

# Philippians

---

**AUTHOR:** Paul

**TIME WRITTEN** A.D. 60-62 From Rome during his first Roman imprisonment

**POSITION IN THE BIBLE:**

- 50th Book in the Bible
- 11th book in the New Testament
- 6th of 21 epistle books
- 10th of Paul's 13 books
- 49 have preceded it. 16 to follow it.

**CHAPTERS:** 4

**VERSES:** 104

**WORDS:** 2,002

**KEY WORD:** To Live is Christ

**TWO KEY PASSAGES:**

1. **Philippians 1:21** - "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
2. **Philippians 4:12** - "I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need."

**KEY CHAPTER:** Philippians 2

**OBSERVATIONS ABOUT PHILIPPIANS:**

1. Paul writes a thank-you letter to the brethren at Philippi, thanking them for their invaluable financial help.
  - a. He uses the occasion of this letter to send along some instructions on Christian unity.
  - b. His central thought is simple: Only in Christ are real unity and joy possible.
  - c. With Christ as your model of humility and service, you can enjoy a oneness of purpose, attitude, goal, and labor—a truth Paul illustrates from his own life and one the Philippians desperately need to hear.
  - d. Paul offer encouragement and guidance to the brethren at Philippi.
  - e. Paul exhorts the church at Philippi to "stand fast . . . be of the same mind . . . rejoice in the Lord always . . . but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let you
2. History of Philippi.
  - a. In 356 B.C. King Philip of Macedonia (the father of Alexander the Great) took this town and expanded it, renaming it Philippi.
  - b. The Romans captured it in 168 B.C., and in 42 B.C. the defeat of the forces of Brutus and Cassius by those of Anthony and Octavian (later Augustus) took place outside the city.
  - c. Octavian turned Philippi into:
    1. A Roman colony (Acts 16:12).
    2. A military outpost.
  - d. The citizens of this colony were regarded as citizens of Rome and given a number of special privileges.
  - e. Because Philippi was a military city and not a commercial center, there were not enough Jews for a synagogue when Paul came (Acts 16:13).
3. Paul's early association with Philippi.

- a. Paul's "Macedonian Call" in Troas during his second missionary journey led him to his ministry in Philippi.
  - b. The first converts there (and on the continent of Europe) were Lydia and her household.
  - c. Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned, but this resulted in the conversion jailer.
  - d. The magistrates were placed in a dangerous position by beating Roman citizens without a trial (Acts 16:37-40), and that embarrassment may have prevented further reprisals against the new converts in Philippi.
  - e. Paul visited the Philippians again on his third missionary journey (Acts 20:1-6).
  - f. When they heard of his Roman imprisonment, the Philippian brethren sent Epaphroditus with financial help (4:18).
  - g. The church at Philippi had helped Paul on at least two other occasions. **4:16** - "For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities."
  - h. Epaphroditus almost died of an illness, yet remained with Paul long enough for the Philippians to receive word of his illness. Upon his recovery, Paul sent this letter back with him to Philippi (2:25-30).
  - i. Silas, Timothy, Luke, and Paul first came to Philippi in A.D. 51, eleven years before Paul wrote the Philippian letter.
3. The epistle has four chapters, and each chapter has a major theme, and each major theme has a specific text.
    - a. Chapter 1— Christ is our **LIFE** — **1:21** - "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain."
    - b. Chapter 2— Christ is our **EXAMPLE** — **2:5** - "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."
    - c. Chapter 3— Christ is our **HOPE** — **3:7** - "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ."
    - d. Chapter 4— Christ is our **STRENGTH AND SOURCE OF SUPPLY** — **4:13** - "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."
  4. Philippians is different from the other letters Paul wrote.

## SUMMARY OF PHILIPPIANS

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. Philippians is the only epistle of joy and encouragement in the midst of adverse circumstances.
  1. Paul freely expresses his fond affection for the Philippians, appreciates their consistent example and support, and lovingly urges them to enter their actions and thoughts on the pursuit on the person and power of Christ.
- B. Philippians focuses on Paul's account of his present circumstances
- C. There are two major sections in the book:
  1. Paul's Account of His Present Circumstances. (1)
  2. Paul's Appeal to Have the Mind of Christ. (2)
  3. Paul's appeal to have the Knowledge of Christ. (3)
  4. Paul's Appeal to Have the Peace of Christ. (4)

### PAUL'S ACCOUNT OF HIS PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES. (1)

- A. Paul's usual salutation (1:1-2) is followed by his thanksgiving, warm regard, and prayer on behalf of the Philippians (1:3-11).

1. For years they have participated in the apostle's ministry, and he prays for their continued growth in the real knowledge of Christ.
2. Paul shares the circumstances of his imprisonment and rejoices in the spread of the gospel in spite of and because of his situation. (1:12-26)
3. As he considers the outcome of his approaching trial, he expresses his willingness to "depart and be with Christ" (1:23) or to continue in ministry.
4. Paul encourages the Philippians to remain steadfast in the face of opposition and coming persecution (1:27-30)

### **PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST. (2)**

- A. Paul exhorts the Philippians to have a spirit of unity and mutual concern by embracing the attitude of humility (2:1-4), the greatest example of which is the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ (2:5-11).
  1. The "kenosis," or emptying of Christ does not mean that He divested Himself of His deity, but that he withheld His pre-incarnate glory and voluntarily restricted the use of certain attributes (omnipresence and omniscience).
  2. Paul asks the Philippians to apply this attitude to their lives (2:12-18), and he gives two more examples of sacrifice in 2:19-30
    - a. The ministry of Timothy.
    - b. The ministry of Epaphroditus.

### **PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST. (3)**

- A. It appears that Paul is about to close his letter ("Finally, my brethren," 3:1) when he launches into a warning against the continuing problem of legalism (3:1-9).
  1. Paul refutes this teaching with revealing autobiographical details about his previous attainments in Judaism.
    - a. Compared to the goal of knowing Christ, those pursuits are as nothing.
  2. Paul yearns for the attainment of the resurrected body.

### **PAUL'S APPEAL TO HAVE THE PEACE OF CHRIST. (4)**

- A. In a series of exhortations, Paul urges the Philippians to have peace with the brethren by living a life-style of: (4:1-3)
  1. Unity.
  2. Prayerful dependence.
  3. Holiness.
- B. In 4:4-9 Paul describes the secret of having the peace OF God as well as peace WITH God.
  1. He then rejoices over their gift, but explains that the power of Christ enables him to live above his circumstances (4:10-20)
- C. This joyous letter from prison close with greetings and a benediction. 4:21-23