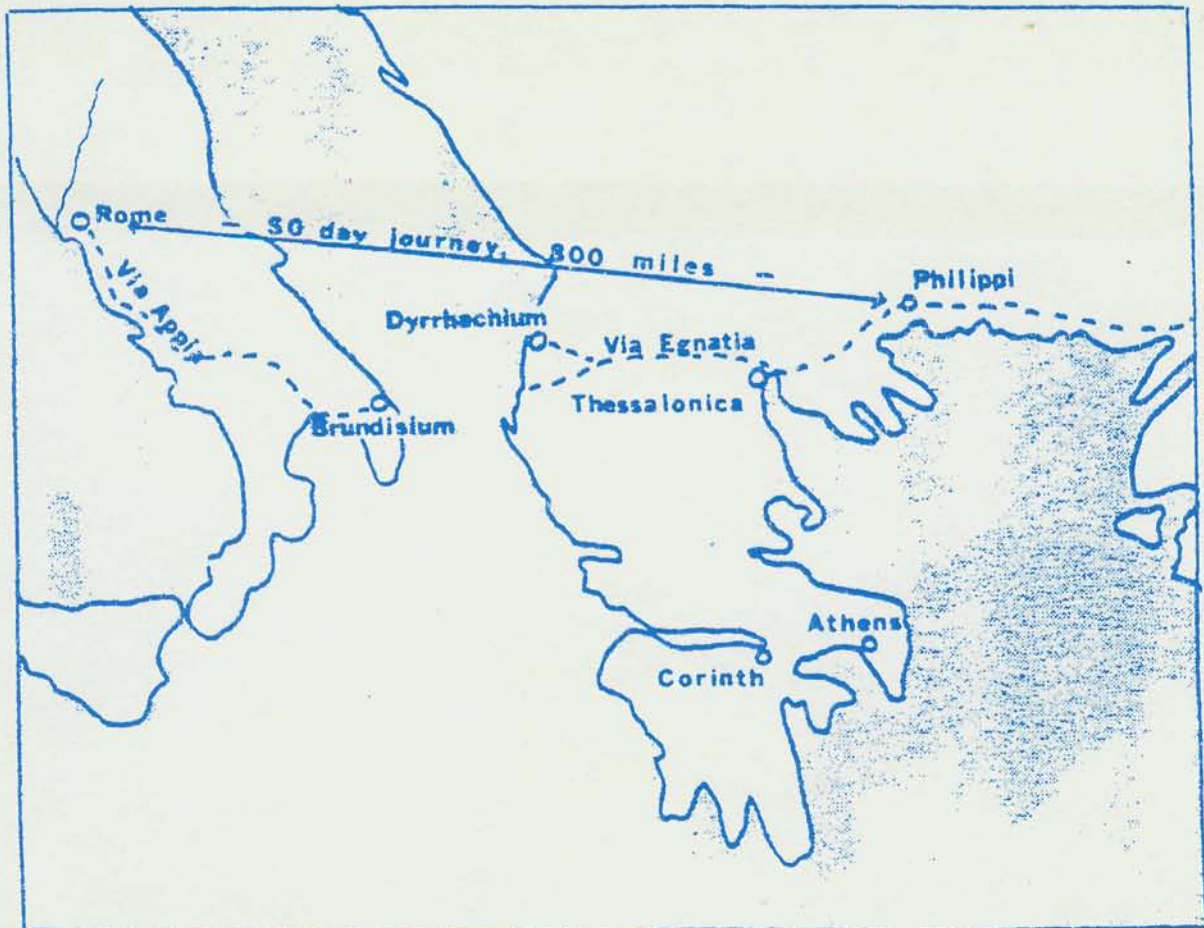


# Paul's epistle to the Philippians



"Therefore my brethren, whom I love and long for,  
my joy and crown, **STAND FIRM IN THE LORD**"

A Study in  
The Epistle to the Philippians

Lompoc Valley Ecclesial Study Day Notes

March 16, 1974

"My brethren . . . STAND FIRM IN THE LORD

The purpose of the Study Day is that the word of His grace may work effectively in those who believe - it reflects a desire to discover what Scripture says by a detailed study of its contents. Once the spark of its teaching is kindled, the student finds that it burns like a fire in his bones. This is as it should be:

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word." ( Psa. 119:9 ).

These notes are not a verse by verse exposition of the Philippian epistle. They are intended rather to provide adequate background information with highlight material that is relevant to the addresses.

To study reflectively on the Philippian epistle is to delight in God's way. The epistle is rich in exhortation and challenging in exposition. It sets before the student the sterling work of Paul's son in the faith, Timothy, of whom Paul said, "I have no one like him". Added to this is the example of Epaphroditus, the messenger of the Philippian ecclesia, who was "righ unto death" for the work of his Lord. Perhaps even these men are overshadowed in the epistle when the mind of Christ is contemplated and its power manifest in the life of the Apostle Paul, the Saviour's chosen vessel.

May the Great God whom we serve bless our studies so that we might be worthy of the great vocation wherewith we have been called and so "stand firm in the LORD".

Ron Abel

Toronto, Canada

March, 1974

CHAPTER 1

SUGGESTED GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

- 1:1 Paul and Timothy - Why does Paul include the greetings of Timothy?  
saints - what qualifications are required for this designation?  
bishops and deacons - What are the meanings of these words? Why have Christadelphians not used these names rather than "arranging brethren", "recording brother"?
- 1:2 Every remembrance of you - Does Paul mean that in all his prayers he remembers the Philippians or that he is always remembering them?
- 1:5 He which hath begun a good work in you - How was this work begun? How could it be attributed to God Himself?  
the day of Jesus Christ - What day is this? How long is the day - 24 hrs?  
we are all partakers of my grace - In what way could the Philippians ( many hundreds of miles away ) fellowship Paul's bonds, defence and confirmation of the gospel?
- 1:8 the bowels of Jesus Christ - Look up the word "bowels" in Young's Concordance or Vine's "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words". What synonym would you choose for this word?
- 1:9 in all judgment - Why must love ( 'agapē' ), be developed by knowledge and judgment? Doesn't "love" include knowledge and judgment? What is meant by judgment in this passage? What one word in English is equivalent to "agapē" in the Greek language?
- 1:10 Approve - This is a significant word - what is its etymology?  
sincere - This is another significant word. Its meaning should be checked in Vine's and Young's Concordance.
- 1:11 the fruits of righteousness - what are these?
- 1:12 the furtherance of the gospel - How did Paul's imprisonment result in the furtherance of the gospel?
- 1:13 my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace - How do you think this was accomplished?

1:14 waxing confident - How would Paul's imprisonment have encouraged others to speak the word without fear?

without fear - What sources of fear do you think would have existed in Rome for preachers of the gospel ?

1:15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy - Would this group have been Judaisers? Or were they a faction within the ecclesia?

1:18 whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached - Why did Paul seem unconcerned for motive?

1:19 the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ - What does this expression mean?

1:20 Christ shall be magnified in my body - Paul states that Christ could be magnified in his body, but said elsewhere that in his flesh dwelt "no good thing" ( Rom. 7:18 ). Is the "body" the same as his "flesh"?

by life or by death - How would Paul magnify his Saviour in death?

1:21 to die is gain - Why would it be gain for Paul to die?

1:22 if I live in the flesh - Is "flesh" used here as synonymous with the "body"?

1:23 having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ - This passage seems like clear proof that at death a person departs to be with Christ in heaven, how do you show from the context that this is not what Paul is saying?

1:25 I know that I shall abide - How does this statement infer Paul's expectation regarding his impending trial? Is there any additional proof to this effect?

1:27 Let your conversation - Is the Greek word restricted in meaning to conversation?

ye stand fast - This is an interesting term in the Greek which has a military meaning - referring to an unbroken battle line. How does the word give additional stress to the point Paul is making?

1:28 nothing terrified - This expression alludes to a horse startled by something in its path. The word should be looked up in Vine's "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words".

1:30 the same conflict - What "conflict" did the Philippian believers see in Paul?

CHAPTER 2

- 2:1 Fellowship of the Spirit - What is meant by this expression? Can the Christadelphian today experience "fellowship of the Spirit"?
- in any bowels - This is an often repeated expression in the epistle, what does it mean? Have you checked the definition given in Vine's "Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words"?
- 2:2 that ye be likeminded - To what extent do you think there were divisions within the Philippian ecclesia? Was this a major problem? What differences might have existed in the ecclesia? Is there any proof for these in the epistle?
- 2:3 vainglory - In what ways can work in the Truth be undertaken with motives of vainglory?
- let each esteem other better than themselves - What is the meaning of this instruction in the ordinary affairs of the ecclesia? Does it mean that if "a" is a better speaker than "b", "a" should regard "b" as if "b" were the better speaker?
- 2:4 Look not every man on his own things - What are the "own things" which can absorb one's time and energies to the exclusion of the Lord's "things"? Are there any pitfalls peculiar to this generation of young people and new converts?
- 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus - How could you describe "this mind"? Why does Paul introduce a consideration of the "mind of Christ" at this stage in his letter? Does it fit a structure in the epistle that you can discern?
- 2:6 Who being in the form of God - This section of the chapter is one of the strongest arguments that the Trinitarian can produce. Can you anticipate how he might reason his case? What rejoinder would you make? This would be a good time to mark your Bible.
- thought it not robbery to be equal with God - This section requires the comparison of other translations and the words looked up in Young's or Strong's Concordance to find the precise meanings. It is generally agreed that the A. V. translation is faulty.
- 2:7 the form of a servant - What examples in the life of the Master illustrate this? What precisely is the "form of a slave"?

- was made in the likeness of men - What point is Paul stressing? When was he made in the likeness of men? Does Paul imply that Christ was only in the likeness not the identical nature of mankind? What other passages are parallel to this one?
- 2:8 became obedient unto death - Why was Jesus required to die, i. e., to be obedient unto death?
- even the death of the cross - Why did God require that Jesus die by crucifixion rather than by stoning or being thrown over the brow of a cliff?
- 2:9 God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name - What is this name? What is your proof? Is this the new name of Rev. 3:12?
- 2:10 things in heaven, and things in earth and things under the earth - Is this expression to be taken literally? What things in earth or under the earth could bow the knee to Jesus?
- 2:11 Jesus is Lord - What is meant by acclaiming Jesus as Lord?
- 2:12 work out your own salvation - This apparently contradicts what follows: "For it God which worketh in you" ( vs. 13 ). How do you reconcile the two statements?
- 2:15 in the midst of a crooked generation - To which Old Testament passage might Paul be alluding?
- 2:16 run in vain, neither laboured in vain - Where is the expression "run in vain" taken from? Are there any other allusions which are similar to this in Paul's epistles? Paul is also drawing points from the Suffering Servant prophecies. Can you find the place? What justification could Paul have in applying a passage to himself which rightly refers to the Messiah? Are there any other applications similar to this in the epistles?
- 2:17 If I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith - Paul is employing terminology of the Mosaic Law. What is the point of his allusion?
- 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's - If Paul is writing from Rome, how does this reflect upon believers there?
- 2:22 As a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel - What were the characteristics of Paul's father-son relationship in the Truth? Cf. 1 Cor. 4:15-17. How would a "father" be different from an "instructor" ( 1 Cor. 4:15 )?

- 2:23 I shall see how it will go with me - What does this tell us about Paul's trial?
- 2:25 My brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier - Why do you think Paul includes such terms of endearment and service in his description of Epaphroditus?
- 2:26 He longed after you all - Why?
- 2:27 He was sick nigh unto death - When do you think the illness was contracted - on the way to Rome or while there? Why did Paul not use the gift of healing ( 1 Cor. 12:28 ) to restore Epaphroditus to health?
- 2:27 Sorrow upon sorrow - What was Paul's first "sorrow"?
- 2:29 Hold such in reputation - Do you think brethren like Epaphroditus should be held in reputation today?
- 2:30 To supply your lack of service toward me - Does this statement imply a deficiency in the Philippian service, or is this a translational problem?



CHAPTER 3

- 3:1 Dogs - Who are these "dogs" and why does Paul use such a disparaging term?
- 3:2 concision - Why does Paul use the term "concision" rather than "circumcision"?
- 3:3 we are the circumcision - What does Paul mean by this expression?
- have no confidence in the flesh - What is the meaning of "flesh"? Is it synonymous with the "body"?
- 3:4 of the tribe of Benjamin - What is the meaning of Benjamin? What prominence did Benjamin have as a tribe in Israel?
- an Hebrew of the Hebrews - What does this expression mean?
- 3:6 touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless - Does this mean that Paul kept the Mosaic Law perfectly as a devout Jew? If he did keep the Law "blamelessly", how is this to be reconciled with Rom. 7: 15-21? If he could keep the Law blamelessly, why didn't he earn eternal life as a reward?
- 3:7 what things were gain to me - What would be "gain" to Paul as a Jew keeping the Law?
- 3:8 loss - This word should be looked up in the Concordance. It is the same word used in Acts 27:10 when the cargo of the ship was jettisoned in order to preserve life. How does this lend force to Paul's argument?
- 3:9 the righteousness which is of God by faith - How was this righteousness different from Paul's "own righteousness" under the Mosaic Law?
- 3:10 the fellowship of his sufferings - In what way could Paul fellowship the sufferings of Christ and be made "conformable unto his death"?
- 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus - What is the metaphor which Paul is employing?
- 3:15 be perfect - In what sense could the Philippians be said to be "perfect"?
- God shall reveal even this unto you - How would this be done? Is there any sense in which the same guarantee applies today?

- 3:18 that they are enemies of the cross of Christ - Who were these enemies?  
Do we have any indication in the epistle?
- 3:19 Whose end is destruction - Does this imply a resurrectional destiny?  
whose God is their belly - What does Paul mean by this?  
whose glory is in their shame - What does Paul mean by this expression?
- 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven - The word for "conversation" means  
"citizenship". How is Paul drawing his allusion from the special colony  
status which Philippi enjoyed in the Roman Empire?  
we look - In the Greek this expression means "to await". How is this rendering  
proof that Paul's "desire" was not to go to heaven?
- 3:21 vile body - Other translations should be checked. Why is the mortal body  
referred to as a body of "humiliation"? Cf. Rom. 8:17-23.

CHAPTER 4

- 1 My joy and crown - This vivid expression is also used in 1 Thess. 2:19, 20.  
What is the point Paul is making here?
- 2 I beseech Euodias and Syntyche - Why does Paul exhort these two women  
in a letter sent to the whole ecclesia? Were they leaders of female  
factions in the ecclesia?
- 3 Rejoice - Why the repeated stress on "rejoice" in this letter to the  
Philippian believers?
- 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men - What is meant by "moderation"?  
Does "all men" refer to those outside the Truth?
- the Lord is at hand - Did Paul expect the Lord to return in his life-time?  
How could Paul say "the Lord is at hand" when he has not returned for  
2,000 years?
- 6 Be careful for nothing - What is the meaning of "careful"?
- 7 The peace of God - What is this distinctive "peace of God"? How is it  
produced?
- 8 true, honest . . . just . . . pure . . . lovely - Are these characteristics  
synonymous with the mind of Christ?
- 10 Wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity - Check other  
translations. Is Paul saying that the Philippians had a desire to assist  
Paul but had no way of doing so?
- 11 I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content - Does this  
mean that any ambition in life like schooling and job promotion should  
be deliberately rejected?
- 12 I know both how to be abased - What examples in Paul's life illustrate this  
statement?
- I know how to abound - What examples of "abounding" can you find in Paul's life
- 13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me - In what ways did  
Christ empower Paul? Are there examples preserved to this effect? Is  
the same power available to believers today in exactly the same way?

- 4:14 Ye did communicate with my affliction - The word for "communicate" is "koinonia", "fellowship". How does this give insight into the meaning of fellowship?
- 4:15 No ecclesia communicated with me concerning giving and receiving, but ye only  
Why do you think the Philippians were so concerned for Paul's welfare?
- 4:17 but I desire fruit that may abound to your account - In what way would this generous giving abound to the Philippian account?
- 4:18 a sacrifice - What Old Testament allusion is Paul employing in speaking of the Philippian gift sent by Epaphroditus?
- 4:21 The brethren which are with me greet you - Who were these brethren?
- 4:23 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you - What is meant by the word "grace"?

OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECIES WHICH RELATE TO PAUL'S WORK

Paul's use of Isaiah 49 is most instructive. He cites it, or alludes to it in the following passages:

<p>Isa. 49:1 "The LORD hath called me from the womb;"</p>	<p>Gal. 1:15 "God, who separated me from my mother's womb,"</p>
<p>Isa. 49:3 "Thou art my servant,"</p>	<p>Gal. 1:10 "the servant of Christ."</p>
<p>Isa. 49:4 "I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain:"</p>	<p>Phil. 2:16 "that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."</p>
<p>Isa. 49:4 "yet surely my judgment is with the LORD,"</p> <p>"and my work [ ] mg. 'reward' [ ] with my God"</p>	<p>1 Cor. 4:4 "For I know nothing by myself; . . . but he that judgeth me is the Lord." "I am not aware of anything against myself," R. S. V.</p> <p>2 Cor. 6:1 "We then, as workers together with him,"</p>
<p>Isa. 49:5 "my God shall be my strength."</p>	<p>2 Cor. 12:9 "my strength is made perfect in weakness." cf. Phil. 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."</p>
<p>Isa. 49:6 "to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel:"</p>	<p>Acts 9:15 "to bear my name before . . . the children of Israel:"</p>

<p>Isa. 49:6          "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth."</p>	<p>Acts 13:47          "I have set thee <u>Paul</u> to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." ( This is applied to Christ, Acts 26:23 ).          Gal. 1:16, R.S. V.          "<u>God</u> was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles."</p>
<p>Isa. 49:7          "him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth,"</p>	<p>1 Cor. 4:9, 10          "for we are made a spectacle unto the world . . . we are despised."          ( cf. also 2 Cor. 4:9, 10 ).</p>
<p>Isa. 49:7          "to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship,"</p>	<p>Acts 9:15          "to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings,"</p>
<p>Isa. 49:7, R.S. V.          "the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."</p>	<p>Acts 9:15          "he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles,"</p>
<p>Isa. 49:8          "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee,"</p>	<p>2 Cor. 6:2          "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."</p>

This list of N. T. allusions and quotations shows Isa. 49 to refer to the Servant's ( Messiah's ) adoption of Gentiles into the covenant. Since Paul applies these passages to his own ministry, his message of reconciliation is all the more impressive. In effect he is an extension, an appendage, of Messiah himself. It might be a valid inference if Paul draws his exhortation from a context which relates to the grace of God being extended to the Gentiles, that it was predominantly Gentiles who were in danger of vitiating the effects of reconciliation.

**"CONTEND EARNESTLY FOR THE FAITH"**  
The Philippians ch. 2 Debate

When Paul arrived at Thessalonica from Philippi it is recorded that he "went in, as was his custom, and for three weeks / sabbaths / he argued with them / the Jews / explaining and proving . . . and some were persuaded." ( Acts 17:2, R.S.V. ). To argue and reason as did the Apostle to the Gentiles requires presentation of evidence logically and clearly so that the Truth can be seen in its overpowering splendour.

Many of us, however, could be much better reasoners than we are now. Some of us would even have to confess to being routed in discussion with persons of different faiths just because we could not seem to present the case for the Truth very successfully. For a Christadelphian such defeat does not rest lightly. It is a command that we should "contend earnestly for the faith" ( Jude 8 ) and like most things in the Truth this requires study and practice.

The purpose of this debate is to set out clearly what the disputed passages in Philippians ch. 2 really do teach and to evaluate the way in which each of the debating teams presents its case. At the end of the debate a post-mortem will be undertaken - be prepared to help out!

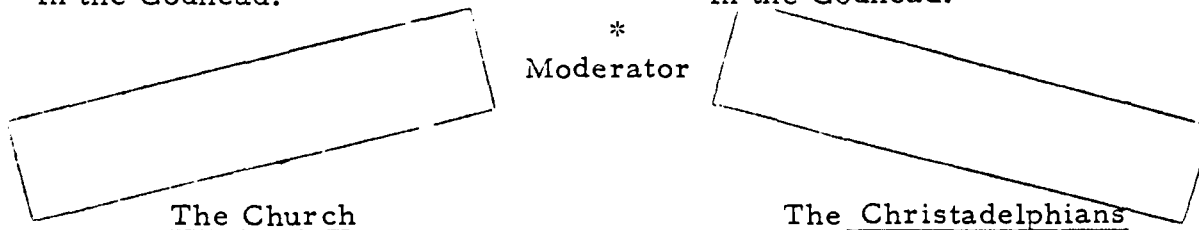
Order of the Debate

Affirmative Position

"That Phil. 2:6-9 teaches that Jesus Christ is the third person in the Godhead. "

Negative Position

"That Phil. 2:6-9 teaches that Jesus Christ is not the third person in the Godhead. "



1st Affirmative Speech ( 10 min. ) - constructive presentation of case.

1st Negative Speech ( 10 min. ) - constructive presentation of case.

2nd Affirmative Speech - refutation consisting of rebuttal and rejoinder. Speech

2nd Negative Speech consists of exposing weakness in opponent's position  
 ( 10 min. ) showing logical inconsistency, inadequate evidence, misquotation in his representation of reference sources

Affirmative Summary ( 5 min. )

Negative Summary ( 5 min.)

Post Mortem!!

Phil. 2:6, 7 "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

PROBLEM: Great stress is placed on "morphe" ( the Greek word for form ) by trinitarians and others like the J.W.'s who teach that Christ had a pre-human existence. It is argued that "in the form of God" means that Christ had the nature of God before his birth, and it was this which he sacrificed in coming to the earth to live as a human.

SOLUTION:

1. If "in the form of God" means the very nature of God, then Christ could not have been "Very God" while on earth, as trinitarians assert, since this is what he is said to have sacrificed and left behind in coming to the earth.
2. The Greek word "morphe" ( translated 'form' ) does not refer to 'essential nature' as the trinitarian cause requires. This is proven by the following:

a) "Eidos", not "morphe" is the Greek word which conveys the idea of "essential nature". As Liddell and Scott point out in their lexicon, "morphe" means form, shape, fine, beautiful form or shape, figure, fashion, appearance, outward form or semblance. It is opposed to "eidos" which means "true form".

b) In the context of this passage, it is stated that Christ "took upon him the form of a servant" ( vs. 7 ). But what is the form of a servant ( Gk. 'doulos', a slave )? The "essential nature" of a slave is the same as that of any other human being. The form, therefore, must refer to the semblance or demeanour of a slave as the distinguishing characteristic.

c) "Morphe" occurs in only one other place in the N. T. - Mark 16:12, and here it clearly does not mean "essential nature". Jesus appeared "in another form", but this could not refer to a change of his essential nature since the reason why he appeared to be in another form was because the disciples' "eyes were holden" ( Luke 24:16 cf. vs. 31 ). Not even a trinitarian or J.W. would be prepared to say that Christ's essential nature was changed after his resurrection and glorification.



3. How was Christ in the form of God? He had the semblance and demeanour of the Father mentally and morally. His character was the express image of his Father's person ( Heb. 1:3 ).
4. Sometimes trinitarians stress that Christ was originally in the form of God - i. e., "being" in the form of God is taken to mean that he was in fact "Very God" before his "incarnation". The Greek verb "huparchon" refutes this position since it is in the imperfect tense which expresses action yet, or still in course of performance. Time signified by an imperfect tense is of a continual, habitual, repeated action, so that "being in the form of God" means "being, and continuing to be in the form of God". Christ never ceased to be in the form of God since in semblance and demeanour from his birth he habitually exemplified his Father's character. Note the use of "huparchon" in the following passages:
- a) Acts 2:30 - "Therefore being a prophet" does not mean "being originally before birth a prophet", but rather a prophet and continuing to be such.
- b) 1 Cor. 11:7 - "Forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God" does not mean "being originally before he was born the image and glory of God", but rather being the image of God and continuing to be.
- c) Gal. 2:14 - "If thou being a Jew" does not mean "being originally before his birth as a Jew", but rather if you from the start and continuing to be a Jew.
5. "Thought it not robbery to be equal with God" is generally acknowledged to be a poor translation. The R. S. V. reads as follows: "He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." Unlike Eve who grasped after the fruit which was desired to make one like God ( the 'elohim' ) to know good and evil, Jesus refused to take the kingdoms of the world without the crucifixion of the flesh and the declaration of the righteousness of his Father. In the Garden of Gethsemane he subjected his will to his Father's, not arrogating to himself prerogatives that rightly belonged to his Father ( Matt. 26:39 ).
6. How then did Christ take the form of a servant ( slave )? Two passages supply the answer:
- a) "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." : ( Jn. 13:14 ).

b) "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." ( Heb. 5:8, 9 ).

Although Christ was in the form of God in his semblance and demeanour, he took on him the semblance and demeanour of a slave.

7. "He humbled himself"; "he emptied himself", R.S.V. ( vs. 8 ), refers to Christ's deliberate choice to submit his will to that of his Father. Christ was worshipped ( Matt. 8:2; 9:18 ), performed the works of God ( Jn. 10:37-38 ), and forgave sins ( Matt. 9:2 ), but he never arrogated to himself authority which had not been delegated to him by the Father. In so doing his example was a powerful lesson in humility to the Philippians. But if Christ "being originally, before his birth, while he was in heaven in the form ( essential nature ) of God thought at his birth, when he descended into the womb, not to be equal with God, but left the form of God",<sup>1</sup> where is humility demonstrated?

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<sup>1</sup>This is the way in which Phil. 2:6 is read by trinitarians. See A. B. Bruce, The Humiliation of Christ, ( Edinburgh: T. and T. Clarke, 1889 ), pp.1-23.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. History of Philippi - Philippi is located about 8 miles from its sea-port city, Neapolis. The city was founded by Philip of Macedon in an area called "The Place of Fountains" from its many streams.

The area contained a pass through the mountain barrier of the Balkans. For this reason Philip of Macedon ( B. C. 359 - 336 ) fortified the area. It was in this same location ( 95 years before Paul reached Philippi ) that Octavius (later called Augustus ) and Antonius defeated the armies of Brutus and Cassius. Augustus elevated Philippi to a colony as a border garrison of the province of Macedonia and as a memorial to his victory over Brutus.

2. Philippi - a Roman colony - A colony was a "little Rome", an extension of Rome itself. "The colonists were sent out by authority, they marched in military order to their new home, their names were still enrolled among the Roman tribes, they used the Latin language and Latin coinage, their chief magistrates were appointed from Rome . . . and combined civil and military authority."<sup>1</sup> The limits of the new city were marked out by the plough.

Greeks divided the world into "Greeks" and "Barbarians",<sup>2</sup> but the Romans divided the world into "Romans" and "strangers".

Paul and Silas had Roman citizenship ( Acts 22:28 ). As such they had the following privileges:

- (a) exemption from scourging
- (b) freedom from arrest except in extreme cases
- (c) in all cases the right of appeal from the magistrate to the Emperor.<sup>3</sup>

The Roman colony at Philippi was used as a place to relocate war veterans. "The colonists went out with all the pride of Roman citizens, to represent and reproduce the city in the midst of an alien population."<sup>4</sup> The ordinary affairs were regulated by local magistrates who took pride in calling themselves by the Roman title of "Praetors" ( Gk. 'stratēgos', cf. Acts 16:20, 'magistrates' ).

This background information is helpful in understanding some of the detail of Acts 16 and the "colony" allusions in the epistle. Note the following for example:

- (i) "And the serjeants [ 'police', R.S.V. ] told these words unto the magistrates [ 'praetors', Nestle ]: and they feared, when they

<sup>1</sup>H. Moule, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: Philippians, ( Cambridge: At the Uni. Press, 1899 ), pp.10,11.

<sup>2</sup>See the following examples where Paul alludes to this classification: Rom. 1:14; Col. 3:11; Acts 28:2,4; 1 Cor. 14:11.

<sup>3</sup>See Conybeare and Howson, The Life and Epistles of Paul, ( London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1873 ), p.224.

<sup>4</sup>Conybeare and Howson, p.225.

heard that they were Romans. And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city." ( Acts 16:38,39 ). The slave owners alleged that Paul and Silas had dreadfully disturbed "our city" ( Acts 16:20 ). In so doing, it was inferred, they had been disrespectful to the colony status of Philippi. "They advocate customs which it is not lawful for us Romans to accept or practice" ( Acts 16:21, R.S.V. ). Such a charge made for great crowd appeal - so successful in fact that the ordinary rules of justice were dispensed with and an abrupt charge given to the lictors - "beat them with rods" ( Acts 16:22, R.S.V. ). The "praetors" ( 'magistrates', A.V. ) in their zeal to stand for Rome, violated the laws regarding Roman citizenship. This explains why they pleaded for Paul and Silas to leave the city ( quietly? ). Can you see now that the colony status of Philippi provides valuable background information?

(ii) Paul stated: "For our conversation in 'commonwealth', R.S.V.; 'citizenship', Nestle is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." ( Phil. 3:20 ). The citizen of Philippi was dedicated to reproducing the life and customs of Rome. Paul reasons by analogy to powerfully exhort the Philippian believers regarding their citizenship - not in Philippi but in heaven with Christ Jesus. It is apparent once again the way in which the colony status of Philippi provides valuable background information.

(iii) Paul uses the word "stekō", "stand fast", A.V.; "stand firm", R.S.V. This is a military term which refers to an unbroken battle line.<sup>5</sup> In an ecclesia in which internal friction was evident ( e.g. Phil. 4:2 ), Paul instructs the believers to form an unbroken battle line. This would be an impressive allusion for believers living in Philippi with its military history and Roman garrison. How many other examples can you find? Check the word "pturomenoi", translated "terrified" ( Phil. 1:28 ); it relates to a horse startled by something in its path. Would this word have any special significance for Philippian believers?

### 3. Population of Philippi -

- (a) Greeks - These would comprise the native population.
- (b) Romans - Retired soldiers and officials from the Italian peninsula settled in Philippi at the direction of Rome itself.
- (c) Jews - Probably very few Jews lived at Philippi. This conclusion is based on the following evidence:
  - (i) The edict of Claudius ( cf. Acts 18:2 ) had banished Jews from Rome. Philippi as a replica of Rome would be certain to follow the "mother city".

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<sup>5</sup>See J. Luke, Notes on Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, ( Adelaide, Aust.: April, 1971 ) Mimeo., p.15.

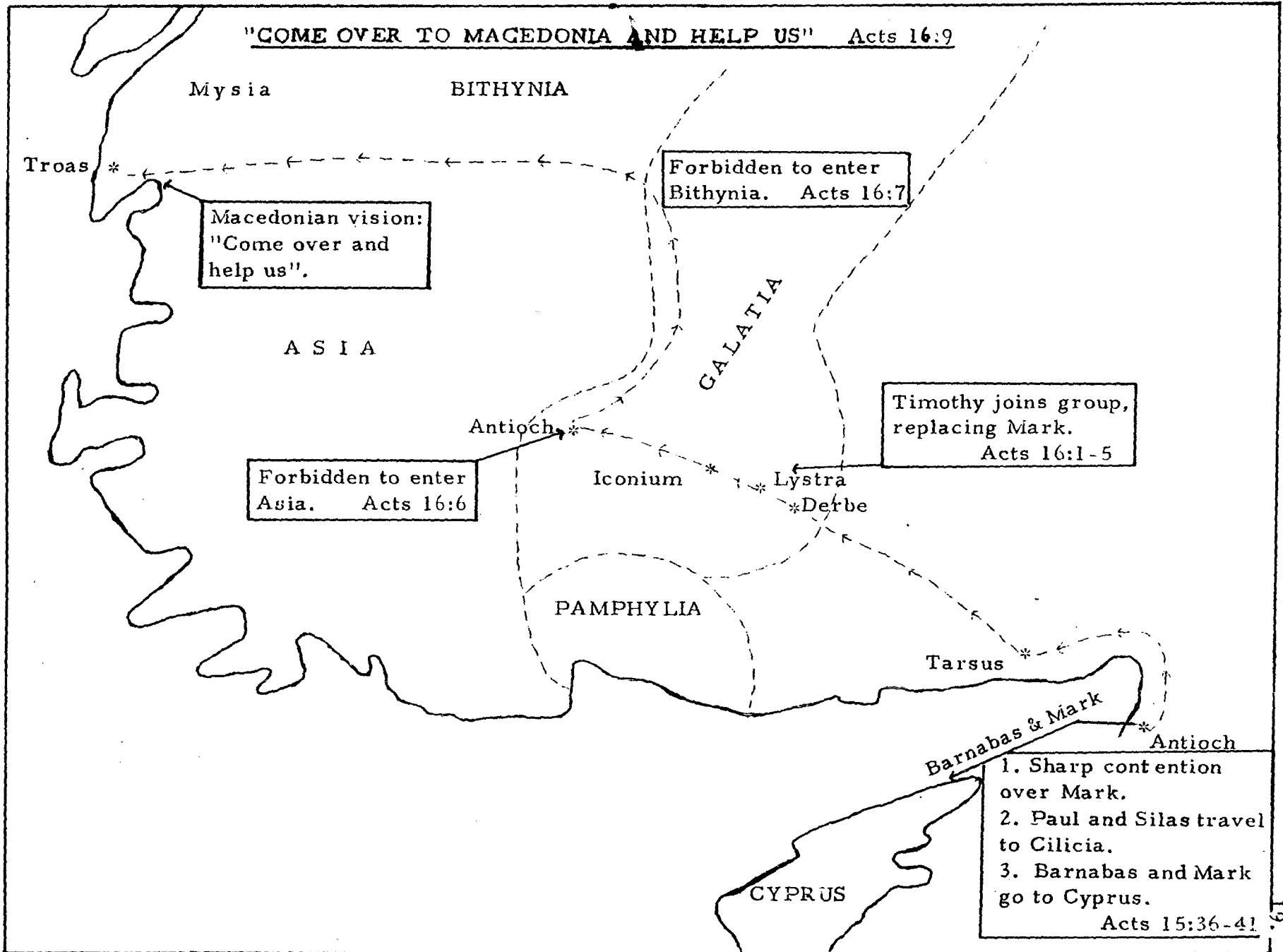
- (ii) Paul's custom was to go to the synagogue when first entering a city ( e. g. Acts 17:2 ). The gospel was first preached to the Jews ( cf. Acts 18:6 ), but at Philippi there is no mention of Paul going to a synagogue. It is assumed therefore that there was not a sufficiently large Jewish population to build a synagogue.
- (iii) The devout persons in Philippi went to a riverside where "prayer was wont to be made" ( Acts 16:13 ). This according to secular writing was the usual practice when there was an insufficient number of Jews to form a synagogue ( ten were required ).<sup>6</sup>
- (iv) There is a lack of Jewish opposition to the growth of the Truth at Philippi, unlike the reaction in Thessalonica ( Acts 17:5 ) Berea ( Acts 17:13 ) and Corinth ( Acts 18:12-17 ). Paul warned the Philippians of Judaisers ( Phil. 3:1-11 ), but nowhere implied that they already had a foothold.

4. Establishment of the Ecclesia - Paul preached at Philippi by divine directive. This is indicated by the following:

- (a) He was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia ( Acts 15:6 ).
- (b) The Spirit of Christ did not allow them to go into Mysia ( Acts 15:7 ).
- (c) The Macedonian vision at Troas contained the message: "Come over into Macedonia and help us". On the basis of this message Luke records: "... immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them." ( Acts 16:10 ).
- (d) Upon their arrival in Philippi, God blessed the work by special manifestation of His power:
  - (i) He opened the heart of Lydia ( Acts 16:14 ).
  - (ii) His power was used by Paul to heal the sorceress ( Acts 16:16 ).
  - (iii) He caused a great earthquake which freed the prisoners and led to the conversion of the jailer and his household ( Acts 16:23-33 ).

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<sup>6</sup>Alfred Edersheim, The life and times of Jesus the Messiah, ( Grand Rapids: Associated Publishers and Authors Inc. ), p. 337.



"COME OVER TO MACEDONIA AND HELP US" Acts 16:9

Mysia

BITHYNIA

Troas \*

Macedonian vision:  
"Come over and help us".

Forbidden to enter Bithynia. Acts 16:7

ASIA

GALATIA

Timothy joins group, replacing Mark. Acts 16:1-5

Forbidden to enter Asia. Acts 16:6

Antioch \*

Iconium \*

Lystra \*

Derbe \*

PAMPHYLIA

Tarsus \*

Barnabas & Mark

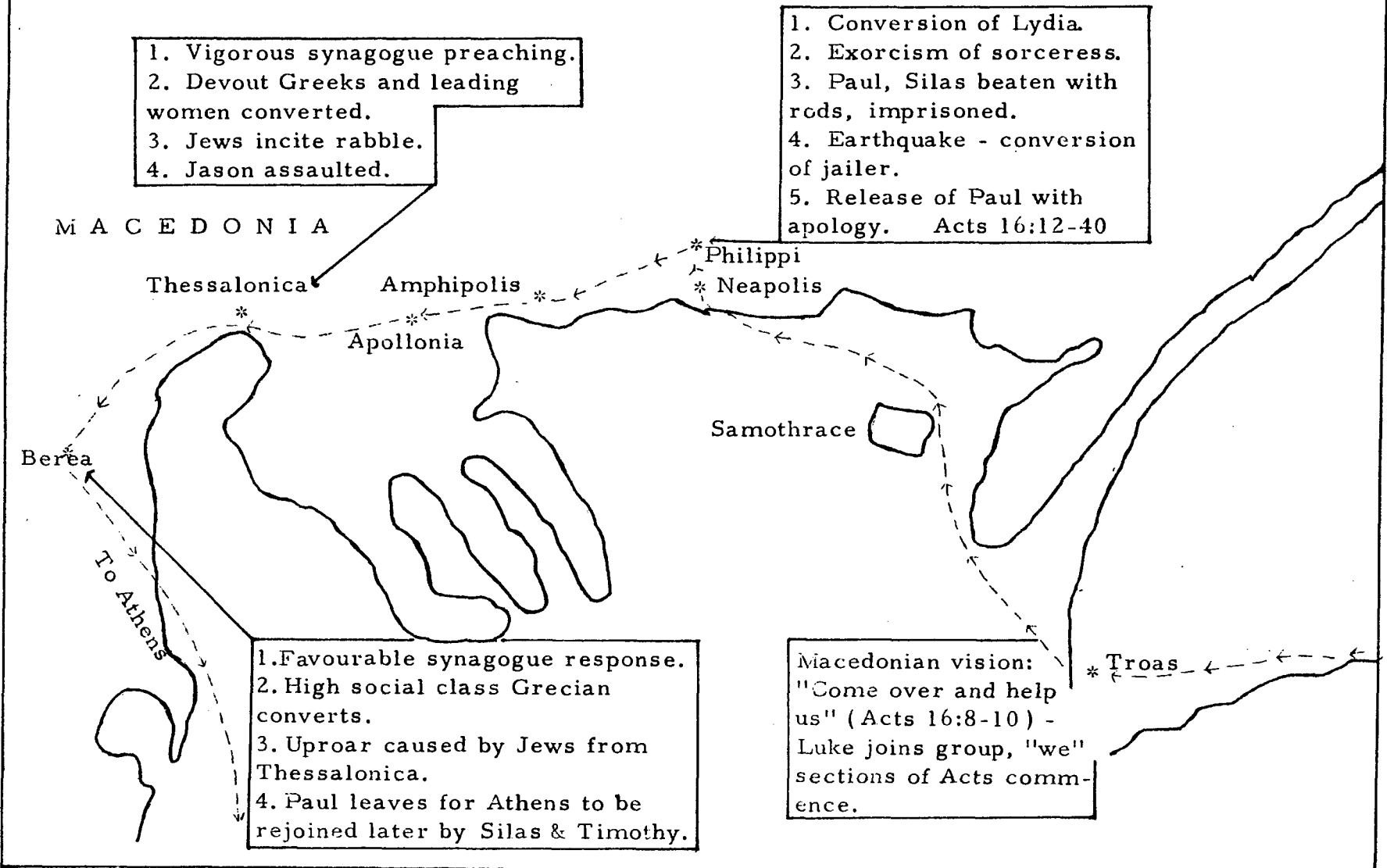
Antioch \*

1. Sharp contention over Mark.
  2. Paul and Silas travel to Cilicia.
  3. Barnabas and Mark go to Cyprus.
- Acts 15:36-41

CYPRUS

JOURNEYS OF PAUL, SILAS, TIMOTHY AND LUKE, WHO "TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN"

Acts 17:6



5. The "Ideal" Ecclesia - If an ideal ecclesia were to be selected in the first century, the consensus of opinion would probably be for the Philippian ecclesia. The spiritual-mindedness of the believers is indicated by the following:

(a) Paul's Apostleship - There is no emphasis in this epistle on Paul's apostolic standing as there is in the epistles to the Colossians, Romans, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Titus and Galatians. The Judaiser<sup>7</sup> influence was negligible at the time of writing and therefore Paul's credentials were not in question.

(b) Money matters - There are no exhortations in the epistle regarding the use of money as in other epistles ( e.g. 1 Tim. 6; Eph 4:28 ). The Macedonians were generous givers even although they suffered severe affliction and dire poverty ( 2 Cor. 8, 9 ). Their generous attitude was an outcome of the fact that they had first given themselves to the Lord ( cf. 2 Cor. 12:14 ).

(c) Support for Paul - Paul enjoyed a special understanding with this ecclesia. This is indicated by his acceptance of support from Philippi, while at Corinth he would not accept it from the Corinthians ( 2 Cor. 11:7-9 ). It was against Paul's general practice to accept support since this might be construed as "sponging" off the ecclesia, or that he preached in order to make a living ( 1 Cor. 9 ). Why did he accept support from Philippi but not from Corinth? This is an interesting question - can you find any reasons?

6. The Purpose of the Epistle -

(a) To thank the Philippian ecclesia - They had thoughtfully and generously sent assistance to Paul in Thessalonica, and now while in prison in Rome ( 4:10-18 ).

(b) To announce Epaphroditus' return - Epaphroditus had journeyed the 800 miles ( 50 day trip ) to Rome as a special messenger of his ecclesia. News of Epaphroditus' return would be joyously received since they knew that he had been seriously ill ( 2:25-30 ).

(c) To bring unity to the ecclesia - It can be inferred that disagreements existed in the ecclesia over minor matters which did not involve doctrine. This is indicated by the following:

- (i) Paul's repeated reference to "all" as if to make it plain that he was not taking sides but held all the members in fond remembrance ( see 1:7, 8 ).
- (ii) He names two sisters and intreats them to "agree in the Lord" ( 4:1-3 ).
- (iii) Specific exhortations are given in the Epistle directed toward the need for unity ( e.g. 2:2 ).

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<sup>7</sup>This term refers to Jews who held that "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved" ( Acts 15:1 ).



(d) To warn the ecclesia of the influence of the Judaisers - Three times Paul warned, "Beware", as if to imply that the Judaisers' influence was about to be experienced by the believers in Philippi. Judaisers had made large inroads at Corinth and dogged Paul's steps at Thessalonica and Berea ( 3:1-19; cf. Acts 17-18 ).

Are there additional reasons why Paul wrote this epistle which should be added to this list?

CHAPTER 2

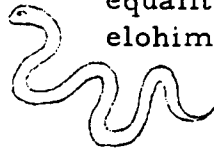
"LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS IN CHRIST JESUS" - Humility  
and obedience of Christ ( 2:1-11 )

THE FIRST ADAM

image of  
elohim  
very good,  
upright



grasped at  
equality with  
elohim



cursed,  
death



Philippians 2:7  
- servant  
- humbled  
- obedient unto death  
- exalted

Isaiah 52, 53  
- servant 52:13  
- poured out his soul 53:12  
- unto death 53:12  
- extolled very high 52:13

THE SECOND ADAM

-spirit of quick understanding  
-Spirit without measure

-God hath highly  
exalted him

-fallen  
-proneness to sin

Make him a king  
stones bread  
self exaltation

- Name above every  
name

humbled himself  
obedient unto death  
on a cross

CHAPTER 3

PHILIPPI - THE ROMAN COLONY - OUR COMMONWEALTH IS IN HEAVEN

\*politeuma - citizenship  
( 1:27; 3:20 )

\*sustratiotēs - fellow-soldier  
( 2:25 )

\*stekō - firm, unbroken battle  
line ( 1:27 )

\*analuō - to depart, break up  
camp ( 1:23 )

\*pturō - frighten,  
startled horse (1:28)

JUDAISER

- mutilators
- dogs
- glory in the flesh
- mind earthly things
- god - belly
- glory - shame
- end - destruction

3:2

3:19

3:3

3:20

GENUINE BELIEVER

- true circumcision
- brethren
- glory in Christ Jesus
- look to heaven
- Saviour - Jesus Christ
- glory - power of God
- change of body