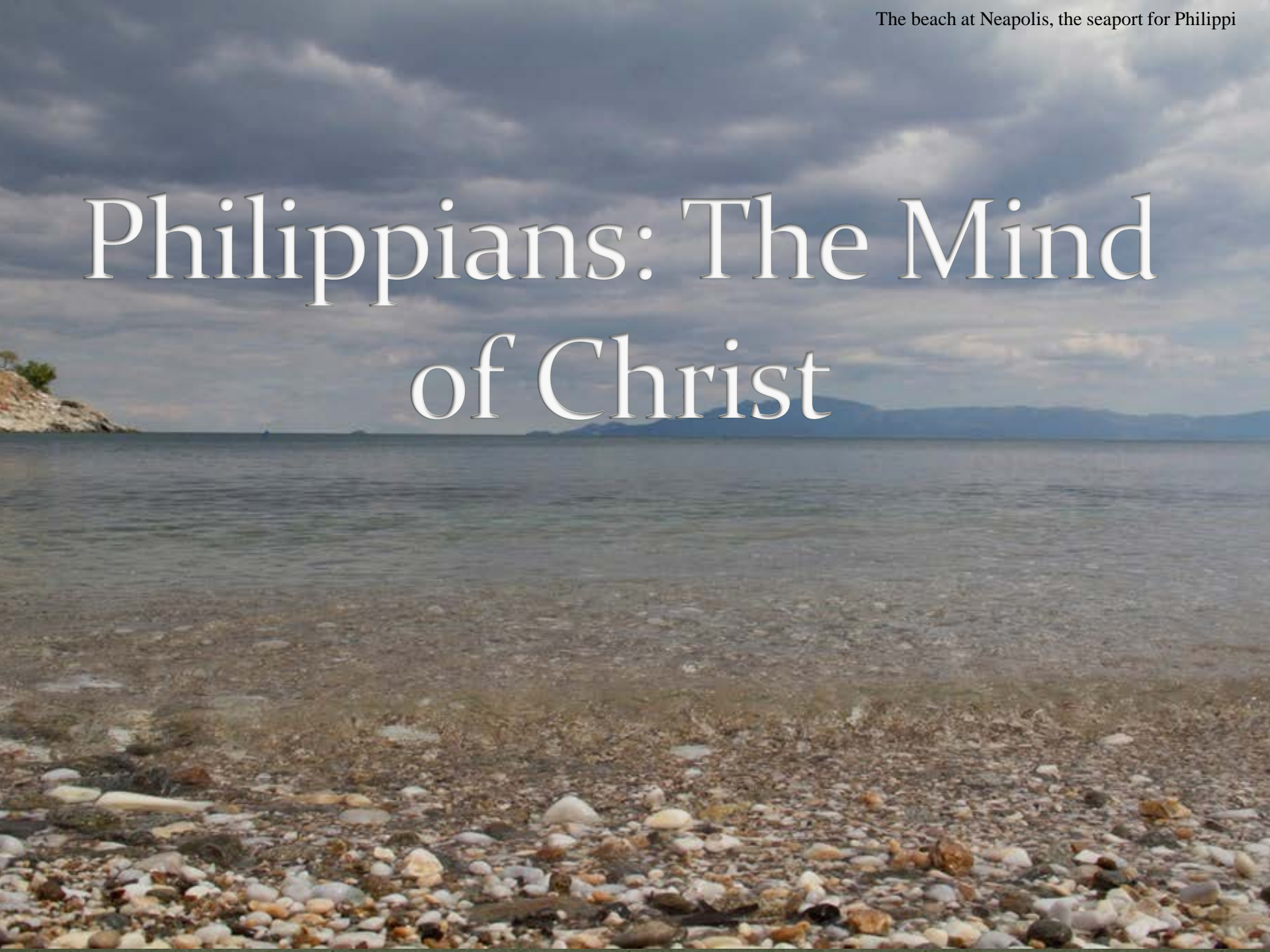


Philippians: The Mind of Christ



Introduction to Philippians

Outline:

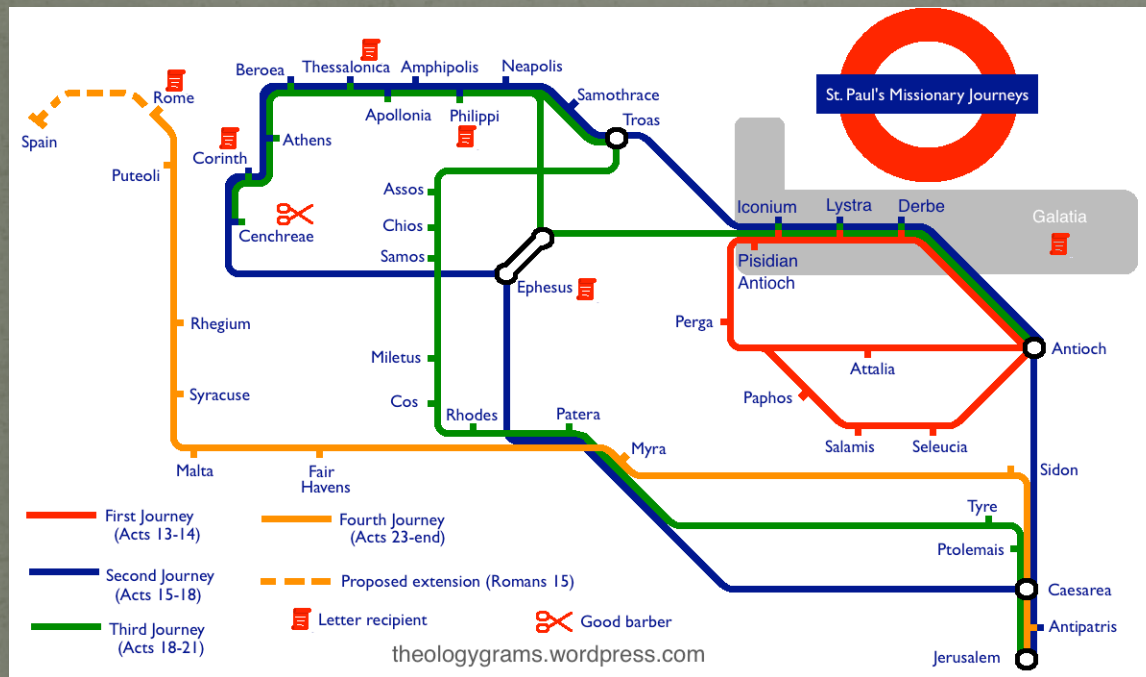
- The Backstory
 - Philippi
- Ancient letter writing

Backstory: Paul arrives at Philippi ten years before our letter is written

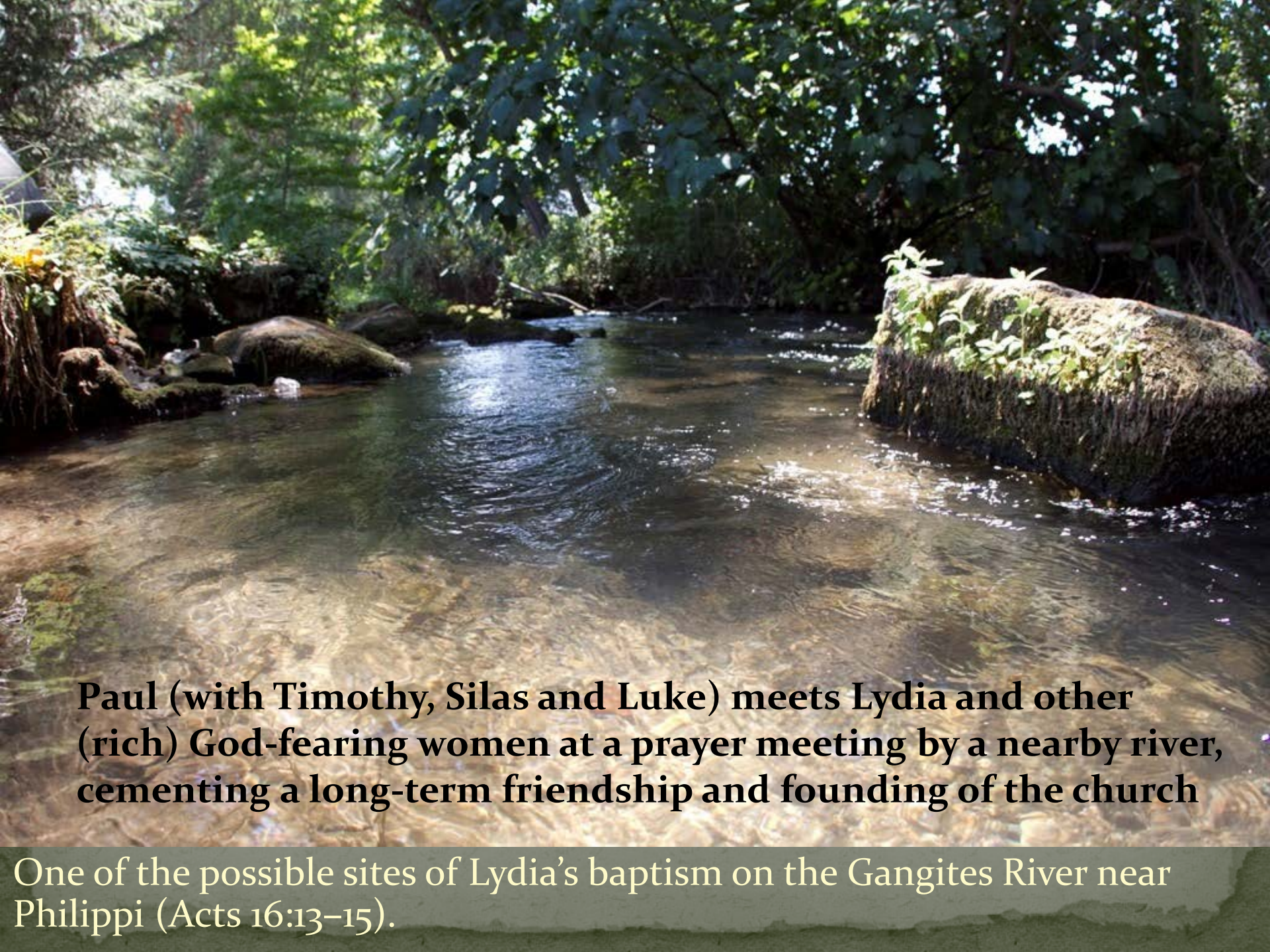


In Troas, Paul receives the dream of the pleading Macedonian, and heads for Philippi (~49 AD)

Backstory: Paul arrives at Philippi ten years before our letter is written



In Troas, Paul receives the dream of the pleading Macedonian, and heads for Philippi



Paul (with Timothy, Silas and Luke) meets Lydia and other (rich) God-fearing women at a prayer meeting by a nearby river, cementing a long-term friendship and founding of the church

One of the possible sites of Lydia's baptism on the Gangites River near Philippi (Acts 16:13-15).

- Paul exorcises the girl with the “python spirit” and is thrown into jail; freed by an earthquake, he converts a jailer’s family
- Luke stays on in Philippi as Paul; the others go to Thessalonica



A possible site of the Philippian jail where Paul and Silas led the jailer to Christ.

Backstory continued...

- Paul visits Philippi again at least twice
 - Philippi maintains its close association with Paul, supporting generously the Jerusalem collection
-
- Now, ten years later, Paul is in jail (most likely Rome)
 - The Philippians hear of this and send Epaphroditus
 - Epaphroditus nearly dies before Paul send him back with the letter we have today
 - In addition to fear of punishment and even execution, Paul faces opposition from other believers who are slandering him

Philippians promises to help us learn the secret to joy in trying circumstances

- Philippians is famous for its joyful theme
- Paul's circumstances were anything but joyful!
- Some questions to ask of this letter:
 - ❖ What are Paul's goals with this letter?
 - ❖ What is the context of the many powerful and memorable verses quoted from Philippians?
 - ❖ What can we glean from Paul about contentment in all circumstances?
 - ❖ What can we learn from the Philippians about healthy church life?

The City of Philippi (Φιλιπποι)

- Philippi was an important Roman colony in Macedonia
- Named for Philip II, father of Alexander the Great
- Two major battles on the plain: Cassius and Brutus (Julius Caesar's assassins) v. Octavian (later Augustus) and Mark Antony
- Octavian honored Philippi by making it a military colony, and later when he defeated Antony's army in 30 B.C. he gave land in Philippi to veterans to build up loyalty in an important area:



The City of Philippi (Φιλιπποι)

- Philippi Was on the Egnatian Way, a major road leading into Europe
- It was strategically located near gold mines, protected by a formidable acropolis, and serving as a “sentry” to a broad fertile plain
- In spite of this commercial importance, most of the colony’s residents likely lived in agrarian rural settlements
- The Philippian church was the first church in Europe





A view of the town site of Apollonia (Acts 17:1) with Via Egnatia, the road on which Paul and Silas traveled, entering from the right. An ancient church appears in the background.



A Christian symbol scratched in paving stone at Philippi—viewed as multiple crosses or a combination of all the Greek letters in “Ichthys,” a Greek acronym denoting “Jesus Christ, God’s Son, Savior.”

Partial walls of the fifth-century AD
“Basilica B” (foreground) with
Philippi Acropolis in background.





A restored stone doorway leading into the fifth-century AD “Basilica B” in Philippi.



The view toward the Acropolis at Philippi from the ruins of fifth-century AD “Basilica B” in the lower town.



A ruined brick and stone arch at the northwestern entrance to the fifth-century AD “Basilica B” in Philippi, with Philippi’s Acropolis in the right background.



A view of the ruined agora, or public marketplace, in Philippi.

Philippians is a prototypical “friendship letter”

- Standard education in antiquity included over a dozen standard letter forms
- Friendship letters were a common form reinforcing an agreement of mutual support and affection
- Friendship letters had a typical structure:
 - ❖ Address and greeting
 - ❖ Prayer
 - ❖ Reassurance about the sender
 - ❖ Request for reassurance about the recipient
 - ❖ General info (body)
 - ❖ Say hi to Uncle Steve
 - ❖ Bye!

Sample letter from a wife to a husband

(Egyptian papyrus, 168 BC)

Isias to her brother [a term of endearment, but possibly also she married her brother, which happened in Egypt in those days] Hephaestion greeting. If you are well and other things are going right, it would accord with the prayer which I make continually to the gods. I myself and the child and all the household are in good health and think of you always. When I received your letter from Horus, [The courier, probably a friend], in which you announce that you are in detention in the Serapeum at Memphis, for the news that you are well I straightway thanked the gods, but about your not coming home, when all the others who had been secluded there have come, I am ill-pleased because after having piloted myself and your child through such bad times and been driven to every extremity owing to the price of corn...

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Sample letter from a wife to a husband

(Egyptian papyrus, 168 BC)

...I thought that now at least, with you at home, I should enjoy some respite, whereas you have no even thought of coming home nor given any regard to our circumstances, remembering how I was in want of everything while you were still here, not to mention this long lapse of time and these critical days, during which you have sent us nothing. As, moreover, Horus who delivered the letter has brought news of your having been released from detention, I am thoroughly ill-pleased. Notwithstanding, as your mother also is annoyed, for her sake as well as for mine please return to the city, if nothing more pressing holds you back. You will do me a favor by taking care of your bodily health. Goodbye.

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Sample *friendship* letter

(from a letter-writing manual by Pseudo-Demetrius)

Even though I have been separated from you for a long time, I suffer this in body only. For I can never forget you or the impeccable way we were raised together from childhood up. Knowing that I myself am genuinely concerned about your affairs, and that I have worked unstintingly for what is most advantageous to you, I have assumed that you, too, have the same opinion of me, and will refuse me nothing. You will do well, therefore, to give close attention to the members of my household lest they need anything, to assist them in whatever they might need, and to write about whatever you should choose.

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Friendship letters of this form were used by those who were separated to establish mutual assistance





A Roman Catholic chapel, called the Lydia Baptistery, near the traditional site where Paul baptized Lydia—the first recorded baptism in Europe (Acts 16:13–15).