

# Philippians

## Introduction

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

We again thank you for all of your word. We thank you that we can depend upon your Spirit for the ministry that you have for us to learn what is in this inspired book. And so we submit ourselves; we submit this time to you for your will to be done in Jesus' name, Amen!

We begin as we usually do at the beginning of each book with a short introduction.

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic.

Its contents are history and prophecy.

And the English bible arrangement is according to the Septuagint which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew. We have our Law, History, Writings and Prophets, but the Hebrew bible is different in that they have the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.

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And even some of the books are different. Under Prophets, Daniel is not there. The writings include Daniel, but it doesn't include Daniel as a prophet in the Hebrew bible.

Now, what makes the Old Testament difficult for both Gentiles and Jews, we'll take the Jews first.

First of all, they debate over what the Old Testament teachings or scriptures are saying, which is why writing down history and prophecy, Hebrew is a general language just like English is. This is why the Jews can sit down and argue over it, because they cannot be exact.

And how the Jewish scholars decide what is true and not true about what a scripture is saying is whoever wins the argument or debate.

If you saw Fiddler on the Roof, you saw one room full of people and people sitting at a table facing each other all around the room. And whoever won the debate at that table would face the winner at the next table.

And they would go all around the room and whoever is left, it means that no one can present things to him to defeat his presentation of the debate about what that text says.

So that person's view of scripture stands as being the truth until somebody can come along and argue with him until he can't answer. That's how the Hebrew people literally went about understanding some of the teachings in the Old Testament.

But again, the Old Testament was meant for history and prophecy.

I will address the Gentile problem with the Old Testament here in a moment.

|                                                         |                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Old Testament (Covenant)                                |                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                   |
| Original Language: Hebrew/Aramaic                       |                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                   |
| Contents: History/Prophecy                              |                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                   |
| English Bible Arrangement (according to the Septuagint) |                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                   |
| <b>Law</b><br>Genesis-Deuteronomy                       | <b>History</b><br>Joshua-Esther                                          | <b>Writings</b><br>Psalms-Song of Solomon                                       | <b>Prophets</b><br>Isaiah-Malachi |
| Hebrew Bible Arrangement                                |                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                   |
| <b>Law</b><br>Genesis-Deuteronomy                       | <b>Prophets</b><br>Joshua-Malachi<br>(minus Ruth, Lamentations & Daniel) | <b>Writings</b><br>Job-II Chronicles<br>(including Ruth, Lamentations & Daniel) |                                   |
| <b>Torah</b>                                            | <b>Nevi'im</b>                                                           | <b>Ketuvim</b>                                                                  |                                   |
| תּוֹרָה                                                 | נְבִיאִים                                                                | כְּתוּבִים                                                                      |                                   |

**But in the New Testament, the original language is Greek. It is one of, if not the most exact languages in the world.**

**Its contents are history. That is Matthew through Acts, the public ministry of Christ, and the ministry of the Lord through the early church after His ascension.**

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**The second part of the New Testament is Romans through Revelation and that is called the doctrine or teaching part of the New Testament.**

**And again, that does not mean that there are no teachings, especially from the Lord in the gospels. But we have the teachings of about 62 to 63 years after the ascension of Christ, teachings in the New Testament church based on the Lord's teachings.**

**Remember, to be an original apostle, the requirement was that they had to be with the Lord from the baptism of John, through His ascension and see the resurrected Christ.**

**That is in Acts Chapter 1 if you want to look that up. The reason why those requirements were made is because now that Jesus had ascended up into heaven, the new believers would have to depend upon what the original apostles were teaching them because they were there.**

**They would have the Lord's teaching and they would have the apostle's teachings, and they had to put it together because a lot of the things that the Lord said and did some people could not understand.**

**In a lot of these instances, Jesus did not leave or give an answer. So the teaching of the early church, based upon the original apostles and disciples, it made all one teaching.**

**As a matter of fact, all of Paul's writings are at the beginning of the teaching section of the New Testament and they have been aligned there for a reason.**

**And this was approved by the Jerusalem church. Paul says in Galatians Chapter 1 Verses 8 and 9 that if anybody preaches any other gospel than that which he has preached, let them be accursed.**

**So right away when somebody preaches something that they say is the gospel, you check Paul's writings and you say is it there? If it isn't there, I discard it.**

**How can Paul make that statement?**

**It's because in Galatians Chapter 1 Verses 11 to 18, it states that Paul after being converted spent three years out in the Arabian Desert and was taught by the revelation of Jesus Christ Himself.**

**So the teachings of the Lord and the teachings of Paul are all from the same source. And that's not just Paul's presentation. That's the approval of the early church also.**

**And we studied that in Galatians Chapter 2 where the early church approved of what Paul had to say, even to the point that Paul said they had nothing to add to what I told them. There's nothing missing. Paul had the complete gospel and they recognized that.**

**The last part of the doctrine or teaching section of the New Testament is called Jewish literature because it was specifically written to the Jews. That doesn't mean that we can't learn from it, but we have to understand it in its Hebrew application.**

**And there are a lot of teachings that we take that apply to us the church, or even to Gentiles that applies strictly to the Jews.**

**For instance, to be a nation of priests, that's not the church. That's the Jewish people. The election, the word election or the elect, that is a word used in the Old Testament and the New Testament for the children of Israel, not the church.**

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**We'll get to that when we get into the Jewish section. Even the book of Revelation with its 404 verses, there are over 800 references or allusions to the Old Testament to understand the book of Revelation.**

**It was written to Jews for their understanding, and secondary for the understanding of the church. But it has to be understood in a Hebrew context, not a Gentile context.**

**So just with New Testament, whatever Paul said has to fit in with what Jesus said, and it has to fit in with what all of what the disciples and apostles taught. It cannot disagree. It cannot counter with anything else. It all has to fit together.**

**When somebody tells me "Well in Matthew Chapter 8, Jesus taught this and here's what He meant," well, you go to that text and you find out that it doesn't say what He meant.**

**Some people think they have insight. So go over here to 62 to 63 years of church history where the teachings of the people that were there and heard that teaching, they now pick up on the issue and here's what they taught about it.**

**And you find out that none of them said what this "teacher" said that Jesus meant in Matthew Chapter 8.**

**So you ask where did he get the teaching? "Well, we just believe or we just know. I have personal revelation that that's what Jesus meant." Yea, but the teachers in the early church, the people who were there won't back you up!**

**Especially in some of these issues that are so important, you can't find any teaching on it anywhere in the early church. And that for us should be a cautionary red light to say wait a minute and not to even go there.**

**So you'll notice at the bottom of the New Testament chart, we have II Corinthians Chapter 10 Verses 4 through 6. I love these verses. It is Paul's motto of his concern for God's people which is to fight for their minds.**

**Once a person has received Christ, that person belongs to Christ and they cannot lose their soul. But secondarily, after you receive Christ, Christ is there to renew the mind.**

**That is my burden for the church, is that everyone who is saved has not been completely transformed with the renewing of the mind. It is a lifetime process.**

**And whatever experiences I have recorded in my mind, or anything else that's there that shouldn't be there, it takes a lifetime for God's Spirit to take His word and minister and renew the mind with the truth of Christ.**

**And sometimes the Lord will take care of it miraculously on the spot. But most of our life is worked out. Our salvation is worked out through the hearing of God's word and by the ministry of God's Spirit.**

**And so Paul says that the tools of our warfare are not fleshly, but powerful with God for the pulling down of strongholds; and the pulling down of reasonings and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.**

**And we have a lot of philosophy and even teaching in the churches today that counter and go against the knowledge of God. They say stay away from it because it causes division. And I agree, and that's what's necessary.**

**So anything that exalts itself against the knowledge of God and taking captive every thought into the obedience of Christ;**

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**Paul says that false teachers and even things of the world are going to come and capture your thoughts and occupy the attention of your mind.**

**You might be saved, but God says from here on in, I want you to make the hearing of my word top priority for the renewing of your mind.**

**So it only stands to reason why Satan would keep people occupied. It's to keep them busy. They don't have time for the word, or they are too tired, or whatever other excuses that we can come up with.**

**So Paul's motto was for him to teach, not so that he can capture everyone's thoughts, or the bible can capture everyone's thoughts, but that everybody's thoughts would be in obedience to Christ.**

**Also in this chart, Paul's writings, Romans through Philemon, this is the order in the bible. It's not presented in the bible in chronological order, but it follows a pattern that Paul mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine. That's the book of Romans.**

**For reproof, for correction, and that's Galatians, and for instruction in righteousness which is Ephesians through Philemon.**

**We're gaining instructions about various doctrines and about various issues.**

**So the chronological order of Paul is interesting in that his letters follow his own presentation of what scripture is for.**

**Now to get to the Gentile problem that I told you I would get to. I told you about the Jewish problem with the Old Testament. Hebrew is a general language like English.**

**And some things in the Hebrew bible, even the Jewish scholars don't even know what it's talking about. They don't know what the prophet meant.**

**I mean, unless you have people back there with Isaiah and Jeremiah like the apostles were with Jesus, if you have nobody from that era, you don't know what he meant.**

**You can take a pretty good guess, especially with the New Testament. We see the Old Testament fulfilled so we can match it up and say this is what they're talking about.**

**But like I say, even Jewish people have a hard time understanding about the Old Testament, but only because it is history and prophecy. You can't make any more out of it than that.**

**Now our problem as Gentiles is that when we get into the Old Testament, and we make New Testament teachings out some of the texts in the Old Testament and those New Testament teachings aren't there.**

**They're not backed up by the New Testament. They're not even quoting from that section. And when we study basic principles from the Old Testament, it's as if Christians should be practicing them.**

**Now one of the things that irritates me is something that came out a while back about the "Prayer of Jabez," and that if you prayed the Prayer of Jabez from 2 Chronicles, because the prayer of Jabez was when the Lord was handing out boundaries for the various families of the Jews, and Jabez prayed for the extension of his borders because he had so many people.**

**God granted him his prayer and extended the borders of Jabez. Now we're talking about literal geographical borders.**

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**So somebody took that prayer and said that if you pray the prayer of Jabez, it will extend your borders. Well that's great, but if you don't own any land, it's not going to do you any good.**

**But they say that if you understand the teaching, it has to do with the borders of your ministry, the borders of your wealth, and all these different things if you pray the prayer of Jabez.**

**Now right away, in reaction to that I say I reject that right away. That's not a teaching of God. I don't care if it works or not.**

**But what we do then is we go to the New Testament and we find out, did Jesus say to pray the prayer of Jabez? In the 62 to 63 years of church history, did Paul say to pray the prayer of Jabez? How about anywhere in the New Testament? No!**

**But somebody figured a way, that if you set your mind to certain teachings, you can make them happen. You think they are happening until somebody comes up and taps you on the shoulder and says "You know, that's not happening. There's nothing happening!"**

**But it's these things that when you get to the Old Testament, you can take teachings right out of the Old Testament and apply it to Christians when it doesn't apply to Christians.**

**In fact, spiritually it won't do anything for a Christian. They'll find out that in order to follow those teachings, they have to do it themselves. God's not going to help them do it. And some people like that. That's why I like to point out the difference and how the whole bible has to be taken together.**

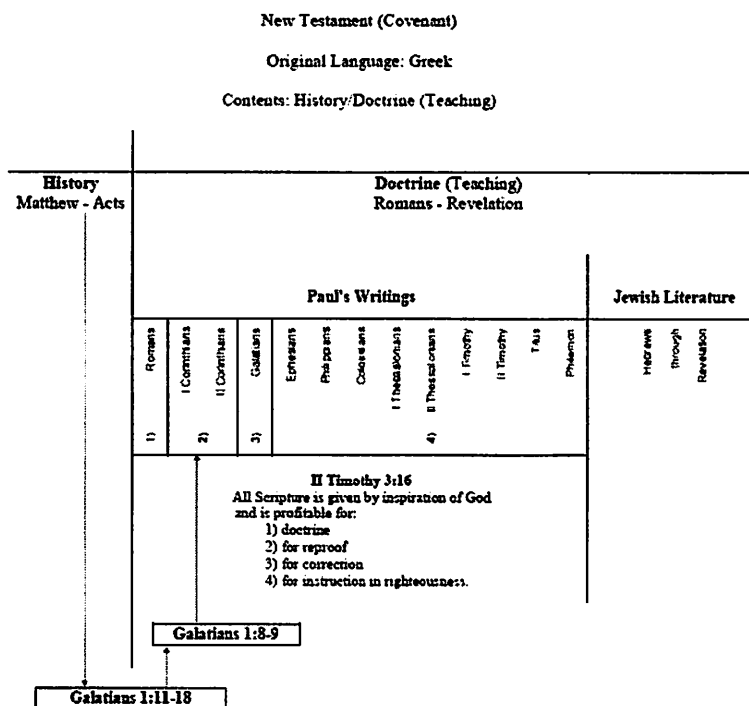
And if we understand the way the scriptures have been put together, we can see that God has given us some security to know that what we're hearing or what we're reading is the truth from God's word.

All we have to do is just say wait a minute. Let's see if it's in the bible. Let's see if Jesus taught it. Let's see if Paul taught it.

Now especially Paul. I am not putting him over Jesus but if what Jesus taught is in Paul's gospel, then it's got to be there. What did Paul say, if anybody preaches any other gospel than that which I have preached, let him be accursed.

Is that teaching in Paul's gospel? The answer is no. So what does that mean? "Well, we don't want to be judgmental. After all you know, Paul had limited revelation!"

But we get ourselves into trouble. On the issues that the bible teaches, it is exact. It's just that we have a lot of questions about some things that are not in the bible. We can't help that. But the things that are in the bible are pretty accurate.



**II Corinthians 10:4-6**

- 4) For the tools of our warfare *are* not fleshly, but powerful *with* God for the pulling down of strongholds;
- 5) pulling down reasonings and every high thing exalting itself against the knowledge of God and taking captive every thought into the obedience of Christ;
- 6) and having in readiness that we should avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience should be fulfilled.

**I. About the Authors**

**Paul and Timothy.**

**It is written by Paul mainly. But he also signs Timothy on. He has Timothy with him. He has Luke with him. But he says Paul and Timothy are the authors of the letter.**

**Paul's inscription is on all thirteen of his letters.**

**II. To Whom It Was Written**

**To the church in Philippi.**

**Philippi became the first European city to receive the gospel.**

**III. The History of Philippi**

**The city of Philippi was founded in 357 BC by Philip II of Macedon who established and founded Philippi.**

**And he is the father of Alexander the Great. Of course his name being Philip, he named it after himself.**

**Philippi was a city of Macedonia in Northern Greece.**

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**It was some 700 miles from Rome and enjoyed full Roman citizenship privileges.**

**Philippi cooperated so much with the Romans coming in and capturing the land that Rome turned around and rewarded them by giving them full Roman citizenship and privileges just like the city of Rome itself.**

**This is why some of the military from the Roman armies settled in Philippi, because full Roman citizenship and privileges was given to them.**

**It was called "Little Rome" to the people of the day because Philippi was a small version of Rome itself. 700 miles, remember that figure because we will be seeing that here soon.**

**The church at Philippi was founded during Paul's second missionary journey, recorded in Acts Chapter 16 Verses 8 to 12.**

**Paul received a Macedonian Vision while in Troas and crossed the Aegean Sea to preach the gospel first in Philippi. And again, that's in Acts 16:8-10.**

**What happened was that on Paul's second missionary journey, he went by land and visited some of the cities that he had established during his first missionary journey.**

**But what he wanted to do was pass those cities and he wanted to go north and preach the gospel. But he said that Satan hindered him. That's all he said!**

**So he decided that it must be a closed door, so I'll go south and preach the gospel, and he said the Holy Spirit hindered him.**

**So he went straight across and came all the way all the way to the coast of Troas, and he just sat there. I mean how much farther can you go? He's in Troas. He doesn't know what God wants him to do.**

**And so while they were in Troas, that's when Paul received what is called the Macedonian vision. That is a man from Macedonia appeared to him and said come over and preach the gospel to us.**

**At which time Paul went. And as he went over, the first place where he landed, because all the vision said was come over to Macedonia, and so he landed first in Philippi and that's where he preached the gospel first.**

**In 57 AD, some five years after his first visit and after his third missionary journey, Paul seems to have visited the church in Philippi twice. That is found in II Corinthians 1:16; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:1-3.**

**The church in Philippi sent Paul two love offerings for his missionary endeavors in Thessalonica, found in Philippians Chapter 4 Verses 15 and 16. Two offerings!**

**In fact, he said nobody else sent for support except for the Christians in Philippi, not once he said, but twice to support the missionary effort.**

**In 62 AD Paul finds himself as a prisoner in Rome. That is in Acts 28:30-31.**

**When the church heard of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, they again sent a love offering to him by way of Epaphroditus. Paul describes him as the pastor or messenger, the one that gives the messages in Philippi.**

**So this is their pastor. And you remember I told you about the mileage? They didn't have airplanes or cars. So Epaphroditus is sent 700 miles with this love offering to help Paul while he was imprisoned in Rome, and to minister to Paul there.**

**Of course Epaphroditus, we'll find out later that something happened to him in Rome where he was near death. But God spared him and Paul sent Epaphroditus back. And when he sent him back to Philippi, he sent the book of Philippians with him.**

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**While in Rome, Epaphroditus became very sick and nearly died.**

**At this time, some 10 years after his original visit to Philippi, Paul wrote the epistle of Philippians.**

**Paul writes to the Philippians both to thank them for their gift and also to report the good news of Epaphroditus' recovery.**

#### **IV. The Theme of Philippians**

**Now you will find this to be different than what you will find in most commentaries about the book of Philippians.**

**Most people say that the theme of Philippians is joy. But in reality, the theme of Philippians is fellowship.**

**We saw that Ephesians was out position in Christ. Philippians is our participation in Christ.**

**The focus is on the unity of fellowship.**

#### **V. Date/Background**

**It was written around 63 A.D. while Paul was under house arrest in Rome for two years, as recorded in Acts 28:16-31.**

**This is his first imprisonment. His second imprisonment was of course in the dungeon and he was killed right after that time.**

**Philippians is one of four prison epistles or letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon were written by Paul during this time that he was under house arrest in Rome.**

**We studied Ephesians and now we are in Philippians. All of the books have the same outline.**

**Paul always presented doctrine first and what we would call application. But I don't like to use the word application because people say that you need to apply the scriptures to your life.**

**In other words do them. That's not what the bible means. By application, it is God's Spirit, in light of what Christ has done. It's what God's Spirit wants to do in us.**

**So we have named them the doctrine and the details because it's the doctrine being presented in the everyday function of life.**

#### **VI. Delivered By**

**Epaphroditus on his return trip.**

#### **VII. Section Outline of the Book of Philippians**

##### **Chapters 1-2: The Doctrine of Christian Fellowship.**

**Of course our Christian fellowship has a lot of problems with it. That's because we have not looked to the book of Philippians that gives us the doctrine of fellowship and how to solve some of the problems.**

##### **Chapters 3-4: The Details of Christian Fellowship.**

**That is how the doctrine is worked out and lived amongst the believers.**

**We're in for a fascinating study.**

**Let's close with prayer,**

**Our heavenly Father,**

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**Again we thank you for yet another time and opportunity to study your word. It is through your Spirit alone that we are able to grasp and understand what it is your word is saying.**

**It's not about head knowledge. It's about submitting ourselves to you, for you to take your word and minister it to our hearts and minds. We ask that you will lead us through this next book that we will soon begin, Lord willing. Again we thank you and we pray these things in Jesus' name, Amen!**