

Philippians

1. Philippians: An Introduction

“Letter of Friendship”? (Fee) – discussed alongside Philemon

2. Quick Overview

Theme: Unity (Phil 1.27; 2.1-4)

Insight into Paul’s history and mindset as he faces possible death

Insight into Philippian community: external persecution (?) and internal discord

Thanksgiving for gift from Philippi

“Opponents”

3. Philippi in the First Century CE

Small city in eastern Macedonia

16km inland from Neapolis; on Via Egnatia

Roman Rule in 167 BCE; Roman *kolonia* in 31 BCE under Octavian, settled by veterans

Romans and Greeks (Epaphroditus, Euodia, Syntyche, Clement); Lydia (Acts)

Gentile community with involvement of women in leadership; any evidence of Jews?

4. The Philippian Church

Evidence from Paul’s letter and in Acts 16.12-40

Paul’s initial visit ~49 CE, marked by conflict? (Phil 1.30; 2.22; 3.18; 4.9; 1 Thess 2.2)

Exorcism of a slave girl and its consequences (Acts 16.16-24)

Conversion and baptism of Lydia (Acts 16.13-15) and of jailer (16.25-34) and their households

Generous with material possessions (Phil 4.16) and sent Epaphroditus to assist Paul (Phil 2.25-30; 4.14)

“Opponents” (Phil 1.28) – 1. not resident in Philippi (1.15-18); 2. threaten unity (1.27-28);

3. “dogs” and “evil doers” (3.2); 4. “enemies of the cross of Christ” (3.18-19)

Internal division between Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4.2)

5. Paul and the Philippians

Authenticity and Unity of the Letter

One letter or two (1.1-3.1; 3.2-4.23) or three (+4.10-20)?

The problem of 3.1 and translation

Purpose

Partnership (*koinonia*), “friendship” (1.5, 7; 2.1; 3.10; 4.14, 15)

Report from prison (1.12-26)

Return of Epaphroditus (2.25-30)

Advice to the community

Thanksgiving for gift (4.10-20)

Place of Imprisonment and Date

Ephesus (mid 50s), Caesarea Maritima (late 50s), or Rome (early 60s)?

Praetorium (Phil 1.13) and Caesar’s household (Phil 4.22)

6. Overview

1.1-11: Introduction and Thanksgiving

1.12-26: Paul's Own Situation

1.27-2.18: Worthy Citizens of the Gospel – steadfastness, harmony, mind of Christ, implications

2.19-30: Plans for renewed fellowship – Timothy, Epaphroditus

3.1: Rejoice! or Farewell

3.2-4.3: Servants of Christ and Enemies of the Cross – “dogs”, Paul's example, appeal to 2 leaders

4.4-23: Concluding exhortations, Thanksgiving, Greetings and benediction

7. Critical Questions

Phil 2.5/6-11

Church hierarchy?

8. Philippi after Paul?

Catastrophic earthquakes in 5th-7th centuries CE

Letter from Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in early 2nd century CE

“Basilica of Paul in Christ” in early/mid 4th century

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Paul's Christology

1. Paul's Christology: Introduction

"high" and "low" Christology – approaches: titles vs narrative – Paul and Christ

2. Approach

"Titles": Son, Lord, Christ/Messiah, Adam

Other attributes: human, Jewish, sinless, faithfulness (?), intercessor, model to imitate

Major debates: earthly Jesus and Paul, pre-existence, divinity

Christology and soteriology

3. "Titles"

"Son": Romans 1.2-4, also Gal 1.15-16; Rom 1.3, 9; 2 Cor 1.19

"Lord": Romans 14.8-9; "The day of the Lord" (1 Thess 5.2; 1 Cor 5.5, 1.8; 2 Cor 1.14)

connection with LXX and the name of God (see Rom 10.13/Joel 2.32; 1 Cor 1.31 and 2 Cor 10.17/Jer 9.23-24); the "Lord's supper" in 1 Cor 11.17-34

"Christ": Jewish expectation and tradition; simply a name/title; honorific (Novenson)

"Adam": 1 Cor 15.22 and Rom 5.12-21

4. Attributes and Defining Characteristics

Jesus was human: Gal 4.4; 1 Cor 15.21; Rom 5.15, 8.3

Jesus was a Jew: Gal 4.4, 3.16; Rom 1.3, 9.5

Jesus is sinless: 2 Cor 5.21; Rom 8.3 (?)

Jesus's "faithfulness": Rom 3-4; Gal 2-3

Jesus as intercessor: Rom 8.34

Jesus as model to imitate: 1 Cor 11.1; 1 Thess 1.6; Gal 6.2; Phil 2.6-11

5. Major Debates/Issues

Paul and the earthly Jesus: is Paul interested?

Pre-existence:

Incarnation: Phil 2.5-11; 2 Cor 8.9

Creation: 1 Cor 8.6; Col 1.16 (?)

Israel: 1 Cor 10.4

Divinity: Rom 9.5; Titus 2.13 (?); 1 Cor 8.6; Phil 2.6-11

6. Paul's Christology and Soteriology

Intimately connected

1 Cor 15.3-4 (see also Rom 5.9-10; 1 Thess 1.10)

Drawing on sacrificial language and images:

"sin offering" (Rom 8.3); "Passover lamb" (1 Cor 5.7); "mercy seat" (Rom 3.25);

"sin" and "curse for us" (2 Cor 5.21; Gal 3.13); "first fruits" (1 Cor 15.20-23)

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