



A Course

In

**PHILIPPIANS,
STUDIES IN**

Prepared by the
Committee on Religious Education
Of the
American Bible College

Pineland, Florida 33945

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PRELUDE

As you study the Scriptures you will find that it is of the greatest importance to approach the Bible in a reverent attitude of mind, looking upon it as the inspired Word of God, and not just an ordinary piece of literature. If the Bible is studied in the same manner as one studies Shakespeare, Milton or some historical work, it may be found interesting and profitable. But by this approach, the Bible student, persistent though he may be, will never find its rich treasures. The Apostle Paul says: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (I Cor. 2:14) For the profitable study of the Word of God, the right spiritual attitude is indispensable.

The Scriptures should be studied as eagerly as a hungry person seeks for food. The formal reading of a portion of the Bible may have some worth as a religious exercise, but in order that the complete benefit may be obtained from its truths, they must be appropriated to personal needs. A milkman may deliver thousands of quarts of milk each day and yet go home thirsty. The Bible student may read large portions of the Bible with little benefit, unless he makes it his own by personal appropriation and feeds upon it.

In your studies of the Bible will you appropriate the riches thereof to your own personal use, or will you read as you would read a book of fiction, a mystery, etc? In order to make full use of the pearls of wisdom contained in the Bible readings, it is suggested you reread them. Go into its wonderful fields of truth; go down into its valleys; climb its mountain peaks of vision; follow its streams of inspiration; enter its halls of learning. Many Bible truths do not appear on the surface; they must be dug up and be brought into the light by toil and effort.

There are various methods of Bible study, such as the exegetical and expository methods, the study of books, the study by chapters, the study of important passages, and the topical method. In our approach we are following the expository method which is the basic meaning explanation of the verses in their context. This method is utilized in order that the student may see Philippians in its total historical and doctrinal setting. Also, it is intended to provide a framework that the student may use in his ministry. Although the American Bible College believes the King James Version is the preserved Word of God, this method of study allows the writers to occasionally condense a passage in his own paraphrase. This should not be construed to imply that A. B. C. is correcting God's Word.

Much of this textbook is taken from the Philippian commentary of B. H. Carroll. Benajah Harvey Carroll (December 27, 1843 – November 11, 1914) was a Baptist pastor, theologian, teacher, author, and one of the founders of the Southern Baptist Convention. The only major point that the A.B.C. would disagree with B. H. Carroll is his opposition to dispensational premillennialism; he held to post-millennialism. However, he was a strong defender of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and a great Baptist theologian. For these reasons, we use his commentary as an example of earlier scholarship.

We wish to thank Dr. B. Gray Allison and Mid-America Theological Seminary (Baptist) for their permission to reproduce some of the included material.

We will be following the exegetical outline and notations of Philippians by Dr. Richard C. Henderson of Mid-America Theological Seminary.¹ Additional material will be noted in brackets "[]" and footnotes.

During this course the student is required to read through the entire Book of Philippians ten times. Keep in mind that the Book of Philippians is more important than this study.

¹ Henderson, Richard C., *PHILIPPIANS; AN EXEGETICAL OUTLINE AND SELECTED NOTES* in the MID-AMERICA THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL, STUDIES IN PHILIPPIANS (Memphis, TN.) Fall, 1980, pp.6-11.

Outline

PHILIPPIANS: AN EXEGETICAL OUTLINE AND SELECTED NOTES

by
Richard C. Henderson
Theme: JOY IN CHRIST
Key Verse: 4:4

INTRODUCTION (1:1-2)

A. Salutation (1:1)

1. Author: Paul, Servant (*doulos*) of Christ (1:1a)
2. Associate: Timothy, Servant (*doulos*) of Christ (1:1 a)
3. Addressees (1:1b-c)
 - a. Saints (1:1b)
 - (1) Designation: Saints
 - (2) Generalization: All the Saints
 - (3) Particularization: All the Saints in Christ Jesus
 - (4) Location: All the Saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi
 - b. Servants (1:1c)
 - (1) Shepherds (*episcopos*)
 - (2) Servants (*diakonos*)

B. Benediction (1:2)

1. From a Redeeming Savior: Grace
2. From a Reconciling Savior: Peace
3. From a Ruling Savior: Submission

I. JOY IN PRAYER (1:3-11)

A. Praise for the Philippian Participation (1:3-7)

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 - a. Partnership in the Gospel (1:3-7)
 - (1) Partnership of the Gospel (1:3-5a)
 - (2) Perseverance of the Saints (1:5b)
 - (3) Performance of God (1:6)
 - (4) Passion of Paul (1:7a)
 - b. Partnership in Grace (1:7b-c)
 - (1) In Incarceration (1:7b)
 - (2) In Confirmation (1:7c)

2. Persuasion about their Completion (1:6)

- a. Settled Persuasion (1:6a)
- b. Savior's Perfection (1:6b)

B. Prayer of Personal Affection (1:7-8)

1. Unity of Affection (1:4,7, 8)
 - a. Prayer for All (1:4)
 - b. Passion for All (1:7-8)
2. Intensity of Affection (1:7-8)
 - a. Locality of Compassion (1:7)

b. Reality of Compassion (1:8a)

c. Intensity of Compassion (1:8b)

d. Quality of Compassion (1:8c)

C. Petition of Particularized Supplication (1:9-11)

1. Prayer for a Fellowship that Loves (1:9)
 - a. Love Heavenly (*agape*)
 - b. Love Increasingly (*perisseuo*)
 - c. Love Experientially (*epiginosko*)
 - d. Love Perceptively (*aisthesis*)
2. Prayer for a Fellowship that Lives (1:10-11)
 - a. A Selective Life that is Fine (1:10a)
 - b. A Sincere Life that is Faultless (1:10b)
 - c. A Saturated Life that is Fruitful (1:11)
 - (1) Fruit as Product of Christ (1:11a)
 - (2) Filled with Praise Unto God (1:11b)
 - (a) Manifestation of His Person (*doxa*)
 - (b) Adoration of His People (*Epainon*)

II. JOY IN PERSECUTION (1:12-26)

A. Progress of the Gospel in the Past (1:12-14)

1. Confession in the Palace (1:12-13)
 - a. Comprehension of God's Provision in the Past (1:12)
 - b. Application to Paul's Profession in the Present (1:13)
2. Confidence Amongst the People (1:14)

B. Proclamation of the Gospel in the Present (1:15-18)

1. Proclamation of Christ through Contention (1:15-16)
 - a. Christ Preached in Strife (1:15)
 - b. Christ Preached in Sincerity (1:16)
2. Proclamation of Christ through Conviction (1:17)
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C. Paradox of the Gospel for the Future (1:19-26)

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 - (1) Christ and the Conviction of Paul (1:20a)
 - (2) Christ and the Conscience of Paul (1:20b)
 - (3) Christ and the Courage of Paul (1:20c)
 - (4) Christ and the Consistency of Paul (1:20d)
 - (5) Christ and the Consummation of Paul (1:20e)
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 - b. The Predicament That Constrains Paul (1:23)
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- (2) Enjoyment of Death in Companionship (1:23b)
- (3) Excellence of Death in Comparison (1:23c)
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 - b. An Appeal to Strive Fearlessly (1:27b-28)
 - c. An Appeal to Suffer Faithfully (1:28-30)
 - (1) Gift of Faith unto Salvation (1:29a)
 - (2) Gift of Faith unto Suffering (1:29b-30)
- 2. Motivation to Unity (2:1)
 - a. Consolation in Christ (*paraklesis*) (2:1 a)
 - b. Compulsion in Love (*paramuthion*) (2:1b)
 - c. Communion in the Spirit (*koinonia*) (2:1c)
 - d. Compassion in Life (2:1d)
 - (1) Seat of Tender Feelings (*splagna*)
 - (2) Sign of Tender Feelings (*oiktirmol*)
- 3. Description of Unity (2:2)
 - a. Same Goals (2:2a)
 - b. Same Love (2:2b)
 - c. Same Souls (2:2c)
- 4. Amplification of Unity (2:3-4)
 - a. Lowliness of Mind (2:3-4)
 - b. Look of Man (2:4)
- B. Encouragement to Humility (2:5-11)
- 1. Humiliation of Christ (2:5-7)
 - a. Form of God (*morphe*) (2:5-6)
 - b. Form of Men (*skene*) (2:7)
- 2. Incarnation of Christ (2:7-8a)
 - a. Form of a Servant (2:7)
 - b. Fashion of a Man (2:8a)
- 3. Crucifixion of Christ (2:8b)
- 4. Exaltation of Christ (2:9-11)
 - a. Given a Unique Name as Reigning Lord (2:9)
 - b. Given a Unique Worship as Ruling Lord (2:10-11 a)
 - c. Given a Unique Glory as Righteous Lord (2: 11b)
- C. Encouragement to Consistency (2: 12-13)
- 1. The Work of the Believer (2: 12-13)
 - a. The Believer at Work (2:12)
 - (1) Persistent Obligation (verb form) ". ..work out. .."
 - (2) Present Possession ". ..your own. .."
 - (3) Pressing Compulsion ". ..fear and trembling. .."
 - b. God at Work through the Believer (2:13)
 - (1) Fact of Indwelling "God. ..in you."
 - (2) Nature of Indwelling "working. .."
 - (3) Object of Indwelling "will and work. .."
 - (4) Motive of Indwelling "His good pleasure. .."
- 2. The Way of the Believer (2:14-15a)
 - a. Absence of Criticism (2:14)
 - (1) Action Towards People (2:14a)
 - (2) Attitude Towards People (2:14b)
 - b. Evidence of Character (2:15a)
 - (1) Unblameable (*amemptos*)
 - (2) Unmixed (*akeraios*)
 - (3) Unblemished (*amomos*)
- 3. The Witness of the Believer (2:15b-16a)
 - a. The Light of God in the World (2:15b)
 - b. The Life of God in the Word
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 - a. A Source of Comfort for Paul (2:19)
 - b. A Singular Concern for Philippi (2:20)
- 2. Timothy Selflessly Cared (2:21)
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 - b. He Shared as a Laborer in the Cause of Christ
 - c. He Shared as a Soldier in the Conflict with Satan
 - d. He Shared as a Messenger of the Church at Philippi
 - e. He Shared as a Minister of the Concerns of Paul
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 - a. Misery of the Saints (2:26-27a)
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 - c. Pride in Race (3:5c)
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 - 1. Assorted Expectations of Paul (4:2-9)
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CHAPTER I

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1

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS¹

The following introduction to Philippians is by
James E. Powell
Of Mid-America Theological Seminary

No greater insight into the personal and pastoral character of Paul may be noted among his epistles than is revealed in the Epistle to the Philippians. In writing to this church, so dear to him, Paul opens a window into his heart and into the heart of the church at Philippi, an act for which all Christians are in his debt.

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A. *Geography and Topography of Philippi.*

The city of Philippi, now no longer existent, lay in East Macedonia—the northern part of Greece—and derived its name from Philip, father of Alexander the Great, who had founded it in 368 B.C. on a site formerly known as *Krenides* or "Springs." He chose his site well, as a glance at a map will show. A range of hills divides Europe from Asia, and just at Philippi the range dips down into a pass. Philippi, therefore, commanded the great road—the *Via Egnatia*, as it was called—from Europe to Asia. No doubt it was for this geographical reason that in 42 B.C. Philippi saw one of the decisive battles of history, when Antony and Octavian (great nephew of Julius Caesar and later to become the Emperor Augustus Caesar) defeated and slew Brutus and Cassius, the murderers of Julius Caesar. The other fact of interest is that the victors, aware of the city's strategic position, turned it into a Roman colony by settling many of their veterans there. In a Roman colony the

¹ Taken from *Mid-America Theological Journal*, Volume 4, Fall, 1980 issue by Dr. Richard C. Henderson.

inhabitants did most things in a Roman way. Not only did they wear Roman dress, but their whole economy and law were based on a Roman pattern. Thus Philippi became a miniature of Rome, a fact no doubt in Paul's mind when he wrote in Philippians 3:20, "Our commonwealth [K.J.V. "conversation"] is in heaven." The word translated "commonwealth" is, [in Classical Greek] perhaps more accurately, "our capital city."²

The site of Philippi marked it for prominence in the ancient world. Located in eastern Macedonia, Philippi dominated a fertile, well-watered plain enclosed by mountains. It was situated only ten miles from the Aegean coast.³ The Viae Egnatia, an ancient military and commercial road that was the chief overland route from Asia to the West, linked Philippi with Neapolis and Thessalonica.⁴

Rich veins of gold in the mountains to the north supplied the area with its most important industry for many years.⁵ This fact may well have been in Paul's mind when he affirmed in 4:19 that God would "supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

B. *The Pre-Christian History of Philippi.*

The original settlers of the site later known as Philippi are thought to have been colonists from the island of Thasos.⁶ The earliest name of the place was Krenides, a name probably attributed to the place from the numerous springs and waters in the vicinity.⁷ When Philip II of Macedon gained control of Krenides in 360 B.C., he gave it his name.⁸ Fortifying Philippi as a fortress town,⁹ he continued to work the gold

mines developed extensively by the earlier colonists, and these mines provided Philip with income in excess of 1,000 talents a year.¹⁰

Following the defeat of the Macedonians by the Romans in 167 B.C., Macedonia was divided into four districts. Philippi was part of the first district, with Amphipolis serving as the capital.¹¹ In 146 B.C., it became part of the reorganized province of Macedonia, the capital of which was Thessalonica.¹²

In 42 B.C., the famous Battle of Philippi was fought. Here Anthony and Octavius defeated Brutus and Cassius, and Octavius made Philippi a colony in recognition of this victory. Following the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C., Augustus sent a large number of Roman veterans to the colony and granted to Philippi the *jus Italicum*, an act which placed Philippi on a par with the Roman colonies of Italy.¹³ As a Roman colony, Philippi enjoyed a form of government independent of provincial administration.¹⁴

C. *Philippi in the New Testament.*

Philippi is mentioned four times in the New Testament: Acts 16:12; Acts 20:6; Philippians 1:1; and I Thessalonians 2:2.

Acts 16:12 indicates Philippi was a city of great importance: "the leading city of Macedonia, and a Roman colony," "a city and colony of the first part (district) of Macedonia"¹⁵

Sir William Ramsay holds that Luke's description holds a touch of pride, because he was a native of Philippi. A famous school of medicine was here. It was associated with a guild of physicians that sent its adherents throughout the Hellenistic world. On this basis, Luke may claim that Philippi was the first city of Macedonia, just as Pergamum, Smyrna, and Ephesus each claimed to be the "first city of Asia."¹⁶

It was about the year A.D. 50 that Paul, in company with Silas, Timothy, and probably Luke (the appearance of the first of the so-called "we-passages" at Acts 16:10 would seem to indicate that Luke was present),

² Hunter, Archibald M., *THE LAYMAN'S BIBLE COMMENTARY*, Vol. 22, "Philippians" (Richmond, VA., John Knox Press, 1968), p. 78

³ A Rupprecht, "Philippi", *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, IV, 759.

⁴ Jack Finegan, "Philippi", *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, III, 786.

⁵ Marvin R. Vincent, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*, Vol. XXXVIII, Samuel R. Driver, Alfred Plummer (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), p. xv.

⁶ Rupprecht, *ibid.*

⁷ Finegan, *Ibid.*

⁸ Paul E Davies, "The Macedonian Scene of Paul's Journeys", *Biblical Archaeologist*, XXVI (September 1963), 95.

⁹ James David Bouchier, "Philippi", *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11 th ed.), XXI, 390.

¹⁰ 8 Rupprecht, *ibid.*

¹¹ Finegan, *ibid.*

¹² Rupprecht, p. 760.

¹³ Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians, and to the Philippians* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing Co., 1937), p. 692.

¹⁴ Rupprecht, *ibid.*

¹⁵ Rupprecht, pp. 760, 762.

¹⁶ Rupprecht, p. 762.

crossed the Aegean Sea and landed in Macedonia not far from Philippi. The story of their mission in Philippi is told in Acts 16. We learn there how Lydia from Thyatira, the dealer in purple, was won to the faith, and how Paul's cure of a slave-girl with psychic powers so incensed her owners that they denounced Paul and his friends to the magistrates who, after scourging them, threw them in prison and put them in the stocks. After the prisoners had been providentially released by an earthquake, their jailer was converted and baptized along with his family. [A. 16:16-34] Then the magistrates, on learning that they were Roman citizens, were glad to apologize for the unlawful scourging and to beg them to leave the town.

So Paul sowed the seed of the gospel in Philippi, and a splendid harvest it was to yield. For the little company of Christians who had their first meeting in Lydia's house grew into a church which was dearer to Paul than any other.

Thus the years went by. Once and again Paul revisited Philippi (Acts 20:1-6; II Cor. 2:12-18; 7:5-7); and the church there, though it did not escape persecution (Phil. 1:27-30), prospered. At length Paul's journeying came to an abrupt end: he was arrested in Jerusalem and, after two years' detention in Caesarea, was sent to Rome to stand his trial before the Emperor. There for two years he remained in a kind of free custody awaiting the Emperor's pleasure.

But even in that ancient world, without telegraph or a decent postal system, news traveled fast, and one day the Christians in Philippi heard with dismay of Paul's fate. Without more ado they "passed the hat" (as we would say), and some weeks later there arrived in Rome a man from Philippi, Epaphroditus, with a present of money for the Apostle and the offer of his own personal services. Unfortunately, while serving Paul, Epaphroditus fell seriously ill (Phil. 2:25-27). When he was better, Paul resolved to send him back to Philippi with a letter of thanks for the gift. The letter which he wrote is our epistle. Since his trial seemed imminent (Phil. 2:17), we surmise that it was written near the end of the two years of Roman imprisonment, about A.D. 62.¹⁷

D. Archaeological Discoveries at Philippi.

¹⁷ Hunter, *Ibid.*, p. 78

The French School of Archaeology at Athens partially excavated Philippi from 1914 to 1938. In the center of the forum, located south of the Via Egnatia, a large rostrum was found. This may have been the place to which Paul and Silas were dragged by the owner of the demon-possessed slave girl.

The ruins of a Roman arch were found a mile west of the city near the River Gangites. The limits of a Roman settlement were usually indicated by an arch. Within these limits, nothing impure could be established. This prohibition included cemeteries or sanctuaries or foreign religions. This may account for the fact that the place of prayer to which Paul and Silas went was outside the gates (Acts 16:13).¹⁸

II. COMPOSITION

A. Authorship.

Not until the nineteenth century was Paul's authorship of the Epistle to the Philippians seriously questioned. F. C. Baur (1792-1860) and the Tubingen school of Germany advanced the most serious arguments against Pauline authorship. Basically the Tubingen challenge asserted four reasons against the authenticity of the letter. First, it was claimed that the letter lacked originality and contained evidences of imitation. Second, the reference to "bishops and deacons" in 1:1 was held to attest to a post-Pauline date. Third, the arguments were made that traces of Gnostic ideas were present in the epistle. Fourth, it was argued that there were discrepancies in doctrine between the epistle and the undisputed Pauline letters.¹⁹

Baur's case against Pauline authorship never received widespread support.²⁰ The chief argument revolves around the use of the dual terms, "bishops and deacons," in the salutation. While the reference is indeed unusual, the title seems suspicious only when one reads into them the significance they came to acquire at a later time.²¹

On the other hand the case for authenticity is quite strong. The external evidence that favors Paul's authorship is both early and strong. Some have noted allusions to the epistle in the letter of

¹⁸ Rupprecht, p. 760.

¹⁹ D. E. Hiebert, "Letter to the Philippians", *The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, IV, 763.

²⁰ Homer A Kent, Jr., "Philippians", *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, XI, 96.

²¹ Hiebert, p. 763.

Clement of Rome to the Corinthians (c. 96 A.D.). Polycarp, near the mid-second century, makes mention of Paul writing to the Philippians.²²

The internal evidence also supports the authorship of Paul. While Timothy is mentioned with Paul in the salutation, Paul immediately begins with the first person singular (1:3) and continues to do so throughout the epistle. The reference to Timothy in 2:19-23 is quite objective, and Timothy is not even mentioned in the final salutation.²³

B. *Unity.*

The issue of unity is basically a question of integrity. Is the full letter as it now appears identical to the document sent by Paul to the Philippians?²⁴ E. F. Scott sees more ground for questioning the unity of the epistle than for challenging its authenticity.²⁵

Since the early nineteenth century, arguments have been advanced that contend that the present Epistle is really a fusion of two or three epistles.²⁶ Mitigating against these arguments is the fact that such theories have no textual support,²⁷ nor is there evidence in its history of interpretation that it was ever regarded as anything but a single letter.²⁸

Those who question the unity of Philippians do so primarily on the basis of the abrupt change of tone and contents at the beginning of chapter three. Some have argued that the change is so hard that it can only be accounted for by a theory of two or more separate compositions.²⁹

Others have attempted to make Polycarp's reference to Paul's "letters" as external evidence for such a fusion. The argument is indecisive, since the term in the Greek idiom in view may be used in the plural with a singular meaning.³⁰

²² Robert H. Mounce, "The Epistle to the Philippians", *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 1319

²³ Ernest F. Scott, "The Epistle to the Philippians: Introduction and Exegesis", *The Interpreter's Bible*, XI, 8.

²⁴ Ralph P. Martin, *Philippians*, in *New Century Bible* (Greenwood, S. C.: The Attic Press, Inc., 1976), p.10.

²⁵ Scott, *ibid.*

²⁶ For a perceptive discussion of this subject, see William J. Dalton, "The Integrity of Philippians", *Biblica* 60:1 (1979), 97-102.

²⁷ Hiebert, *ibid.*

²⁸ Dalton, p. 101.

²⁹ Hiebert, *ibid.*

³⁰ Dalton, *ibid.*

It is difficult to argue against the combined weight of textual evidence and historical interpretation, both of which favor the unity of the work. While Paul may well have written more than one letter to the Philippian church, it is but one of them.³¹

III. PLACE AND DATE OF ORIGIN

A. *Place.*

The primary problem in locating the place from which this Epistle originated is to identify the imprisonment mentioned in the text (1:7, 13, 17). The Epistle itself provides that the imprisonment involved a considerable span of time. The imprisonment of Paul was of sufficient length that it had become known "throughout the whole praetorian guard" (1:13). It was long enough to allow for considerable evangelistic work (1:14-17), and to allow for conversions to have taken place in "Caesar's household" (4:22).³²

Only two possible imprisonments are cited in Acts: one at Caesarea (Acts 23:33-26:32), and one at Rome (Acts 28:16-31). However, it is evident from II Corinthians 6:5 and 11:23 that Paul was imprisoned at least briefly in other places during his service. Advocates may be found, then, for views suggesting at least three potential places of origin—Rome, Caesarea, and Ephesus—though other places of origin have sometimes been suggested.

1. *Rome.* The view commonly held from earliest times, and without serious opposition until the nineteenth century, is that Rome was the place of origin. The situation implied in Philippians corresponds to the setting of Acts 28. References to the "whole praetorian guard" (1:13) and to "Caesar's household" (4:22) within the epistle point more naturally to a Roman origin.³³

2. *Caesarea.* Since the Caesarean origin was first proposed by Paulus in 1799, it has received support from a number of scholars. The chief arguments of this view were: (1) the Caesarean military custody of Paul agrees better with Paul's "bonds" (1:14) than the Roman imprisonment; (2) the "praetorium" (1:13) could refer to the palace of Herod at Caesarea; and (3) "Caesar's

³¹ For a full discussion of the modern debate on the unity of the Epistle, one may see Ralph Martin, *Philippians*, pp. 14-21.

³² Hiebert, p. 764.

³³ *ibid.*

household" could refer to imperial slaves stationed at Caesarea.³⁴

3. *Ephesus*. While H. Lisco first proposed this alternative in 1900,³⁵ the case for an Ephesian origin has been best presented by Professor George S. Duncan in his work, *St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry*, but even so, the argument is tenuous.³⁶ A principal reason for such popularity as the view has enjoyed is that it makes the problem of the journeys between Philippi and the site of Paul's imprisonment less difficult from the standpoint of the time required. It would also make Paul's proposed trip to Philippi agree with his journey into Macedonia upon his departure from Ephesus (20:1). If Paul's imprisonment was at Ephesus, it would make it possible for Timothy to journey to Philippi and to return before Paul left there, and it would also explain the absence of any mention of Luke in Philippians, since Luke was at Philippi during that period.³⁷

Each of these views seeks to interpret the evidence in the Epistle, and there are difficulties that each view does not fully resolve. The highest degree of probability lies with the Roman origin. No other view presents evidence of such weight as to set aside the traditional view.³⁸

B. *Date*.

If one assumes Rome as the origin of the Epistle, how one dates the Epistle is determined by whether one regards Philippians as having been written before or after Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians—the other writings of Paul during his imprisonment.

Bleek, Lightfoot, Sanday, Hart, Beet and others assume that Philippians was written first. Zahn, Ramsay, Findlay, Shaw, Vincent, Julicher, Holtzmann, Weiss, Godet, and others contend that Philippians was written toward the end of the Roman imprisonment and after the other letters.³⁹ Assuming that it was near the close of Paul's imprisonment, Philippians was written around [62 A. D.]

IV. OCCASION AND PURPOSE

³⁴ Hiebert, p. 765.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, IV, 433.

³⁷ Hiebert, *ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Doremus Almy Hayes, "The Epistle to Philippians", *The Internal Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, IV, 2374.

The return of Epaphroditus to Philippi after a serious illness (2:25-30) provides the opportunity for Paul to express his commendation of his fellow worker to the Philippian church. He uses the occasion to pour out his expressions of appreciation and affection to this beloved church.

The view that the letter was written to thank the Philippians for their gift to him poses at least two difficulties. First, why did Paul delay his thanks unto the end? Second, why would Paul allow several months to pass before he even acknowledged their gift? If Epaphroditus had been accompanied by others from Philippi, Paul could have sent back his thanks by the brothers who returned. If Epaphroditus had traveled alone, Paul could have sent the message by some other traveler.⁴⁰

Some secondary factors could also have provided a reason for writing the Epistle. Timothy's approaching visit (2:19) could have provided the occasion. Then, too, Paul hoped to visit the church (2:24). The situation involving Euodias and Syntyche (4:2) may also have been a factor.⁴¹

V. CANONICITY

There is ample evidence that this Epistle was accepted by the early leaders of the church. Clement of Rome (first century) and Ignatius (early second century) both allude to its contents. Polycarp (early second century) even makes use of the terminology of the canonical Epistle.

Second-century lists of canonical works include Philippians. The Muratorian fragment (c. 170 A.D.) and the list of Marcion include it among Paul's Epistles. The early external witness contains no suspicion concerning the canonicity of the Epistle.⁴²

VI. THEOLOGY

While the tone of this Epistle is eminently practical, it contains profound theological truths. In 2:5-11, one finds Paul's classic doctrinal statement concerning the Person of Christ Jesus, a statement of great significance for the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God. Here, the

⁴⁰ Hiebert, *ibid.*

⁴¹ Kent, p. 99.

⁴² *Ibid.* p. 100.

pre-existence, the incarnation, and the exaltation of the Son of God are clearly affirmed. The statement that Christ "emptied himself" has been the keynote of the *kenosis* controversy.⁴³

We come now to the first of Paul's first imprisonment at Rome letters. These letters, in chronological order, are Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, and Hebrews.

It would be well at this point to name several books, most of which have already been given, as general helps on the whole group: Conybeare & Howson's *Life and Epistles of Paul*; Farrar's, *Life and Letters of Paul*; Stalker's *Life of Paul*; *Horae Paulinae*; by Wm. Paley, Robertson's, *Syllabus of New Testament Study*; *St. Paul*; by Adolphe Monod. Meyer's translation, Malcolm McGregor, *Divine Authority of Paul's Writings*, and Carroll's sermon before the Southern Convention at Hot Springs, Arkansas, 1908, on The Nature, Person and Offices of Our Lord and His Relations to the Father, the Universe and the Church; Wilkinson's Epic of Saul, and Epic of Paul. (this was a defence against liberalism that was creeping to the convention at that time).

The special helps on this book are as follows:

For Exposition – Lightfoot on Philippians the best for exposition and criticism; *American Commentary*; Pidge on Philippians; Cambridge Bible; Moule on Philippians; Expositors' Bible; Rainey on Philippians; Speakers' or Bible Commentary; Jamieson, Fausset & Brown, brief and critical. For Homiletics as well as Exposition – *The Pulpit Commentary on Philippians*; Robert Hall's *Expository Sermons on Philippians*; Johnston's, *Expository Lectures*.

For Devotion – Hoyt's *Gleams from the Prison of Paul*.

For Geographical and Historical Setting – Both Conybeare & Howson and Farrar cited in the general helps for the group of letters, to which we may add Ramsay on *Paul the Traveler*; and Forbes, *Footsteps of Paul*.

Expository, Practical and Devotional – Matthew Henry, or better, *The Comprehensive Commentary*, edited by Jenkins.

END OF SAMPLE

⁴³ Hiebert, p. 766.