

Introducing Philippians

Introduction

Welcome to our study of Paul's letter to the Philippians, a letter which Paul wrote from prison (see 1vs7-14) to a Church which he and Silas had been instrumental in planting in the Macedonian city of Philippi (see Acts 16vs6-40). We are not absolutely sure which imprisonment is in view and consequently exactly when the letter was written, and in many ways this information has no major bearing on our understanding of Philippians. What is clear is that Paul had deep affection and concern for the Philippian Christians and that he wrote not only to thank them for their partnership in the gospel (1vs5), but also to encourage and challenge them to "continue to work out their salvation with fear and trembling," knowing that God was at work within them (1vs6, 2vs13), and thus to continue to conduct themselves "in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." As part of God's word to us today, the letter serves to encourage and challenge us as well. How it does so will be the subject of the studies that follow, but one thing can be stated right at the outset: Paul's encouragement and challenge to the Philippians and to us flows from his deep understanding of and wholehearted commitment to the Lordship of Jesus both over the church and over the daily life of each individual Christian.

Study Questions

(These questions should be answered from the text)

Read Acts 15vs36-16vs40. Answer the following questions

1. How was Paul led to preach the gospel in Macedonia?

2. What kind of city was Philippi ?

3. What evidence was there that God was at work through the ministry of Paul and Silas?

Read Philippians 1vs1-2; 4vs21-23. Answer the following questions:

1. How does Paul describe himself and Timothy?
2. How does he describe the Philippian Christians? What is the significance of this description? (*hint: see question 2 above*)
3. To whom is his letter addressed?
4. What key word occurs repeatedly in Paul's introductory and final greetings? What does this teach us about Paul's concern for the Philippians?

Think it Through _____

What have you learnt about the church in Philippi and about Paul's purpose in writing to them?