

Toward A Radical Unity

TRU-07 “In The Beginning...”

PAUL’S LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS

08/02/2026

PHIL 1:3-5 *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴ always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵ because of your partnership in the Gospel from the first day until now.*

THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH: “Lights in the World”

ACTS 16:11-12 *So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, ¹² and from there to PHILIPPI, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.*

The City of PHILIPPI was a difficult place:

- Many wore the “Roman Colony” status as a badge of privilege;
- Government and Military officials lived in fearful allegiance;
- Garrisons of Roman Soldiers surrounded them – a Military town;
- Prosperous citizens lived in luxury while slaves lived in squalor;
- It was filled with Temples to every Roman and Barbarian god...

In this “*crooked and depraved generation*” [PHIL. 2:15], a Church was founded... Paul’s Letter recalls the “*first day...*” when God’s good work began in the converts’ lives [1:3-6]. These were “*the early days of ... the Gospel*” [4:15]. Since then, Paul had known a continuing fellowship with the Church. He looks upon them as his “*joy and crown*” [4:1], boasting of them to other Churches [2 COR. 8:1-5]

➤ THE FOUNDATION:

ACTS 16:13-15 *And on the Sabbath day we [Luke & Timothy included] went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.*

¹⁴ One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God.

“Who heard us...” – This would include all of Paul’s Team:

PAUL & SILAS who would be preaching the Gospel;

TIMOTHY & LUKE bearing witness to the results of Salvation

Lydia – A Prosperous businesswoman – probably owner of a large estate within the city – *possibly became the site of the original Church*

A “*worshiper of God...*” – she was not a full convert to JUDAISM yet, but follower of the “*moral / ethical teachings*” that are a result of the blessings of believing in JUDAISM

The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. ¹⁵ *And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.*

“The Lord opened her heart...” it was not Paul’s persuasion that brought her (and the others) to faith in Jesus Christ...

The Lord “*opened her heart...*” – *To cause to see what was not seen before* – she had been seeking something more greater that would bring freedom & peace - She found it in the Gospel

“*Pay attention...*” – *To direct full attention to the words being said*
She was “*Baptized...*” – *Seen as a declaration of severance from a former way of life or belief system (THE LAW) – “Repentance from dead works...” [Heb 6:1] – that salvation could only be found through “strict obedience” to the LAW AND SACRIFICES*

➤ THE “SCANDAL” OF JESUS CHRIST

ACTS 16:16-24 *As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. ¹⁷ She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”*

“*Spirit of Divination*” – “Puthos” (python) – *Use of seemingly innocent words / things / substances to ensnare those who listened or used them*
- Probably an adherent to the “ORACLE OF DELPHI” –

“*A WAY of salvation...*” – NOT “THE WAY of Salvation...” – *Implying it was “One of Many ways” – an early UNIVERSALIST presentation* – *This heresy has found “new life” in the current culture that sees “truth” as personally understood – and the Bible as suggestively interpreted...*

¹⁸ And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

Paul finally called an end to the harassment and its distraction from the “True Message of Salvation in Jesus Christ” that they preached...

The “GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST” is a “scandal” – “Skandalon” being offensive to those who hear... AND at the same time being a “trap / snare / stumbling stone” (Drawn to the bait – caught in the trap)

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

²⁰ And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.” ²¹ They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.”

It wasn’t offensive or illegal to be a “JEW” in the Roman Empire.

“They” were offended over the loss of income both from the influence of her words AND from the loss of the girl...

“Their” accusation was this “new religion” was influencing people to leave their “acceptable” pagan idolatries, which included the Cult of “EMPEROR WORSHIP” – thus leading to Treason... and Anarchy

This was used by the owners to punish Paul for their loss. We see this often in the cities to which Paul would bring the Gospel.

²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

As seen in Jesus’ crucifixion narrative, and many other scenes in the BOOK OF ACTS, it is not hard to raise a “near-riot” in a crowded market

²³ And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them [securely].

²⁴ Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

As a “ROMAN COLONY” any activity that could be potentially seen as “treasonous” against ROME and the EMPEROR by a non-citizen was punishable W/O a trial or hearing... (All Citizens received a trial) Beatings and Imprisonment were both immediate and open-ended...

WHAT will happen?

Stay tuned for the exciting conclusion!