

Philippians

- Author and Date
 - Paul
 - Either during the Ephesian captivity (circa AD 54), or during the Roman captivity (circa AD 62). Internal evidence supporting the Roman captivity can be found in 1:13; 4:22.
- Destination
 - Leading city of Eastern Macedonia (in northern Greece).
 - Positioned on the Egnatian Way, which connected Italy with Asia Minor.
 - Named after Philip of Macedon (Father of Alexander the Great).
 - Made a Roman military colony in the 1st century BC.
 - Paul spent an unknown amount of time here (possibly a couple years) during his second missionary journey. He then visited them relatively briefly once or twice on his third missionary journey. He clearly spent enough time with them to establish a very personal rapport as is evident from the letter (cf. Acts 16:12-40; 20:1-3).
 - First church to be established on the mainland of Europe.
 - Not many Jews there. Mainly settled by retired Roman soldiers and sailors.
- Purpose
 - Does not address a doctrinal, disciplinary or moral crisis. It is more a letter of thanks and encouragement to friends.
 - The Philippians have been very generous and gracious to Paul in supporting with prayer and financial assistance during his imprisonment.
 - Paul also treats a personal conflict between two women of the community, and also warns them about Judaizing missionaries that may try to pressure them into circumcision.
- Themes and Characteristics
 - Joyous, positive, and personal
 - Skips around topically like a friendly letter might, as opposed to building a substantial argument on a controversial subject.
 - Exhorts Philippians to imitate both he and Christ.
 - Portrays the Lord as the model of humility and selfless service.
 - Portrays himself as the model of patient endurance.
- Structure
 - Opening Address 1:1-11
 - Paul's Imprisonment 1:12-30
 - Imitating Jesus Christ 2:1-18
 - The arrival of Timothy and Epaphroditus 2:19-30
 - Striving the for the goal 3:1-21
 - Final Instruction and Praise 4:1-20
 - Conclusion 4:21-23