

PREFACE

What a joy it has been for us as a Bible Study to have worked out and discussed these lessons on Philippians! We have been taught many wonderful lessons on prayer, peace, contentment, and self-denial, having as our example the very mind of Christ, Himself.

We believe a word of explanation is in order as to how these lessons came about. Our desire for this type of Bible study came from an appreciation for the format found in the Precept upon Precept Bible Study Series. We liked the method they used to motivate toward a personal daily study of God's Word. We wanted lessons that would challenge us to search the Scriptures, and that would motivate us to store the Word of God in our hearts and minds through weekly memory verses.

When we came to Rev. Haak with our request, he agreed to make lessons, keeping in mind the particular needs of our Bible study group. We greatly appreciate his time and effort on our behalf and pray that this material may be of as much profit to others as it was to us.

We met bi-weekly, in small groups, for approximately one hour, to discuss the lesson material. Our goal was to keep the discussion "moving," in order to complete our lesson in one time. After our discussion, we went over any remaining questions with Rev. Haak. Through the sharing of our common faith, we found ourselves drawn closer to each other and our Lord.

The Ladies Bible Study
Lynden Protestant Reformed Church

PHILIPPIANS

Lesson 1

OVERVIEW OF PHILIPPIANS

Rev. H. Hoeksema wrote concerning this book, "Like the second epistle to the Corinthians, that to the Philippians is one of the most personal letters of the apostle Paul. Only in distinction from that epistle, this one is much more positive, not filled with rebukes, but rather with expressions of warm affection. It is evident throughout that the church of Philippi is one of the most beloved of all the churches by the apostle Paul."

It is difficult to draw any one theme or central message from this epistle. It is a personal letter from Paul to a dear congregation whom he loved and to whom he desired to express his love for a final time. Paul uses the pronoun "I" some 52 times in the brief letter, expressive of the warm and personal tone.

There are nevertheless some beautiful themes running through the epistle as well as sound and practical teaching to which we must give diligence. The theme of the Christian joy and contentment are found repeatedly. The truths of the unity of the church, life in the church and fellowship in the gospel are brought out more than once. And we have the great instruction on the incarnation of our Lord (chapter 2:1-11) and the call to have the mind of Christ in us.

Questions for Study:

1. After having read the book through a number of times, what can we say from the book itself concerning:
 - a. The apostle Paul who wrote the epistle.
Who was he?

What was he?

When did he write this epistle?

From where?

Why did he write this epistle?

- b. The Philippians.
Who were they?

What does he say about them?

What can be said of their life and times?

What do we learn of their spiritual state?

What do we learn of their origin as a church?

2. What can be learned from the book itself of the historical setting in which the book was written and received?

3. What are some of the key words of this epistle? Give their references and look up their basic meaning.

4. What would you call the theme or central thought of this book?

5. Taking each chapter by itself, give the major idea (or ideas) of each and find verses which state that idea.

6. Now, when you have done this (#4, #5), prepare an outline of the book.