

3ABN SABBATH SCHOOL PANEL
001 - LESSON - January 1, 2026

The Churches of Philippi and Colossae

Mamertine Prison – where Paul was imprisoned: **punishment is often the impetus of Progression. Imprisonment is often the seed of freedom.** It is not what happens to you, but what happens in you.

In 356 BC, King Philip of Macedonia (the father of Alexander the Great) took this town and renamed it from **Krenides (the city of springs and fountains)** to **Philippi**.

Rome captured Philippi in 168 BC, the same year they completed the demise of Greece. It began their reign as the fourth beast of Daniel. In 42 BC **OCTAVIAN** turned Philippi into a Roman colony. Rome brought down the Grecian Empire in 168 BC – and as Pagan Rome reigned till 476 AD, Papal Rome then began its reign from 476 AD.

For the next 62 years Rome fought the **Arian** powers (Vandals, Heruli, Ostrogoths). After defeating the last power, the Dark Ages began and lasted from 538 AD to 1798 AD. **As of 2026 Philippi is 2382 years old.**

1. Ephesians

- **Written from:** Rome, during Paul's first imprisonment (around A.D. 60–62)
 - **Theme:** The Church as the Body of Christ — unity, grace, and spiritual blessings.
 - **Key verse:** ***"For by grace you have been saved through faith..." (Ephesians 2:8)***
 - **Tone:** Encouraging and exalted — focuses on spiritual riches in Christ.
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2. Philippians

- **Written from:** Rome (also while under house arrest or confinement)
 - **Theme:** Joy and contentment in Christ despite suffering.
 - **Key verse:** ***"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Phil. 4:13)***
 - **Tone:** Warm, grateful, and personal — written to thank the Philippian church for their support.
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3. Colossians

- **Written from:** Rome (first imprisonment)
- **Theme:** The supremacy and sufficiency of Christ.

- **Key verse:** *“He is the image of the invisible God...”* (Colossians 1:15)
- **Tone:** Doctrinal — correcting false teachings by exalting Christ above all.

Philippians 1:1-3 (NKJV) “Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: (2) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (3) I thank my God upon every remembrance of you.”

Colossians 1:1-2 (NKJV) “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, (2) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

How are the churches in Philippi and Colossae described, and what significance does the depiction have?

Both Philippi and Colossae the church is described as:

1. **Philippi: Saints:**
2. **Colossae: Faithful brethren:**

Paul’s typical greeting in his epistles calls Christians “**saints**”; that is, through baptism they have been **set apart as God’s special people.**”

1. A “**Saint**” is not a perfect person but one that has transitioned from a former standing to a present standing:
 - a. **Formern Standing: Sinner** —
 - i. Condemned — Under the penalty of sin. Destined for eternal death.
 - ii. Enemies of the Cross, Under the Condemnation of the Law.
 - iii. Disqualified by Adam’s Nature
 - iv. Worthy of the Wages of Sin
 - v. Children of the Wicked One
 - vi. Destined for Hell
 - b. **Present Standing: Saint** —
 - i. Consecrated — Freed from the penalty of sin. Destined for eternal life.
 - ii. Proponents of the Cross, Living by the Law of Liberty.
 - iii. Qualified by Christ’s Nature
 - iv. Made worthy to receive the Gift of God.
 - v. Children of God
 - vi. Destined for Heaven

Ephesians 2.13 NKJV “(2.13) But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”

Colossians 1.21 NKJV “(1.21) And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled”

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1 Peter 2:10 NKJV “(2.10) who once *were* not a people but *are* now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy.”

Through Christ, the inheritance offered to Israel is made available to the Christian.
Exodus 19:5-6 (NKJV) “Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. (6) And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV) “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

THE TRANSITION: Baptism is a symbol of the change from sinner to saint:

Romans 6:3-4 (NKJV) “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? (4) Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

Baptism is the “**Guarantee**” that our standing before God has changed.
Romans 6:5-7 (NKJV) “For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, CERTAINLY we also shall be *in the likeness of His resurrection*, (6) knowing this, that our old man was crucified with *Him*, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. (7) For he who has died has been freed from sin.”

Paul is using two descriptions to reveal the change:

Philippi: Bishops and Deacons — It is not only the church member, but the leaders of the church that are accounted as “**Saints**” to lead the work of the kingdom
Colossae: Faithful Brethren in Christ — The leaders are called to be “**Faithful Brethren**” in their leadership.

Training coworkers like Timothy and Epaphras and providing for the leadership of local churches was a priority for Paul and augmented his evangelistic efforts. In other words, there was a strategic approach to both outreach and retention.

People, that are not baptized, may work with the church members to advance the gospel, but their works will not be a substitute for their submission to Christ.

Works cannot change our standing before God:

Matthew 7:21-23 (NKJV) “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (22)

Many will say to Me in that day, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?” (23) And then I will declare to them, “I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!”

Summary: As renewed “Saints and faithful brethren, we are called to advance the kingdom through the Righteousness of Christ.

1. Saints Are All Believers in Christ

In the New Testament, the word “**saint**” (Greek: *hagios*) means *holy one* — someone set apart for God’s purposes.

- **Romans 1:7 (NKJV)** – “To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be **saints**: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- **1 Corinthians 1:2** – “To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be **saints**, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord...”

Meaning: Every Christian is a saint because they are “sanctified in Christ Jesus.” It’s not about perfection, but position — being set apart by grace.

2. Saints Are Made Holy by Christ’s Blood

Saints are not holy by their own deeds but by what Christ has done for them.

- **Ephesians 1:7** – “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”
- **Hebrews 10:10** – “By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

Meaning: Saints are those who have been cleansed and made holy by the sacrifice of Jesus.

3. Saints Live Differently — Set Apart from the World

True saints live out their faith in holiness and obedience.

- **Ephesians 5:3** – “But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for **saints**.”
- **Colossians 3:12** – “Therefore, as the **elect of God, holy and beloved**, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering...”

Meaning: Being a saint means living in a way that reflects God's character.

4. Saints Form the Household of God

All believers together are part of God's family — His saints.

- **Ephesians 2:19** – “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the **saints** and members of the household of God.”

Meaning: Saints are the community of believers — the Church.

5. Saints Will Reign with Christ

The Bible also uses “saints” to describe those who will live eternally with Christ.

- **Daniel 7:18** – “But the **saints of the Most High** shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.”
- **Revelation 14:12** – “Here is the patience of the **saints**; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

Meaning: Saints are faithful followers of Christ who will share in His eternal kingdom.



In Summary:

A **saint**, according to the Bible, is:

1. **A believer set apart by God** (Romans 1:7)
2. **Made holy through Christ's blood** (Hebrews 10:10)
3. **Living a holy life by God's Spirit** (Ephesians 5:3)
4. **Part of God's family — the Church** (Ephesians 2:19)
5. **Destined to reign with Christ eternally** (Daniel 7:18)