

A Study of
New Testament Churches

12 Lessons

Prepared by Paul E. Cantrell
2009

Title Page

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1

The Jerusalem Church

How fitting to begin our study with the Church in Jerusalem—because it was the first!

SOME FACTS

This city was prominent in both the Old Testament and the New Testament! It is believed to have been the city of Melchizedek—Priest of the Most High God.

Gen. 14:18 _____

It became the capital of Israel and looked upon as a Holy City because God's name was there. It was the place where Solomon built the great temple to God. But it was also the beginning place of the church. It is the symbol of the city of God in **Rev. 21**.

- **Isa. 2:1-4** _____
- **Luke 24:44-48** _____
- **Acts 1:4-5, 8, 2:1-4** _____

The church experience great growth in the early stages:

- Acts 2:41**—3,000
- Acts 4:4**—5,000 men
- Acts 5:28**—Filled Jerusalem with doctrine
- Acts 5:42**—Taught & preached daily in temple and from house to house
- Acts 6:7**—Number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly
--A large number of priests were obedient to the faith.

The Church was unified and at peace for a short time!

Acts 2:44-47 _____

Acts 4:32, 34-37 _____

SOME PROBLEMS BEGAN TO OCCUR!

Sin in their midst

Ananias & Sapphira both lied about their gift and were stricken dead on the spot. (Acts 5:1-11)
The Grecian widows in the congregation were being neglected in daily ministrations. (Acts 6:1-7)
The problems were quickly solved and the church continued to grow.

Persecution began—opposition grew!

Acts 4:1-3, 17-21 _____

Acts 7:54-60 _____

Acts 8:1-4 _____

Even though persecution scattered the members of the body of Christ...there evidently were many that remained in the city. The Apostles remained there for a period of time.

Some Jewish Christians tried to bind the Law on non-Jews.

Acts 15:1-35 _____

The idea seems to have been that non-Jews needed to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses in order to be acceptable to God. The people who were advocating this had come from Jerusalem up to Antioch where Paul and others were working. They (Paul and company) traveled back to Jerusalem to try to deal with this issue at its inception. A conclusion was reached and a Letter was sent out to be read in all the churches.

JERUSALEM'S FALL

Jesus foretold that the City would fall (Matthew 24). Christians were warned to flee the city when they see the City surrounded by an Army. When the Army pulled back for a period of time, the Christians fled the City. The Roman Army overthrew the City in AD 70.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Who prophesied that the church would have its beginning in Jerusalem?
2. Why was the response so great on Pentecost to the preaching?
3. Should we teach people to sell what they have and give to church, so it can be distributed among the needy? (Acts 2:44-47)
4. Why did the early church eat together? (Acts 2:46)

5. Why was the problem so easily solved in the Jerusalem church? (Respect, love, concern for others).
6. How did they fill Jerusalem with their doctrine? (Acts 5:28)
7. What part did prayer play in the success of the Jerusalem church? (Acts 2:42; 4:29-31; 6:4).
8. What was the underlying problem over Grecian widows? (Different cultures and backgrounds).
9. What kind of leadership did the Jerusalem church have? (Apostles—later elders).
10. What do we need to do to be like the Jerusalem church?
11. Can we expect to ever be like the Jerusalem church?
12. What lessons can we learn from the Jerusalem church?

2

The Ephesian Church

The Ephesian Church became one of the five main centers of early Christianity.

SOME FACTS

The city of Ephesus is reputed to have had one of the seven wonders of the ancient world—a Temple built to the "goddess" Diana (Acts 19:26-28). It was a large, thriving city close to the ocean that gave it a prominent place at that period of time.

The church was established in the city of Ephesus by the Apostle Paul and others around AD 54. Paul and company must have stayed close to three years in the city (Acts 18:18-19:41; 20:31). About ten years (AD 63) later the Apostle wrote a letter to the Church. And Ephesus was also one of the seven Churches of Asia that received a short Letter from the Lord (Rev. 2:1-7) written in about AD 96. The Apostle Paul called for the Elders at Ephesus to meet him at Miletus where he gave some strong warnings and recommendations to these men to do their work well (Acts 20:17-32).

Several people are associated with the church at Ephesus that are mentioned in Acts and two of the Letters sent by Paul and John.

Acts 18:24-28; 19:1 _____

Acts 18:26 _____

Acts 19:1-41 _____

1 Tim. 1:3 _____

Eph. 6:21 _____

There is evidence that the Apostle John may have left Jerusalem in AD 70 at the fall of the city and moved to Ephesus (with Mary, the Lord's Mother) and stayed there until his death.

CONDITION OF THE CHURCH

The Letter sent to the Church by the Apostle Paul does not give us much insight into the condition of the Church. The absence of any mention of problems could be a good sign that the Church was still doing well. This Letter was written in about AD 63 while Paul was in prison at Rome (Acts 28:30-31).

The Letter that was sent to the Ephesian Church in Revelation 2:1-7 does give us some good insight of the Church's condition.

Good things about the Church:

Rev. 2:2 _____

Rev. 2:3 _____

Rev. 2:6 _____

Bad things about the Church:

Rev. 2:4 _____

Admonition—solution to problems:

Rev. 2:5 _____

God's Promise:

Rev. 2:7 _____

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How could the church have been so active and still have left their first love?
2. What is involved in repentance?
3. Who were the Nicolaitanes?
4. What or who are we to hate?
5. Where is Paradise?
6. What does it mean that "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word?"

SPECIAL QUESTIONS

- 1. Are we willing to give ourselves the examination the Lord gave Ephesus?**
- 2. How would we measure up:**
 - a) First love?**
 - b) Pure doctrine?**
 - c) Stern discipline?**
 - d) Patiently laboring?**
 - e) Endure fierce opposition?**
- 3. Is our enthusiasm, zeal, and efforts increasing or diminishing?**
- 4. Do we listen correctly to God's spirit?**

3

The Smyrna Church

The Church in Smyrna was one of the seven churches of Asia that had good things said about it.

SOME FACTS

Symrna was a city in "little Asia;" which was in the province of Asia in Asia Minor. This area is now known as Turkey. It was called "*The Beauty of Asia.*" It was 2nd in importance only to Ephesus. The city was located about 40 miles north along the sea coast. It was a commercial city and obviously rich. It is the only one of the 7 cities that still remains a town of any importance. It had a strong Jewish element and a synagogue.

BACKGROUND OF CHURCH

It was possibly established on Paul's 3rd missionary journey—during the 2-3 years stay at Ephesus. (All Asia heard the word). Very little is given about the church even though it was unusual—because it offered nothing for the pure eyes of Christ to rebuke. It is the shortest of the seven letters sent. It is suggested that it may have been a large church.

INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT

(Rev. 2:8-11)

Identification of Christ

Rev. 2:8 _____

What Jesus knew about the church

Rev. 2:9 _____

What Jesus knew about their persecutors

Rev. 2:9-10 _____

The Lord's encouragement to the church

Rev. 2:10 _____

Reward promised

Rev. 2:10-11 _____

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the significance of Jesus being "the first and the last?"
2. What is the significance of Jesus being "dead, and is alive?"
3. How was the church poor?
4. How was the church rich?
5. What was the blasphemy of these persecutors?
6. Why would the church suffer?

An Example:

- 1) Polycarp—disciple of John—died 155 AD.
- 2) Tried before Roman governor, given chance to repent.
- 3) Conversation recorded:
 - **Governor:** *"Swear, and I will set thee at liberty, reproach Christ."*
 - **Polycarp:** *"Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Savior.?"*
 - **Governor:** *(Pressed him to repent strongly)*
 - **Polycarp:** *"Since thou art vainly urgent that...I should swear by the fortune of Caesar, and pretendest not to know who and what I am, hear me declare with boldness, I am a Christian."*

- **Governor:** *"I have wild beasts at hand; to these will I cast thee, except thou repent."*
(Later)
 - **Governor:** *"I will case thee to be consumed by fire seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not repent."*
 - **Polycarp:** *"Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt."*
- 4) Quotation: *"And the fire of their inhuman tormentors felt cold to them, for they kept their eyes on escaping the eternal, unquenchable fire, and with the eyes of their minds they looked at the blessings reserved for those who are stedfast, 'which no ear ever heard and no eye ever saw, and never occurred to the human mind.'"*

7. How long would they suffer?

8. What is held out as reward to the faithful & overcomer?

- a) To faithful—a crown of life.
- 1) A crown signifying that they were righteous before God.
 - 2) A crown of life—incorruptible—fades not away. (1 Pet. 1:4)
 - 3) These Christians were to show a quality of life which neither persecution, poverty, nor death could destroy.
 - 4) ***"I have set the Lord always before me, and because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved."***
 - 5) Jesus wanted them liberated from fear.
 - 6) And also from the fact of death itself.
- b) To the overcomer—not hurt of 2nd death.
- 1) Delivered from it.
 - 2) Rev. 20:14
 - 3) 2nd death—the one to fear. (eternal punishment).

CONCLUSION

1. The Spirit has spoken—let man take heed.
2. Could we pass the test of persecution—trials—imprisonment—martyrdom?
3. Reward goes to the faithful overcomers.

4

The Pergamos Church

The Church in Pergamos had both good and bad said about it; but there was hope

SOME FACTS

The City of Pergamos first rose to prominence in 241-197 BC. They won recognition from Rome early for their allegiance to the Emperors. In 29 BC, they erected a temple and dedicated it to the worship of Caesar Augustus. They also had an acropolis filled with pagan temples: ZEUS, APOLLO, DIONYSIUS, APHRODITE, AESCULAPIUS. They had a great altar to Jupiter (Zeus) about 40 ft. high. The famous temple of Aesculapius (a healing god) was worshipped in the form of a serpent (School of medicine). At one time they were given authority over the cities of Asia. They were famous for their great library of 200,000 volumes—2nd only to Alexandria. It was a stronghold of Balaamite & Nicolaitian teachers.

The Church at Pergamos was possibly started like the others—*"All Asia heard the word."*

INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT (Rev. 2:12-17)

Identification of Christ

Rev. 2:12 _____

What the Lord knew about the church

Rev. 2:13 _____

For what did He rebuked

Rev. 2:14-15 _____

The Lord's admonition to them

Rev. 2:16 _____

The Lord's Exhortation to them

Rev. 2:17 _____

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1. What is to be understood about Jesus having a two-edged sword? (12)**
- 2. Why is Pergamos said to be "Satan's seat?"(13)**
- 3. What did Jesus praise them for? (13)**
- 4. What was the Lord's rebuke to the church? (14-15)**
- 5. What exhortation does the Lord give? (16)**
- 6. What reward was promised to the church? (17)**
- 7. What are some spiritual lessons to be learned?**

5

The Thyatira Church

The Church in Thyatira had its Jezebel to contend with.

SOME FACTS

The City of Thyatira was located more inland—on a road between Pergamos and Sardis. But it had commercial and industrial enterprises. They had organized trade guilds or societies: Bakers, Potters, Wool Workers, Robe Makers, Leather Workers, Metal Craftsmen, Weavers, and Dyers. Each guild had its guardian god. To get ahead, you needed to belong to a guild. But you were obligated to engage in ceremonial homage to the gods. You had to eat meats offered to idols and indulge in immoralities. The Christian would be faced with quite a decision. Lydia (seller of purple in Philippi) was connected with this city.

The Book of Acts does not give knowledge of the Church's beginning. However, for the most part, it seems to have been faithful. Some were not. Christianity is a battle—It is a continual war against all evil within and without, until death!

INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT (Rev. 2:18-29)

Identification of Christ

Rev. 2:18 _____

What the Lord knew about the church

Rev. 2:19 _____

What He rebuked them for

Rev. 2:20-21 _____

The Lord's Threat of punishment

Rev. 2:22-23 _____

The Lord's admonition

Rev. 2:24-25 _____

The Lord's Promised rewards

Rev. 2:26-28 _____

Admonition to all

Rev. 2:29 _____

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the significance of Jesus being identified as:
 - a) The Son of God:
 - b) Eyes like unto a flame of fire:
 - c) Feet are like fine brass:
2. What is indicated by all the good things said about the church?
3. Was "Jezebel" really a prophetess of God?
4. Why did the Lord rebuke the church about this woman Jezebel?
5. What did the Lord expect of the woman "Jezebel?"
6. What will the Lord do to her?
7. What punishment will come to her followers.

8. What is it to know the "depths of Satan?"

9. How will the faithful Christian be given power over the nations?

10. What is the significance of being given "the morning star?"

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. An ungodly person can play havoc in the midst of God's people.
2. But a righteous, godly person can have a great influence for good too.
3. It is not enough to refrain from immorality—must oppose it too!
4. If we sin with our leaders—we will be punished with them.
5. The Lord gives the sinful time to repent.

6

The Sardis Church

*The Church that had a fatal
Reputation!*

SOME FACTS

The City of Sardis was an ancient city that antedates known history! It had been an important and magnificent city in times past. It had been fabulously rich with gold and silver in hills and streams. But the City was also known for its sinfulness. At this time, the City was thought to have been declining.

The beginning of the Church at Sardis is unknown. It had no Balaam nor Jezebel in its midst. But it evidently had a worse evil—the numbness of spiritual death coming on. This Church received a complete rebuke—nothing good said with the exception of a few people.

INFORMATION FROM TEXT (Rev. 3:1-6)

The Lord's Identification

Rev. 3:1 _____

His rebuke of them

Rev: 3:1 _____

His exhortation

Rev. 3:2-3 _____

His threat

Rev. 3:2-3 _____

His limited praise

Rev. 3:4 _____

His promise

Rev. 3-5 _____

Admonition to hear Spirit

Rev: 3:6 _____

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the significance of 7 Spirits and 7 stars?

2. What are some things that can give a name to a church—but no guaranteed of spiritual life?

3. What does it mean to be watchful?

4. What does it take to put new life back into a dead church?

5. What are some areas in which the church could be dead?

6. How can you have a few righteous in midst of a dead church?

7. What is the significance of the three promises?

7

The Philadelphia Church

The Church of "Brotherly Love" that lived up to its name!

SOME FACTS

The City of Philadelphia was a commercial city. It was well-fortified and in a commanding position. However, it was destroyed by an earthquake in A.D. 17. The richness of land caused people to continue to live there. It had numerous temples and festivals. It had a colony of Jews who lived there. The name means—"brotherly love."

The Church at Philadelphia was the only one with no condemnation or rebuke of any kind. This is most unusual.

INFORMATION FROM TEXT (Rev. 3:7-13)

The Lord's identification

Rev. 3:7 _____

His praise of them

Rev. 3:8, 10 _____

His promise to them

Rev. 3:8, 9, 10, 12 _____

His exhortation to them

Rev. 3:11, 13 _____

QUESTIONS

1. Why was it important for the church at Philadelphia to know that Jesus had the Key of David?
2. For what was the church praised by Jesus?
3. What is the significance of an "open door" and what responsibility does it require?
4. Who is called a synagogue of Satan and why?
5. In what sense will such be made to come and worship before the church's feet?
6. Is God promising the church that He will cause them to miss being tempted when the world will be tested?
7. Is Jesus saying that men can take our Crown that God gives us?
8. What is the significance of the promises to the church in verse 12?
 - a) Pillar in the temple of my God
 - b) Go no more out
 - c) Write upon him the name of my God
 - d) Write the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem.
 - e) New name:

CONCLUSION

1. Are we a Philadelphia church?

8

The Laodicean Church

The Church that was indecisive that made the Lord sick at His stomach.

SOME FACTS

The City of Laodicea was wealthy, proud, and well-known. It was a center of a banking empire. They had a Medical school close by. They were known for their special black wool and seamless garments. Laodicea was destroyed by earthquake in 62-63 AD, but rebuilt by its wealthy people.

The Church at Laodicea was one of three churches close together: **Colossae** and **Hierapolis**. Paul evidently had a letter passing around that was known of by the Laodiceans. (Col. 4:16). The Church was not disturbed by **heresies** or **persecutions**; but received severe condemnation from the Lord for its condition.

INFORMATION FROM THE TEXT (Rev. 3:14-22)

Attributes of Christ

Rev. 3:14 _____

Condemnation

Rev. 3:15-17 _____

The Lord's Admonitions

Rev. 3:18-19 _____

The Lord promises

Rev. 3:20-22 _____

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Never become self-satisfied with your life.
2. Always look to ways of improving yourself before God.
3. As a congregation, never be content to remain as we are.
4. No preacher, worth his salt, desires to preach to and work with a self-satisfied smug, indifferent church—much less the Lord.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. **Why would the Lord want them hot or cold, not lukewarm?**
2. **Why is it so hard to reach the indifferent?**
3. **Why does the Lord have to keep knocking on the door of men's hearts?**
4. **How do people get to the condition of a false sense of security?**
5. **How does ease and prosperity affect Christians?**
6. **How does one so delude himself about his true condition?**
7. **In what sense were they "naked?"**
8. **Who truly loves his children?**
9. **How does God knock on the door of our hearts?**

9

The Antioch Church

*The "mission-minded" Church that became
one of the early centers of Christianity.*

SOME FACTS

The City of Antioch was founded by Seleucus Nicator (BC 300). It was named after his father, Antiochus. It was made the Capital of the Seleucian Kingdom until city was conquered by Pompey and made a Roman Province (BC 64). It was located about 300 miles north of Jerusalem. The estimated population of the City was 500,000. It is referred to as "Antioch the Beautiful," or "The Queen of the East." The City was large, rich, cosmopolitan, and with large commerce.

The Church at Antioch had its beginning shortly after the great persecution that scattered members of the church (Acts 8:1-4). It is interesting to note that Nicolas (a proselyte from Antioch) was one of the seven men chosen in Acts 6:5 to serve tables. The Church was started by those who were scattered (Acts 11:19). Nicolas could have been one of the ones that helped to start the church in Antioch. At first, they preached to the Jews only. Later, some came from Cyprus and Cyrene and spoke to the Hellenists (Acts 11:20). The Church grew rapidly (Acts 11:21). Great numbers believed and turned to the Lord. Later, after the destruction of the City of Jerusalem in AD 70, Antioch became a haven for fleeing Christians. It became the center of Eastern Christianity.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) **Who was sent to help strengthen the new church at Antioch? (11:22)**

- 2) **Who else was secured to help with the new church? (11:25)**

- 3) **For how long did they work together with others at Antioch? (11:26)**

- 4) **What term was used for the first time to identify the followers of Jesus at Antioch? (11:26; Isa. 62:2)**

- 5) Who foretold of a great famine to come? (11:27-28)
- 6) What did the disciples at Antioch do? (11:29-30)
- 7) Who did Paul & Barnabas bring back to Antioch with them that went on their first missionary journey? (12:25)
- 8) Who were named as Prophets and Teachers at Antioch? (13:1)
- 9) Who determined that Paul & Barnabas would do mission work elsewhere? (13:2)
- 10) What did Paul & Barnabas do upon their return to Antioch from their first missionary trip? (14:27)
- 11) For how long did they stay at Antioch? (14:28)
- 12) What was the problem that arose in the church and who caused it? (15:1)
- 13) How was Peter and Barnabas affected by these men from Judea (from James)? (Gal. 2:11-13)
- 14) What did Paul do before the whole church? (Gal. 2:11, 14-16)
- 15) How did the church deal with this problem? (Acts 15:2; Gal. 2:1-10)
- 16) What did the Jerusalem church do to help settle the question? (15:22-23)
- 17) What effect did the letter and the exhortations have on the church at Antioch? (15:30-32)
- 18) What did Paul & Barnabas do at Antioch? (15:35)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Acts 18:22-23—last mention of Antioch in Scriptures.
2. Antioch became a great center of Christianity for many years.

10

The Thessalonica Church

*The brave and faithful Church in the midst
of persecution.*

SOME FACTS

The City of Thessalonica has a long history. Its present name is Salonica. Cassander named the city after his wife—Philip's daughter. The City was taken by the Romans in 168 BC and it became the capital of one of the 4 divisions of Macedonia under the Romans. In 42 BC, it was made a free city.

The Church at Thessalonica had its beginning under the preaching of Paul on his second missionary journey (50-53 AD) (Acts 17:1-10; 1 & 2 Thess.). Timothy and Silas accompanied Paul and helped in any way they could. Paul reasoned with the Jews and devout Greeks about Jesus and some of them believed. But, a great multitude of devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women were happy to hear his message about Jesus being the Christ. However, the Jewish unbelievers became envious of Paul's success and worked up a mob of evil men to try to run Paul out of town—they were successful.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1) **What caused some Jews to take action against Paul? (Acts 17:5-9)**

- 2) **What did Paul and Silas do? (Acts 17:10)**

- 3) **From where did Paul write the two letters to the Thessalonian church? (1 Thess. 2:17-18; 3:1-6; Acts 17:14-16; 18:1, 16)**

- 4) **What names are mentioned as being from Thessalonica? (Acts 20:4; 27:2; 2 Tim. 4:10)**

- 5) Who had suffered as the Thessalonians had? (1 Thess. 2:14-16)

- 6) How had they dealt with their persecution? (1 Thess. 3:2-3, 5-7)

- 7) What were some of their misunderstandings about the 2nd coming of Christ? (1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Thess. 3:6-8, 10-12).

- 8) What was their problem about not working? (1 Thess. 4:11-12; 5:14; 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:6-8, 10-12)

- 9) What were some good things stated about the church at Thessalonica?
 - a) 1 Thess. 1:3
 - b) 1 Thess. 1:6
 - c) 1 Thess. 1:7
 - d) 1 Thess. 1:8
 - e) 1 Thess. 1:9
 - f) 1 Thess. 2:13
 - g) 2 Thess. 1:3

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. There were quite a few exhortations to the church.
2. Especially in view of the problem areas.
3. He praised them highly as a group.

11

The Colossian Church

The Church with good order and a steadfast faith in Christ.

SOME FACTS

The City at Colossae is in a tri-city area. It was 10 miles from Laodicea and 13 miles from Hierapolis in the region of Phrygia (Asia Minor). The City was founded close to the Lycus River. The city of Laodicea became more and more important over the other two cities. An earthquake around the time of Paul's Letter to the church at Colossae led to the demise of the City. Ruins have only been uncovered in the last century. The population of the City was mixed: (1) There were the long-time residents (native to the area); (2) A large population of Greeks that had a very strong influence over the area; and (3) A large body of Jews that had been settled in the area for some reason. The city of Ephesus was about 100 miles West of the tri-cities.

The Church was probably started while Paul was at Ephesus on his 3rd journey. (All Asia heard the word). Epaphras was working with all three churches as a minister of the gospel.(4:12-13). He may have been the one who first took the gospel to the three churches. (1:7).They were not personally acquainted with Paul. (2:1). The Church was made up of both Jew & Gentile (larger number of Gentiles—1:27; 2:13).Epaphras may have brought news of the problems in the church to Paul at Rome (4:12) that caused Paul to write to the Colossian Church.

PAUL'S COMMENDATION OF THE CHURCH.

Col. 1:2-5 _____

Col. 2:5 _____

PAUL'S ADMONITION AND WARNINGS TO THEM

Col. 1:9 _____

Col. 1:10 _____

Col. 1:11 _____

Col. 2:4 _____

Col. 2:8 _____

- Col. 2:16 _____
- _____
- Col. 2:18 _____
- Col. 2:20-23 _____
- Col. 3:1-2 _____
- Col. 3:5-6 _____
- Col. 3:16 _____
- Col. 4:5-6 _____

PAUL'S GREAT EMPHASIS UPON CHRIST

A. His Nature:

- 1) He is the image of the invisible God. (1:15)
- 2) He is the first born of all creation. (1:15)
- 3) He is the creator of all things in heaven & earth. (1:16)
- 4) He is before all things. (1:17)
- 5) In Him all things consist. (1:17)
- 6) He is the head of the body, the church. (1:18)
- 7) He is the beginning, the first born from the dead. (1:18)
- 8) He is to have the pre-eminence in all things. (1:18)
- 9) In Him all fullness dwells. (1:19)
- 10) He makes reconciliation with God possible. (1:20)
- 11) In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom & knowledge. (2:3)
- 12) In Him dwells all fullness of Godhead bodily. (2:9)
- 13) He is head of all principalities and powers. (2:10)
- 14) He has disarmed principalities & powers. (2:15)
- 15) He has made a public spectacle of them. (2:15)
- 16) He has triumphed over them. (2:15)
- 17) He is all in all. (3:11)

B. His Blessings:

- 1) Redemption. (1:14)
- 2) Forgiveness of sins. (1:14; 2:13)
- 3) Reconciliation. (1:21)
- 4) Make us holy & blameless & above reproach. (1:22)
- 5) He is our Hope of glory. (1:27)
- 6) We are complete in Christ. (1:28; 2:10)
- 7) He has made us alive. (2:13)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

1. Christ is our hope—not the wisdom of men, nor the commandments & regulations of men.
2. Put our trust in Christ, not something else.
3. We are complete in Him.

12

The Philippian Church

*A Great Church that was a great encouragement
to the Apostle Paul.*

SOME FACTS

The City of Philippi was in the Macedonian Province and considered a part of the European continent. There was a large number of retired military people that gave it the privilege of being an elite Roman colony. It was famous as a military & communications center. There was no Jewish synagogue—only a few Jews lived there. The City was made up of a lot of people with money—indicated by Lydia being a seller of purple. And obviously, people born there had Roman citizenship, freedom, and special privileges. This was the first place Paul preached in Macedonia.

The Church was started on Paul's 2nd missionary tour (around 51-52). Paul and Barnabas separated and went different directions after the first mission tour. Silas went with Paul (Acts 15:40). They strengthened the churches in Syria, Cilicia, and the Galatian province. (Acts 15:41; 16:1, 5). Timothy was asked to join them. (16:2-3). They came to Troas where Paul saw a vision of a man asking him to come and preach to them in Macedonia (16:8-9). The first recorded converts at Philippi were Lydia and her household (Acts 16:13-15); and, the Jailer and His household (Acts 16:16-34).

- 1) About AD 51-52.
- 2) Paul came through again on his 3rd journey (AD 55-56)
- 3) Letter written to them from Roman prison (AD 62-63).

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHURCH

A. From Acts:

- 1) Church made up of Jew & Gentile.

B. From Philippian letter:

- 1) They had Bishops & Deacons (1:1)
- 2) They were holding up under suffering (1:29-30)
- 3) They were mission-minded (1:5)
- 4) They had a benevolent spirit (2 Cor. 8:1-5)

C. People connected with church:

- 1) Lydia & her household (Acts 16:13-15)
- 2) Jailer & His household (Acts 16:16-34)
- 3) Luke evidently stayed with the church when Paul left. (Acts 16:11, 17:1)

- 4) Epaphroditus was sent to Rome to help Paul. (Phil. 2:25; 4:10, 14, 18)
- 5) Euodia & Syntyche (4:2-3)

PAUL'S EXHORTATIONS TO THEM

A. In General:

- 1) Your love to abound still more & more in knowledge & all discernment (1:9)
- 2) Approve things that are excellent (1:10)
- 3) Be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ (1:10)
- 4) Be filled with fruits of righteousness (1:11)
- 5) That your faith & Joy will progress (1:25)
- 6) That your conduct will be worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27)
- 7) Don't be terrified by your adversaries (1:28)
- 8) Be blameless & harmless children of God (2:15)
- 9) Shine as lights in the world of darkness (2:15)
- 10) Hold fast to the word of life (2:16)
- 11) Help women who laborer with Paul in the gospel (4:3)
- 12) Rejoice in the Lord always (4:4)
- 13) Let your gentleness be known to all men (4:5)
- 14) Be anxious over nothing (4:6)
- 15) Think on good things (4:8)

B. Exhortations to unity, oneness, harmony.

- 1) Stand fast in one spirit (1:27)
- 2) Stand fast in one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel (1:27)
- 3) Be likeminded (2:2)
- 4) Have same love (2:2)
- 5) Be of one accord (2:2)
- 6) Be of one mind (2:2)
- 7) Walk by same rule, same mind (3:16)
- 8) Two women to be of same mind (4:2)

C. Exhorted to avoid things that disturb or destroy this unity.

- 1) Don't do anything through selfish ambition or conceit (2:3)
- 2) Don't complain and be disputing with one another (2:14)
- 3) Beware of dogs, evil workers, mutilation (3:2)

D. Exhorted to do things that help to strengthen this unity.

- 1) In lowliness of mind esteem others better than self. (2:3)
- 2) Look out for others' interest as well as your own. (3:4)
- 3) Follow my example (3:17)
- 4) Take notice of those also who do this (3:18)
- 5) What you have learned, received, heard, saw in me, do! (4:9)

CONCLUSION

1. These concepts are hitting at the idea that a person can have a vital connection with Christ, but isolated from fellowship with God's people.
2. Rom. 14:7, 19

