

An overview of the book of Philippians

Author, Date, and Place of Writing

- Philippians was written by the Apostle Paul.
- Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians **last**, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62.
- Paul wrote the letter from Roman Prison (Paul's house arrest in Acts 28:14–31). He was in his own rented house, where for **two years** he was free to impart the gospel to all who came to him.

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- Paul sent the other **three Prison Epistles**—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of **Tychicus**, as their destinations were near one another.
- However, the letter to the **Philippians** was to be delivered by **Epaphroditus**, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi (Philippians 2:25; 4:18).
- But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter (Philippians 2:26–27).

Background

- Paul ministered at Philippi during his **second** missionary journey, spending about **three months** in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul's entrance into Macedonia, which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi (Acts 16:8–12).

Background

- During this **first stay** in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his **third** missionary journey (Acts 20:6).
- Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were
 - Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (Acts 16:13–15), and
 - the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul’s ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (Acts 16:22–34).

Purpose

- Paul's primary purpose in writing this letter was **to thank** the Philippians for the **gift** they had sent him upon learning of his detention at Rome (1:5; 4:10–19).
- The apostle Paul **did not write** Philippians in **response to a crisis**, as he did with Galatians and Colossians. Instead, he wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers.
- More than any other church, the believers in Philippi offered Paul **material support for his ministry** (2 Cor 8:11; Phil 4:15–18).

Purpose

- Paul's affection for these people is clear throughout the letter as he encouraged them to live out their **faith in joy and unity** (Philippians 1:3–5; 25–26; 4:1).
- He makes use of this occasion to fulfill several other desires:
(see next slide)

Purpose

- (1) to report on his own circumstances (Philippians 1:12–26; 4:10–19);
- (2) to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances (Philippians 1:27–30; 4:4);
- (3) to exhort them to humility and unity (Philippians 2:1–11; 4:2–5);
- (4) to commend Timothy and Epaphroditus to the Philippian church (Philippians 2:19–30); and
- (5) to warn the Philippians against the Judaizers (legalists) and antinomians (libertines) among them (Chapter 3).

Recipients

- The city of Philippi was named after King Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great.
- It was a prosperous Roman colony, which meant that the citizens of Philippi were also citizens of the city of Rome itself.
- They prided themselves on being Romans (Acts 16:21), dressed like Romans and often spoke Latin. However, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul reference to the believer's heavenly citizenship (Phil 3:20–21).

Recipients

- Many of the Philippians were retired military men who had been given land in the vicinity and who in turn served as a military presence in this frontier city.
- That Philippi was a Roman colony may explain why there were not enough Jews there to permit the establishment of a synagogue and why Paul does not quote the Old Testament in the Philippian letter.

Characteristics

1. Philippians contains no Old Testament.
2. It is a missionary thank-you letter in which the missionary reports on the progress of his work.
3. It is outstanding as the New Testament letter of joy; the word “joy” in its various forms occurs some 16 times.

Characteristics

4. It manifests a particularly vigorous type of Christian living:

- (1) self-humbling (Philippians 2:1–4);
- (2) pressing toward the goal (Philippians 3:13–14);
- (3) lack of anxiety (Philippians 4:6);
- (4) ability to do all things (Philippians 4:13).

5. It contains one of the most profound Christological passages in the New Testament (Philippians 2:5–11). Yet, profound as it is, Paul includes it mainly for illustrative purposes.

Outline

- Greetings (Philippians 1:1–2)
- Thanksgiving and Prayer for the Philippians (Philippians 1:3–11)
- Paul's Personal Circumstances (Philippians 1:12–26)
- Exhortations (Philippians 1:27—2:18)
 - Living a Life Worthy of the Gospel (Philippians 1:27–30)
 - Following the Servant Attitude of Christ (Philippians 2:1–18)

Outline

- Paul's Associates in the Gospel (Philippians [2:19–30](#))
 - Timothy (Philippians [2:19–24](#))
 - Epaphroditus (Philippians [2:25–30](#))
- Warnings against Judaizers and Antinomians (Philippians [3:1—4:1](#))
 - Against Judaizers or Legalists (Philippians [3:1–16](#))
 - Against Antinomians or Libertines (Philippians [3:17—4:1](#))
- Final Exhortations, Thanks and Conclusion (Philippians [4:2–23](#))
 - Exhortations concerning Various Aspects of the Christian Life (Philippians [4:2–9](#))
 - Concluding Testimony and Repeated Thanks (Philippians [4:10–20](#))
 - Final Greetings and Benediction (Philippians [4:21–23](#))



References

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<https://www.biblica.com/resources/scholar-notes/niv-study-bible/intro-to-philippians/>

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