

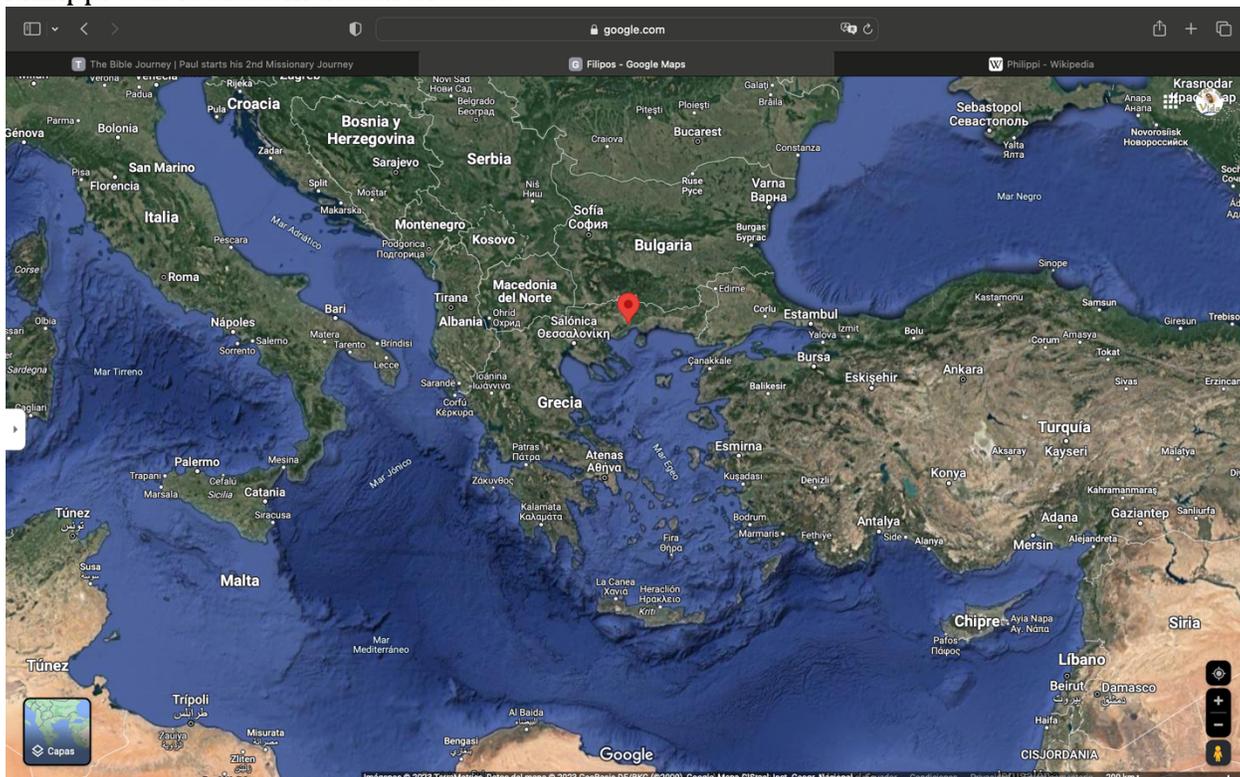
Rejoice in Christ Jesus

The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians
Presented by Oscar Aguirre 28/May/ 2023

1. Introduction

About the city :

Philippi was located in actual Greece.



According to the Wikipedia:

- **Philippi** was a major Greek city northwest of the nearby island, [Thasos](#).
- Its original name was Crenides (**Greek**: Κρηνίδες, *Krēnīdes* "Fountains")^[u] after its establishment by [Thasian](#) colonists in 360/359 BC.
- The city was renamed by [Philip II of Macedon](#) in 356 BC and abandoned in the 14th century after the [Ottoman](#) conquest.
- The present village of [Filippi](#) is located near the ruins of the ancient city and is part of the region of [East Macedonia and Thrace](#) in [Kavala](#), Greece. T

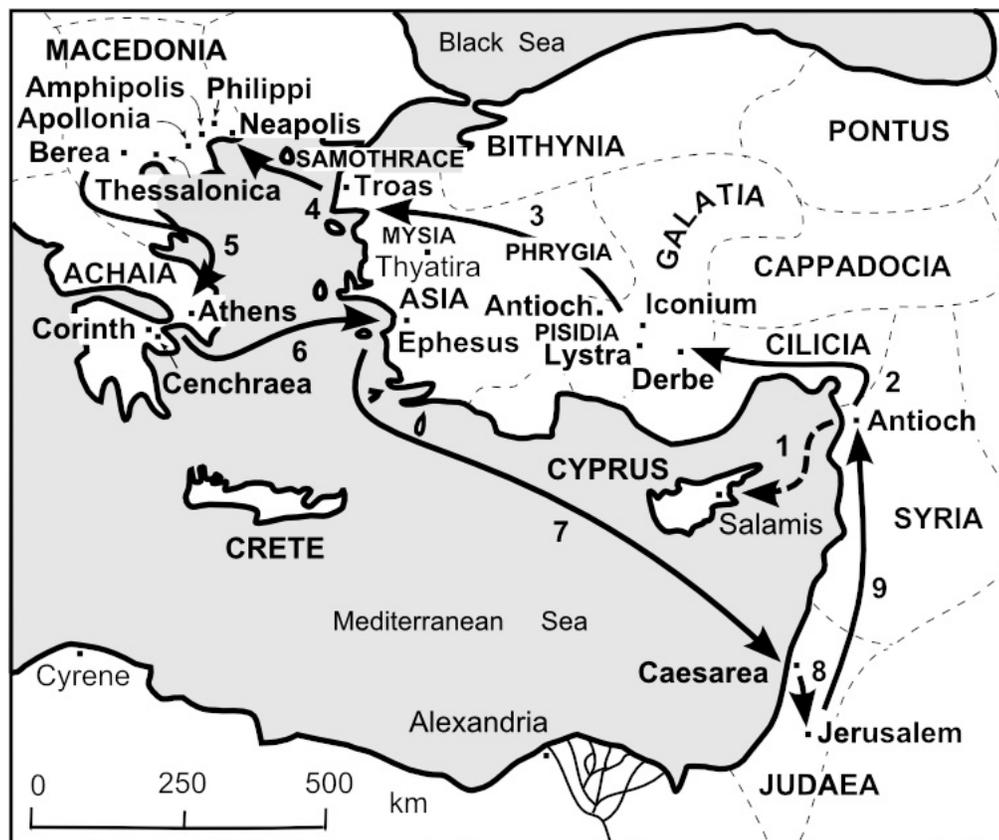
About the church at Philippi

- Acts 16th records the start of this church.
- It was founded during the second missionary journey of Paul.
- Paul was sent with Silas by the leaders of the church to Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. There he went through Derbe and Lystra where he picked up Timothy.
- Paul and Silas were prevented by the Holy Spirit from preaching the Gospel in Asia, nor to go north to Bithinia. They were led west to a city called Troas, where God gave him a vision to go further west to the area of Macedonia.
- Once in Macedonia they reached Philippi which the most important city at the time in that particular Roman colony.

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- Then Paul meets a Jewish woman called Lydia, who made a profession of faith for Jesus Christ and she and her entire household were baptized.
- Paul had expelled a spirit from a woman who was a fortune teller and had made much profit for some men. With the spirit gone and their profits gone, these men accused Paul and Silas of teaching practices that went against their god's and Cesar. Paul and Silas were beaten and put in the inner prison and their feet were fastened in the stocks.
- At midnight, in the jail, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns, when suddenly there was an earthquake, and the doors of the jail were opened, and their chains loosened. The keeper of the prison was about to kill himself as he thought the prisoners had escaped. Paul prevented that from happening. Put the keeper of the prison at ease and he asked Paul how he could be saved. Paul told him "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household" Acts 16:31
- The keeper of the prison and his household believed and were baptized.
- And that is how the church in Philippi started....





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The Content or Message of the Letter

1. True Partnership: Friendship for God's purpose

- Paul writes this letter while being in prison. Most likely in Rome and in house arrest where he was free to impart the gospel to all who came in.
- The letter to the Philippians is a thank you note from Paul to the church in Philippi who had sent an offering to him as they knew of his detention in Rome.
- In chapter 1 Paul expresses how thankful he is to God for them and how he prays with joy for them their partnership in furthering the gospel.
 - I want to pause here for a moment: What a great testimony of friendship, love, and ministry we see here. Do you remember how this church started?
 - Paul remembers. Philippians 1:3 he says, “your partnership in the Gospel from the first day.”
 - They both love the Lord, and Paul shared about the salvation through Jesus Christ and now they provide for his needs as they understood the circumstances he is going through.
 - They know that by supporting Paul they are also advancing the gospel.
 - But this is beyond an offering, this is about relationship. You see, the church in Philippi is also experiencing persecution, which Paul refers about later in in this epistle, and he encourages them with his words.

Philippians 1:3-11

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ 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.

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

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

- A question and a challenge: Let's think which “missionary” or brother/sister in Christ do we have this kind of relationship with?



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2. Paul is totally focused on Christ being exalted in his life

Verses 1: 12-30

- Paul says that what has happened to him, God has worked to advance the gospel. (This is consistent Roman's 8:28). Everybody in the palace guard knows that he is in chains for Christ. This means that the Christians in that city are being motivated to speak more "courageously and fearlessly." In other words, the more they try to turn off faith, the more it is ignited!
- Paul's hope is not for saving his life or getting out of prison, but to not be ashamed and to have enough courage to always exalt Christ in his body, whether he lives or dies.

²⁰ I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

Philippians 1:20

- What is so powerful about this passage is Paul's position facing the possibility of death.

V1:21 "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain"

V1: 22 -26

- He is saying: If I die, I will gain because I will be with Jesus. If he continues to live on this earth, he will continue to further the gospel or as he puts it "defending and confirming" the gospel" v:7 and helping his brethren progress in joy in the faith.
- Keep in mind he had seen Jesus and he probably remembers Stephen's sacrifice when he saw Jesus as well. He knows!
- In other words, he will rejoice if he lives, and he will rejoice if he dies. It does not matter what happens he will rejoice!
- Putting it in perspective, Paul suffered terrible situations but that did not affect his focus, his convictions or attitude towards God, nor his mission. In Acts 16 we saw him singing hymns and praying in jail, here he is facing the possibility of death and yet rejoicing.
- Yes, if we are true followers of Christ, this means if we live like Christ and further the gospel, persecution is to be expected. It is not punishment for our wrongdoing. Rather it is because of Christ, and the privilege that helps us identify more closely with Him.

Philippians 1:27-30.



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Paul shares some advice and instructions in case he dies: “whatever happens [to Me]” – (remark added for clarity)

Paul’s wants his brethren to:

- stay unified V1:27 “stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man.”
- not be afraid V1: 28 “without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you.

Paul knows the Philippians are facing the same opposition and persecution like him.

Moreover, in Philippians 2:1-18 he’s stronger advice is that they have an attitude more like Christ Jesus

- What is being like Jesus? Philippians 2:6-11

6 Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own
advantage;
7 rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
8 And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Here we have some of the specific things Paul would like to see continue to develop in his brethren and they are applicable to us nowadays:

1. Be like minded.
2. Having the same love, being one in spirit and in purpose
3. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility.
4. Consider others better than yourselves.
5. Look not only to your own interests, but also the interest of others.

Philippians 2:12 – 18 Paul’s more powerful advice aims for them (and us now) to be shining stars:



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1. Work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.
2. Do everything without complaining or arguing (how many times did we complain last week?), so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation **in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.**

In chapter 3 Confidence in the flesh VS confidence in Christ Jesus

- At that time the church experienced an attack from a group of people within the church (Pharisees believers) that preached a false doctrine; they would say that a person would not be saved unless they were circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses. This matter had been addressed a long time before in the council of Jerusalem according to Acts 15. Specifically, Acts 15:11 the apostles said, “that is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved”.
- Philippians 3:3 Paul says that we the believers are the “circumcision”: those that worship by the Spirit of God, who glorify in Christ and who put no confidence in the flesh.
- Paul calls **flesh** all that is “religious or according to the law” or that outwardly “qualify” you as a good believer and very graphically states that is not that what saves you.
- V3:7-11 He says:
 - He considers all his religious qualifications that at one point he thought were a profit for him now a loss for the sake of Christ.
 - Moreover, he says that not only his Religious curriculum -the “flesh”- but “everything else” is a loss - or considers them “rubbish” compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing – having communion or relationship, with Christ Jesus his Lord.
 - Paul strives to be found in Christ, not having a righteousness on his own that comes from the law but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes through GOD is by faith.
 - Also, Paul wants:
 - to know Christ,
 - the power of his resurrection
 - the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings - becoming like him in his death
 - somehow to attain to the resurrection from the dead.
- V3:12 – 21, 4:1
- – Paul says he has not already obtained all that nor that he has made perfect.
 - This put Paul into a “human” or “common” level.
 - What stands out of this passage is his powerful teaching on how to reach the goal:
 - “Forget about what is behind” – leave behind your old self, believes, sin, faults guilt, life.
 - “Straining toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus” v:3:14
 - The meaning of the verb “Strain”: force (a part of one's body or oneself) to make a strenuous or unusually great effort. (Oxford languages)
 - Paul finalizes this chapter saying that religious people have their mind set on earthly things, but our citizenship is in heaven. And this is how you stand firm.



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Chapter 4: **REJOICE IN THE LORD! – ultimate motivation.**

Philippians 4:4-9

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

- A wonderful conclusion of this letter.
- Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!
- I like how he says: “the Lord is near.”
- In other words, “don’t worry, He’s got this!”
- When you are joyful, then you are gentle. When you are not anxious, you are at peace then you exude kindness.
- If you trust the Lord Jesus then your petitions will be in prayer and with thanksgiving.
- The peace of God will be in you – no matter the circumstances! It will transcend all understanding, and more importantly will guard your heart and your minds in Christ Jesus. This fits right with the “contemporary” concept of “mental health”.
- Paul is experiencing prison and facing death and I would say he is very healthy in every way.
- Moreover, Paul motivates us to be intentional on focusing our minds on whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and price worthy. “Think about such things.”
- Challenge Questions:
 - What occupies your mind most of the time?
 - What do your thoughts focus on?
 - Are you being intentional -making decisions- about what you put in your mind?
- V4:11-13



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¹¹ I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. ¹² I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. ¹³ I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

- Paul reveals “the secret” to being content in every situation – regardless of material things.
- The conviction – the joy of doing everything through HIM (Christ Jesus)- He gives you strength.

To finalize I want to repeat the last verse of Paul’s letter to the Philippians.

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen” Philippians 4:23