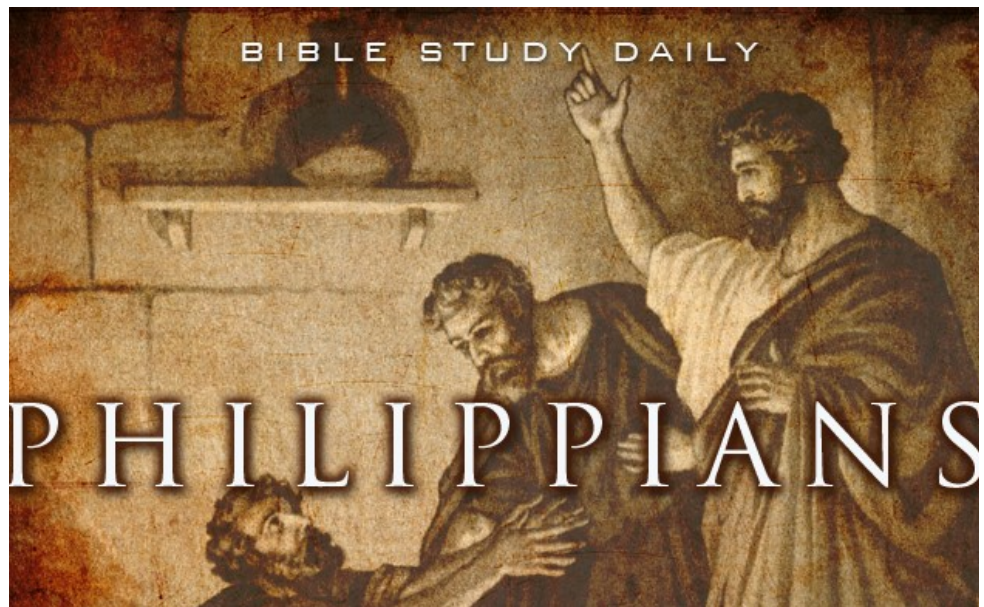




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Philippians as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The title “Philippians” comes from the intended audience designated in 1:1, “To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi.” The body of the epistle makes it clear that Paul’s intended audience in Philippi is both Jewish and Gentile Christians.

Author

Paul claims authorship of Philippians in 1:1. Also attesting to Pauline authorship is the description of his life in Philippians 3:4-6. Additionally, the first person pronouns "I" and "my" appear 51 times.

Externally, many of the early church fathers attribute the book of Philippians to Paul including: Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian of Carthage.

Genre

Epistle

Literary Form

The epistle to the Philippians is a personal letter that includes a section written as poetry (2:5-11) that may have been an early hymn.

Time Frame

Paul was in prison in Rome in A.D. 60-61 when he wrote the letter to the Philippians.

Emphasis

The emphasis of Philippians is on Paul's explanation for his situation in Rome, an exhortation to the Philippians to remain united in the faith, a warning to be wary of those Judaizers who preach legalism, the importance of remaining steadfast in the faith, and to thank the Philippians for their support of him while he was imprisoned.

Outline

- Introduction (1:1-2)
- Prayer of Thanksgiving (1:3-1:11)
- Paul's testimony to the saints (1:12-1:30)
- Exhortations to living the Christian life (2:1-4:9)
- Final thanks, greeting, and benediction (4:10-4:23)

What I Noticed Today (Philippians 1-4)

Philippians 1

Paul often begins his letters with doctrine and follows with an application. The letter to the Philippians does not follow this pattern. His letter to the Philippians has doctrine and practical application woven throughout, but the overriding theme of the letter is leading the Christian life.

In verses 1-2 Paul identifies himself as the author, a slave of Jesus Christ. His audience includes the saints in Philippi along with their overseers (deacons) and elders.

Note: Although Paul mentions Timothy in the introduction, Timothy is not a co-author of the letter. Timothy was with Paul when they first founded the church in Philippi and was with Paul in prison when the letter was written so he had a special interest in the Philippians.

In verses 3-11 Paul begins with a prayer of thanksgiving for the Philippians.


- Paul always prayed for them with joy because of their partnership in the Gospel.
- Paul is confident that God who began a good work in them would carry it on to completion until the day of Christ's return.
- The Philippians are partners with Paul in grace, both in his imprisonment and in presenting and defending the gospel.
- Paul prayed that their love will keep growing in every kind of knowledge and discernment, that they will be blameless until Christ's return, and that they will be filled with the fruit of righteousness.

In verses 12-20 Paul explains how his current situation has aided in the spread of the Gospel throughout all the imperial guard.

Note: Although Paul was under "house arrest" in Rome in his own Roman house, he was still guarded by Roman soldiers from the Imperial Guard. Over time all of these soldiers heard the Gospel from Paul.

Other believers seeing how Paul preached the Gospel became bolder themselves and presented the Gospel fearlessly.

- Some preached the Gospel out of sincerity, but some preached the Gospel out of envy hoping to cause Paul more trouble. Paul did not care whether they preached the Gospel with pure motives or not as long as the Gospel was preached.
- This, Paul said, would lead to his deliverance through their prayers and the Holy Spirit.



In verses 21-30 Paul says the purpose of his life is to live for Christ and exhorts the Philippians to do the same.

- To live is Christ, to die is gain. Paul lived to spread the Gospel but knew that if he died he would be with Christ. Though he longed to be with Christ he thought it more important to remain in the flesh.
- Paul expressed confidence the Philippians would continue to grow spiritually and that would bring him great joy.
- Paul exhorts the Philippians to live their lives in a manner worthy of the Gospel. Then, whether Paul is able to return to them or not, he will hear about them standing firm in the faith, united. Their courage from God would deliver them from their opponents. Paul warned that in believing in Christ they would endure the same suffering and face the same struggles as he.

Philippians 2

In chapter 2 Paul continues the exhortation he began in Philippians 1:27 providing examples for leading the Christian life.

In verses 1-4 Paul uses four “if” statements to describe the reason for his appeal to the Philippians: if there is any love, Spirit, affection, and mercy.

Note: The Greek form of these “if” statement assumes agreement. They could also be translated “since:” since there is love, since there is fellowship with the Spirit, since there are affection and mercy.

- Paul says it will fulfill his joy if the Philippians feel the same way, sharing the same feelings, focused on one goal.
- He warns them not to do anything out of rivalry (selfish ambition), or conceit, but in humility considering others to be more important than yourselves.

In verses 5-11 Paul exhorts the Philippians to make their attitude the same as Christ’s.

Note: This passage is difficult but extremely important to understand the nature of God and the Son.

- In verses 6-8. Christ existed in the form of God. The word translated “form” or “nature” is very important. It could also be translated “essence.” The very essence of Christ was God. Christ “emptied” himself to take the form of a slave (servant). He became a man in his external form. Christ was fully God, and fully man. He humbled himself by being obedient to the Father even to the point of death on the cross.

Note: Christ did not empty himself of His deity. While theologians debate what this means it seems likely that Christ emptied himself of his own self-interests in order to be obedient to the Father and the servant of man.

- In verses 9-11. Christ was exalted by the Father who gave Him a name above all names, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow on earth and in heaven. Every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father.

Note: This passage (verses 6-11) may have been an early hymn comprised of two stanzas: verses 6-8 speak of Christ's humiliation, while verses 9-11 speak of Christ's ascension.

In verses 12-18 Paul resumes the exhortations to the Philippians he started in verses 2-4. His focus is on practical Christianity, being steadfast, and having personal joy.

- In verses 12-13. Continue to obey God, for it is God who is working in you enabling you to do His good works.

Note: Paul's reference to "work out your salvation" does not mean they are to *work* for their salvation but to put into practice the Christian lifestyle.

- In verses 14-16. Fulfill God's good purpose (v. 13) by doing everything without complaining or arguing, so that you will be blameless in a perverted world. In that way you will be a light to the world. Hold on (remain steadfast) to the message of life (the Gospel).
- In verses 17-18. Even if Paul is poured out like a drink offering (a sacrifice) for the Philippians he rejoices in the faith of the Philippians. In the same way, Paul wants the Philippians to be joyful for him.

Note: In all likelihood Paul envisioned his martyrdom at the hands of the Romans. Even if he dies because of his sharing of the Gospel he is joyful because of the faith of the Philippians.

In verses 19-30 Paul discusses the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus as servants of Christ and partners in the ministry with Paul.

- Paul hopes the Lord will allow him to send Timothy to them soon so that he may be encouraged by news of them. No one else is like Timothy who is like-minded (with Paul) in his concern for the Philippians and their relationship to Christ. Timothy's character was proven as they had served together in ministry like a father and a son.
- Paul also intends to send Epaphroditus, a brother in Christ, coworker, and fellow soldier as well as a messenger and someone who has ministered to Paul's needs. Epaphroditus had recovered from a serious illness and Paul was anxious for them to see him again. Epaphroditus had risked his life caring for Paul in Rome since they in Philippi were unable to do so.

Note: The Philippian church had sent Epaphroditus to Paul with a gift of money (Philippians 4:18) for his care. Now Paul was sending him back, presumably carrying the letter to the Philippians.

Philippians 3

After giving the examples of Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippians Paul goes on in chapter 3 to exhort them to lead a similar life.

In verses 1-11 Paul begins a series of exhortations for living a life of service:

- Watch out for the dogs, evil workers who mutilate the flesh. Paul is referring to the Judaizers who insisted on adding circumcision to the Gospel.
- Paul explained believers were the circumcision, those who serve by the Spirit and boast in Jesus Christ.

Note: Jews believed that circumcision was required to have a right relationship with God. They had confidence in the flesh. Paul is saying those who believe in Jesus are circumcised in their hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- As an example Paul provides his own biographical background having been circumcised on the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews, a zealous Pharisee he persecuted the church believing that righteousness came from following the Law.
- Paul describes his past life as a loss in view of the value of knowing Christ. He had suffered everything and lost everything to gain Christ. His righteousness came not from following the Law but from God based on faith in Christ. His only goal was to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, that one day he might be resurrected like Christ.


In verses 12-21 Paul admitted that he was not yet what he hoped to be in Christ (his goal from verse 10).

- Paul makes every effort attain the goal because of Christ.
- He does not consider that he has achieved the goal, but he pursues his goal as a prize promised by Christ.
- Therefore, all who are spiritually mature should think this way. We should live up to whatever spiritual truth we have.
- He exhorts them to watch for how those among you live. For there are those that lives as enemies of the cross. Their destruction is near. They are focused on: 1) their physical desires (their stomachs), 2) they give praise to themselves and not to God, and 3) they are focused on earthly things.
- But our citizenship is in heaven, where Christ will transform our bodies into the likeness of His glorious body (the rapture of the Church).

Philippians 4

Paul closes the letter to the Philippians with some final practical advice about living as a Christian and expresses his appreciation for their support.

In verses 1-3 Paul tells the Philippians they are loved dearly and exhorts



them to remain firm in the Lord.


He urges Euodia and Syntyche (two influential women in the Philippian church) to agree in the Lord and for the Philippians to help them because they have been co-workers with Paul contending for the Gospel. Paul also commends to them, Clement and other coworkers.

Regarding how they are to live Paul:

- Urges them to rejoice in the Lord always.
- Let your graciousness be known to everyone.
- Do not be anxious about anything.
- But in everything through prayer and petition with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
- And the result is the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds.
- Finally (indicating his conclusion) to dwell on the things of God:
 - Whatever is true.
 - Whatever is honorable.
 - Whatever is just.
 - Whatever is pure.
 - Whatever is lovely.
 - Whatever is commendable.
 - If there is any moral excellence or if there is any praise think about these things. These things are all excellent and praiseworthy.
 - Do what you have learned, received, and seen in me and the God of peace will be with you.

In verses 10-20 Paul expresses his thanks for the support of the Philippians.

- Paul says he has learned to be content in whatever circumstances he is in. He knows what it is like to have little and what it is like to have plenty. The secret to being content is to recognize it is Christ who strengthens me.
- Paul expresses his appreciation for the support of the Philippians again as they were the only ones during the early days of the ministry who helped him. Even when he was in Thessalonica they provided help for Paul several times.
- Paul considers the offering carried by Epaphroditus a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. Because of their faithfulness to Paul, God would reciprocate and care for the Philippians, according to His glorious riches.



In verses 21-22 Paul closes the letter in the typical fashion by sending greetings from the saints in Rome including those of Caesar's household.

Note: Paul's reference to the believers within Caesar's household indicates that the Gospel had spread well beyond the soldiers who guarded Paul.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *The over-riding theme of Philippians is living the Christian life in a way that brings honor and glory to God. Paul is proud of how the Philippians have grown in their spiritual lives. Are we growing the way we should?*
- *Whatever work God has for us, have no doubt that He will be faithful to us and help us complete it.*
- *Paul said he was alive to Christ. Are we alive to Christ as we continue to become more like Jesus?*