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 historica 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 thi 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.

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Lesson 2

THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI

In the coming of the gospel to Philippi, and in the establishment of the church there, the mighty and marvelous providence of God is shown. Studying the history of the origin of this church and Paul's involvement with the Philippians, we see in a concrete and a beautiful way the truth we confess in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 21, Question & Answer 54, "The Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends and preserves to himself, by his Spirit and Word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life...." (See also the Canons of Dordrecht, Head I, Art. 3.) The principles we see at work in Philippi's organization and the wondrous communion and joy among her members and the apostle Paul are the same wherever the church is gathered in faithfulness to the Word of Truth.

It is therefore well worth our while to spend a lesson on the establishment of the church at Philippia. Comparing this with what we learn of the Philippians from the epistle itself will give us a complete and well-rounded view of the Philippian church. Our study will deal basically with Acts 16 and 20:1-6. We will also want to come to some understanding of Paul's imprisonment as this bears on the question of when this epistle was written, as well as to the exact meaning of his reference to this in Philippians 1:12-26 and 4:10-19.

Memory Work:

Philippians 1:3-6

I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,

Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy.

For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

Questions for Study:

1. Using a concordance, look up each reference to *Philippians* or *Philippi* in the Bible (except in Philippians itself). List each reference.

2. Acts 16.

- a. Who was with Paul on his 2nd missionary journey? How did they come into contact with Paul (Timothy, Silas, etc.)? If you have a map in the back of your Bible, trace the major stops of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd missionary journeys.
- b. In Acts 16:1-12 God leads Paul to Philippi. This is important, as the gospel very plainly is directed westward. Macedonia (Philippi) is in Europe, or better, a different continent. Philippi is the first western church. Discuss any relationship between Acts 16:1-12 and Genesis 9:25-27.
- c. What can be said about Philippi? (Consult a Bible dictionary or encyclopedia.)

What was the origin of the city?

What kind of city was it?

Was there a strong Jewish element? A synagogue? Or was it strongly Roman?

What is the evidence and significance of this?

d. From Acts 16:12-end, give a list of the major events and the significance, or simply relate what happened during Paul's first visit there, people he met, lasting results, state of the church when he left.

3. Acts 20:1-6:

- a. Explain the visits of Paul to Philippi. The occasion for these visits, what happened during these visits?
- b. How many times was Paul in Philippi? One or two visits? Demonstrate from Scripture. (See I Tim. 1:3.)

4. Acts 20-28:

- a. When did Paul write this epistle during imprisonment in Caesarea or Rome?
- b. What can we say of Paul's condition as he writes this epistle? (Look up II Tim. 1:8-18 and 4:6-22.)
 - 5. Can you write Philippians 1:3-6 from memory?

PHILIPPIANS

Lesson 3

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER Philippians 1:1-11

What is peculiar of the salutation (ch. 1:1, 2) Paul addresses to the Philippians is that it is addressed, not only to the saints at Philippi, but also to the bishops and deacons, which we find in no other epistle. A possible reason for this is that the contribution the Philippians sent to Paul could well have been sent in the name of the officers, as well as the church generally. (Com-

pare Acts 15:23.) Hence Paul mentions them in reply.

The thanksgiving and prayer the apostle offers in this epistle (ch. 1:3-11) is very sincere and earnest. Paul dwells long and fondly on the subject. The words and phrases used reveal the intensity of his feeling. Paul gives thanks with joy for every remembrance of them, especially for their constant fellowship in the gospel. He is confident that God will finish the good work which He has begun in them. They are all partakers of his grace, both in his bonds and in the defense of the gospel. Because he greatly longed for them, he prayed for them. There were basically three petitions he offered to God in their behalf:

1) That their love may abound more and more in all wis-

dom and prudence.

2) That they may approve excellent things, that is, may taste them, and may be sincere and without offense in the world.

3) That they may be filled with the fruits of righteousness.

Memory Work:

Philippians 1:9-11

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may

be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ;

Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

Questions for Study:

- 1. The apostle introduces himself and Timothy as the servants of Jesus Christ. The word "servant" is literally "bond-servant."
 - a. Consult these passages: Deuteronomy 15:12-18

Matthew 10:24, 25

I Corinthians 6:19, 20

Galatians 1:10

I Corinthians 7:21-23

- b. How is one made a bond-servant of Christ?
- c. What are the reasons for wanting to be a bond-servant?

d. What mark does a bond-servant of Christ wear? (See Gal. 6:17.)

- e. How does this apply to our lives? (See also Lord's Day 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism.)
- 2. Saints: The word "holy" in Scripture always carries with it two ideas: separation from sin and dedication to God.

a. What is a saint?

b. Look up the following texts to find out what the life of the saint is called to:

Exodus 19:3-6

Leviticus 20:22-26

Deuteronomy 14:2

I Peter 1:13-16

II Corinthians 6:14—7:1

- 3. Elders and Deacons:
- a. Read I Timothy 3. What are the qualifications for these offices?
- b. Why did Christ give them to the church and what is their task and importance? (See also I Peter 5:1-5 and Acts 6:1-6.)

4. Verses 3-11 of chapter 1 express Paul's thanksgiving and prayer for the Philippians.

a. What do we learn of Paul's attitude toward the church?

- b. What are his specific petitions for them?
- c. What are the reasons he makes these requests?
- d. What is the relationship between love and knowledge in verse 9?
- e. Prove the truth of the preservation of the saints from this passage. What is the benefit of believing this truth?
 - f. What are the fruits of righteousness?
- 5. Now, from memory, write out Paul's beautiful prayer for the Philippians (and for us) in Philippians 1:9-11!