

Philippians Chapter One

Greetings (vv. 1-2)

VERSE 1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in

Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons (Παῦλος καὶ

Τιμόθεος δούλοι Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις

σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις [*noun nom.m.s. Paulos + conj + noun nom.m.s. Timotheos +*

noun nom.m.p. doulos slave + noun gen.m.s. Christos + noun gen.m.s. Jesus + adj.dat.m.p. pas

all + d.a.w/adj.dat.m.p. hagios saint + pres.act.part.dat.m.2p. eimi; “who are” + prep en +

noun loc.m.p. Philippi + prep sun + noun instr.m.p. episkopos overseer + conj. + noun

instr.m.p. diakonos deacon]):

VERSE 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ

(χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ [*noun nom.f.s.*

charis grace + pro.dat.2p. su + conj + noun nom.f.s. eirene peace + prep apo + noun abl.m.s.

theos + noun abl.m.s. pater father + pro.gen.p. ego + conj + noun abl.m.s. kurios + noun

abl.m.s. Jesus + noun abl.m.s. Christ]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 1-2

1. The apostle Paul is the author of this letter sent to a local church located in the province of Macedonia (northern Greece).
2. This church was founded by Paul in the late 50s AD (Acts 16:12ff.).
3. At the time of writing Paul was in prison in the early 60s AD.
4. In about 51 AD in response to a vision Paul left Asia Minor, and along with Silas, Timothy and Luke set sail for what we now call Europe.
5. His first stop was the Roman colony of Philippi, a city that enjoyed special prominence within the Roman empire.
6. Here Paul encountered several Jewish women whom he evangelized and subsequently established the very first congregation in Europe.
7. These Christian ladies are named Lydia, Euodia and Syntyche along with an important person named Clement (Phil. 4:3), as well as others.

8. Even the warden of the local prison and his family became converts and joined the church (Acts 16:16-34; 4:2-3).
9. The local authorities forced Paul to leave, and he complied, leaving Luke in charge of the congregation, and he headed west to Thessalonica.
10. Paul's itinerary after being forced to leave Thessalonica was as follows: he went to Berea, then to Athens, and finally to Corinth where he stayed a full eighteen months.
11. After that, on his 3rd missionary journey, Paul raised funds among the Gentile churches to meet the need of the impoverished Jewish Christians in Judea (Acts 18:23; 1Cor. 16:1-4; 2Cor. 9:1-2, 12-23).
12. Paul was successful in raising the funds for the Jerusalem relief effort and brought the offering to Jerusalem (Acts 21:17-19; Rom. 15:25-32).
13. His Jewish opponents managed to get Paul imprisoned, and for a full two years he awaited his fate in Caesarea (Acts 21:17-24:27).
14. Finally, Paul made an appeal to Rome (Caesar) and in the years around 60 AD, under guard, he set sail for Rome (Acts 25:10-12; 27:1).
15. Within a few months of Paul's arrival in Rome, the Philippians became aware of his situation, and despite their economic situation, raised a large monetary gift, and sent it by the hand of Epaphroditus (Phil. 4:18).
16. Timothy is alone featured in this letter's opening, as he was involved in the evangelization of Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 16:16-18), as well as his association with Paul during his imprisonment (Phil. 2:19-22).
17. The Philippians had a strong attachment to Timothy so it is not surprising that he is given an honorable mention as a coauthor of this letter (v. 1).
18. Timothy's name as a coworker on behalf of the Philippians is not merely a sentimental mention, but serves as a witness to the letter's contents.
19. Paul omits a reference to his authority by including the title "apostle" which was being challenged especially during his third missionary journey.
20. Its absence here, and in 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, is evidence of a special relationship he had with those two churches.
21. Paul identifies himself and Timothy as "bond servants of Christ Jesus" which carries with it the notion of humility and obedience.
22. This designation Paul applies to Jesus Christ in the doctrine of the hypostatic union featured in this letter (Phil. 2:7).
23. "To all the saints in Christ Jesus" is inclusive and features the doctrine of positional sanctification.
24. "Who are in Philippi" refers to their geographical location as a local body in Christ.
25. "Including" or "along with the overseers and deacons" (*sun episkopois kai diakonois*) distinguishes these believers from the general congregation.
26. These refer to two distinct offices within the church as are attested from the Pastoral Epistles, and 1Tim. 3 provides the qualifications for these two offices.
27. The term "overseer" occurs 5x: Acts 20:28; Phil. 1:1; 1Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:7; 1 Pet. 2:25.
28. Acts 20:28 makes it apparent that the function of "overseer" is that of a communicator of Bible doctrine.

29. The term “deacons” is used in both a technical sense of a group of individuals that are set in place over believers in a given locale to minister to primarily the physical well being of believers (as per v. 1; 1Tim. 3:8, 12); otherwise it is used in the more general sense of “minister” or “servant” determined by the immediate context (Matt. 23:11; Jn. 12:26; Rom. 13:4; 15:8; 16:1; 1 Cor. 3:5; 2 Cor. 3:6; 6:4; 11:15, 23; Gal. 2:17; Eph. 3:7; 6:21; Col. 1:7, 23, 25; 4:7; 1 Tim. 4:6).
30. So here Paul singles out those believers who held positions of leadership within the church.
31. The opening to this letter follows the pattern of letters of the era; name of sender, name of addressee, and the infinitive “greeting.”
32. Paul changes the standard secular greeting (*chairein*) to the cognate noun “grace” (*charis*).
33. “Grace” is at the very heart of the Christian message apart from which there is no benefits for humans.
34. “Peace” is the result of orientation to God’s grace as defined by Scripture.
35. Ph1 and Ph 2 grace and peace are in view is this greeting.
36. Paul’s prayer-wish is that “grace and peace” continues to flow to these saints in their present situation.
37. “Peace” denotes spiritual well-being, and when God’s promises are applied, counters fear and anxiety.
38. The source of our spiritual welfare flows from “God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Prayer Report (vv. 3-5)

VERSE 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you (Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνήμῃ ὑμῶν [*pres.act.ind.1s. eucharisteo give thanks + d.a.w/noun dat.m.s. theos + pro.gen.s. ego + prep epi on, upon + adj.dat.f.s. pas + d.a.w/noun dat.f.s. mneia remembrance + pro.gen.p. su*]),

VERSE 4 always offering prayer [petition] with joy in my every prayer for you all (πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δεήσιν ποιοῦμενος [*adv pantote always, constantly + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.f.s. deesis prayer, intercessory prayer + pro.gen.m.s. ego + prep huper on behalf of + adj.gen.m.p. pas + pro.gen.m.p. su + prep meta with + noun gen.f.s. chara joy + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. deesis petition + pres.act.part.nom.m.s. poieo “making”*]),

VERSE 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now

(ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν [*prep epi + d.a.w/noun dat.f.s. koinonia fellowship; participation + pro.gen.m.s. su + prep eis + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. euangelion gospel + prep apo from + d.a.w/adj.abl.f.s. protos first + noun abl.f.s. hemera day + prep achri until + d.a.gen.m.s. + adv nun now*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 3-5

1. Paul's prayer reports in his letters were designed to encourage and inform believers during periods of separation.
2. For "I thank my God" see Rom. 1:8; 1 Cor. 1:4 and Phm. 1:4.
3. The basis for his thankfulness is found in v. 5.
4. The phrase "in all my remembrance of you" serves to show that his prayers for them were on-going.
5. Paul personally established the Philippian church and has been kept abreast of their situation during his absence.
6. His knowledge of their spiritual excellence produces within him joyful thanksgiving.
7. His gratitude for their positive volition motivated him to regularly offer "petition" or intercessory prayer for them.
8. In vv. 9-11 we have what it was that Paul specifically petitioned God for on their behalf.
9. The noun translated "prayer" is *deesis* better translated, "petition" (cf. Lk. 1:13 "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John."; 2:17 "and then there was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers/petitions."; Rom. 10:1; 2 Cor. 1:11; 9:14; Eph. 6:18; Phil. 1:4, 19; 4:6; 1 Tim. 2:1; 5:5; 2 Tim. 1:3; Heb. 5:7; Jam. 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:12).
10. The phrase "with all joy" expresses Paul's emotional frame of reference when remembering this congregation.
11. Finally, in verse 5 Paul cites the basis for his thanksgiving on their behalf which sponsored repeated intercessory prayers.
12. The phrase "in view of your participation in the gospel" refers to their history "from the first day until now."
13. The noun "participation" (*koinonia* fellowship; partnership, participation) refers specifically to the Philippians efforts in the spread of the Christian message.
14. We encountered this noun in Phm. 1:8 and rendered it "partnership" along with its cognate "partner" in Phm. 1:17 used in reference to Paul's relationship to Philemon.
15. Their "partnership" over the years from their earliest beginnings was highlighted by their generous monetary gifts to others (e.g., Jerusalem relief fund; Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 8:4; cf. 9:13) and their monetary assistance to Paul while at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:7-9; Phil. 4:15-16) and Thessalonica (Phil. 4:16), and again, when imprisoned in Rome (Phil. 4:17-18).
16. In summary, Paul's thanksgiving to God is distinguished by repetition and emotional intensity.

17. Paul's gratitude flows from an appreciation of his converts' support of his ministry from the outset to the present.
18. Their most recent contribution to his ministry in effect was the occasion for this letter.
19. It is important to know that Paul did not ask for this gift (as he did in the instance of the Jerusalem offering).
20. Their generosity was strictly based on their own love and appreciation for God and His faithful servant.