

officials were given the title of Roman counterparts (this emphasis on Philippi's privileges as a colony may be why Paul mentions citizenship several times in his letter).

The forum of Philippi was larger than a football field and surrounded with temples, public building (including a library), fountains, monuments, and public baths. One mile west of the city a Roman arch (now in ruins) straddled the Egnatian Way; just past this arch lies the River Gangites. Arches of this kind often marked off the pomerium...a sort of "no man's land" outside the city walls where neither building nor burial was allowed. Cults could not worship in this territory and the Jews may, therefore, have been forced to meet for prayer beyond it. This might explain Acts 16:13 where Paul and Luke went "outside the city gate to the river."

Keys to Philippians:

Paul's prayer for the Philippian Christians (1:9-11) shows where his concerns for them lie. He uses the example of Jesus own self-humbling (2:5-11) to urge on them the necessity of a life of service, unity, and peace. The great imperative of Philippians is "Rejoice!". It is especially prominent in 4:4: Paul's confidence in God's ability to provide (4:19) is an echo of his attitude toward his present trials in 1:12-13.

Study Tips:

Read through Philippians several times in succession, alternating between your "normal" Bible and another version. Read about Philippi and Philippians in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia. Using a concordance, look up the New Testament references to Philippi and read those passages. Now read again keeping in mind the historical background of the city and church. What new light does this shed on familiar texts?

Philippians is often called the "epistle of joy." Where does Paul mention joy or joyfulness? What does he mean by this? How can he, in his circumstances be joyful?

Another theme, perhaps even more dominant, is that of fellowship, communion, or church unity. How many expressions mention this theme? What, for Paul, was the basis of this unity in the church? What needs to happen for this unity to be real in the church today? Finally, Paul speaks more plainly about his motivations in Philippians than in any other epistle. What were they? How did he hope to accomplish them? How do your motivations compare or contrast with his?