

a Christological epistle

Philippians

3/12/64

The historical background of the Philippian church is given in Acts 16. Philippi was the first place in Europe to receive the Gospel.

Philippi was in Macedonia, a city which was "enlarged by Philip of Macedon," and afterwards raised to the rank of a Roman military colony by Julius Caesar" (Angus-Green, p. 718).

Paul visited Philippi twice after his original visit and before his imprisonment in Rome. Cf. Acts 20:1, 2, 6.

Occasion: This is a Prison Epistle, having been written by Paul from Rome.

Ephaphroditus had come to Rome with a gift of money for Paul from the Philippian church. While there, Ephaphroditus became very ill and Paul sent him back as soon as he was able to go, and sooner than he had expected.

"Twice while he was at Thessalonica, and once when at Corinth, they had sent him contributions for his support, which he accepted, to prevent the Gospel being burdensome to more recent converts" (Angus-Green, p. 719). Cf. Phil. 4:15, 16; 2 Cor. 11:9.

Therefore, one of the greatest reasons for the Epistle is that of "a thank you note!"

Date: 61-63 A.D. (Robertson); 63 A.D. (Angus-Green); 61 or 62 A.D. (Lightfoot).

Contents and Argument: Paul's theme seems

To be likemindedness, although the epistle was not written like Rom., Gal., or Eph. with some great doctrine in mind. ~~that was~~ The passage which was destined to become one of the most wonderful ever written by Paul on the Person and Work of Christ was actually written as a part of Paul's exhortation to likemindedness.

I. Intro (1:1-11).

II. Paul's testimony regarding the results of "the things which happened" to him (1:12-26).

III. Paul's exhortation to likemindedness (1:27-2:18). The main object for likemindedness here is outreach (1:28; 2:15, 16).

IV. Paul's commendation of his co-workers: Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30).

V. Paul's exhortation to "rejoice in the Lord" (3:1-4:9).

A. His testimony regarding his own experience of rejoicing in the Lord (3:1-14).

B. His exhortation to the Philippians to follow him (3:15-4:9). See 3:17 and 4:9.

VI. Paul's Thanksgiving and testimony regarding their gift to him and his attitude toward material things in general (4:10-20).

VII. Conclusion (4:21-23).

Note: This book comes close to being what one might call Paul's spiritual autobiography.