



The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Exhortation and the Example of Paul

Philippians 3:1-21; Philippians 4:1-9

- I. THE WARNING OF PAUL’S EXHORTATION (Philippians 3:1-3)
 - A. The Importance of the Warning (Philippians 3:1)
 1. The finality of the warning—“Finally” (see 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 6:10; Philippians 3:1; Philippians 4:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; 1 Peter 3:8)
 2. The affection of the warning
 - a. Written to the brethren
 - b. Hopeful of the brethren’s joy—“rejoice in the Lord.”
 3. The willingness of the warning
 - a. In spite of repetition—“To write the same things to you” (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Timothy 4:1-6; 2 Timothy 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:1-18; 2 Peter 1:1-15; 2 Peter 3:1-2; Jude 1:5)
 - b. Void of any grief—“to me indeed is not grievous”
 4. The safety of the warning—“for you it is safe” (see Leviticus 25:18; Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 21:31).
 - B. The Cause for Warning (Philippians 3:2)
 1. Dogs (see Psalm 22:16, 20; Isaiah 56:10-11; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30; 2 Peter 2:10-22; Revelation 22:14-15); Note: This is very likely a reference to unsaved Gentiles.
 2. Evil workers (2 Corinthians 11:13); Note: Likely references false apostles
 3. Concision; The word *concision* means a cutting away and is related to the more commonly used word *circumcision* (see Philippians 3:3; Acts 10:45; Acts 11:1-3; Romans 4:9-12; Romans 15:8; Galatians 2:7-9, 12; Colossians 4:11; Titus 1:10); Note: This is no doubt speaking of the Jews.
 4. Note: It is of great interest to note that three enemies are referenced. The saints’ greatest dangers often come in threes.
 - a. The lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life (1 John 2:16)
 - b. Principalities and powers (see Colossians 2:15; Titus 3:1), the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12)
 - c. The world (James 4:1-4; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 Timothy 4:10), the flesh (James 1:13-15; Ephesians 2:3; Galatians 5:16-17), and the devil (Matthew 4:1-3; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 1 Thessalonians 3:5)
 - d. For tribulation saints: the beast, the false prophet (Revelation 19:19-20), the devil (Revelation 20:10)



C. The Recipients of the Warning (Philippians 3:3)

1. The identity of the circumcision—"we"
2. The description of the circumcision (see Romans 2:25-29; Ephesians 2:11; Colossians 2:11-15)
 - a. Which worship God in the spirit (John 4:23-24)
 - b. Which rejoice in Christ Jesus
 - c. Which have no confidence in the flesh (see Philippians 3:4-9)
 - d. Notes on spiritual circumcision
 - (1) Its nature (Colossians 2:11)
 - a) It is something that has happened to believers—"ye are."
 - b) It is supernatural—"made without hands"
 - (2) It is spiritual—"by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11)
 - (3) Its benefits (Colossians 2:12; with Romans 6:3-4)
 - a) It gives death—"buried with him in baptism"
 - b) It gives resurrection—"ye are risen with him."
 - (4) Its operation
 - a) By faith, reckon yourself dead to sin (Romans 6:11; Luke 9:23; Colossians 3:5).
 - b) By faith, count Christ to be your life (Romans 6:11; Galatians 2:20).
 - c) By faith, refuse to obey the lust of the flesh (Romans 6:12).
 - d) By faith, surrender to God (Romans 6:13; Romans 12:1-2).
 - e) By faith, yield your members as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13).

II. THE EXAMPLE OF PAUL'S LIFE (Philippians 3:4-14)

A. Paul's History (Philippians 3:4-6)

1. His superiority (Philippians 3:4)
 - a. The admonition was to have no confidence in the flesh (Philippians 3:3).
 - b. If there were an exception, he would have been it (Philippians 3:4).
 - (1) He could have had confidence in the flesh.
 - (2) If any man might think he could have confidence in the flesh, Paul would have surpassed him.
2. His stock (Philippians 3:5; 2 Corinthians 11:18-22)
 - a. Circumcised the eighth day (Genesis 17:9-14)
 - b. Of the stock of Israel (Acts 22:3)
 - (1) Of the seed of Abraham (2 Corinthians 11:22)
 - (2) Of the seed of Israel (1 Chronicles 1:34)
 - (3) Of the tribe of Benjamin (Romans 11:1); Note: This is the tribe from which came the first king, Saul (1 Samuel 9:21).
 - c. An Hebrew of the Hebrews
 - (1) Abraham was a Hebrew (Genesis 14:13).
 - (2) The word *Hebrew* likely came from the name *Eber*.



- a) Noah was the father of Shem (Genesis 10:1) and Shem was the father of all the children of Eber (Genesis 10:21).
 - b) Shem begat Arphaxad (Genesis 10:22) who begat Salah (Genesis 10:24) who begat Eber (Genesis 10:24).
 - c) Eber begat Peleg (Genesis 11:16) who begat Reu (Genesis 11:18) who begat Serug (Genesis 11:20) who begat Nahor (Genesis 11:22) who begat Terah (Genesis 11:24) who begat Abraham (Genesis 11:27).
3. His religion (Philippians 3:5-6)
- a. The sect of his religion (Philippians 3:5)
 - (1) The strictness of the sect (Acts 26:5)
 - a) Their separation
 - i) They would not eat with publicans and sinners (Matthew 9:11; Mark 2:16; Luke 5:30; Luke 15:2).
 - ii) They did not fellowship with sinners (Luke 7:36-39).
 - b) Their fasting
 - i) They were concerned that the Lord's disciples did not fast (Matthew 9:14; Mark 2:18; Luke 5:33).
 - ii) They fasted often, perhaps twice a week (Matthew 9:14; Luke 18:12).
 - c) Their tithes
 - i) They paid tithes of herbs (Matthew 23:23; Luke 11:42).
 - ii) They paid tithes of all they possessed (Luke 18:12).
 - d) Their traditions
 - i) They emphasized the washing of hands before eating (Matthew 15:1-2, 10-12, 20; Mark 7:1-3, 5; Luke 11:37-38).
 - ii) They emphasized the washing of cups, pots, vessels, and tables (Mark 7:4, 8).
 - e) Their observance of the Sabbath
 - i) They were opposed to plucking corn to eat (Matthew 12:1-2; Mark 2:23-24; Luke 6:1-2).
 - ii) They were opposed to healing (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-2; Luke 6:6-7; Luke 13:14; Luke 14:1-6; John 9:13-16).
 - iii) They were opposed to a healed man carrying his bed (John 5:9-13, 16-18).
 - (2) The focus of the sect (Acts 22:3; Luke 5:17)
 - a) "Behold, thy disciples do that which is not **lawful** to do upon the sabbath day" (Matthew 12:2).
 - b) "Is it **lawful** to heal on the sabbath days?" (Matthew 12:10).
 - c) "Is it **lawful** for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (Matthew 19:3).
 - d) "Is it **lawful** to give tribute unto Caesar?" (Matthew 22:17).



- e) “It is the sabbath day: it is not **lawful** for thee to carry thy bed” (John 5:10).
 - f) “Now Moses **in the law** commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?” (John 8:5).
 - g) “It is not **lawful** for us to put any man to death” (John 18:31).
 - h) “There rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep **the law of Moses**” (Acts 15:5).
- (3) The power of the sect
- a) They sat in Moses’ seat (Matthew 23:2).
 - b) They were to be feared by others (John 7:47-53).
 - c) They could put people out of the synagogue (John 12:42).
- (4) The doctrine of the sect (Acts 23:6-9)
- a) The Sadducees had major doctrinal problems.
 - b) The Pharisees, though they certainly had their own problems, believed in a resurrection, angels, and spirits.
- (5) The leaven of the sect (Luke 12:1)
- a) Much of what they said was right (Matthew 23:3).
 - b) They did not live what they taught (Matthew 23:3).
- (6) The special lineage of Paul (Acts 22:3)
- a) He was a son of a Pharisee (Acts 23:6).
 - b) He was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel (Acts 22:3).
 - i) Gamaliel was a doctor of the law (Acts 5:34).
 - ii) Gamaliel was a man of great reputation among all the people (Acts 5:34).
 - iii) Paul was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers (Acts 22:3).
- b. The fervency of his religion (Philippians 3:6)
- (1) He was exceedingly zealous of the traditions of his fathers (Galatians 1:13-14).
 - (2) His zeal moved him to persecute the church (Philippians 3:6).
 - (3) His persecution included:
 - a) Committing people to prison (Acts 8:3)
 - b) Threatening the disciples of the Lord (Acts 9:1)
 - c) Persecuting unto death (Acts 22:4; Acts 26:9-10)
 - d) Punishment (Acts 26:11)
- c. The righteousness of his religion (Philippians 3:6; Matthew 5:20)
- (1) The righteousness of the law (Luke 1:6; Romans 9:31-33; Romans 10:1-5)
 - (2) A reminder concerning the meaning of being blameless
 - a) The word *blame* and its various forms appears twenty-four times in scripture.
 - b) In a general sense, blame is the guilty responsibility concerning a matter.