

# PERSECUTION: Their Blood is Seed

Sunday, October 13, 2019 — Philippians: Joy From Jail series— Pastor Andrew Coleman

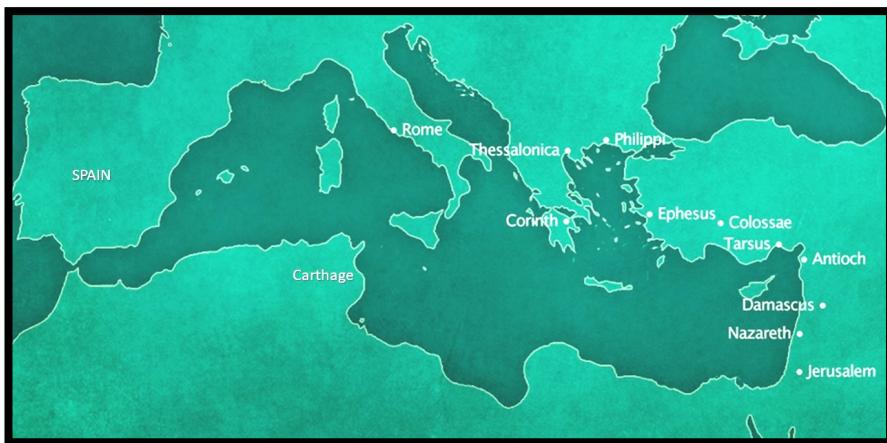
Philippians 1:12-14

English Standard Version (ESV)

**12** I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, **13** so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. **14** And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

## REVIEW:

- 1) Paul writes from a prison in Rome to the Philippian church that he planted several years earlier.
- 2) Paul awaits execution while the people of the Philippian church endure economic hardship and persecution as well.
- 3) Paul starts off expressing his great love for the Philippians and his appreciation that they continue to love God, love each other and love him. Their concern for him means much to him.
- 4) Last week we asked... ‘Do you love Christ’s church... like Paul? Like Christ?’  
‘What do your words and actions reveal about your love for the church?’



## MORE CONTEXT -- The Setting of Paul’s Imprisonment in Rome:

- 1) Paul had long desired to preach the Gospel in Rome. (Rom. 1:9-10, 13, 15)
  - Rome was center of political power and paganism
  - Rome was a possible springboard further west to Spain (Rom. 15:24)
- 2) Paul was accused by the high priest Ananias in Jerusalem. (Acts 23-24)
- 3) Roman Governor Felix leaves Paul in prison in Caesarea for two years. (Acts 24)
- 4) A new Roman Governor named Festus arrives and hears Paul immediately. (Acts 25)
- 5) Festus intended to hand Paul over the Jews but Paul appealed to Caesar. (Acts 25:11)
- 6) Festus holds a hearing before Agrippa, King of the Jews -- Paul shares his testimony! (Acts 26)
- 7) Paul and those escorting him nearly die in a stormy shipwreck at Malta. (Acts 27-28)
- 8) At Rome, Paul is chained to a Roman soldier at a private residence. (Acts 28:16,30)
- 9) While in chains for 2 years he preaches, teaches, and fellowships with friends. (Acts 28:17-30)
- 10) Many people from ‘Caesar’s household’ become Christians. (Phil. 1:13-14; 4:22)

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### 1) Amidst his trouble, Paul gives Consolation for their Concern... vs 12-13

- They were concerned for him (see 4:10) so he immediately sets out to assuage their fear for him.
- Fear, resentment, despair, regret, hopelessness, anger, bitterness etc are ABSENT from him.
- Christ's glory, His salvation and His calling drown out all other voices.

**Acts 20:24** (Paul speaks to the church at Ephesus on his way to Jerusalem)

*However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*

- God's presence and power give a true joy that goes beyond all circumstances.

### 2) Amidst his trouble, Paul gives an Explanation for his Circumstances...

- **what has happened to me...** imprisonments, false charges, shipwreck, snake bite, beatings, etc.  
Philippians 1:7; 14, 17; Colossians 4:3, 18; Philemon 9, 13; 2 Cor. 11:23-27
- **advance the gospel...** 'advance' = *prokopé* = *pro (in front of) kóptō* (to cut, chop down)  
'to move forward by overcoming obstacles'  
Satan, evil men, false ideologies, unbelief, weaknesses, persecution

**2 Timothy 2:8-10**

*8 Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel, 9 for which I am suffering, bound with chains as a criminal. But the word of God is not bound! 10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*

### 3) Three Key Observations about persecution/suffering for the Gospel...

#### A -- Persecution does not have to be dreaded, feared or avoided at all cost.

Persecution is NOT the worst thing that can happen to a Christian.

(Other things are far worse than persecution, ie. abandoning or being unfaithful to Christ.)

#### B -- Persecution does not compare with God's reward of far greater glory.

**2 Corinthians 4:16-18**

*16 So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. 17 For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, 18 as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.*

#### C -- Persecution is often the path of God's great purpose -- the redemption of His people to the praise of His glory and grace.

**Genesis 45:8; 50:20** (Joseph speaks to his brothers who, years before, sold him into slavery)

*8 So it was not you who sent me here, but God. He has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.*

*19 But Joseph said to them, "Do not fear, for am I in the place of God? 20 As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today.*