Roman officials who publicly beat them and threw them into prison. During a prayer meeting at midnight, God opened the prison doors, and as a result, the jailer was saved along with his household. The next day Paul disdainfully refused to go down to the Roman officials for a conference, but went instead to the brethren where he remained until he had comforted them in the things of the Lord. After this, accompanied by the now fearful Roman officials (the beating which they administered to Paul was punishable by death because Paul was a Roman citizen), Paul leisurely left Philippi.

Such were the stormy conditions under which Paul founded the church at Philippi. This church differed from most of the other churches founded by the Apostle in that it was largely a Gentile church. Moreover, there seemed to have been so much closer and sweeter fellowship among the saints in the church at Philippi than in any other church of those early days.

➔ Match these terms:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| (1) _____ Philip of Macedon | a. father of Alexander the Great |
| (2) _____ Roman colonies | b. the dominant group of people in Philippi |
| (3) _____ Roman colonists | c. only a few Jews in this group |
| (4) _____ native Macedonians | d. apparently not one in Philippi |
| (5) _____ admixture of Orientals | e. seller of purple |
| (6) _____ man of Macedonia | f. God opened the doors of the prison during this |
| (7) _____ Jewish synagogue | g. miniatures of the Imperial City |
| (8) _____ first European convert | h. most numerous group of people in Philippi |
| (9) _____ Lydia | i. Paul saw in a vision |
| (10) _____ fortune-telling demon | j. Lydia |
| (11) _____ prayer meeting at midnight | k. Paul cast this out of a slave girl |
| (12) _____ Roman officials | l. the beating they administered to Paul was punishable by death |

The Purposes

Paul's reasons for writing Philippians were

1. to communicate to them his deep appreciation for the thoughtful fellowship (1:1-5)
2. to confirm his confidence in their continued progress and a continuation of his prayers for them that they would grow even more (1:6-11)
3. to clarify that his sufferings were not due to disobedience on his part nor to a failure of the plans and purposes of God, but that they had rather been the means of "furthering the Gospel" (1:12-26)
4. to console them with the fact that their own sufferings were also part of the plan and good purpose of God, thus enabling them to bear their persecutions without despair (1:27-30)
5. to command them to strive for unity, humility, and behavior consistent with their profession as followers of Christ by showing them how Christ had been the ever-obedient, suffering servant (2:1-18)
6. to confer with them regarding his plans to send Timothy to Philippi in the near future in order that he (Timothy) might further minister unto them (2:19-24)
7. to convey to them his reason for sending Epaphroditus back to Philippi so soon (2:25-30)
8. to caution them against the divisive work of the Judaizers (3:1-14)

9. to constrain them to avoid antinomianism (the view that teaches that since Christ's obedience and sufferings have fully satisfied all the demands of the Law, the believer is therefore free from any obligation to observe the Law) (3:15-4:1)

NOTE: It is true that Christ has freed us from the Law as a system of guilt and penalty, but the demands of the Law as being a transcript of the holiness of God and as being a moral rule are unchanging. Moreover, the union which has been established between Christ and the believer has secured the impartation of Christ's spirit of obedience to that believer and, thus, has freed the believer from the Law as an outward and foreign compulsion.

10. to call upon Euodias and Syntyche, two members of the Philippian church who were at odds, to be reconciled (4:2-3)
11. to commit them to joyfulness, prayerfulness, and the diligent pursuit of all that is good (4:4-9)
12. to comment anew on his deep gratitude for their recent generosity and to send greetings (4:10-23)

➔ Answer true or false:

- (1) _____ Paul was deeply appreciative of the Philippians' thoughtfulness.
- (2) _____ Paul's sufferings were due to his disobedience to God's will.
- (3) _____ Paul wanted to send Timothy to Philippi to minister unto them.
- (4) _____ Paul cautioned against the work of the Judaizers.
- (5) _____ Paul was in agreement with the doctrine of antinomianism.
- (6) _____ Two members of the church in Philippi were at odds with each other.

The Postman

The postman was Epaphroditus. His name meant "belonging to Aphrodite (Venus)." He was one of the messengers from the church at Philippi who bore the financial gift to Paul. (2:25; 4:18) It seems that shortly after arriving in Rome, he became so seriously ill that Paul despaired of his life; but God raised him up, and Paul sent him back to Philippi with the epistle. Paul held this man in high esteem, calling him such endearing names as "brother," "companion in labor," and "fellow-soldier."

➔ On the blank, write the correct answer:

- (1) The postman of this book was _____.
- (2) He was one of the messengers from the church at Philippi who bore the _____ to Paul.
- (3) After he arrived in Rome, he became seriously (a) _____, and Paul (b) _____ of his life.
- (4) God raised him up, and Paul sent him back to Philippi with the _____.

- (5) Paul referred to this man by such names as (a) _____, (b) _____, and (c) _____.

The Plan of the Book

➔ Read through the book of Philippians as you study the following outline:

- A. The inward look--Christ the believer's confidence: rejoicing in suffering (1:1-30)
1. Paul's prelude (1:1-2)
 - a. The servants
 - b. The saints
 - c. The salvation
 - (1) The substance
 - (2) The source
 2. Paul the pastor (1:3-11)
 - a. His joyful remembrance of them (1:3-5)
 - b. His hopeful expectation for them (1:6)
 - c. His careful devotion to them (1:7-8)
 - d. His prayerful concern for them (1:9-11)
 3. Paul the prisoner (1:12-30)
 - a. exults because his persecutions have furthered the Gospel (1:12-18)
 - b. expresses joy regardless of the outcome of his imprisonment (1:19-24)
 - c. exhibits confidence that he will continue to be of service to them (1:25-26)
 - d. exhorts them to stand fast in their own suffering (1:27-30)
- B. The backward look--Christ the believer's consolation: rejoicing in service (2:1-30)
1. The plea for unity (2:1-4)
 - a. The positive qualities to be attained (2:1-2)
 - b. The negative qualities to be avoided (2:3-4)
 2. The pattern of Christ (2:5-11)
 - a. His humiliation of Himself (2:5-8)
 - b. His exaltation by the Father (2:9-11)
 3. The performance of the believers (2:12-16)
 - a. The plea (2:12)
 - b. The power (2:13)
 - c. The purpose (2:14-16)
 4. The personal rejoicing of the apostle (2:17-18)

5. The piety of Timothy (2:19-23)
 6. The purpose of Paul (2:24)
 7. The perseverance of Epaphroditus (2:25-30)
- C. The onward look--Christ the believer's companion: rejoicing in submission (3:1-21)
1. The warning against Judaism (3:1-3)
 2. The worthlessness of legalism (3:4-14)
 3. The walk to be cultivated (3:15-17)
 4. The wilfulness of the enemies of Christ (3:18-19)
 5. The waiting in patience (3:20-21)
- D. The upward look--Christ the believer's compensation: rejoicing in supplication (4:1-23)
1. The exhortations (4:1-9)
 - a. Concerning constancy (4:1)
 - b. Concerning consideration for each other (4:2)
 - c. Concerning calmness (4:3-7)
 - d. Concerning conduct (4:8-9)
 2. The exultation (4:10-13)
 - a. For their concern (4:10)
 - b. For his own contentment (4:11-13)
 3. The commendation (4:14-23)

➔ Complete the following exercises:

- (1) Chapter 1 - the (a) _____ look--Christ the believer's (b) _____: rejoicing in (c) _____.
- (2) Chapter 2--The (a) _____ look--Christ the believer's (b) _____: rejoicing in (c) _____.
- (3) Chapter 3--the (a) _____ look--Christ the believer's (b) _____: rejoicing in (c) _____.
- (4) Chapter 4--The (a) _____ look--Christ the believer's (b) _____: rejoicing in (c) _____.