

## **Philippians**

### **Introduction, Background, and Argument**

#### **1. Title and Destination**

- 1.1 ΠΡΟΣ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΗΣΙΟΥΣ - “To the Philippians”
- 1.2 Philippi was named after Philip of Macedon.
- 1.3 Philippi was located in the Roman province of Macedon 10 miles inland from the Aegean Sea and it’s nearest port, Neapolis.
- 1.4 There were gold mines nearby in the mountains.
- 1.5 Octavian (later Augustus) turned Philippi into a colony and military outpost (Acts 16:12). Those from Italy forced to migrate to Philippi were given the “Italic Right,” which allowed them to live in Philippi but still be treated as citizens of Italy.
- 1.6 Philippi was located along the Via Egnatia which connected Rome to the East, which made it the chief city of Macedonia.
- 1.7 Paul went to Philippi because of the Macedonian vision in AD51 during his second missionary journey.
- 1.8 Philippi did not have a synagogue because there were less than 10 Jewish men. In such cities those who worshipped the Jewish God would meet by the river. When Paul arrived he met Lydia, some Jewish women, and Gentile proselytes.
- 1.9 Paul’s cast a demon out of a slave girl resulting in beating, imprisonment and the earthquake that led to the Philippian jailer’s salvation.
- 1.10 The citizens of this colony were regarded as citizens of Rome and given a number of special privileges. Those privileges were endangered when the city officials had Paul, a Roman citizen, beaten (Acts 16:22-23, 37-39).
- 1.11 The first church founded in Macedonia met at the home of Lydia.
- 1.12 Paul visited Philippi again on this third missionary journey (Acts 20:1, 6).
- 1.13 The Philippians sent Paul financial gifts on several occasions (4:16, 18).

#### **2. Authorship**

- 2.1 External Evidences
  - 2.1.1 Ignatius
  - 2.1.2 Clement of Rome
  - 2.1.3 Irenaeus
  - 2.1.4 Clement of Alexandria
  - 2.1.5 Tertullian
  - 2.1.6 Marcion
- 2.2 Internal Evidences
  - 2.2.1 Paul identifies himself as the author (1:1)
  - 2.2.2 The author indicates his association with Timothy, which is known to be true of Paul elsewhere (1:1; 2:19-23; Col 1:1).

2.2.3 The autobiographical information matches Paul's life as an unbeliever (3:4-6)

2.2.4 The writer was in prison and expecting release (1:7, 13; 1:25-27; 2:24).

2.3 Pauline authorship virtually uncontested until 19th century higher criticism.

### **3. Date**

3.1 Paul mentioned the Praetorian guard (1:13) and Caesar's household (4:22), both indications that he wrote from Rome.

3.2 The Marcionite Prologue (AD170) mentions Paul writing Philippians from Rome.

3.3 Paul's first imprisonment in Rome lasted for two years, giving him plenty of time for correspondence (Acts 28:30).

3.4 In Philippians Paul expected soon release from prison (1:24-25; 2:20-26) indicating that the letter was written after Ephesians and Colossians where no such expectation is mentioned.

3.5 Philippians was probably Paul's fourth prison epistle, and a date of AD62 is most likely.

### **4. Occasion**

The church at Philippi learned that Paul was imprisoned in Rome. In response they sent Epaphroditus to see how he was doing and to give him a financial contribution (4:18). While he was visiting he worked in order to give more money to Paul (2:25, 30), perhaps enabling Paul to rent his own quarters under house arrest (Acts 28:16). During this time Epaphroditus became sick and almost died (2:25, 27, 30). The news of his sickness had reached the Philippian congregation (2:26). In response, some of the Philippian Christians who were in Rome came to express concern for him. After he recovered he returned to Philippi bearing Paul's letter.

### **5. Purpose(s) of Writing**

5.1 To reassure, encourage, and express his affection for them.

5.2 To explain the benefits of his imprisonment (1:12-26)

5.3 To exhort them to stand firm in the gospel (1:27-30)

5.4 To exhort them to live selfless lives (2:1-8; 4:1-3)

5.5 To prepare them for a visit by Timothy and hopefully himself (2:18-24)

5.6 To commend Epaphroditus who was dreadfully sick and barely survived (2:25-30)

5.7 To warn against encroaching Judaizers who boasted in the flesh (3:1-4:1)

5.8 To give thanks for the financial contribution brought by Epaphroditus (1:4-6; 4:10-20)

5.9 To give them instruction for how to relieve anxiety (4:4-9)

### **6. Argument**

The Philippians needed to have the mindset of Christ, which is putting others ahead of themselves. This will allow them to participate in the progress of the gospel. Rejoicing through sufferings exalts Christ.

## **7. Theme(s)**

7.1 The theme is participation in the gospel.

7.2 A sub-theme is unity.

7.3 Another sub-theme is rejoicing in suffering.

7.4 Another sub-theme is having the mind of Christ, which is necessary to participating in the gospel (1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2, 10).

7.4.1 Christ's mindset was to put others ahead of Himself (2:5-8).

7.4.2 Christ demonstrated this by taking to Himself true humanity and dying for others (2:5-8).

7.4.3 God rewarded Him by exalting Him to the highest position (2:9-11).

7.4.4 We should have the mindset of Christ, putting others ahead of ourselves (2:1-4).

7.4.5 God will reward us in the day of Christ/rapture (1:6, 10-11, 20; 2:16; 3:8-9, 14; 4:5)

## **8. Outline**

8.1 Salutation (1:1-2)

8.2 Prologue (1:3-11)

8.3 Progress of the gospel (1:12-26)

8.4 Participation in the gospel (1:27-4:9)

8.5 Provision for the gospel (4:10-19)

8.5 Benediction (4:20-23)

## **9. Uniquenesses**

9.1 The doctrine of kenosis with its practical repercussions for putting on humility (2:1-8).

9.2 The letter mentions "joy" or "rejoicing" 18 times, more than in any of Paul's other epistles.

9.3 The absence of the Greek explanatory conjunction "for" which Paul uses frequently in argument shows this letter is more affectionate.

9.4 The letter uniquely reveals the impact of the gospel in Caesar's palace.

9.5 Paul uses several military concepts to explain truths, which makes sense given that he was chained to a Roman soldier (1:13, 27, 28; 3:14, 16; 4:7).

9.6 This letter mentions the "day of Christ" as a reference to the rapture several times.

9.7 This letter mentions Jesus Christ 51 times in 104 verses.

9.8 This letter refers to the gospel seven times (1:5, 7, 12, 27; 2:22; 4:3, 15)

9.9 This letter sets up an interesting paradox between being in prison and rejoicing.

Paul's experience with the Philippians seemed to always be tied to prison (Acts 16; Acts 28:16-31)

## 10. Controversial Passages

Philippians 1:29 "For to you it has been granted (graciously given) for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,"

## 11. Keys to Philippians

11.1 Key Word: Attitude/Mind of Christ

11.2 Key Passages:

Philippians 1:21 "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Philippians 2:5 "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Philippians 3:1 "rejoice in the Lord."

Philippians 3:8-11, "More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ, 9and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, 10that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead."

Philippians 3:13 "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, 14, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

Philippians 4:6 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things."

Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Philippians 4:19 "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

11.3 Key Idea: Have the mind of Christ so you can rejoice in the Lord despite sufferings.