

# Philippians / Colossians

Studying To Show  
Ourselves Approved



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# Philippians – Background Information

Philippi was an ancient city with a colorful and full past. The Romans first occupied the city in 186 B.C. In 146 B.C. the area was reorganized placing Philippi in a province of Macedonia with the capital being Thessalonica. Philippi was the location of the decisive battle of the second Roman civil war fought in 42 B.C. The forces of Brutus and Cassius were defeated by the forces of Antony and Octavian. Many of the veterans of the war settled in Philippi, and by 30 B.C. many Roman civilians lived in the city as well. In every way Philippi was a Roman city, involved with Roman culture, politics, military, and society.

Paul first visited the city of Philippi during his second missionary journey about 52 A.D. He entered the city on the Egnatian Way (via Egnatia) which ran east and west through the city. This was a major Roman road built to link the eastern territories with the empire. Paul and his companions went to the river just outside the city and found Lydia and some other women worshipping (Acts 16) at “a place of prayer”. Lydia, a seller of purple, being of the city of Thyatira, heard the preaching of Paul and she and her house were baptized. Later in Acts 16 we read how Paul and Silas were in prison praying and the jailer and his house eventually obey the gospel late in the evening. This marks the beginning of the church in Philippi.

Some five years later Paul again visits Philippi in Acts 19. He determines to travel by land and makes a stop over in the city. It is mentioned one other time in Acts 20:6 as having been passed through. There is no further mention of the church in Philippi till Paul writes this letter.

Both the internal and external evidence confirm that Paul is the author. The date of the letter is linked directly with the place of writing. 1:7, 13-16 indicates Paul was in prison when he wrote. Because we know of several imprisonments, there is some debate as to which imprisonment he wrote from. The traditional view is that Paul wrote all four of the books commonly called the prison epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon) while in Rome. This would put the date of writing in or about 62 A.D.

## A Quick Outline

- I. Introduction (1:1-11)
- II. Progress of gospel in Rome (1:12-26)
- III. Practical Exhortations (1:27-2:18)
- IV. Of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30)
- V. Warnings against Judaizers (3:1-21)
- VI. Concluding Exhortations (4:1-9)
- VII. Fellowship with Paul, Paul's Thanks (4:10-20)
- VIII. Conclusion (4:21-23)

# Philippians – Chapter 1

1. Relate the importance of the following two portions of verse 1:
  - A. “to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi”
  - B. “including the overseers and deacons”
2. How did the Philippians participate in the gospel with Paul? (v.3-6)
3. Why did Paul say it was right for him to be thankful for the Philippians? (v.7)
4. Paul speaks of their love abounding...(v.9ff)
  - A. In what ways?
  - B. For what purpose?
5. Give two reasons Paul said his circumstances turned out for a greater progress of the gospel. (v.12ff)
6. How is it Christ can be exalted in life or death? (v.20)
7. Why was Paul convinced he would not die from this imprisonment? (v.22ff)
8. Describe how we conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel. (v.27)
9. What attitude should we have towards the opponents of truth? (v.28)
10. To what conflict does Paul refer which the Philippians were to experience? (v.29)

# Philippians – Chapter 2

1. List the points Paul gives for how we can make his joy complete.
2. How did Christ “empty” Himself? (v.7)
3. Explain how Jesus was “in the likeness of men” and “in appearance as a man”. What does this mean?
4. In the context of 2:1-8 what point is Paul making about what our attitude should be?
5. How do we work out our salvation (v.12)? Please explain.
6. How does Paul describe children of God? (v.15-16)
7. Who was Epaphroditus? (v.25ff)
8. What “men like him” (v.29) are we to hold in high esteem? Why?



# Philippians – Chapter 3

1. What does Paul warn us of?
2. How are we the “true circumcision” (v.3)?
3. Why could Paul put confidence in the flesh?
4. List three things that are gain to us that we count as loss for the sake of Christ.
5. How does righteousness come? (v.9)
6. To what is Paul referring when he says he was “conformed to his death” (v.10)?
7. From verses 13-15 list three good points of application suitable for a sermon outline.
8. In what ways are we to follow Paul’s pattern? (v.17)
9. Why are some considered enemies of the cross?
10. What will happen to our earthly bodies? (v.20-21)

# Philippians – Chapter 4

1. Why does Paul refer to the Philippians as his “joy and crown” (v.1)?
2. What help did Euodia and Syntyche need?
3. List the points Paul makes which leads to the peace of God.
4. What does verse 5 teach about what our reputation should be? How does “The Lord is near” impact our understanding?
5. From verse 8: Give one example of each of these traits that we should let our minds dwell on.
6. What four things does Paul say we are to practice? (v.9) Give one example of each from Paul’s life.
7. What is the meaning of verse 13 in the context of verses 10-13?
8. How had the Philippians “shared” with Paul in his afflictions?
9. What does this imply about us when our congregation helps support preachers in other places? What is this called in verse 18?
10. How would verse 22 have been received in the first century?



# Colossians – Background Information

Colosse was a city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, or modern day Turkey. It was near two other cities which together formed a triangle: Laodicea was 12 miles away, and Hierapolis was about 6 miles away. Both of these cities are mentioned in this letter. Colosse was renowned for its “natural baths” and was a health resort at the time of this writing, but due to a change in the road system it had become somewhat insignificant as a city.

Paul is clearly the writer as he names himself three times in 1:1, 1:23 and 4:18. His own handwritten salutation at the end is consistent with his usual writing habits. It is held by most that Paul wrote this letter along with Philemon and Ephesians while he was imprisoned in Rome about A.D. 60-61. Many of the themes of these books are parallel and contain many of the same names. It was most likely sent by Tychicus and the converted slave Onesimus (4:7-9; Eph. 6:21; Philemon 10-12).

Epaphras’ report about the conditions in Colossae prompted Paul to write this letter. Although they had not yet given in, an encroaching heresy was threatening this gentile congregation (1:21, 27; 2:13). The nature of the heresy can only be surmised by Paul’s incidental references in 2:8-23. Most likely it was a religious system combining elements of Greek, Jewish and oriental beliefs.

We do not know when the church in Colosse was founded. It is not mentioned in the book of Acts. It may be that some present on Pentecost (Acts 2:10) carried the message home with them. This seems unlikely as the church seems young in this letter. There is a good argument for Epaphras starting the congregation since he was a Greek from that city (4:12) and traveled much with Paul. Most of the congregation were Gentiles.

## A Quick Outline

I. Introduction (1:1-14)

II. Preeminence of Christ (1:15-23)

A. To Deity (1:15)

B. To Creation (1:15-17)

C. To Church (1:18-23)

III. Paul’s Defense of the Faith (2:6-3:4)

A. Reasons to be Steadfast (2:8-15)

B. Reasons to not follow philosophy (2:16-3:4)

IV. Guidelines for Christian Life (3:5-4:6)

A. Put Off (3:5-11)

B. Put On (3:12-17)

C. Family (3:18-25)

V. Personal Greetings (4:7-18)

# Colossians – Chapter 1

1. How does verse 2 refute the religious concept that faithful individuals become saints after they die?
2. For what two things were Paul and Timothy thankful about the Colossians?
3. What does Paul affirm the gospel message is about? (v. 5-6)
4. Describe “walking in a manner worthy of the Lord”.
5. How are we “delivered” and “transferred”? (v.13-14)
6. How does Paul describe Christ? (v.15-19)
7. Upon what conditions does Christ’s work of reconciliation come to us? (v.20-23)
8. Please explain Paul’s meaning in reference to himself in verse 24.
9. Paul uses what word to describe his apostleship from God in verse 25? How does this describe our relationship with the gospel?
10. What is the “mystery hidden from past generations” now “manifested to the saints”?

# Colossians – Chapter 2

1. Why was Paul writing the Colossians (v.1 - 5)?
2. What imagery comes to your mind when Paul says we are to be “knit together in love” (v.2)?
3. Chapter two relates much about those teaching error. List the phrases in the chapter that emphasize the false teacher and/or their teaching. Example: verse 4 “that no one may delude you with persuasive argument”.
4. Describe the differences in “good discipline” and “stability of your faith” (v.5). With what was Paul rejoicing about in the congregation?
5. Verses 6-7 are a small sermon. Please outline and perhaps embellish the outline. What is his point?
6. “Rather than according to Christ” (v.8). What does this verse reveal about what our knowledge should be about?
7. Verses 9-10 sound a lot like 1:19-20.
  - A. How have we been “made complete” (2:10)?
  - B. Describe the “circumcision of Christ” (2:11).
8. In context, when does verse 13 indicate we are made alive and are forgiven?
9. From verse 14, what did Christ cancel and nail to the cross? Explain the language used.

10. Verse 15 doesn't seem to fit the surrounding context. Please give an explanation of what is being taught and how it fits the overall context.
11. What Old Testament things are referenced in verse 16? Why should no one act as our judge about these things?
12. How does the spiritual body of Christ grow? (v.19)
13. Paul cites several practices seen in the first century that were teachings of men that seem wise, but which he says has "no value". Try to list two or three modern examples that would fit the same argument.

# Colossians – Chapter 3

1. How do we “keep seeking that things above”? (v.1) What is Paul saying we should do?
2. What things should we “set our mind on”? Give two or three specifics.
3. Why should we set our mind on things above and not on the things that are on the earth?
4. Explain how we are to consider our body “dead” to some things (v.5), and “put them all aside” (v.8).
5. Please give two examples of the sins listed in verses 5-9 that are sometimes evident in the church. Relate how these specific sins lead to congregational problems.
6. “Laying aside” (v.5-9) and “putting on” (v.10-15) indicate: a) hypocrisy b) choice c) necessity
7. Verses 12-15 speak of the kind of heart we are to put on. What do you see as important about each of these phrases?
  - A. “Heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”
  - B. “Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other...just as the Lord forgave you...”
  - C. “Put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity”
  - D. “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful”
8. Compare and contrast Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19.
9. Of what significance is verse 17 in regards to authority?
10. In order for the family to operate as God designed, what important trait is taught about each of the following:
  - A. Wives
  - B. Husbands
  - C. Children
  - D. Fathers
11. We no longer have slaves in our Country. What applications CAN we make from verse 22-25?

# Colossians – Chapter 4

1. In a continuation of the thoughts in the previous chapter regarding the attitude of the slave, Paul now turns to the attitude of the Master. What applications can be made to our modern work environment?
2. What improvements do we need to make in our prayers based on verses 2-4?
3. Talking with others about the gospel is not easy for most of us. What 4 points of instruction are given in verses 5-6?
4. Relate what we can know from this chapter of these godly men who worked with Paul:
  - A. Tychicus
  - B. Onesimus
  - C. Aristarchus
  - D. Jesus called Justus
  - E. Epaphras
  - F. Luke and Demas
  - G. Nympha
  - H. Archippus
5. What did Paul intend happen with this letter? (v.16)
6. Why did Paul close so many of his letters with a statement like the one found in verse 18: "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand"?