

PHILIPPIANS: INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION:

1. Paul helped establish the church in Philippi on his second preaching tour (Acts 16:9-40)

- a. Paul heeds “*The Macedonian Call*” at Troas (v. 9-12)
- b. Apparent absence of synagogue leads to belief that few Jews lived in Philippi – “place of prayer” was on river side, not in a synagogue (v. 13).
- c. People proud to be Romans (v. 21)
- d. Lydia and her household converted (v. 14-15)
- e. Suffering imprisonment, Paul takes advantage of the occasion along with an earthquake to convert a jailor and his household (v. 16-34).
- f. “Other brethren” were also in the church at this place (v. 40).

I. AUTHOR: Paul (1:1)

- A. Timothy, a traveling companion of Paul during his second preaching tour, was apparently well known and respected by the Philippian brethren. He joins in the greetings (cf. 2:19-22; Acts 16:1-5, 17:14).

II. DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

- A. Last of the two year imprisonment in Rome (Acts 28:30-31).
 1. Some time had elapsed since Paul’s arrival in Rome.
 - a. News of Paul’s arrival had to reach Philippi in order for Epaphroditus to come with assistance from Philippi (2:25, 4:18).
 - b. News of Epaphroditus’ illness at Rome had to reach Philippi (2:26).
 2. Paul’s reputation from preaching had time to spread and favorably affect the praetorian guard (1:13) and Caesar’s household (4:22).
 3. Luke and Aristarchus who went to Rome with Paul seem now to be absent (Acts 27:1-2)
 - a. Both gave greetings in earlier Colossian letter (4:10, 14)
 4. Paul’s case before Caesar seems to be close to a final decision (1:23-26; 2:17, 24).
- B. Probably A.D. 62

III. THEME AND PURPOSE:

- A. “REJOICE IN THE LORD” (3:1, 4:4)
 1. Rejoicing in the spiritual closeness and fellowship enjoyed by brethren with a common goal.
 - a. Furtherance of the Gospel (1:4-5)
 - b. Opportunity to serve the Lord’s people (1:25, 2:16-18)
 2. Rejoicing even in unpleasant circumstances (1:18)
- B. Purpose:
 1. To thank the Philippians for their gifts
 2. To express his love for them and his joy in knowing of their faithfulness to Christ

3. To inform brethren of his work and hope for release
4. To warn brethren of dangers within and without

IV. FEATURES OF THE BOOK

- A. One of Paul's most personal letters – First person pronoun "I", "me" used over one hundred times.
 1. Church in Philippi seems to one of the closest groups to Paul. He has no doubts as to their loyalty to him.
- B. The "gospel" is mentioned nine times: the message and body of faith which stands for Paul's activities and goals as its proclaimer
 1. "the fellowship of the gospel" – 1:5
 2. "the confirmation of the gospel" – 1:7
 3. "the progress of the gospel" – 1:12
 4. "the defense of the gospel" – 1:16
 5. "worthy of the gospel" – 1:27
 6. "striving for the faith of the gospel" – 1:27
 7. "served in the gospel" – 2:22
 8. "labored in the gospel" – 4:3
 9. "the beginning of the gospel" – 4:15
- C. The proper "mind" is stressed
 1. Submitting to the thinking mold of Christ in contrast to the world. When patterned after Christ, progress in spiritual maturity and unity will prevail.
 - a. "it is right to be thus minded" – 1:7
 - b. "be of the same mind" – "of one mind" – 2:2; 4:2
 - c. "have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" – 2:5
 - d. "as many as are perfect, be thus minded" – 3:15
 - e. "who minded earthly things" – 3:19
 - f. "received your thought (care) for me" – "ye did indeed take thought (care)" – 4:10
- D. The place Christ should occupy in our lives:
 1. Christ: Our Life – "For me to live is Christ" – 1:21
 2. Christ: Our Mind – "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ" – 2:5
 3. Christ: Our Goal – "That I may also gain Christ" – 3:8
 4. Christ: Our Strength – "I can do all things in Him that strengthens me" – 4:13

LESSONS:

1. Salutation and Thanksgiving (1:1-11)
2. Paul's encouragement to the saints by example and appeal (1:12-30)
3. The Mind of Christ (2:1-11)
4. Lights in the World (2:12-18)
5. Paul and His messengers (2:19-30)

6. Paul's warning against legalistic influence: His example (3:1-16)
7. Paul's warning against legalistic influence: His appeal (3:17-4:1)
8. Paul's concluding appeals (4:2-9)
9. Paul's reasoning for rejoicing and final salutations (4:10-23)