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Encouragement in Christ

Philippians 2:1-11

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,

complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Introduction

On his second missionary journey, Paul[[1]](#footnote-1) founded a church at Phillipi in the year 50AD. Phillipi was a Roman colony[[2]](#footnote-2) and an important city in Macedonia: so important that Emperor Octavian[[3]](#footnote-3) gave the citizens there the same rights and privileges as the citizens of Rome.

[Paul](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_the_Apostle), [Silas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silas), Luke[[4]](#footnote-4) and [Timothy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Timothy)met a woman there called Lydia of Thyatira,[[5]](#footnote-5) which was not her birth name but ***where*** she came from and/or her expertise in producing a rare *‘Lydian purple dye’.*

Lydia[[6]](#footnote-6) was taught to believe in the gods of Thyatira but also investigated the Jewish[[7]](#footnote-7) claims of *one-God* and so, Lydia and other women met at the gates of Phillipi to pray: here they met Paul, Silas, Luke and Timothy and they talked about Jesus: Lydia and others became ‘*followers of Christ’* and they told others too.

Lydia then shared her faith with her household and they were *all* baptized together. She invited Paul and those with him to stay at her home in Phillipi and they told them how to be *‘followers of Jesus’*. When the others disciples left, Luke stayed-on so he could teach them more about Jesus.

Lydia[[8]](#footnote-8) lived in a big house in Philippi in which she began the first Christian church on Greek soil: she welcomed people into their meetings of learning about Christ and whilst she continued her successful business, she also nurtured the *nascent*[[9]](#footnote-9) church at Phillipi: she also cared for Paul during his emprisoned in the Roman jail.[[10]](#footnote-10)

After the other disciples left Philippi, Luke stayed on for awhile to help Lydia teach the story of Jesus: Paul visited Phillipi again during his third missionary journey – outward bound and again when homeward bound [[11]](#footnote-11).

Lydia’s learning could not have been better and summarised well by the short but enlightening statement – **Lydia met Paul.**

All this took place about 15 years after Saul[[12]](#footnote-12) had been confronted by the resurrected **Jesus** on the Damascus Road in the year 34/35 and which changed him dramatically.

At this time, Saul had received authority from the High Priest to persecute the **Libertines**[[13]](#footnote-13) who had rejected the high moral values[[14]](#footnote-14) teachings and practices of Judaism and also rejected the Jerusalem Temple and its services.

Saul[[15]](#footnote-15) was aggressive in his opposition to the *libertines* because they were tenacious in their anti-Judaistic stance and had grown to three *‘synagogues of freedmen’* with plans for more.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Luke writes that Saul was *“violent and aggressive”* as he *“… ravaged the* ***libertine*** *groups”* [[17]](#footnote-17) and was implicated in the stoning death of Stephen its leader.[[18]](#footnote-18) Saul defends this by stating, *“… that according to the strictest party of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.”*[[19]](#footnote-19)

However, Saul was so *vehment* in his opposition to the *“libertines”* [[20]](#footnote-20) that Luke[[21]](#footnote-21) described him as *“ravaging the church”* but Saul[[22]](#footnote-22) defended his actions stated “*I have lived before God in all good conscience … from a sincere conviction of duty… zealous for the moral traditions of the Fathers of Israel ….”* [[23]](#footnote-23)

The *crux*[[24]](#footnote-24) of the matter was that Saul opposed the *libertines* in order to preserve Judaism, while Stephen the *libertine* leader taugh that Jesus was the ***Libertine*** Messiah who had replaced worship in the Jerusalem Temple.

According to Jewish writings - The *Tanakh*,[[25]](#footnote-25) Saul was the son of Kish and a member of the tribe of Benjamin and so it appears he came from **Gibeah**[[26]](#footnote-26) to Tarsus[[27]](#footnote-27) which in Saul’s time was a synthesis of East and West, Greek and Oriental influences.

Saul was educated at the Tarsus University and then moved to Jerusalem to train under Gamaliel – aged somewhere between 12-15.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Rylands Professor Arthur Peake wrote in 1927, *“I find it difficult to believe that the rigid Pharisee, brought up by parents who belonged to that straighest of sects, can have studied at the University of Tarsus.”*

Professor Votaw of the University of Chicago (1864-1946) wrote that Saul *“believed fully in the Jewish faith, and would defend it strenuously against its opponents … and for a time, stood forth as the leader of this persecution.”*

Saul was well known as a vigorous Pharisee[[29]](#footnote-29) and an aggressive opponent of the *libertines*[[30]](#footnote-30) in Jerusalem[[31]](#footnote-31) whom he persecuted until Christ[[32]](#footnote-32) confronted him in a blinding theophany[[33]](#footnote-33) on the Damasus Road.[[34]](#footnote-34)

Saul’s training in the rabbinic tradition by Gamaliel,[[35]](#footnote-35) is said to have led him to a vigorous position of the Jewish law which[[36]](#footnote-36) raises the question, *“was he a zealot in younger life?”* [[37]](#footnote-37)

Ernest D Burton (1856-1925) of Chicago University, suggests that with *“increasing frequency and intensity, (Saul) was greatly dissatisfied with his general moral condition.”*[[38]](#footnote-38)

Mark Fairchild[[39]](#footnote-39) of Huntington University,[[40]](#footnote-40) USA, believes Saul had been a zealot: if not officially but certainly in zeal as he demonstrated in his life to being *“blameless”*[[41]](#footnote-41) when in 35AD he went on a self-appointed errand of persecution and violence[[42]](#footnote-42) but about noon,[[43]](#footnote-43) he was confronted with a vision of the Lord who *“spoke to him in the Hebrew language.”*[[44]](#footnote-44)

Paul converted to Christ on the Damascus road in 35AD and ten years later in 45AD he changed his name to the Latin **Paul** and changed to become a different person!

Josephus[[45]](#footnote-45) writes in the [*Jewish Antiquities*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_Antiquities) there were three mainJewish sects at this time, the [Pharisees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pharisees),[[46]](#footnote-46) the [Sadducees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadducees), and the [Essenes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essenes): the Zealots were a *"fourth sect"*, founded by [Judas of Galilee](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judas_of_Galilee) in the year 6BC at the time of the [Census of Quirinius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census_of_Quirinius).

Christ’s confrontation with Saul on the Damascus road was via a powerful and transforming **theophany**[[47]](#footnote-47) that temporarily blinded him[[48]](#footnote-48) and changed him from the aggressive Saul of Tarsus to the pastoral Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles.[[49]](#footnote-49)

He was changed from Saul, a persecutor of people[[50]](#footnote-50) to *‘Paul’* the Apostle, an emissary ***of*** people - a person sent as a special representative of God on a diplomatic mission

to the Gentiles.[[51]](#footnote-51)

**Brittany Wilson** of SBL Press, wrote of him, *“he was out of control, but after his conversion to Jesus, he in fact, epitomizes self-control”*.

In-line with the Roman concept of masculinity as a previous *“manly man”* he changed to the nature of God’s Son – Jesus Christ.[[52]](#footnote-52)

Rylands Professor **Arthur Peake** wrote in 1927 that Paul not only became the *‘father of christianity’* he was also very apt to explain God’s will in detail throughout Jewish history as he did and a wonderful assest to christianity.

**Amy-Jill Levine**,[[53]](#footnote-53) Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University Tennessee was born a Jew, raised a Jew, educated and lives as a Jew and recently stated, *“the more I read the New Testament the better Jew I become”.*

The triune God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit did not create division and hatred in humanity as they are **the** creators of “*diversity and love”* as Paul affirms *‘by the abundance of the revelations’* in his own experience.

Rylands Professor, Arthur Peake wrote of Paul. *“Before his conversion he had carried on an energetic persecution of the Christians in Palestine”* but after the Damascus Road experience, he gave his *‘everything’* to Christ and excelled as the Apostle to the Gentiles: his teachings handled large subjects in a large way.[[54]](#footnote-54)

The benefits of Saul **to** Paul were once unimaginable!

Fifteen years after the Damascus Road experience, Paul founded the church at Phillipi[[55]](#footnote-55) in Lydia’s home. Another fifteen years later, there was the mention of overseers and deacons in the Philippian church which meant it had grown into a church where the Gentiles were experiencing Christ as their Saviour.[[56]](#footnote-56)

This **brought joy to Paul** who now wanted **to thank the Philippians for supporting him** with their financial gift through Epaphroditus[[57]](#footnote-57) who extended himself to deliver it so far away.[[58]](#footnote-58)

Paul was a man now living by the power of God’s Divine [Grace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grace_(Christianity)) as, **Johann Peter Lange**[[59]](#footnote-59) wrote in 1868, *"no fall so deep that grace cannot descend to it"* and *"no height so lofty that grace cannot lift the sinner to it."*

Paul put exceptional depth into his teachings; he loved his churches and prayed constantly for them. He inspired deep affection for his converts and gave them a great strength and moral courage for witness and, by his own example, a tender and scrupuous living example.

Paul was a new man in Christ: he had freedom, meekness, peace and joy, a mystical presence, tender mercies, noble, confronting, hardworking with insight, poetic, intelligent and pastoral in his love and devotion to Christ.[[60]](#footnote-60)

His heritage of letters[[61]](#footnote-61) cannot be exaggerated in their influence,[[62]](#footnote-62) *and the enormous amount of work he did in his lifetime was “colossal.”*

Lydia’s learning could not have been better and summarised well by the statement, she was encouraged by the faith of her household and the faith of the Phillipian church that followed for a least the time of Paul’s natural life, part of which was locked away in a jail in Rome and elsewhere.[[63]](#footnote-63)

The Phillipians had learned well and practised accordingly that *“a christian can even do more than God asks”*[[64]](#footnote-64) and will receive a corresponding reward. They had great generosity toward the poor, widows, and orphans, some going so far as to sell themselves into slavery to supply the needy.” [[65]](#footnote-65) Summarised well in the statement **– Paul met Lydia.**

An increasing number of scholars consider this first letter Paul wrote to the Philippians to be not just one, but several – possibly three.

This *generosity* of heart came from Paul who had an emotional nature of exceptional depth and richness. He was able to inspire deep affection in his converts as they served him with filial[[66]](#footnote-66) devotion. eg: Epaphroditus was a fellow Christian missionary of Paul's and is mentioned in Philippians 2:25-26[[67]](#footnote-67) and 4:18[[68]](#footnote-68). … Paul says *“I am filled (by) the gifts you sent, a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God ... to Him be glory for ever and ever.”* Amen

Another example of Paul’s generosity of spirit was in his relationship with Timothy – like Father-and-Son as he wrote:, *“I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.”*[[69]](#footnote-69)

Timothy was quite different and is said to have been acquainted with the Scriptures since childhood. In 1 Corinthians 16:10, there is a suggestion that he was by nature **reserved and timid**: *"When Timothy comes, see that you put him at ease among you, for he is doing the work of the Lord".*

Roman prisons were used forprisoners already condemned to death and so each day Paul would no doubt speak of Christ: looking ***to*** Him as the great Saviour. *‘In-house’* they stripped the prisoner of dignity, few rations were supplied and officials promoted abuse and rape.[[70]](#footnote-70)

Paul’s own personal position is as he writes in his letter to the Philippians, *“for me to live is Christ, and to die is* (personal) *gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire it to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account.*

In 50AD, Paul, Silas and Timothy[[71]](#footnote-71) founded the church in Phillipi[[72]](#footnote-72) and, later when in jail in Rome, Paul rejoiced to hear that this christian ministry was going well and the gospel was bearing much fruit and they were generously supporting him.[[73]](#footnote-73)

At Philippi, Lydia continued to use her spacious mansion, business accument and much love in establishing the Philippian church to provide practical help and, Paul in prison *“loved his churches and prayed constantly for them.”*[[74]](#footnote-74)

In the last years of his life and *‘in prison’* [[75]](#footnote-75) in Rome[[76]](#footnote-76) he was under *‘house arrest’*[[77]](#footnote-77) until his execution in Rome about 67AD. According to Clement, Dionysius, Eusebius and Tertullian, Paul was executed by beheading, a death befitting a Roman citizen. Ancient records suggest that Nero knew Paul personally, so it’s likely he had Paul beheaded through order of the prefects of Rome.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Philippi, at the end of the [Roman Republic](https://www.worldhistory.org/Roman_Republic/), prospered in a number of ways as a major Byzantine city. Today the archaeological site has substantial remains including a [theatre](https://www.worldhistory.org/disambiguation/theatre/) and four basilicas. Philippi is listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site – nearly 2,000 years since Saul met Christ on the Damacus road and changed the world forever. see below.

. See UNESCO.org/uploads/nominations.1517.pdf for an outstanding 50 plus page document in colour and black & white, called Archeological Site of Philippi. It is a most informative presentation and can be downloaded without cost. See also <http://orthodoxwiki.org/Lydia_of_thyatira>; en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydia\_of\_thyatira **and** www.catholic.org/saints/saint\_php\_saint-id=713

1. . Timothy, Silas (and perhaps Luke) were with Paul during his 2nd missionary journey from Antioch (49-51AD). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . A Roman colonia was originally a Roman outpost established in conquered territory to secure it. Eventually, however, the term came to denote the highest status of a Roman city. It is also the origin of the modern term colony. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. . Caesar Augustus, also known as Octavian, was officially the first Roman emperor who reigned from 27BC until his death in 14AD. He is known for being the founder of the Roman Principate, which is the first phase of the Roman Empire, and Augustus is considered one of the greatest leaders in human history. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. . Tracing the use of "we" throughout Acts we find that , Luke, the author of Acts, seems to join the apostolic team at Troas and travels with them to Philippi. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. . She was a wealthy business woman whose expertise was in making purple dyes from local fish at Thyatira which was southeast of Pergamum 40 miles inland, across the Aegean Sea at Athens. She probably had a Greek background – Acts 16.9-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. . Her name means ‘purple seller’ and was known as Lydia Purpuraria. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. . Evidently, there were not enough Jews in Phillipi for a synagogue. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. . The fact that there is no mention of a man has been used to deduce that she was a widow, but this has been challenged as a patriarchal interpretation. Nevertheless, she was head of the household and was therefore either a widow or unmarried. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. . Nascent means, just coming into existence and beginning to display signs of future potential – budding, developing, growing and embyonic. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. . As noted by Paul himself, the apostle and his companion Silas were put in jail without any trial as the ***duumviri*** of the Romans decided to have Paul and Silas whipped in the forum and then imprisoned to calm an angry mob and avoid a riot. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. . They stayed with her until their departure through Amphipolis and Appollonia to Thessalonica – see Acts 16.4 – 17.1. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. . Saul was his Hebrew name and reminiscent of the hero of the tribe of Benjamin. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. . A libertine is a person who rejects moral boundaries and lives “at liberty” from constraint. The result is that the libertine usually lives a profligate, dissolute life. Libertinism is a disregard of authority or a rejection of moral boundaries. Libertinism typically involves pursuing personal desires without consideration of [ethics](https://www.gotquestions.org/Christian-ethics.html) or social mores. The term *libertine* almost always refers to a male who is sexually promiscuous and disinterested in [monogamy](https://www.gotquestions.org/monogamy-Bible.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. . Paul’s classes of judgments are two. First, there are the moral prohibitions such as murder and fornication and the doctrinal beliefs of justification by faith, and the gospel proclaimed to the Gentiles to which he permits not exception … (of) supreme importance to Saul and on account his is willing to be most harsh with those who violate them. Ethics in Paul: The Shape of Christian Life and Method of Moral Reasoning. W M Longsworth, The Society of Christian Ethics, 1981, Vol 1, 1981. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. . Saul highly valued Israel’s moral superiority to the Gentiles: they bore the proud name of ‘Israel’ and to them belonged the Shekinah, the covenants, the Law, the Divinely ordained ceremonial traditions, the Patriarchs and the divine promises from which came the Messiah. - see Romans 9.3-5. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. . In Biblical usage, the German sitz-im-leben roughly means the *‘situation in life’* and volksleben meaning *‘setting in life’*. For the ‘libertines’ this meant a general disregard of authority and/or the rejection of moral boundaries. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. . Acts 8.3. “Saul laid waste the church …”. ie: the libertine christian gatherings. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. . Stephen[delivers a prophetic speech in Acts 7](https://readingacts.com/2019/02/08/acts-7-stephens-speech-2/) and describes his fellow Jews [as a ‘stiff-necked’ generation](https://readingacts.com/2019/02/08/acts-751-a-stiff-necked-generation/). Stephen is seized by an angry crowd and killed. Saul stood guard over Stephen’s cloak as the crowd stoned him to death but whether Saul approved of this (Acts 8:1) or whether he was a legal representative of the Sanhedrin is unclear – a legal technically was involved over one word - see 1 Maccabees 1:57. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. . Acts 26.5 [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. . A libertine is a person devoid of most moral principles, a sense of responsibility, or [sexual](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_sexual_activity) restraints, which they see as unnecessary. In genereal, Libertines put value on physical pleasures, meaning those experienced through the senses. According to Stephen Benko, Brill, The Libertine Gnostic Sect of the Philionites, they were also known as Sratiotici, Phibionites, Secundians, Socratians, Zackheans, Coddians, Barborites and Barbeliotes. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. . See The Book of Acts 8.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. . Acts 23.1, Galatians 1.14, v22-23 and Phil 3.6. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. . Saul was a man of profound moral earnestness. Galatians 1.4 [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. . Crux is a difficult problem or puzzling thing that seems impossible to solve. An example of a crux is the most important beliefs of a religion. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. . The Hebrew Bible or Tanaka, also known in Hebrew as Miqra is the [canonical collection](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon) of [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language) scriptures, including the [Torah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Torah), the [Nevi'im](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevi%27im), and the [Ketuvim](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ketuvim). [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. . Gibeah is the name of three places mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, in the tribes of Benjamin, Judah, and Ephraim respectively. Gibeah of Benjamin is the most commonly mentioned of the places. In the Book of Judges, it is the main setting to the story of the Benjaminite War. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. . Tarsus … housed a population of … half a million people in Roman times, it had Greek and Oriental influence but no indication of autonomy except attendant liberalism. The Tarsus of Saul, with its synthesis of East and West, Greek and Oriental dates from this time. New Bible Dictionary, Third Ed. P1154. IVP 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. . FF Bruce, Rylands Professor, University of Manchester writes in his New Century Commentary on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Oliphants, “Saul’s family sent him to Jerusalem aged 12 for training under Gamaliel.” Clyde Weber Votaw, 1864-1946, Professor of New Testament, The University of Chicago suggests, “perhaps at the age of thirteen or fourteen.” E.E. Ellis, Research Professor of Theology, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, writes that “From Paul’s birth until his appearance in Jerusalem as a persecutor of Christians, there is little information concerning his life.” [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. .  Barnabas travelled to Tarsus and took Saul to Antioch, where for a year they taught the people about Jesus. They went to Jerusalem and back to Antioch, where they preached the gospel. Saul now changes his name to Paul. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. . A libertine is devoid of most moral principles, irreresponsible, unrestrained and who ignores or even spurns accepted morals and forms of behaviour. Paul opposed ‘christian’ libertines but there were also many other gnostic ‘libertines’ such as the Stratiotici, Phibionites, Secundians, Socratians, Zackheans, Coddians, Barborites, Barbeliotes and Barbeliotes: see The Libertine Gnostic Sect of the Phibionites According to Epiphanius. Vigiliae Christianae, May 1967. Also, Stephen Benko, Brill, Vigiliae Christianae, May 1967, Vol. 21. No. 2, pp. 103-119. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. . See Acts 8.1-3. Votaw writes, “we lack information as to his career between the time when he became a Rabbi and the time when he appears in connection with the death of Stephen.” In The Conversion and Early Ministry of Paul. Clyde Votaw. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. . They were brazen in their sexual practices and well-known in their shamelessness, disrespectfulness and debauchery. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. . A Theophany is a personal encounter with a deity, that is an event where the manifestation of a deity occurs in an observable way. Specifically, it "refers to the temporal and spatial manifestation of God in some tangible form.” In 1987, D Landsborough in the Journal of Neurology, Neurosurgery and Psychiatry, proposed that Paul suffered from “temporal lobe epilepsy.” pp659-664. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. . Estimated to be 4 to 7 years after the crucifixion of Christ in Jerusalem. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. . Gamaliel the Elder was a first-century CE teacher. It is said that when he died in 52AD, ‘the glory of the Torah ended.” He had counselled the Sanhedrin to leave the early christian leaders alone.” Metzer & Coogan, The Oxford Companion to the Bible. Oxford University Press, 1993, p242. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. . Williston Walker, op.cit.., p25. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. . Evidence is not clear either way but he probably was not a *Zealot* since they were a *‘riotous bunch’* of Pharisees who advocated violent resistance against Roman rule in Israel. He certainly was a man of profound moral earnestness and an earnest seeker after righteousness. Ernest D Burton, Professor of New Testament, The University of Chicago – 1893-1926. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. . Ernest D Burton, (1893-1925) Professor of New Testament, The University of Chicago. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. . Fairchild suggests that Paul may have been a Zealot at some time in his early life and which might have been the driving force behind his persecution of the Christians before his conversion to Christianity. See Galatians 1.14 and Acts 12.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. . Huntington University is a private Christian university in Huntington, Indiana. It is affiliated with the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and a member of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. . Ernest D Burton, University of Chicago, wrote in 1897(?) “He was a man of profound moral earnestness. Whatever faults of character or vices of life he had, frivolousness was not one of them. Earnestness did not begin with his conversion. Paul was always intense. This appears in all his references to his life before his conversion. Acts 23.1: " I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day … my manner of life from my youth up, which was from the beginning among mine own nation, and at Jerusalem, know all the Jews; having knowledge of me from the first, if they be willing to testify…”. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. . Christ intervened to stop Saul’s violent intentions at Damascus. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. . Acts 22.6 [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. . Saul’s devotion to the Pharisaic conception of a nation made holy by careful observance of the Jewish law was extreme, and his own conduct therein … was “blameless”. Wiliston Walker, ibid. Also, FF Bruce, New Century Commentary on 2 Corinthians, Oliphants 1971, p241, “confidence in the flesh”. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. . According to Josephus, they "agree in all other things with the Pharisaic notions; but they have an inviolable attachment to liberty, and say that God is to be their only Ruler and Lord" and this excludes Rome. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. . The Sadducees commenced in 167BC, the Pharisees commenced in 160BC and the Zealots were much later in 6AD but according to origins, Zealots were Pharisees who advocated violent resistance to Rome. These were regarded ‘in the main’ as being a ‘riotous bunch’ [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. .Theophany is a personal encounter with a deity, that is an event where the manifestation of a deity occurs in an observable way. Specifically, it "refers to the temporal and spatial manifestation of God in some tangible form." [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. . Blindness was deemed necessary to stop Saul’s violent intentions in Damascus. It may also have been a de-masculising the Roman concept of ‘manhood’ [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. . The story of Paul's conversion on the road to Damascus is told in Acts 9:1-19 and retold by Paul in Acts 22:6-21 and Acts 26:12-18. Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee in Jerusalem after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ, swore to wipe out the Libertine Christian church, called The Way. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. . Luke in Acts 9:1 writes that Paul was "breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples." Saul had obtained letters from the high priest, authorizing him to arrest any followers of Jesus in the city of Damascus. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. . FF Bruce, Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis, Manchester. 1959, New Century Bible Commentary, 1 & 2 Corinthians.1971, p241. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. . There’s Not a Friend Like the Lowly Jesus. Johnson Oatman Jnr (1856–1926). [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. . Dr. Amy-Jill Levine is E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University Divinity School, Tennessee, Department of Religious Studies, and Graduate Department of Religion. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. . Rylands Professor, Arthur Peake wrote this in 1927 for his annual lecture. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. . This was during his second missionary journey between 49-52AD. Paul and Silas revisited the places in Asia Minor where Paul had preached on his first journey while Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus. Paul and Silas visited Derbe, Lystra, and Antioch in Pisidia. From there Paul and Silas travelled to Troas, where Paul received a vision of a man from Macedonia calling to them. Crossing into Europe, they passed through several towns along the Egnatian Way and travelled to the cities of Athens and Corinth in southern Greece. Then, sailing to Ephesus and Caesarea, they visited the church in Jerusalem before returning to Antioch of Syria.See Acts, 15, 16, 17 and 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. . See Acts 16.9-40. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. . Epaphroditus was a fellow Christian missionary of Paul's and is mentioned only in Philippians 2:25 and 4:18. He was the delegate of the christian community at Philippi, sent with their gift to Paul during his first imprisonment at Rome or, alternatively, at Ephesus. It is not known which jail he was in at that time. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. . See Philippians 2.30 [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. . Johann Peter Lange, A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures, Scribner, 1868. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. . Professor Peake noted well that Paul was born and trained a Jew, he remained a Jew to the end, however, he largely created the rich christian understanding and rich appreciation of God through Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. . Paul's Letters to the Churches (Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, First Thessalonians, and Second Thessalonians) were written by Paul over a period of fourteen years to seven churches scattered throughout Asia Minor, Greece, and Rome. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. . It can also be said of Paul that he was a formidable christian *apostle to the gentiles* who had an exceptionally high spirituality and intelligence and an emotional nature of great depth and richness in his heart and mind and so he was well able to inspire deep affection in his converts for he had enormous moral courage. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. . Paul and Silas locked away from one night XXX and then until his death in 62? [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. . Philippians 4.14ff Paul wrote: 14Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. . Williston Walker, op.cit., p38. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. . As in a son or daughter – dedicated to their dutiful, loyal, respectful and to their overall well being. In this respect, Paul loved his churches and prayed constantly for them and their well-being and protection. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. . Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier …. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. . … having received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent … [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. . Philippians 2.22 [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. . These prisons were underground, filthy, hot, torturous, militant, depressive and discouraging: they were horrible conditions, poorly ventilated, dark, crowed, designed to psychologically and physically torture – the opposite to Lydia’s home. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. . Epaphroditus had visited Paul in Rome and delivered gifts from the church. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. . What attracted people to Phillipi (named after Phillip the Conquering King) was the valuable silver mines in the mountains that created a border for the area to the north and north-eastern areas of the region. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. . In 58AD they set sail for Rome and arrived there in the spring of that year. Paul remained in custody for 2 more years (Acts 28:30) which brings it to 60AD. Paul was apparently freed shortly after this time as he predicted in his letter to the Philippians.. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. . Peake, ibid, 1927, p371. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. . Probably in the ‘fortress of Antonia’ referred to as a ‘house’ [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. . When Herod put Peter in prison, it was probably in the ‘fortress of Antonia, where Paul was later lodged before his death. See Acts 21.34 & 23.30. Though referred to as ‘house’ the apostle was guarded continually by four soldiers. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. . First, he lived under house arrest and wrote letters and preached. The Church of St. Paul alla Regola stands in Rome over the location where Paul ‘rented’ some accommodation to conduct his ministry. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. . Beheading, a mode of executing [capital punishment](https://www.britannica.com/topic/capital-punishment) by which the head is [severed](https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/severed) from the body. The ancient Greeks and Romans regarded it as a most honourable form of [death](https://www.britannica.com/science/death). [↑](#footnote-ref-78)