

## Philippians Chapter Three

Paul Goes on the Offensive (vv. 1-3)

**VERSE 1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.** (Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ. ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ [*d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. loipos rest; finally + noun voc.m.p. adelphos + pro.gen.m.s. ego + pres.act.imper.2p. chairo rejoice + prep en + noun loc.m.s. kurios*]).

**To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you** (τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές [*d.a.w/pro.acc.nt.p. autos “the same things” + pres.act.infin. grapho write + pro.dat.p. su + pro.da.ts. ego “to me” + part men on the one hand + neg ouk + adj.nom.nt.s. seneros lazy; troublesome + pro.dat.p. su “for you” + conj de + adj.nom.nt.s aophales safeguard*])

**VERSE 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision** (Βλέπετε τοὺς κύνας, βλέπετε τοὺς κακοὺς ἐργάτας, βλέπετε τὴν κατατομήν [*pres.act.imper.2p. blepo see; beware + d.a.w/noun acc.m.p. kuon dog + pres.act.imper. blepo + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.p. kakos evil + noun acc.m.p. ergates worker + pres.act.imper.2p. blepo + d.a.w/noun acc.f.s. katatome mutilation; “false circumcision”; only here*]);

**VERSE 3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory [boast] in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh** (ἡμεῖς γὰρ ἐσμεν ἡ περιτομή, οἱ πνεύματι θεοῦ λατρεύοντες καὶ καυχώμενοι ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐν σαρκὶ πεποιθότες [*pro.nom.p. ego “we” + conj gar + pres.act.ind.1p. eimi “are” + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. peritome circumcision + d.a.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.p. latreuo worship + noun loc.nt.s. pneuma spirit + noun gen.m.s. theos + conj kai + pres.dep.part.nom.m.p. kauchaomai boast + prep en + noun loc.m.s. christos + noun loc.m.s. Jesus + conj kai + neg ouk + prep en + noun loc.f.s. sarz flesh + perf.act.part.nom.m.p. peitho trust*]),

ANALYSIS: VERSES 1-6

1. “Finally” (*To loipon*) introduces a new section that has as its background the threat of the Judaizers.
2. The section serves as a springboard for Paul to present doctrinal principles that serve to counter the false teachings of the salvation by works crowd.
3. Paul opens this section of the letter with a call to “rejoice in the Lord” in the face of this threat which if embraced would rob the Philippians of their joy.
4. “Joy” occurs 7x in this letter (1:4, 25; 2:2, 17, 18, 29; 4:1) and “rejoice” occurs 7x as well (1:18; 2:17, 18, 28; 3:1; 4:4, 10).
5. The Philippians are summoned to “rejoice” in the fact that they have an apostle that is fully capable of dispelling the false doctrine that was so counter to the doctrine of grace first introduced to them when Paul first came to Philippi.
6. Nothing has changed, only that there arose a new challenge to their understanding of the truth they had in Christ.
7. The celebration of truth in the soul is the antidote to being exposed to the legalism designed to undermine the teachings of grace for salvation and spirituality.
8. When confronted with error, the knowledgeable believer is to rejoice in the knowledge of the true grace of God (cf. Col. 1:6 “which (gospel) has come to you in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth.” 1Pet. 5:12 “Through Silvanus, our faithful brother (for so I regard *him*), I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it.”). Gal. 2:21
9. Paul also prefaces his offensive (vv. 2-3) against the false teachers with a statement about his approach in the composition of this letter (v. 1b).
10. He reassures the church that his effort in writing this letter was not tedious for him, even though he had previously sent letter(s) dealing with the same subject matter (i.e., “the same things”).
11. Furthermore, he says that this letter would serve as a “safeguard for [them].”
12. It is always good to have the truth reiterated even when the information is well known.
13. Here, once again we see Paul’s genuine pastoral concern for their feelings and for their protection.
14. In vv. 2-3 Paul goes on the offensive against the false teachers that had undoubtedly tried to insinuate themselves into the Philippian church.
15. In the case of the Galatians this very same threat had made inroads into those churches in Paul’s absence (cf. Gal. 3:1ff.).
16. These same Judaizers had cast their spell over these otherwise adjusted and healthy congregations, teaching that salvation (and spirituality) was not strictly by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
17. These individuals were Jews who had believed in Christ but who adopted a legalistic approach to salvation insisting that Gentile believers needed to be circumcised and keep the Law in order to be assured of salvation.
18. In effect, they were guilty of teaching “another gospel” (cf. Gal. 1:6-11) and for doing so were “accursed!”
19. The origins of this heresy arose out of the Jerusalem Conference where it was determined by the church leaders in Jerusalem that salvation by faith alone was the true gospel (Acts 15:1-31).

20. The decree of the Jerusalem Council did not stop these ex-Pharisees from their evil ways.
21. A subplot to the controversy that came out of the Antioch mission to the Gentiles was that Peter allowed himself to be intimidated and briefly influenced by the Judaizers when he visited Antioch.
22. Paul called him down publically (humiliating) on this and Peter repented (cf. Gal. 2:1-21; also Acts 10 & 11).
23. Back to Paul's offensive in v. 1b where he engages in sanctified name-calling directed at these same characters!
24. Three times he uses the imperative "beware" along with three descriptive terms to highlight their unsavory character.
25. "The dogs" would have been especially offensive to the Judaizers as that was a favorite term that the Jews employed when referring to the Gentiles.
26. Paul turns it on them!
27. There are a variety of habits that canines engage in that are repugnant to humans, like eating their own vomit (cf. 2 Pet. 2:22).
28. This habit is what the Judaizers were guilty of in their insistence that Gentiles abandon salvation purely by grace and turn back to their "vomit"—salvation by works (Prov. 26:11 "Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool who repeats his folly.").
29. "Evil workers" indicates those who are very busy promoting false doctrine where ever they can get an audience (cf. Titus 1:10).
30. "The false circumcision" is actually one word in the Greek and only occurs here in the NT (*katatome*).
31. Literally translated it means "the mutilation" and serves as an sarcastic label; in other words Paul is saying that these types do not deserve to be called "the circumcision."
32. After all these types who were saved by grace were guilty of mutilating the gospel by insisting that salvation for Gentile converts required them to be circumcised.
33. The same can be said to later corruptions that came into vogue such as the necessity of water baptism as an adjunct to faith in Christ.
34. But offers no quarter here reflecting God's attitude towards those who distort the true gospel of Christ.
35. In v. 3 Paul presents the real status of believing Gentiles (and Christian Jews) and the circumcision (actual term is *peritome*) that is not of the flesh but of the Spirit (v. 3a).
36. Here in v. 3 Paul presents the antithesis which is sharply drawn between the evil doers and the adjusted saints at Philippi.
37. Spiritual circumcision is the reality that is illustrated by physical circumcision, the sign of the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Col. 2:11 "and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal (e.g. isolation) of the body of the flesh (ISTA) by the circumcision of/by/from Christ.").
38. This is a component part of the salvation adjustment (a list of things that is provided to the one who believes in Christ).
39. "Who worship God in the Spirit"—a positive aspect for these believers—surely harks back to Jesus words in Jn. 4:23-24 where He defines the impending situation for worship among the people of God.
40. The reference is to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2).
41. This new order allows Gentiles to an equal place with believing Jews.

42. Those who belong to Christ are part of the new dispensation (2 Cor. 5:17); they have the indwelling Spirit of God and as such are able to worship God in Spirit and in truth.
43. As the true circumcision CA believers who are operating in the will of God can accomplish three things Paul affirms.
44. They can worship in the sphere of the Holy Spirit, and they can as a result “boast in Christ Jesus.”
45. That means they can boast in the fact that they are saved by grace through faith, and totally apart from works (cf. Eph. 2:8-9 “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God, not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”).
46. For “boasting” in Philippians see 1:26; 2:16 and here.
47. The exact opposite of this attitude is that which places “no confidence” in the flesh, that is, in human efforts to achieve the unachievable.
48. “No confidence in the flesh” is a passing slap at the insistence of the Judaizers that to be saved one needs to submit to this ritual.
49. This applies equally to both Ph 1 salvation and spirituality by grace (RB producing the FHS).