

## Expository Bible Study for Paul's Letter to the Philippians

### Lesson #3 • Greetings to the Faithful

#### • H A N D O U T •

► The last study covered the events experienced by Paul & Silas when they were unjustly arrested for allegedly creating a riot in the Roman colony of Philippi. Even though they were Roman citizens and were supposed to be exempt from such cruel actions, they were stripped of their clothing and severely flogged with rods before being chained in an inner cell with their feet locked into stocks. Instead of complaining about their treatment, Paul & Silas prayed and sang hymns of praise. That is when God intervened by sending an earthquake, causing the doors of the prison to open and the chains to fall away.

But, instead of escaping, they stayed in their cells, as did all the other prisoners. Paul was able to stop the jailer from killing himself because he thought all the prisoners had escaped. Paul then preached and the jailer and his family became believers and were baptized.

Though the text doesn't deal with the issue, one way or the other, it is possible that the other prisoners also responded to Paul's preaching and became Believers. We know they had listened to the two men as they prayed and sang. Why else didn't they run when the prison doors swung open? The only answer is the power of the Holy Spirit working through Paul, drawing the other prisoners to faith.

The next morning Paul & Silas were told to leave, but Paul made an issue of the fact they were Roman citizens and their horrific treatment had been against Roman law. Deeply afraid of the consequences for such a blatant error, the magistrates apologized and, with dignity, escorted Paul & Silas out of prison. They left the prison and visited with the Believers at Lydia's.

As difficult as this experience was for Paul and Silas, in the end there was a positive result: lawful Roman protection was granted to the new Believers in the house-church which had started in the home of Lydia, one of Paul's first converts in Philippi. This allowed the Gospel to spread & the church to grow.

Paul, Silas, and Timothy left Philippi and traveled to Thessalonica. There are scholars who believe Luke stayed behind in Philippi to help with the ministry there. This is mainly based on the fact that the narrative in Acts, which Luke wrote, shifted during this time from the first-person "we" to a third-person perspective. This indicated Luke's temporary absence from Paul's team, until he rejoined Paul for his third missionary journey. From then on, Luke would be a continuing presence in Paul's life, especially during his last incarceration in Rome, which led to Paul's death.

► It has now been at least 10 years, maybe 12, since Paul first arrived in Philippi. As he pens these words to the Philippians, he is a prisoner. Based on contents of this letter and the information from Acts 28:16-31, this letter was written after Paul was unjustly arrested in Jerusalem. As a Roman Citizen he requested to be heard by Caesar. He was placed under house arrest and sent to Rome. As a Roman citizen, he was allowed to rent a house while he waited for his hearing. As part of his house arrest, Paul was chained, at the wrist, to a Roman Praetorian Guard. These guards served in shifts, which meant Paul had a change of guard several times during the day and night.

Paul was allowed to receive visitors and he was permitted to preach to those who came to visit. So, in addition to writing letters of encouragement to various churches, Paul continued with a preaching ministry. And, by the circumstances of his arrest, that included his guards. This house-arrest lasted two full years.

► **Philippians 1:1-2** • Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q: Whatever happened to Silas? He is not mentioned in this letter, yet he was a key figure when Paul established the church at Philippi.

Q: Paul included Timothy in the letter's Greeting. Does this mean they co-authored the letter?

Q: Paul does not use his title, “Apostle” in this letter. Since this was something Paul usually stressed in all of his writings, why did he make an exception in this letter?

Q: What are we to understand when Paul uses the description: “servant of Christ Jesus?”

Q: Paul addresses “all the saints” together with the “overseers” and “deacons” at Philippi. What are the roles of an “overseer” and “deacon?”

An Overseer:

A Deacon:

Q: The blessing: “grace and peace” is frequently used by Paul. It combines both Greek and Hebrew expressions and is a familiar Christian greeting. What is significant about the meaning of words of this blessing?

Grace:

Peace:

Q: What does this verse tell us about the source of this blessing of “grace & peace?”

► **John 14:25-27** • "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

### Paul's Greeting imparts to us a great promise ...

► **Philippians 1:3-6** • I thank my God every time I remember you.

In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the Day of Christ Jesus.

Q: Paul begins his letter by thanking God for the Believers in Philippi. Is his remembrance unique to this letter?

Q: What does Paul say was the reason he was thanking God for the Believers at Philippi?

Q: What is the special spiritual truth that Paul is teaching in this greeting?

Q: What would be a definition of the “good work” to which Paul refers in this greeting?

Q: What is significant about “The Day of Christ Jesus?”

In the OT: the phrase emphasizes \_\_\_\_\_

In the NT: it is connected to \_\_\_\_\_

### Paul finishes his initial Greeting ...

► **Philippians 1:7-8** • It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

Q: What's the meaning of: "I have you in my heart?" What does the word "heart" represent in this verse?

Q: What is significant about Paul saying: "whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel?"

Q: What does Paul mean that "God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus?"

**Having completed his greeting to the Philippians  
Paul begins to pray for these beloved friends of faith.  
This is where we will start next time.**

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**Next Time ♦ Lesson #4  
"More & More"**

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