

Philippians

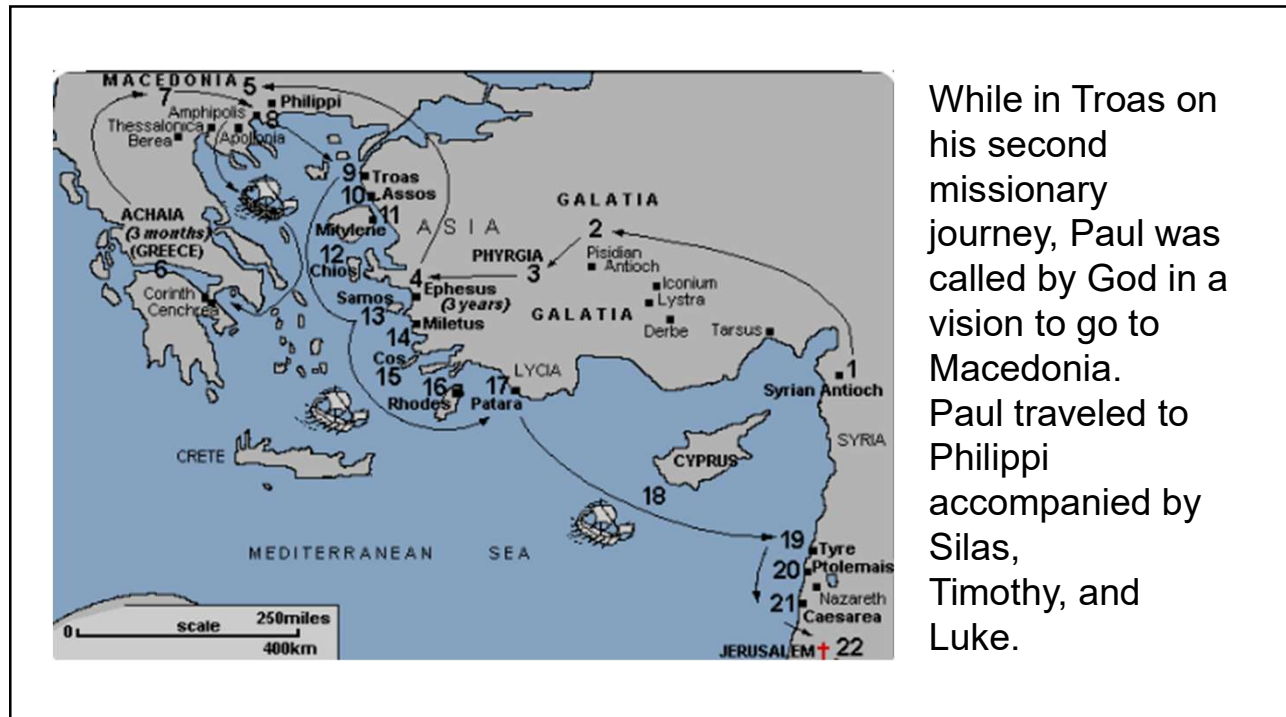
The church at Philippi was the first Christian church in Europe
Planted by Paul on his second missionary journey, AD 50 or 51
Initial converts of the church at Philippi were Gentiles, mainly a Gentile fellowship

Women also played an essential role in the life of the church at Philippi
The city of Philippi was located in ancient Greece on the eastern border of the Roman province of Macedonia, about 10 miles inland from the coast, on a trade route.

It was named after Philip of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great.
Under Alexander, the city rose to become the capital of the Greek Empire.

A famous school of medicine existed in Philippi, where Luke may have studied.

1



While in Troas on his second missionary journey, Paul was called by God in a vision to go to Macedonia. Paul traveled to Philippi accompanied by Silas, Timothy, and Luke.

2

Paul's custom was to go to the synagogue whenever he first arrived in a new city, but in Philippi, apparently, there was no synagogue. He went to the river where he knew that Jews would be worshipping. There Paul met Lydia, a Gentile dealer in purple cloth. She became the first Christian convert in Europe. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. She and the members of her household were baptized. She invited them to stay at her home. Three significant events associated with start of Philippian church. First: Lydia's conversion. Second: The exorcism of demons from a slave girl, which resulted in Paul and Silas being thrown into prison. Third: The conversion of the Philippian jailer and his family.

3

Paul visited the church at Philippi again on his third missionary journey. The believers there gave generously to support Paul's ministry as well as the church in Jerusalem. While Paul was imprisoned in Rome, the church at Philippi sent Epaphroditus to minister to him. In return, Paul sent Timothy to the congregation at Philippi. From the time it was established, the church at Philippi was healthy, strong, and generous, becoming a model church that only experienced minor problems of disunity.

4

Philippians has many inspiring passages. This one stuck out to me. Philippians 3:10 – 16 ¹⁰ I want to know Christ – yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, ¹¹ and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. ¹² Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. ¹³ Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, ¹⁴ I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. ¹⁶ Only let us live up to what we have already attained.