

## **Philippians: Background from Acts**

The letter to the Philippians is a letter of tremendous encouragement and joy. Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, sends this letter to thank the church in Philippi for their support. He also addresses some issues of unity that had come up. As you begin this study it is our desire that you will have a growing appetite and joy for the Word of God. The time we have in group interaction as well as your own study of the passages can be a fantastic way to learn and grow.

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths” Proverbs 3:5,6*

### Philippians background-Acts 16

Philippians is a letter to the church in the city of Philippi. In Acts 16, the Bible gives us some ‘background’ on this city and the people in Philippi.

**Read Acts 13:2,3,4 and 16:6-10** How did disciples in the early church determine where they would serve? \_\_\_\_\_

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Additional verses showing the person and ministry of the Holy Spirit from the book of Acts:

**1:8** Holy Spirit empowers and prepares us to be witnesses

**5:9** Warning against “tempting” the Holy Spirit

**8:29** Holy Spirit instructs Philip

**8:39** Holy Spirit relocates Philip.

**10:19** Holy Spirit speaks to Peter

**11:28** Holy Spirit gives prophecy

It is important to understand the leading and equipping of the Holy Spirit. The church in Philippi is a result of the work done by the Holy Spirit through someone (Paul) who would follow His instruction. This truth applies to all believers and not church leaders alone. How can we discern and know the leading of the Holy Spirit in our lives?

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## **Acts 16:11-15**

Look at the map in the back of your Bible and familiarize yourselves with the area identified. (‘then and now’ maps are available at the entry table.)

**V13-16** Lydia becomes the first recorded convert to Christ in Europe. God hears her prayers, opens her heart, and she responds. She shows her appreciation by inviting Paul and his friends to stay with them.

**Acts 16:16-24**

Paul spoke up for the slave girl and against those who mistreated her. In doing what was right Paul draws criticism and is beaten. Doing what is right often carries a price!

**Acts 16:25-40**

**V25-** People are observing how we handle adversity. Paul and Silas were not trying to impress people with their singing. They were singing because of the impression Jesus left on them. **What “impresses” you? What do we sing when we face adversity?**

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**V26-34** Neither Paul nor Silas had any idea of what would take place as they prayed and worshipped, but you can be sure their motive was to simply focus on God regardless of circumstances.

**V27-** Thinking he had failed and would be severely punished, the prison keeper was going to commit suicide. Philippi was a Roman ruled city, a model city for Roman government. If a Roman soldier allowed a prisoner to escape then that prisoners’ sentence was placed upon the soldier. It was believed better to die quickly at the hand of a sword than to suffer the torture of the Roman guards.

**V34- From thoughts of suicide to New Life! Be patient when life is overwhelming; great things may be just around the corner!**

**V35-40** Paul shows a little ‘spunk’ as he addresses the punishment they had received. Rather than slip away quietly he wisely points out their wrong doing. It is possible that the church in Philippi was left alone for awhile so that the improper punishment Paul and Silas received would be forgotten.

**V40-** They visited the new believers and then traveled on to the next city in their journey. It is important to note that *encouragement* was of vital importance to Paul. He often sought to strengthen through encouragement and the letter to the Philippians is a model of that.

**For Next Week:** Read the entire book of Philippians and then go back to focus on chapter 1 for next week’s meeting.

My Memory verse for this week is: \_\_\_\_\_

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