THE BOOK OF PHILIPPIANS
“Shalom – Saints”
Philippians 4:20-23

Review
1. The study of the Bible has enormous benefits. In fact the Bible itself testifies to this fact (Ps. 119:105).

2. Philippians is indeed an inspired letter from Paul to a real church at Philippi. He wrote during his first imprisonment in Rome about 62 A.D.

3. That the words “joy” or “rejoice” are used about 18 times suggests that the letter exudes with joy and expresses God’s purpose for the normal Christian experience. Consider then the following summary of “Joy from the Prison.”

   b. Joy in Suffering 1:12-30
   c. Joy in Humbleness 2:1-11
   d. Joy in Service 1:12-30
   e. Joy in Knowing 3:1-11
   f. Joy in Growth 3:12-21
   g. Joy in Peace 4:1-9
   h. Joy in Strength 4:10-23

4. Closing out this letter of joy, Paul has some final salutations. They focus on the place of the “saints.”

   a. Saints in the PLACE of PRAISE v. 20

   i. By whom
   The particle “now” is a simple connective ( ). With no verb recorded, it is proper to insert the copula “to be” to show “God” and “Father” as direct objects of praise. Paul unites himself with the Philippians in writing our ( ) rather than “my.”

   ii. By what
   “For ever and ever” must not be translated “unto the ages of the ages.” However, the idea conveyed by the Greek is of all ages following each other in endless succession (ad infinitum) in eternity. “Amen” is properly a Hebrew adverb meaning “surely.” Note where Israel affirms the sentences of against sin with their “Amen” (Deut. 27:15-26).

   b. Saints in the PLACE of BLESSING v. 21a

   i. Who?
   The verb “salute” ( ) is a technical term for conveying greetings at the end of a letter. Here it is for “every” (singular: ) saint, not “all” (plural!). This is the same as the Hebrew “one by one” ( ). It is true that our Lord had “compassion on the multitude” (Mt. 15:32), but He also gave time to individuals as Nathanael (Jn 1:45-51), Nicodemus (Jn 3:1-21), Samaritan woman (Jn 4:1-45), Nobelman’s son (Jn 4:46-54), etc. Review the extended list in Romans (16:3-16).

   ii. Where?
   The individuals saluted were each one “in Christ Jesus.” Ah, this is the place of blessing.

   Such a position is possible through the transforming power of God’s Spirit (Ro. 8:9; 2 Cor. 5:17 cf. Jn 14:20). It is the only place of safety for eternity.

3. Saints in the PLACE of PRIVILEGE v. 21b

   a. Noted
   The affectionate term “brethren” is employed ( ). These apparently are distinguished from resident Christians in Rome. They may have visited Paul in his imprisonment. These may have included Tychicus, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, etc. What a company of “brethren.”

   b. Attached
   No one will ever fathom the depths of the prepositional phrase “with me.” Think of the privilege to be with Paul in his prison., help him with correspondence, talk of spiritual things, pray with him, run errands, and watch his patience and cheerfulness. Yes -- salutations to such “brethren.”

4. Saints in the PLACE of COMMUNITY v. 22a

   Here the plural “all” is used ( ). The previous verse seemed to emphasize individual believers. Now the “body” of believers is underscored. This notes the “family of believers,” the significance and obligations of “community” (1 Cor. 1:9). Paul surely is working at the need to be zealous in the discharge of the responsibilities in belonging to the “church” at Philippi. “All” needed to pull their weight in all the life and activity of the local body.

5. Saints in the PLACE of SURPRISE v. 22b

   “Especially (chiefly) those out of (of) Caesar’s household (house)” is the place of surprise. “Caesar’s household” is to be associated with an earlier reference (Phil. 1:13). It demonstrates that as a prisoner Paul was attracting some very special attention. Surely, those soldiers who were placed on the rota for guarding him were intrigued and surprised. This may have prompted part of his letter to the Ephesians (6:14-18). Rather recent studies suggest that more than guards are meant by this phrase. It probably was a description embracing the whole range of imperial employees -- family, house servants, slaves, army, and officials. It was among these that the cult of worship for the emperor was rampant. But the Gospel intervened and penetrated these ranks. Here is patent evidence that there is no place where the Spirit’s influence is impossible.

6. Saints in the PLACE of PRAYER v. 23

   a. Benediction pronounced
   Grace was recorded at the beginning of the letter (1:2) and now at the end. Grace (unmerited favor) commences life in Christ (Eph. 2:8) and that life is pursued in grace (1 Cor. 15:10). This same form of benediction is elsewhere (Gal. 6:16; Philemon 25). Since grace is God the Father’s favor, the fact our Lord is mentioned is a striking testimony to His deity (cf. 2 Thess. 1:12). Moreover, this benediction as found in all Pauline epistles (cf. 2 Thess. 3:17, 18; Heb. 13:25).

   b. Benediction personalized
   “With your Spirit” is added in some texts (MSS). This is virtually the equivalent of the personal pronoun. The point is clear -- the grace of our Lord is to be in their whole inner being, in all their thoughts and desires, in all their experiences. No wonder “Amen” is attached -- so let it be!

Conclusion So the saints “addressed” (1:1) are apparently “saluted” (cf. 21-23). Thus this letter of Joy is God’s Word to our waiting hearts. Glory to His Name.