

# An Introduction<sup>1</sup> to the Book of Philippians

By David Malick. See © note at the end of the outline.

## I. **AUTHOR: The Apostle Paul**

**A. External Evidence:** There never seems to have been a question about Pauline authorship by the church fathers

1. The Church Fathers: Echoes of Philippians are found in the writings of:
  - a. Clement (c. AD 95)
  - b. Ignatius (c. AD 107)
  - c. Hermas<sup>2</sup> (c. AD 140)
  - d. Justin Martyr (d. c. AD 165)
  - e. Melito of Sardis (d. c. AD 190)
  - f. Theophilus of Antioch (late second century)
  - g. Polycarp of Smyrna<sup>3</sup> (d. c. AD 155)
  - h. Irenaeus (d. c. AD 200)
  - i. Clement of Alexandria (d. c. AD 215)
  - j. Tertullian (d. c. AD 225)
  - k. Later fathers quote from Philippians and assign Paul to it as well
2. The Early Canons
  - a. The Muratorian Canon (late second century)
  - b. The Canon of Marcion (d. AD 160)

**B. Internal Evidence:** Internally, the evidence is strong for Pauline authorship of Philippians

1. The author claims to be Paul along with Timothy (1:1)
2. The picture of Paul in Philippians coincides with other sources like Acts and Galatians:
  - a. His innermost feelings (1:18-24)
  - b. Autobiographical information (3:5,6)
  - c. Naming of friends and coworkers (2:19-24)
  - d. Referring to gifts sent to him from Philippi to Thessalonica and elsewhere (4:15,16; cf. Acts 17:1-9; 2 Cor. 8:1-5)
3. The style and language show themselves to be Pauline:
  - a. Special Pauline vocabulary appears throughout Philippians

- b. Phrases, ideas, and allusions to opposition of false teachers which show up in Philippians also show up in Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians

**C. Critics:**

1. A few modern scholars<sup>4</sup> have questioned Pauline authorship of Philippians, but these radical views are not convincing
2. While most hold to the authenticity of Philippians, there are portions of the letter that some consider to be non-Pauline:<sup>5</sup>
  - a. Philippians 1:1b with its mention of bishops and deacons
  - b. as a Marcionite interpolation
  - c. as a song to Christ not originally written by Paul, but modified and used by him as the supreme example for humility and service
  - d. as a brief Pauline note written to correspondents whose identity can no longer be determined

**II. THE INTEGRITY OF PHILIPPIANS: A Single Letter**

**A. A Composite Work of Two or More Letters:<sup>6</sup>**

1. First suggested in the seventeenth century (Collange)
2. Reasons:<sup>7</sup>
  - a. If Romans 16 was originally a note addressed to Ephesus and 2 Corinthians was composed of at least two letters, then it is not an incredible thing to think of Philippians as a composite of previously existing letters. But Romans and 2 Corinthians are not composite letters; even if they were, it would prove nothing about Philippians
  - b. Paul may have written more than one letter to this community whom he loved; if he did, where they all lost but one? Paul may have written more than one letter (3:1), but attempts to recover these letters is conjecture
  - c. An Ancient Syriac stichometry mentions two

- letters to the Philippians This may be due to an accidental repetition and thus be no corroborating proof of plurality of Pauline letters to Philippi
- d. Polycarp, in his letter to the Philippians also states that Paul had written them letters (3:2) But the plural may simply mean "a letter of importance" or may refer to a collection of Paul's letters which were sent to all churches, or may be a guess on Polycarp's part inferred from Philippians 3:1
  - e. Polycarp's own letter may itself be the end-product of a compilation confirming the practice This thesis concerning Polycarp's letter has not gone unchallenged
  - f. The disjointedness of Philippians raises questions of original unity (3:1-2 versus 3:1 and 4:4 which seem to go together) This disjointedness is not surprising in a personal, conversational, letter written by a man accustomed to abrupt shifts in style<sup>8</sup> The change in tone from warmth and friendliness to harshness is startling only if one assumes that the opponents Paul denounces were fellow Christians, identical with those mentioned in 1:15-17; but 3:1b-21 identifies them as Jews hostile to the gospel who were attempting to turn the Philippians away from faith in Jesus Christ The harsh tone of 3:2-6 leads up to and gives way before the personal confession of faith and hope which is consistent with Paul's other intimate expressions found in Philippians The same terms, word-roots and motifs pervade all of the so-called separate letter of chapter three. If 3:1 and 4:4 fit together so perfectly one must ask why any intelligent scribe, bent on unifying the fragments would have placed 3:2ff between them
  - g. The question of unity is further raised by the fact that Paul did not turn to thanking

the Philippians for their gift until the end of the letter (4:10-20) which seems unlikely.<sup>9</sup> But why would a scribe wishing to put the Philippian "letters" together into an ordered whole place the "letter" at the end? It is possible that Paul, in the custom of his day, dictated the early part of the letter, but picked up the pen to sign it in his own hand, and in doing so wrote his own personal "thank you" for their gift.<sup>10</sup>

**B. A Single Letter:**

1. Theories of compilation solve nothing, but shift the order and organization from Paul to an unknown editor
2. Theories of compilation do not deal with the questions of whether there were salutations and signatures to the "fragments" and why these portions of the letters were not allowed to stand without modification since length was not a criterion for preservation (e.g., Philemon)
3. From the beginning of its manuscript history there has been only one canonical letter to the Philippians.<sup>11</sup>
4. All of the peculiarities of sequence of thought are comprehensible without assuming editorial work or interpolations

**III. THE RECIPIENTS AND THEIR CITY:**

**A. In view of the prominence of Phillipi,** Paul probably bypassed Neoapolis (Acts 16:11) to begin his preaching of the gospel in Macedonia in the Roman colony of Philippi

1. Philippi was built and fortified in 358-357 BC by Philip II of Marcedon (the father of Alexander the Great); it was named after him
2. It was a section along the Via Egnatia (the main overland route connecting Rome with the East)
3. It was the place where Brutus and Cassius (the assassins of Julius Caesar) were defeated by Antony and Octavian in 42 BC
4. When Octavian defeated Antony (31 BC) he rebuilt

Philippi and established a military outpost there and gave it the legal quality of being a Roman territory in Italy (*ius italicum*) enabling colonists to purchase, own, and transfer property, to enter into civil lawsuits, and to be exempt from poll and land taxes

**B. The People of Philippi:**

1. The city was inhabited predominantly by Romans with many Macedonian Greeks and some Jews
2. The people were proud of their city, ties with Rome, Roman customs, Roman laws and to be Roman citizens (cf. Acts 16:21)

**C. Paul's Founding of the Church at Philippi** (Acts 16:1-40):

1. The mission at Philippi: The mission through Paul and Silas is sovereignly directed by the Holy Spirit to Philippi where God sovereignly arranges for the conversion of several including Lydia (an Asian woman of commerce), and a Philippian jailer (a Greek/Roman man) before sending Paul and Silas out of the city 16:1-40
  - a. Prologue: the call to Macedonia: As the party, including at least Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke traveled, the Holy Spirit sovereignly directed their movement away from Asia to Macedonia 16:6-10
    - 1) Paul, Silas, and Timothy were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word of God in Asia, so they went through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia 16:6
    - 2) At Mysia the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go north to Bithynia, so they went down south to Troas 16:7-8
    - 3) In a vision to Paul a Macedonian man beckoned him to come west and help them 16:9
      - a) A vision appeared to Paul in the night 16:9a
      - b) A Macedonian man beckoned Paul to come west and help them 16:9b
    - 4) Those in the party (including Luke--

- "we") immediately interpreted this dream as God's sovereign direction to go to Macedonia to preach the gospel to the people there 16:10
- b. The conversion of Lydia When the party arrived in Philippi, they sought the place of prayer by the river on the Sabbath, and the Lord caused a God-worshipping woman named Lydia to hear Paul's message, whereupon she believed, and showed hospitality to the party 16:11-15
- 1) Setting: The party set sail from Troas to Macedonia through Samothrace and Neapolis to Philippi, the leading city of Macedonia, where they remained for some time 16:11-12
  - 2) As the party went to a place of prayer by the river on the Sabbath, God caused an Asian woman named Lydia to hear Paul's message, whereupon she believed, was baptized with her family, and showed hospitality to the party 16:13-15
    - a) There not being a synagogue<sup>12</sup>, on the Sabbath the party went to a riverside outside of the city where they supposed there to be a place of prayer, and they spoke to women who had come together 16:13
    - b) One woman heard them named Lydia, an Asian from Thyatira who was a merchant, and a worshiper of God 16:14a
    - c) The Lord caused her to hear what Paul was saying, she believed, was baptized, with her household, and showed hospitality to the party 16:14b-15
- c. The conversion of the Jailer: God sovereignly works to save a jailer and his family through Paul delivering a demonized girl from an evil spirit, which led to his

being arrested and placed under a jailer's care, where the Lord caused an earthquake that provided the opportunity for the jailer and his family to hear and believe in the word of God 16:16-34

- 1) A demonized girl: When a demonized girl began to follow the party around and announce their mission from God, Paul in the name of Christ cast the evil spirit out of her 16:16-18
  - a) The party was met by a slave girl who was demonized and used for profit by her master as a soothsayer when they were on their way to the place of prayer 16:16
  - b) For many days she followed the party around announcing that they were servants of God who are proclaiming the way of salvation 16:17-18a
  - c) Paul was annoyed by her actions, so he cast the evil spirit out of her 16:18b
- 2) Imprisonment of Paul and Silas: When the Spirit was cast out of the girl, her owners drug Paul and Silas to the magistrates, and charged them with disrupting the city against Roman law, whereupon, the rulers had them beaten and thrown under custody of a jailer into prison 16:19-24
  - a) When the spirit was cast out of the girl, her owners saw that they had lost their hope of profit through her 16:19a
  - b) The girl's owners brought Paul and Silas before the judges and charged them with being Jews (racial) who were disturbing the city, and whose customs are not Roman 16:19b-21
  - c) The town joined in with the attack,

and the rulers had them severely beaten,<sup>13</sup> thrown into prison, and put under the guardianship of a jailer who fastened their feet in stocks 16:22-24

- 3) The Deliverance: God sovereignly works through an earthquake to cause a jailer to hear the gospel message from Paul and Silas, whereupon he and his family believe and enter into fellowship with them 16:25-34
- a) At midnight, Paul and Silas were being listened to by the prisoners as they were praying and singing hymns 16:25
  - b) Suddenly there was a great earthquake which shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors and unfastened everyone's fetters 16:26
  - c) When the jailer awoke and saw what had occurred, he was about to kill himself thinking that all of the prisoners had escaped, when Paul told him to not hurt himself since everyone was still present 16:27
  - d) The jailer ran into the jail, got Paul and Silas and asked them what he must do to be saved 16:29-30
  - e) Paul and Silas explained the word of the Lord to him and his household, and urged him to believe in the Lord Jesus to be saved 16:31-32
  - f) A Picture of Reconciliation: That very night the jailer washed Paul and Silas' physical wounds and they washed him and his family (through baptism) of their spiritual wounds, whereupon they fellowshiped in his house 16:33-34



- d. Epilogue: God's servants are vindicated:  
Paul and Silas were vindicated by the rulers of Philippi when they learned that the team were Roman citizens by being escorted out of prison, whereupon, they returned to Lydia's house, encouraged the brethren, and left Philippi 16:35-40
- 1) When it was morning, the rulers ordered the jailers to release Paul and Silas 16:35
  - 2) The jailer announced their release to Paul urging them to come out to peace 16:36
  - 3) Paul refused to come out privately, but insisted that the leaders come themselves and lead them out because they were unjustly beaten in a public manner as Roman citizens<sup>14</sup> 16:37
  - 4) When the leaders heard Paul's words about being Roman citizens, they were afraid, came to them, apologized, took them out and asked them to leave the city 16:38-39
  - 5) Paul and Silas left prison, went to Lydia's, exhorted the brethren, and departed from Philippi 16:40

**D. Other names** of members of this Philippian community are Epaphroditus, Euodia, Syntyche, and Clement (2:25; 4:2,3) which indicate that the church was largely made up of Gentiles

**E. Paul stayed in touch** with the Macedonian churches through Timothy (Acts 19:21-23; Phil. 2:19,20), visited them on at least two other occasions (Acts 16; 20:1-6), and received gifts from them on several occasions (Phil. 4:15,16)

#### **IV. PLACE AND DATE OF WRITING:** Rome AD 61

**A. Several Fundamental Factors** Must Be Considered in the Choice of a Place of Writing:<sup>15</sup>

1. The fact that Paul was in prison when he wrote (Phil. 1:7,13,17)

2. The fact that Paul faced a trial that could end in his death (Phil. 1:19-20; 2:17)
3. The fact that from wherever it was that Paul wrote there was the Praetorium (toV praitwvrion, 1:13), and there were those who belonged to Caesar's household (4:22)
4. The fact that Timothy was with Paul (1:1; 2:19-23)
5. The fact that extensive evangelistic efforts were going on around Paul at the time he wrote to the Philippians (1:14-17)
6. The fact that several trips were made back and forth between Philippi and the place from which Paul wrote Philippians--all within the time-span of his imprisonment (Phil. 2:19-30)

**B. Several Locations Are Suggested As the Place of Writing:**<sup>16</sup>

1. Caesarea
  - a. Many aspects of Paul's imprisonment here could match the necessary events in the Philippian letter<sup>17</sup>
  - b. However, Caesarea is even further away from Ephesus than Rome
  - c. However, Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea did not hold the possibility of death (Phil. 1:20; 2:17) since he could and did appeal to Rome. It is true that the death that Paul could be concerned about is from the Jews (Acts 21:31,36; 22:22; 23:30; 25:3,24; 26:21)
2. Ephesus
  - a. While many elements could fit an Ephesian location, the hypothesis is mostly built on conjecture as one reconstructs what could have happened in Ephesus
  - b. Other objections:
    - 1) No mention of the "collection" as in other letters known to have been written from this time (third missionary journey, e.g., 2 Corinthians and Romans)
    - 2) Paul speaks harshly about the Christians around him--unlikely of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:2,18,24-26; 1 Cor.

16:19)

- 3) The church in the city where he is writing from is divided which may not answer the setting of the Ephesian church
  - 4) How could Paul be facing the possibility of immediate death in Ephesus since he could appeal to Rome (Phil. 1:19-20)
  - 5) Acts does not speak of an Ephesian imprisonment
3. Corinth
    - a. Although this could meet some of the necessary requirements, it is mostly built on speculation with no facts of support
    - b. There is no mention of an imprisonment for Paul in Corinth

### **C. Rome May Be The Best Suggestion as the Place of Writing:<sup>18</sup>**

1. From the second century Marcionite prologues attached to Paul's epistles until the eighteenth century, everyone accepted Rome as the place of writing without question
2. Paul was a prisoner under house arrest for at least two years (Acts 28:30)
3. While in prison Paul was free to send letters and receive those who would come to him or bring gifts (Acts 28:17,30)
4. From Rome Paul had no higher court of appeal: he would stand before Caesar and would either die or be acquitted
5. The expressions, "the praetorium" (Phil. 1:13), and "Caesar's household" (Phil. 4:22) are most easily and naturally understood in view of Rome
6. In Rome there was a church sufficiently large and diverse to divide into factions over Paul and his teachings (Phil. 1:14-17)
7. The distance from Rome to Philippi is considered to be a problem for there to have been so many trips, but this is not insurmountable<sup>19</sup>

## **V. PURPOSES OF PHILIPPIANS**

- A. To write this church whom he loved** with the opportunity of Epaphroditus returning to Philippi
- B. To bring the church up to date** on the news about himself--his present situation and future prospects (1:12-26; 2:24)
- C. To address problems of infighting** in the church over personal differences (1:27; 2:2-4,16; 4:1-2)
- D. To honor Epaphroditus** who had brought a gift from the Philippians to Paul (4:18), served Paul (2:25) was ill (2:27), but now was returning with the letter to the Philippians as one honored by Paul (2:25-30)
- E. To warn of the threat to their faith** through false teachers who:
  - 1. Establish their own righteousness through the Law
  - 2. Boast in the strictness of their religious observance
  - 3. Consider themselves to have already arrived and to have attained a form of perfection in the eyes of God
- F. To encourage the church to rejoice** irrespective of circumstances (2:18; 3:1; 4:4)--to view imprisonment and suffering in light of a Christological framework:
  - 1. Jesus humbled himself in his incarnation and death
  - 2. God exalted Jesus through the resurrection and established his ultimate victory over all of creation (2:6ff)
  - 3. Therefore one can rejoice because:
    - a. In suffering the gospel is advanced
    - b. There will be a vindication on the day of Christ (2:16; 3:20)
- G. To thank the Philippians** again for their financial support (4:10-20)
- H. To mention Timothy's approaching visit** (2:19), and Paul's hope of visiting the church (2:24)
- I. To provide cautionary and preventative warnings** to the church--stand firm in the faith, complete dedication to the will of Christ (1:27-30)
- J. To provide something like a last will and testament** offering "a confident witness to a beloved church on how to respond faithfully and with joy to life with Christ even when the apostle is no longer present"<sup>21</sup>

**K. To encourage the Philippians to continue in their unity**  
for the sake of continuing their part in the  
proclamation of the message -- especially against  
false teachers<sup>22</sup>

1 Much of what follows is developed from Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians, Word Biblical Commentary*, pp. xxvi-lii; R. P. Martin, *The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; Homer A. Kent, Jr. "Philippians" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol. 11.

2 Shepherd, *Similitude 5.3.8* (Phil. 4:18); 9:13, 7-8 (Phil. 2:2; 3:16; 4:2).

3 He addresses himself to the Philippians and directly mentions Paul as having written to them (3.2). See also Philippians 9.2 (Phil. 2:16), 11.3 (Phil. 4:15), 12:3 (Phil. 3:18)

4 Edward Evanson (1731-1805), F. C. Baur (1792-1805), A. Q. Morton and J. McLeman (See Hawthorne, *Philippians*, p. xxviii).

5 Hawthorne, *Philippians*, pp. xxviii-xxix.

6 Some see Philippians as made up of two letters: (a) 1:1--3:1a; 4:2-7, 10-23, and (b) 3:1b--4:1, 8-9.

Some see Philippians as made up of three letters: (a) 4:10-20 [or 4:10-23], (b) 1:1--3:1a; 4:2-7, 21-23, and (c) 3:1b--4:1, 8-9).

Few scholars agree on the number of "letters" or on what sections go to make up these "letters".

7 Hawthorne, *Philippians*, p. xxx.

8 See Romans 16:16-19; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16.

9 The theory is that 4:10-20 must be a separate earlier letter sent soon after Epaphroditus brought the gift, but carried back to Philippi by someone else since Epaphroditus fell ill.

10 See Bahr, *JBL* 87 (1968).

11 Admittedly, the earliest manuscript that includes Philippians is the Chester Beatty Papyrus (P46) dated AD 200.

12 There may have been too few Jews in Philippi to have a synagogue, and others think that this may be descriptive of a synagogue since they were often placed by water for the convenience of religious ablutions. It seems that Luke is clear, however, when they do go to a synagogue in Acts.

13 Paul could have appealed to his Roman citizenship in order to avoid a flogging, but did not.

14 Although Paul would not claim Roman citizenship to spare himself physical suffering, he would and did claim it to clear Christianity from any possible reproach by the Roman government.

15 Hawthorne, *Philippians*, p. xxxvii.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. xxxviii-xliv.

17 *Ibid.*, pp. xli-xliv.

18 It is not possible to speak with certainty about this matter.

19 See Hawthorne, *Philippians*, p. xlii. Here he is arguing

for a Caesarean location, but the arguments still apply to Rome.

20 See Brevard S. Childs, *The New Testament as Canon: An Introduction*, p. 337.

21 *Ibid.*

22 "To encourage partnership in the Gospel by reflecting upon the highest and most perfect expression of Christian life." (E.E. Johnson)

Therefore, the theme of the book is: Unity in the body is necessary for effective witness to the world. As Johnson writes, "For the Gospel to increase through you it must continue to advance in you." Herb Bateman writes, "Be unified and fight the enemy, not yourselves."

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**Introduction:**

1. “Philippi (city of Philip)-- a city in eastern Macedonia (modern Greece) visited by the apostle Paul. Situated on a plain surrounded by mountains, Philippi lay about 16 kilometers (10 miles) inland from the Aegean Sea. The Egnatian Way, the main overland route between Asia and the West, ran through the city.
2. “Philippi was named for Philip II of Macedonia, the father of Alexander the Great. In 356 B. C. Philip enlarged and renamed the city, which was formerly known as Krenides ("wells, springs"). Philip resettled people from the countryside in Philippi and built a wall around the city and an acropolis atop the surrounding mountain. Although they date from later periods, other points of interest in Philippi include a forum the size of a football field, an open-air theater, two large temples, public buildings, a library, and Roman baths.
3. “In 42 B. C. Mark Antony and Octavian (later Augustus Caesar) combined forces to defeat the armies of Brutus and Cassius, assassins of Julius Caesar, at Philippi. In celebration of the victory, Philippi was made into a Roman colony this entitled its inhabitants to the rights and privileges usually granted those who lived in cities in Italy. Eleven years later, Octavian defeated the forces of Antony and Cleopatra in a naval battle at Actium, on the west coast of Greece. Octavian punished the supporters of Antony by evicting them from Italy and resettling them in Philippi. The vacated sites in Italy were then granted to Octavian's own soldiers as a reward for their victory over Antony.
4. “The apostle Paul visited Philippi on his second missionary journey in A. D. 49. Acts 16:12; 20:6. Evidently the city did not have the necessary number of Jewish males (ten) to form a synagogue, because Paul met with a group of women for prayer outside the city gate. Acts 16:13.
5. “One of the women of Philippi who befriended Paul, named Lydia, was a dealer in purple cloth. Acts 16:14. A Latin inscription uncovered in excavations mentions this trade, thus indicating its economic importance for Philippi.

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6. There is very little reference to the Old Testament in Philipians. This points to most of the believers there having come from a pagan background.
7. We must read about the origin of the church to tie together some of the bits and pieces covered so far. Acts 16: 9 - 40.

**1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:**

- A. This is one of six letters that includes **Timothy** in the greeting. He may have been **Paul's** secretary. Since **Paul** is not affirming his authority as an apostle of **Christ**, he can say **Paul and Timothy**.
- B. They are **servants**, slaves of **Christ Jesus**. They both are His. Moses was called the **servant** of the Lord in the same sense. 2 Kings 18:12.
- C. Later, **Paul** will point out that **Christ Jesus** became a **servant**. Phil. 2:7. He is setting the mood now.
- D. This epistle is about **Christ**. His name appears here about 61 times.
- E. **Saints** is one of the several Old Testaments terms used to describe God's people that is brought over into the New Testament Scriptures. It is a reminder of the holiness of God and consequently, God's people. Holiness is another reoccurring theme in the epistle.
- F. **In Christ** is common in Paul's writing. The religious world wants to define away the meaning, but we are baptized into Christ. Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:27 both affirm this truth. "**In Christ** is used 132 times in Paul." - *Barclay*.
- G. The **bishops** are the overseers or elders of the church. There was more than one of them and they are God's local leaders. The Greek word occurs four other times: Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7 and 1 Peter 2:25. They are not mentioned again in the letter.
- H. The **deacons** are the *formally recognized* servants of the church. The word is generally translated as minister or servant. While each



Christian is a servant, some take on the formal role of **deacon** with the church.

## **2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

- A. As in Ephesians, Paul's greeting speaks to both Greek saints (**grace**) and the Jewish portion of the church (**peace**).
- B. Both of these blessings were more than common words of greetings. They were gifts from the **Father** we have in common. And blessings from our **Lord**. Paul elevated the most ordinary words and raised the sights of his readers to their true source.
- C. Being a Roman colony, there existed the belief in the community that Caesar was lord. Paul uses Lord 15 times in the letter to stake out his claim that **Jesus is Lord**.
- D. The unity of Jews and Gentiles in the church is implied in this greeting. **Our Father**.
- E. If he is speaking **for** the **Father** and the **Lord Jesus Christ**, he is claiming inspiration.

## **3 I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, 4 always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy,**

- A. These beloved saints were recalled to mind frequently. He **thanked God** when he **remembered** them. They were a pleasant memory and he needed some of those, considering that he was imprisoned.
- B. He could **remember** Lydia and her household, the jailer and his household among others.
- C. **Thanksgiving** is a primary part of the life of a believer. What we have and what we enjoy come from God's hand. We must learn to identify and appreciate our blessings. One person carries a "Blessings Book" and makes regular entries.

- D. Paul has opened other books with prayers of **thanksgiving** for those receiving them. Romans, 1 Corinthians, 1 Timothy and Philemon all share that feature.
- E. Most translators choose *prayer* rather than **supplication**.
- F. Paul will use **joy** a total of 16 times in Philippians. Here **joy** springs from his memory of their fellowship. The soldier chained to him did not dampen his **joy** when he thought of his brethren. **Joy** springs from deep causes.

### **5 for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now;**

- A. **Fellowship** is something that one does in common with others. It carries the idea of active participation, as seen here. In our time, the word has degenerated to being passive and social, like a potluck meal. We even designate a large room in the church building as the *fellowship hall*.
- B. ASV translators have added **furtherance of**. He spoke of their **fellowship in the gospel**. They were deeply involved in the good news that Jesus died and rose from grave. The **gospel** is clearly defined in 1 Corinthians 15:1 - 8.
- C. Their **first day** would have been when Paul and his party met with the ladies down by the river side. Acts 16:11 - 15.

### **6 being confident of this very thing, that he who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ:**

- A. Their past and present have brought joy to Paul. He is **confident** about the future as well because God is being allowed to **work** in their lives.
- B. There is a song: *He Who Began a Good Work in You*
- C. We do not win this struggle in our own strength. It is God who will bring us to **perfection**.
- D. **Began:** εἰς ἄρκαμενο\$. The initial ritual of a Greek sacrifice. See Barclay.

**Perfect:** ἐπιτελεῖ - The completion of the Greek sacrifice. See Barclay.

E. The saints of God are *people of the future who live in the present*. Christians are to plan and make decisions with a view to **the day of Jesus Christ**; the day of His return and judgment; the end of this earthly sojourn. Our conversations should reflect this present truth.  
**7 even as it is right for me to be thus minded on behalf of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as, both in my bonds and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers with me of grace.**

- A. Paul asserts that he is **right** to pray for them and believe in their victorious outcome because they have been **partakers** with him in his **bonds** — his imprisonment. He was imprisoned in their town and he is imprisoned now in Rome. Acts 28:16.
- B. Papyri discoveries show that both *apologia*, **defense**, and *bebaiosis*, **confirmation**, were legal terms. He had gone to court in Philippi and they were present and cared. Acts 16:19 -22. See Paul's view of what happened in 1 Thessalonians 2:2.
- C. They had continued to be Paul's friend and supporter. In that sense, they were **partakers with me of grace**. To suffer for Christ is a special favor of God. 1 Peter 4:13.

**8 For God is my witness, how I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus.**

- A. **I long after you all** reveals a deep sense of Christian family affection. He missed their presence and wanted it.
- B. His was not a "tough love." He loved them in the way that Christ had loved them.

**9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment;  
 10 so that ye may approve the things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and void of offence unto the day of Christ;  
 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.**

- A. He knows they **love Christ**. He wants their love to grow and develop. Love, here, is not affection, but points to improvement in outlook.
- B. That growth should take the form of precise **knowledge** (*epignosis*) and moral **discernment** (*aisthesis*). **Love** must comprehend with accuracy and apply the truth with discrimination and ethical common sense.
- C. **Approving the things that are excellent** “is to give one’s entire support to that which through testing has proved to be essential and vital. The result of intelligent love is a right sense of values.” <sup>1</sup>
- D. Such growth in **knowledge and discernment** will enable personal growth so they will be entirely **sincere** and not a cause of blame in the **day of Christ**.
- E. **Filled with the fruits of righteousness**. “Discerning love will also result in a bumper crop (note sing., *karpos*) of uprightness. But even this depends upon the righteousness by faith -- that which comes through Jesus Christ. The goal of all Christian activity is to bring recognition and homage (*epainos*) to the divine perfections (*doxa*) of a redeeming God.” <sup>1</sup>
- F. *The Living Bible* has verse 11 saying, “May you always be doing those good, kind things that show you are a child of God, for this will bring much praise and glory to the Lord.”

**12 Now I would have you know, brethren, that the things (which happened) unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel;**

**13 so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest;**

- A. At first glance and from a human perspective, Paul’s chains (**bonds**) were a genuine setback to the **gospel**. He wants to set their minds at rest and give them the heavenly perspective.
- B. Paul was removed from church-planting duties by the Lord with a goal of preaching to Caesar, top man in the Roman Empire. Paul wanted to do this, too. Acts 19:21; 23:11.

- C. “*Prokope*, **progress**, is from a verb used originally of a pioneer cutting his way through brushwood (Souter, *Pocket Lexicon*, p. 216).”
- D. Now he was in Rome and chained to a Roman soldier. But this was not an ordinary soldier, but a member of Caesar’s elite guard. These men were the king-makers. The gospel was penetrating to the heart of Roman political life.
- E. **Praetorian guard.** “*Praitorion* here refers . . . to the imperial guard (RSV and most commentators; cf. Lightfoot’s famous note *op. cit.*, pp. 99-104). Even professional guards could not resist speaking of this remarkable prisoner and the reason for his imprisonment. Soon the entire city (**all the rest**, ASV) knew that Paul was in chains for the cause of Christ.”<sup>1</sup>
- F. Gordon Fee suggests the Roman guards worked four hour shifts around the clock. This would expose a good many men to the words of Paul in a two-year period.
- G. Paul’s bonds had actually removed barriers rather than making them.

**14 and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.**

- A. Additionally, many **brethren** in Rome gained new **confidence** because their Christian model was jailed for being **bold** about the **word of God**. They said, “If he can do it, I can do it.” They lost their **fear** of the unknown. Paul’s heroism was contagious.
- B. *Courage*, *tolman*, is always a great need among presenters. Paul’s example had set the standard for *courage*.

**15 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will:**

**16 the one (do it) of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel;**

**17 but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds.**

- A. We cannot be certain who preached Christ with the wrong motives. *The Living Bible* say, “Some, of course, are preaching the Good News because they are jealous of the way God has used me. They want reputations as fearless preachers!”
- B. It’s hard to believe that Paul had such opponents. Their goal was to cause Paul more pain and **affliction**.
- C. But there were men who preached from the right motives. They knew that Paul was **set for the defense of the gospel** much as a sentry posted for duty. They stepped in to take up the slack left by Paul’s detention in prison - probably at his own house.

**18 What then? only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.**

- A. Paul **rejoiced** that **Christ was proclaimed** whether the motives were lofty or not. Those who meant to annoy Paul provided further grounds for his **rejoicing**, both in the present and in the future.
- B. Notice that while the message was valid, the motives for **proclaiming** it were not. This is different than preaching a false message of **Christ**.

**19 For I know that this shall turn out to my salvation, through your supplication and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,  
20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing shall I be put to shame, but (that) with all boldness, as always, (so) now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life, or by death.**

- A. Paul expected the events would actually turn out for his **salvation**, probably not in the eternal, but the short-term sense.
- B. There were two forces driving this conclusion: one was their prayers and the other was the Holy **Spirit**.
- C. It is necessary to remember that he expected to be tried before Caesar for charges brought against him by the Sanhedrin back in Jerusalem. As it turned out, his accusers did not come to Rome and Paul was released when the statute of limitations ran out on the charges after two years. This is implied in Acts 28:30.

- D. “*Apokaradokia*, **earnest expectation**, is a striking word, perhaps coined by Paul. Literally it means to look intently into the distance with outstretched head.”<sup>1</sup>
- E. He was intense and **hopeful** that he would always be **bold** so that **Christ would be magnified in his body**, whether he **lived** or **died**. At that time, the outcome was anybody’s guess.

## **21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**

- A. Christ was the total sum of his **life**. In his next sentence, he recounts the advantages of staying on the planet.
- B. On the other hand, **death** would offer some distinct advantages. Notice that he did not contemplate soul-sleeping or non-existence as the alternative.

**22 But if to live in the flesh,-- (if) this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not.**

**23 But I am in a strait betwixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better:**

**24 yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake.**

- A. Paul was neutral about living or dying. Producing more **fruit** from his life did offer an incentive to further living.
- B. **Depart:** *analyo* -- pictures a vessel weighing anchor or a soldier breaking camp.
- C. **Departing** and **being with Christ** was a superior choice for his own interests, but perhaps he needed to live a while longer for **their sake**.
- D. His decision making apparatus was unable to decide. He was in a **strait betwixt**, “hemmed in and under pressure from both sides.”

**25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith;**

**26 that your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus in me through my presence with you again.**

- A. But he knows that he will **abide** — remain a little longer. In fact, he will revisit them.
- B. This will result in their spiritual **progress** and added **joy in their faith**.
- C. This, in turn, will bring on added **glorying in Christ** because Paul is once again **present with them**.

**27 Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ: that, whether I come and see you or be absent, I may hear of your state, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel;**

- A. The main concern here is their **life** style. It must match the message of **Christ**.
- B. **Manner of life**. This is a proud colony of Rome and Paul chooses *politeuomai*, “to live as a citizen,” “to fulfill corporate duties” to describe his goals for them.
- C. “The thought of gladiatorial combat runs throughout these verses: They are to take a firm stand (*steko*), join in combat (*synathleo*) and not be frightened (*ptyreomai*, v. 28).”<sup>1</sup>
- D. “**One spirit** designates a unified offensive; **one soul** (seat of affections) indicates that unity must extend to inward disposition.”<sup>1</sup>

**28 and in nothing affrighted by the adversaries: which is for them an evident token of perdition, but of your salvation, and that from God;**

- A. The verb, to be terrified, **affrighted**, pictures frightened horses about to stampede.<sup>1</sup>
- B. The **adversaries** would be able to read the fearlessness of the saints. They were destined for destruction.



- C. On the other hand, the believer's ability to stand up to the pressure was a **token** of their salvation.

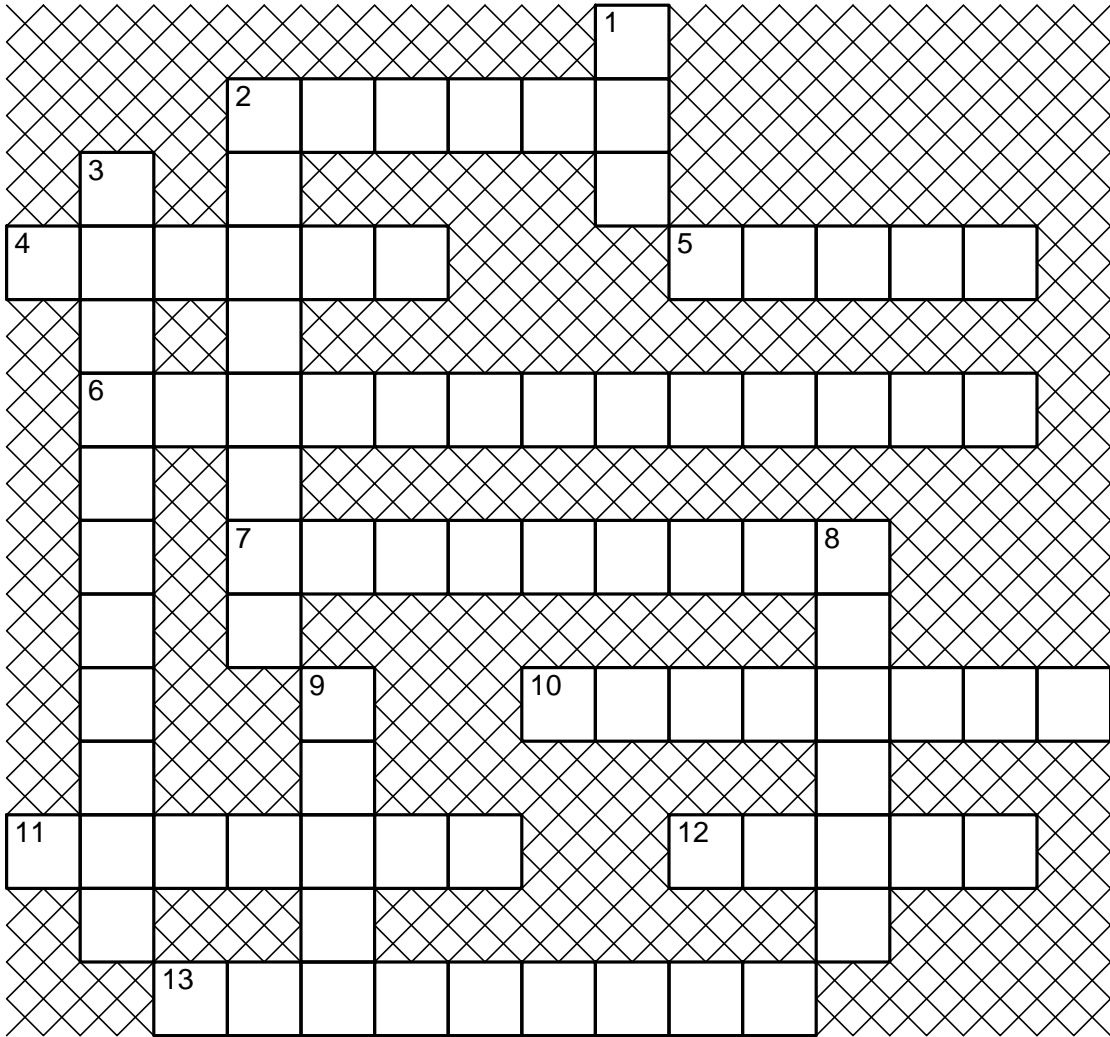
**29 because to you it hath been granted in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf:**

**30 having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.**

- A. God had made special arrangements for their conversion. Acts 16:9.
- B. There is more than initial **belief** and salvation. **Suffering** is part of the package of salvation. 2 Tim 3:12: "Yea, and all that would live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."
- C. "The privilege of **suffering** for Christ is the privilege of doing the kind of work for him that is important enough to merit the world's counterattack."
- D. Paul had experienced the **suffering** phase of the faith while among them at Philippi and they **heard** that he was experiencing it in Rome.

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Philippians 1  
by Lois Dailey



Apr 23,2001

Across

2. What did Lydia sell?
4. Octavian punished his supporters.
5. Paul's greeting to the Jews.
6. Define 'fellowship.'
7. Part of the salvation package.
10. Define 'deacons.'
11. Pau's boldness gave the brethren \_\_\_\_\_.
12. The woman who befriended Paul.
13. Define 'bishops.'

Down

1. Number of Jewish males needed to form a synagogue.
2. Pioneers cutting through brushwood.
3. Verse 2 is a claim to \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Paul's most frequent listeners.
9. Paul's greeting to the Greeks.

**Introduction:**

1. From 1:27, we can see that Paul is concerned about the ongoing unity of the Philippian Church. Whenever a group is under some kind of attack, unity becomes a concern, because some people are tempted to deviate from the course and want to include the troublesome people.
2. While Paul wanted a united church, that unity had to be on the correct basis. He now lays out that basis and the example of Jesus as a model.
3. The opening sentence contains four conditional clauses that point directly to the existing grounds for oneness among believers.

**2:1 If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions,**

- A. There are *four reasons* listed to strive for unity. **Exhortation** here is translated by many as *encouragement* and that fits the thought pattern better. Being **in Christ** is encouraging beyond all measure. “. . . the rabbis call the Messiah the Consoler, the Comforter.” - Thayer
- B. Christ’s love and the saints’ love is **consoling**. **Love** gives meaning and purpose to life.
- C. We work (**fellowship**) with the **Spirit**, also giving meaning to life. Ephesians 3:16; 5:18,19.
- D. **Affection and compassion** for others are actually developed **in Christ**. Colossians 3:12. Life-hardened people develop compassion after being **in Christ** for a while.

**2 make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind;**

- A. The Philippians were already a source of **joy** to Paul. 1:4. He is now wanting to add depth to that **joy**.

- B. There may not be a serious difference between the four clauses in this verse. Rather, the four match the four in verse 1.
- C. **Having the same love** points to an *emotional* rather than a purely *doctrinal* unity. With **love** for our brethren missing, intelligent people can usually find something to divide over. In this case, they were to maintain the **love** that existed and that he had mentioned in verse 1.
- D. Because Christians have a body of beliefs, we are prone to disagreements over them. Romans 12:16; 15:5-6. We must resist this very human tendency.

**3 (doing) nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself;  
4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.**

- A. His point is that **faction** is to be avoided. It was already mentioned in 1:17. **Faction** is self-centered while **counting others better** is group centered.
- B. **Counting others as better** takes humility. We are taught to have a healthy self-esteem and to view our conclusions as the most important.
- C. The Greeks actually considered this quality a short-coming, but Jesus said that it was a virtue. Matthew 11:29.
- D. **Counting another person better** than ourselves does not mean that we accept whatever they say. Christ is the illustration and he held his own views
- E. While there are times that issues are so great that lines must be drawn, yet these should be few and far between. We believe the centrality of immersion into Christ is one of those few times.
- F. Even drawing this line needs to be made with care and making sure that we are not doing this to advance our own interests.

**5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

- A. Now a model or paradigm is brought forward that every reader can grasp. It is the personal example of **Jesus**.
- B. We are to catch his **mind** set. This stretches our **minds!**
- C. Gordon Fee says that when all else fails, read the manual and Paul is reciting the manual to them.

**6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped,**

- A. The elementary doctrinal truth is that before he became flesh, Jesus was in the **form** (morphe) **of God**. Retaining that **form** was in his best interest, but his *guiding principle was our best interest*.
- B. “Morfee means the essential attributes as shown in the form. In his preincarnate state Christ possessed the attributes of God and so appeared to those in heaven who saw him. Here is a clear statement by Paul of the deity of Christ.”  
(from *Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by Biblesoft & Robertson's Word Pictures in the New Testament. Copyright (c) 1985 by Broadman Press)
- C. The *New International Version*: “Who, being in very nature God . . .”
- D. Jesus had **equality** with **God** the Father. There is no question about who Jesus was and is. John 5:18.
- E. The first Adam tried to become **equal with God** while the second Adam became equal with man.
- F. Some, attempting to soften the force of this statement, point out that Jesus did not **grasp** or reach out for **equality with God**. However, **grasp** cannot be used in the sense of reaching for something that one does not possess. The earlier part of the sentence shows that he already possessed it. It is used in the sense of *held on to*, or *retained*.
- G. The example is that Jesus surrendered his **form** to accept another **form** because it was in the best interest of others. This illustrates verse 4 above.

**7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men;**

- A. If he became real **man**, he was real God, because the same word, **form**, is used. To deny his divinity is also to deny his humanity. Isaiah 9:6; Jeremiah 23:6; Micah 5:2; Matthew 1:23; John 1:1-2, 18;
- B. He **emptied himself**. Before his birth to Mary, Jesus was the creator of the earth. John 1:1; Hebrews 1:3. He was at the Father's right hand. He had all power. His power was without limits. Following his birth, his power was limited to that enabled by the Holy Spirit. John 3:34. In his prayer of John 17, he asked for his previous glory to be restored to him. John 17:5.
- C. **Emptying himself** and giving up his glory is the exact opposite of the vainglory warned about in verse 3.

**8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient (even) unto death, yea, the death of the cross.**

- A. The **humbling** of Jesus did not stop with becoming human. It went all of the way to an illegal **death on the cross** at the hands of those whom he came to save.
- B. Closely aligned with **humility** is **obedience**. His **obedience** took him to death. That was the Father's special plan for his life.
- C. All of this was voluntary.

**9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name;**

- A. The humility and obedience have rapid rewards. **God exalted Jesus highly.**
- B. Along with being **exalted**, his **name** (authority) was restored. Not only was he the Son of God, but now the Son of Man as well, an added title.
- C. The **name**, if literal, was Lord as seen in verse 11.
- D. Jesus himself said, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth." Matthew 28:18.

- E. This places Jesus above the highly regarded Caesar of the Roman Empire.
- F. “The fact that the LXX consistently translated the divine name as *kyrios* is substantial evidence that the habit of substituting *adonai* (Hebrew “lord”) for Yahweh, which continues to this day in the Jewish community, goes back before the third century B.C.E. But this also makes for the happy situation that the earliest believers could use God’s title, *Lord*, which also became God’s ‘name’ in the LXX, as their primary designation for Jesus. In so doing they expressed his equality with God but also avoided calling him Yahweh, which is reserved for God the Father.” - *Gordon Fee*
- G. “One can scarcely miss the christological implications. In the Jewish synagogue the appellation *Lord* had long before been substituted for Gods ‘name’ (YHWH). The early believers had now transferred that ‘name’ (*Lord*) to the risen Jesus. Thus, Paul says, in raising Jesus from the dead, God has *exalted him to the highest place* and bestowed on him God’s own *name* — in the Hebrew sense of ‘the Name,’ referring to his investiture with God’s power and authority. At the same time, Paul’s monotheism is kept intact by the final phrase, *to the glory of God the Father*. Thus this final sentence begins with God’s exalting Christ by bestowing on him *the name* and concludes on the same theological note, that all of this is to God the Father’s own *glory*. — *Gordon Fee*.

**10 that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of (things) in heaven and (things) on earth and (things) under the earth,  
11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

- A. The verse is an *allusion* to Isaiah 45:23. It is not a quotation.
- B. The implication is extremely powerful:

22 "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;  
For I am God, and there is no other.

23 "I have sworn by Myself,  
The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness  
And will not turn back,

*That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear  
allegiance.* NASU

Paul has removed the clear reference to Jehovah (*to Me*) and substituted the **name of Jesus**.

- C. Is there coming a time when every man will confess that **Jesus is Lord?** Probably at the end of time. The choice is voluntary now, compulsory later.
- D. In verses 5 - 9, Paul has scanned the activities of **Jesus** from pre-incarnation to the final time on earth and total **Lordship**. Such a packed paragraph!

**12 So then, my beloved, even as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;**

- A. Paul's affection for these saints is unmistakable. He calls them **beloved**.
- B. Like a faithful employee, they were to be working on salvation matters whether he was **present or absent**.
- C. The **obedience** that he requests is based on the **obedience** of Jesus to his Father's will in verse 8. This, too, is obedience to the Father.
- D. Responsible **obedience** in "being of the same mind" (v. 2) is requested. Some commentators try to remove the personal involvement by making the **obedience** simply corporate — involving the entire church. But the church is simply a collection of individuals. Each of us must take responsibility for our development through **obedience**.
- E. Those who define *grace* entirely as: "you can't do a thing, it's all been done for you" must pause at this statement. **Salvation** has:
  1. an *initial* phase (Acts 2:47, Romans 8:24)
  2. this *ongoing* phase (1 Corinthians 9:24 - 25) and
  3. a *final* phase (2 Timothy 2:10; Hebrews 1:14).



**13 for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure.**

- A. God is the energizer (**worketh**). Duracell has an Energizer line of batteries.
- B. He will energize us and we need to respond. “God is actively developing your lives.”

**14 Do all things without murmurings and questionings:****15 that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world,**

- A. **Murmuring** is the word used of the Grecian Jews in Acts 6:1. *Thayer* says the word carries the idea of a “secret displeasure not openly avowed.”
- B. Not only are saints to obey God, but without ongoing **questionings** about the pros and the cons of it all.
- C. **Blameless** carries the idea of free from censure. **Harmless** is in the sense of unmixed, unadulterated. Getting along in the church is a step toward **blamelessness**.
- D. Their lives are to show their lineage to **God** the Father. They are to be **without blemish** in the sense that a sacrifice was to be **unblemished**.
- E. Paul describes the **generation as crooked and perverse**. **Crooked** is simply the opposite of *straight* and **perverse** is *twisted*. The language appears to be drawn from Deuteronomy 32:5.
- F. Christians are more than flickering candles. Paul is much stronger than that when he uses a word for stars (**lights**). The language is very similar to Daniel 12: 1- 4.

**16 holding forth the word of life; that I may have whereof to glory in the day of Christ, that I did not run in vain neither labor in vain.**

- A. The objective of their unity, faithfulness and obedience is that the message of the risen Jesus is **held forth** for all to see.

- B. This will be the reason Paul can **glory in the day of Christ**, which we take to be the day of his coming and judgment day.
- C. When we are dealing with tangibles, it is easy to see if we win or lose, but with intangibles, it is difficult to tell when we win. He wanted the Philippians as evidence that he did not waste his life.
- D. There are two words of achievement. **Run** is drawn from the games and **labor** may be drawn from Paul's own vocation of making tents. He wanted to complete the race and make a useable tent.

**17 Yea, and if I am offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all:**

**18 and in the same manner do ye also joy, and rejoice with me.**

- A. Paul did not know how his court trial would turn out. He might become a drink-offering poured out upon the altar of their **sacrifice and service** for the **faith**. It would bring him **joy**.
- B. They should also **rejoice** with him if that comes about.
- C. An alternate view is that he is being **offered** at the time of writing by being imprisoned and they should **rejoice** in that just as he **rejoices**.

**19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.**

- A. **But I hope in the Lord Jesus** is like saying "If the Lord is willing." Rather than the expression **I hope** standing by itself, the grounds and source of his **hope** are specified.
- B. **Timothy** was present with Paul and he would get some comfort when **Timothy** returned from seeing them. Just knowing how they were would help his heart.
- C. Note the relationship between the men was such that Paul could **send Timothy**. It would be difficult to find such a relationship today.

**20 For I have no man likeminded, who will care truly for your state.**

- A. Only Timothy **cared** that much about the Philippians. He may have been the only one present to have visited Philippi.
- B. He modeled putting others first, following the example of Jesus.

**21 For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.**

- A. Those workers that would come by his house put their own interests first. Making a trip to a distant city to find out about a few people was not on their priority list.

**22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a child (serveth) a father, (so) he served with me in furtherance of the gospel.**

- A. There was a **father**-son relationship between these men. Timothy had joined Paul, Luke and Silas in Acts 16:1 and was at Philippi when Paul was jailed.
- B. Timothy had learned the art of playing second fiddle. There are those who have to play solo violin or they quit the orchestra. They have an ego problem.

**23 Him therefore I hope to send forthwith, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me:**

**24 but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly.**

- A. When the trial was over or the outcome was certain, Paul would **send** word of the outcome with Timothy, but he expected to be released. He may have been aware that no accusers had come from Judea.
- B. As in verse 19, Paul's trust was in the **Lord** for the outcome of his plans.

**25 But I counted it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow-worker and fellow-soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need;**

- A. **Epaphroditus** hailed from Philippi. He will be delivering the letter we are reading.
- B. Part of his original purpose was to bring an offering. Philippians 4:18.

C. The three terms used to describe **Epaphroditus** are interesting: “Paul calls him a **brother** (emphasizing the bond of Christian family love), **fellow-worker** (a term borrowed from the workshop and stressing the spirit of comradeship), and **fellow-soldier** (*systratiotes* pictures Christians fighting side by side against the onslaughts of heathenism. Phillips translates, *comrade-in-arms*).”

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D. Here is a good contextual definition of *apostle* — **messenger**. The word usually had some modifiers when it designated one of the 12.

**26 since he longed after you all, and was sore troubled, because ye had heard that he was sick:**

A. Our word *homesick* fits **Epaphroditus**. That is the word chosen by *The Living Bible*.

B. Additionally, he learned that word of his bodily **sickness** had reached home.

**27 for indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.**

A. **Epaphroditus** had been very ill; approaching **death**.

B. His recovery is attributed to the **mercy of God**.

C. The **mercy** benefitted both **Epaphroditus** and Paul. Otherwise Paul’s **sorrow** would have been increased.

D. Note that on earlier occasions, Paul had healed the sick. Acts 14:8-11; 20:10; 28:8. But that age of direct healing was now past.

E. We cannot locate any cases of healing after A.D. 60. Compare the sickness of Trophimus in 2 Timothy 4:20.

F. Today’s “faith healers” are without foundation in Scripture. They are frauds that lead people astray for money or power.

**28 I have sent him therefore the more diligently, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.**

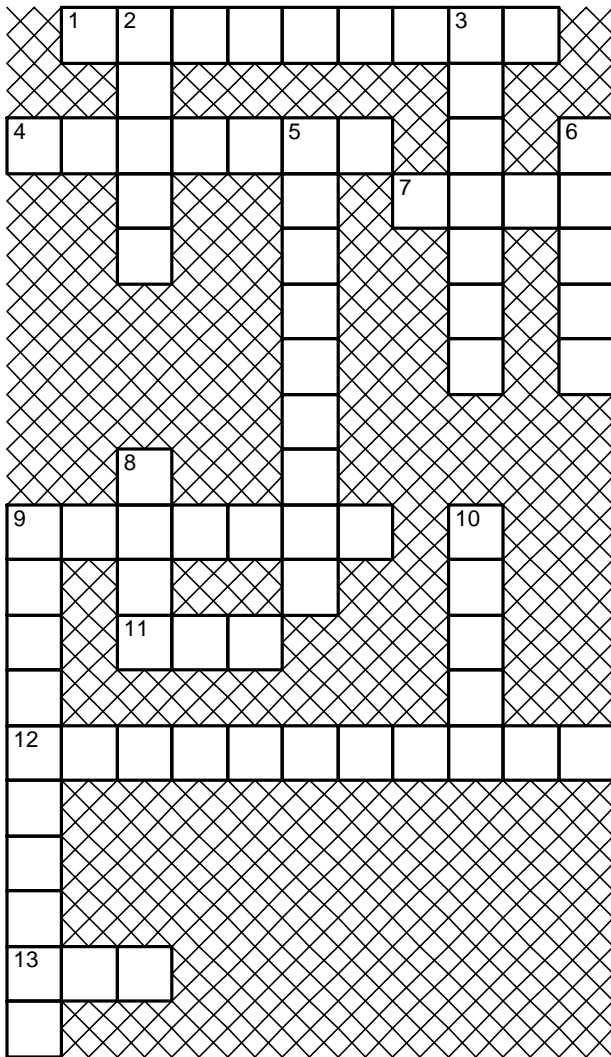
- A. Paul knew that sending **Epaphroditus** would bring happiness to the brethren at Philippi and consequently reduce his own **sorrow**.
- B. **Epaphroditus** modeled self-sacrifice for the good of others.
- C. We have numerous high-tech methods of communication today, but then, a courier was the best choice and that is the role **Epaphroditus** was playing.

**29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all joy; and hold such in honor:**

**30 because for the work of Christ he came nigh unto death, hazarding his life to supply that which was lacking in your service toward me.**

- A. **Epaphroditus** was not to be criticized for returning to Philippi, but was to be held in honor for the risk that he took.
- B. He **hazarded** his life. The word is interesting: “From *parabolos*, ‘venturesome, reckless.’ In Alexandria there grew up an association of men known as the Parabolani. Among the hazardous duties of this ‘suicide squad’ was the nursing of the sick during epidemics.”  
(from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)
- C. We cannot tell just what the **hazard** was, but he survived it.
- D. The rest of the church could not help Paul even though they wanted to and **Epaphroditus** filled the gap.

Philippians 2  
by Lois Dailey



Apr 30,2001

Across

1. A synonym for name.
4. Perverse
7. It gives meaning and purpose to life.
9. Not straight.
11. The second Adam became \_\_\_\_\_,
12. Our lives should be an \_\_\_\_\_ sacrifice.
13. Drawn from the games.

Down

2. To be of the same mind.
3. Like minded with Paul.
5. Worketh
6. The very nature of God.
8. Morphe
9. Not voluntary.
10. Jesus obedience took him there.

**3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not irksome, but for you it is safe.**

- A. **Finally.** Paul sees the end of his comments looming. But the threat of Judaizers elicits some very specific warnings from him.
- B. He opens a section of warning on a very positive note: **rejoice**. Something about warnings usually brings out a sense of possible defeat in us. But we are to be upbeat even about the downbeat subjects.
- C. That **rejoicing** is because we are **in** the Lord. This is the seventh occurrence of the verb **rejoice** in the letter. With Paul, it is not something to experience, but something to be doing. Psalm 32:11; 33:1.
- D. **To write the same things** has opened the door of speculation. Several translators had added *again* to the phrase. *To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.* NASU
- E. As a result, some see here a reference to an earlier letter that we do not have. The evidence is very thin.
- F. *Repetition* is the mark of a good teacher. It was common in the life of Jesus. It is a *trap* for preachers to always have to discover new things and refrain from saying what they said before. A better approach is to find new *ways* to say the old truths.

**2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision:**

- A. There isn't any evidence that Judaism was currently a problem in Philippi. When Paul and his team visited on a Sabbath, there were too few worshipers to form a synagogue. Acts 16:13. Even part of that small pre-synagogue group was converted to Jesus. Perhaps all of them were won over.
- B. It was more likely that itinerant Jews might come into town and try to make adherents. They zeroed in on the churches rather than

make converts from the pagans. For some sense of how they operated, read Galatians 2:1- 14. Jesus spoke of them in Matthew 23:15.

- C. It is a known mark of a good speaker to bring a truth in three ways. Note the speeches of great speakers for this rule. Here Paul warns of their character (**dogs**), their conduct (**evil workers**) and their creed (**concision**). (This word is explained in part G.)
- D. **Beware.** Paul is not gentle or conciliatory with these dedicated Judaizers. Is he setting an example that we should follow?
- E. **Dogs.** Shamelessly and audaciously unclean and impure. Used of Gentiles by Jews, but here applied in reverse by Paul.
- F. **Evil workers.** What looked like a religion of *good works* to some viewers was really a religion of evil deeds, measured from God's point of view.
- G. **Concision.** The ASV here uses an archaic word for "cutting apart or cutting off." (*American Heritage Dictionary.*) The Greek text uses a word found only in the Greek version of the Old Testament in Leviticus 21:5 and 1 Kings 18:28. In both places the reference is to a heathen flesh-cutting ceremony.
- H. These zealous operatives were convinced that circumcision saves.

**3 for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh:**

- A. Paul and his Gentiles (and therefore uncircumcised) brethren at Philippi are of a **circumcision**, but this one **worships by the Spirit of God** and **glories in Jesus Christ** rather than **circumcision**.
- B. Paul is speaking of **circumcision** in another sense, like that of Romans 2:28 - 29 or even Deuteronomy 30:6.
- C. There are different ways to **worship God** and the one used by the Judaizers is not proper. Believers worship in spirit and truth. John 4:23 - 24.



- D. As a result, believers in the Lord are not controlled by certain outward conditions like being **circumcised** and therefore **glorying** in the **flesh**, but live in constant touch with the Lord. Romans 12:1-2.
- E. Gordon Fee says, “Again, ‘flesh’ refers to the rite of circumcision but now carries all of the theological overtones of trying to have grounds for boasting before God in human achievement, the ultimate self-centered expression of life.”
- F. Our **glory**, boasting, is not in us, but in **Jesus Christ**. Some have likened baptism to **circumcision**, but there is very little comparison. **Circumcision** was needed to make a person a member of the covenant nation of Israel. It was a mark in the **flesh**. Baptism points to the death and resurrection of Christ and is for salvation.
- G. A song that sets this to music is: *In the Cross of Christ I Glory*.

**4 though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh: if any other man thinketh to have confidence in the flesh, I yet more:**

- A. Paul was actually better qualified to brag about his fleshly status than the Judaizers that were plaguing his work in every city.
- B. Now he unleashes a list of seven credentials to prove his statement. His self-audit begins:

**5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;**

- A. He had been **circumcised**. *Circumcision* was the original requirement of the covenant way back in Abraham’s time. Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3.
- B. He was not an Ismaelite, because they **circumcise** at 13 years nor was he a proselyte to Judaism. He was no johnny-come-lately to *citizenship* in the nation of **Israel**. Proselyted Gentiles could not match that!
- C. He had the right genes. He was of the **stock of Israel**. It was possible to have *citizenship* in Israel by other means than through birth. For instance, one could become a proselyte and that is

precisely what the Judaizers were trying to get all Gentile Christians to do. But Paul has this privilege in this list of things he is considering garbage and worthless.

- D. He was from the **tribe of Benjamin**, among the elite tribes because their mother Rachel was a wife and not a hand-maid of Jacob. Further, **Benjamin** was one of the two tribes to return from the Babylonian captivity as a group. Further, his namesake, King Saul, came from this tribe. When Gentiles were proselyted, they did not have any set tribal ancestry. For Paul, it was more garbage.
- E. The brag list continues. He was a **Hebrew of Hebrews**. He uses the word here to distinguish the pure culture of Jerusalem natives from the acquired western ways of Jews in enclaves spread across the Roman Empire such as in Alexandria, Egypt. Note the use of the terms by Luke in Acts 6:1. Gentiles turned into Jews could never match Paul's credential of being a **Hebrew of Hebrews**.
- F. From this we can conclude that he knew **Hebrew** (actually Aramaic) well and it was spoken when he was a child at home. He used it to great advantage in Acts 21:40 and 22:2.
- G. Christ has addressed him on the road to Damascus in the **Hebrew** language. Acts 26:14.
- H. Now to items of personal choice. **As touching the law, a Pharisee**. He was from the right-wing, conservative party that followed Scripture much closer than the Sadducees. Galatians 1:14; Acts 23:6 - 9; 26:5.

### **6 as touching zeal, persecuting the church; as touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless.**

- A. **Zeal** is easily understood when we hear its Greek definition: to boil over. Notice its use in Psalm 119:139. Zeal may be seriously misdirected. The Jews abused zeal. Romans 10:2.
- B. Paul's *boiling over* came in his opposition to the **church**. Not one to simply shrug off this intrusive new teaching, he **persecuted** it to the full extent allowed under Judaism. See Luke's reports in Acts 8:3

and 9:1 - 2 plus his own remarks in 1 Corinthians 15:9 and 1 Timothy 1:13.

C. It was possible to lead a life free from outside criticism and therefore considered **righteous**. This is said of Zachariah and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist in Luke 1: 6. Paul said he himself was **blameless**. His conscience didn't convict him of violating the **Law**. He had law-keeping down to a science.

D. Barnes says,

He led a moral and strictly upright life, and no one had occasion to "blame" or to accuse him as a violator of the law of God. There is every reason to believe that Paul, before his conversion, was a young man of correct deportment, of upright life, of entire integrity; and that he was free from the indulgences of vice and passion, into which young people often fall. In all that he ever says of himself as being "the chief of sinners," and as being "unworthy to be called an apostle," he never gives the least intimation that his early life was stained by vice, or corrupted by licentious passions. On the contrary, we are left to the fair presumption that, if any man could be saved by his own works, he was that man. This fact should be allowed to make its proper impression on those who are seeking salvation in the same way; and they should be willing to inquire whether they may not be deceived in the matter, as he was, and whether they are not in as much real danger in depending on their own righteousness, as was this most upright and zealous young man.

(from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)

E. Note that this is a limited, observable keeping of **the law**, the *Torah*, and is far from the **righteousness** imparted to every believer by Christ. Paul had excelled here and found the **fleshly righteousness** to be worth little. Now comes the punch line:

**7 Howbeit what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ.**

A. Paul now introduces the balance sheet. Everyone familiar with bookkeeping can comprehend this metaphor.

- B. Once his credentials list and résumé of recommendations, now he calls the list **loss for Christ**. At the same time, it still places him in a position to counter the Judaizers that plague his preaching. Such lists were important to them and that was the problem Paul was addressing.
- C. But all of this personal status that came through birth and upbringing and achievements made by his own choices do not carry weight in **Christ**.
- D. He is not renouncing this status; it has served the cause of **Christ** in good stead in Paul's encounters with his countrymen. He is saying that they have no value in giving him standing before God.
- E. Paul's seven claims to fame are like the parable of the pearl merchant who sold his entire stock of pearls to purchase the "pearl of great price" because it was worth more than all of his other pearls combined. Matthew 13:45 - 46. These claims "**have I counted loss for Christ.**"
- F. Gordon Fee points out that Paul did not dwell longingly on his past as we have heard some do in their public testimony. It was refuse, junk and needed little more than a passing remark.

**8 Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ,**

- A. Paul expands from his list of seven items to **all things**. Anything he has or has achieved is now on his list.
- B. **Refuse**. There may be a play on words between **Beware of the dogs** in verse two and the word **refuse** here. It probably means *refuse that is thrown to the dogs*. The KJV is very doubtful.
- C. The *New American Standard* translates: *More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ . . . NAS*
- D. "For Christ" is expanded to *the surpassing value of knowing Christ*.

- E. Paul did not just know *about Jesus*, he knew him as **Christ** and **Lord**. His level of commitment was not spurred on simply by raw facts, but a person, experience-centered knowledge of the risen **Jesus**.
- F. He has given up his standing with former friends, teachers and perhaps family members so he could **gain Christ**, that is, a personal knowledge of him. He wasn't concerned what others may have thought about his decision to follow Christ.

**9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, (even) that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith:**

- A. The balance sheet has been revised. The old positive balances are eliminated and the new entries push the new balance into record territory.
- B. Because he is **in Christ**, he enjoys the **righteousness** that is imputed through **faith in Christ** instead of his earned **righteousness of the law** that was inadequate at best. Some have called one *behavioral righteousness* and the other *positional righteousness* because of our position in **Christ**.
- C. This is so different than **law-based righteousness** of the Judaizers.

**10 that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death;**

- A. He was *not* intending to know *about* Christ, but to **know him**. The difference is vast. He was dealing with a person, not an identity from history.
- B. **The power of his resurrection** is the power central to our experience with the Lord. From his **resurrection** springs all of his authority and power in this world and the one to come. Paul's change to following Jesus was based directly in the truth of his **resurrection**. That message was the core message preached throughout Acts and it should be our core message as well. Without the **resurrection** there is no hope.

- C. Jesus **suffered** greatly before getting to the victory of the resurrection. Matthew 16:21; 17:12; Luke 22:15. Paul was **suffering**, too. Acts 9:16; Romans 8:17; 2 Timothy 3:12. This was a **fellowship** or *working together* in the **suffering** experience.
- D. The **suffering** enabled him to experience some of the feeling leading up to the Lord's **death**. 2 Corinthians 4:10 - 12.

### **11 if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.**

- A. While the statement reads as though Paul was hoping to be **resurrected from the dead**, we must match it with his other statements such as Acts 24:15 where he speaks of the **resurrection** of both the righteous and the wicked. Also Acts 26:6 - 8.
- B. Here he hopes to **attain** the **resurrection**, so if *must* be the **resurrection** of the righteous.
- C. The statement matches his other experiences with the Lord. In verse 10 he spoke of fellowship with his sufferings, his conformity with death experiences (though he had not died yet) and here he seeks to conform to the **resurrection** experience made possible through the grand **resurrection** of the Lord.

### **12 Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus.**

- A. Paul was still moving toward his goals. He had not reached them yet.
- B. **Perfection**, in the personal sense, was still ahead.
- C. **But I press on**. He continues to *run* towards his goal. Notice his use of this metaphor from the foot-races.
- D. The Christian life has been compared to a bicycle. We must keep pedaling or we fall off. So here with Paul.

- E. When did **Jesus Christ lay hold** of him? Probably he was remembering the events on the Damascus Road. Acts 9:3 - 6; 15

**13 Brethren, I could not myself yet to have laid hold: but one thing (I do), forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before.**

- A. **I could** is a typo. The word should be **count**.
- B. We asked William E. Paul, editor of *Bible Collectors' World* about the typo and he responded:

Charles,

I checked Phil. 3:13 in seven copies of the 1901 ASV Bible and three more ASV New Testaments (all Nelson), all printed between the 1940s and 1970s. Until fairly recently, Nelson was the sole publisher. They ALL say "count." My guess is that the companies who produce computer editions or CDs of the ASV scanned the copy from a Nelson edition and then, as sometimes happens, the word "count" was read as "could." The Holman hardcopy edition was probably then downloaded from an erroneous computerized copy.

I have found a typo in an ASV New Testament printed in the 1950s, however. It has "last" for "hast" in Phil. 4:9.

Bill Paul

- C. The Apostle is clearly saying that he has not completed his course. He has not attained any kind of perfection. He has laid aside his list of personal qualifications and is moving ahead. Looking back could cause him to lose the race.
- D. The Jewish view of what to do to enter heaven is related to our once-saved-always-saved doctrine. Paul found it necessary to keep moving toward his goals and could not rest on his considerable attainments.

**14 I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.**

- A. **I press.** *Straining forward* (RSV) graphically portrays a runner who draws upon all his remaining strength and stretches out toward the

goal (thus, our homestretch). (from *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)

- B. His real **goal** was not just to come to Philippi, but to be **called by God** because he was IN **Christ**. How we all long for this **high calling**.
- C. In the normal races, the **goal** was simply a wreath. This race is in a different league.

**15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye are otherwise minded, this also shall God reveal unto you: 16 only, whereunto we have attained, by that same (rule) let us walk.**

- A. Gordon Fee says it graphically: “Although Paul’s focus is altogether on the heavenly prize, his running shoes make regular contact with terra firma.”
- B. **Perfect** here is in the sense of *maturity*. *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary* says, “In the mystery religions it designated the fully instructed as opposed to the novices.” (from *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)
- C. **Be thus minded**: “to have a mindset like mine” seems to be the sense of it.
- D. We do not know how God would enable them to come to Paul’s mindset.
  1. It might be through “natural” Christian growth as they read in whatever Scripture they might have.
  2. It could be they had a prophet among them and God would provide needed information through that prophet.
  3. It might be by the teaching of Timothy and Epaphroditus that their views would mature.
- E. At any rate, they are to live by the light as they presently understand it. Anything less would be hypocritical or a retrenchment.
- F. Notice that the action metaphor has changed from *running a race* to **walking** through life.



- G. *The Living Bible* gives an interpretation of the sentence: “I hope all of you who are mature Christians will see eye-to-eye with me on these things, and if you disagree on some point, I believe that God will make it plain to you — if you fully obey the truth you have.

**17 Brethren, be ye imitators together of me, and mark them that so walk even as ye have us for an ensample.**

- A. Paul knew that his example could be copied. He asked others to **imitate** him.
- B. There might be new saints in the congregation that had never met Paul, so there were others that could be copied, too. **Mark** their examples
- C. **Walk** is talking about life style.
- D. The English word **ensample** is not quite the same as *example*. “*Typos (ensample)* was originally the mark left by a blow, and then a ‘pattern’ or ‘mold.’” (from *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)
- E. Paul is concerned about some alleged believers that have an entirely different lifestyle. He brings up their case in the next verse:

**18 For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, (that they are) the enemies of the cross of Christ:**

- A. These may not be Judaizers, but another group who claim to follow **Christ**, but don’t. At any rate, there were **many** of them.
- B. It brought tears for Paul to even remember them. They are actually **enemies of the cross of Christ**.
- C. We do not know much about them; we can only guess a little based on his following comments:

**19 whose end is perdition, whose god is the belly, and (whose) glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.**

- A. They are not simply misguided saints; they are headed for **perdition**, the opposite of salvation. Notice that Paul starts with their pending trip to a lost eternity rather than ending with it after giving the reasons.
- B. They worship their senses. Probably **belly** here stands for more than just food, but a wide range of moral degradation.
- C. They **glory** in the shameful. The things they brag about should not even be discussed, let alone be a point of boasting.
- D. They are dull to anything spiritual and focus their lives on the things of **earth**. We might call them *totally secular*.

**20 For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:**

- A. **Citizenship** was a strong word to Christians in Philippi. Because of their close political and financial ties with Rome, being a responsible **citizen** was very important.
- B. In verse five above, Paul has made his own **citizenship** in Israel an important point among his earthly credentials.
- C. Christians have a dual **citizenship**, just as some Americans are allowed to have dual citizenship. For instance, a person can be a citizen of the United States and Israel at the same time. For more information on this legal point, see [www.webcom.com/richw/dualcit](http://www.webcom.com/richw/dualcit)
- D. But the saint has a loftier **citizenship** that shapes his decisions. He does not primarily *mind earthly things* as the people in verse 19. The saint is a **citizen of a heavenly** colony on earth.
- E. Some have used this statement to opt out of voting and other forms of public participation. Included here are some Churches of Christ and the Jehovah Witness Movement.
- F. Gordon Fee says, "The primary title for the Roman Emperor was 'lord and savior;' Paul now puts those two words side by side: our *Savior* and *Lord*, Jesus Christ who will not only *transform* our present humiliation in glory but do this in keeping with the *power that*

*enables him to bring everything under his control (including the Roman lord and savior, Nero Caesar!).”*

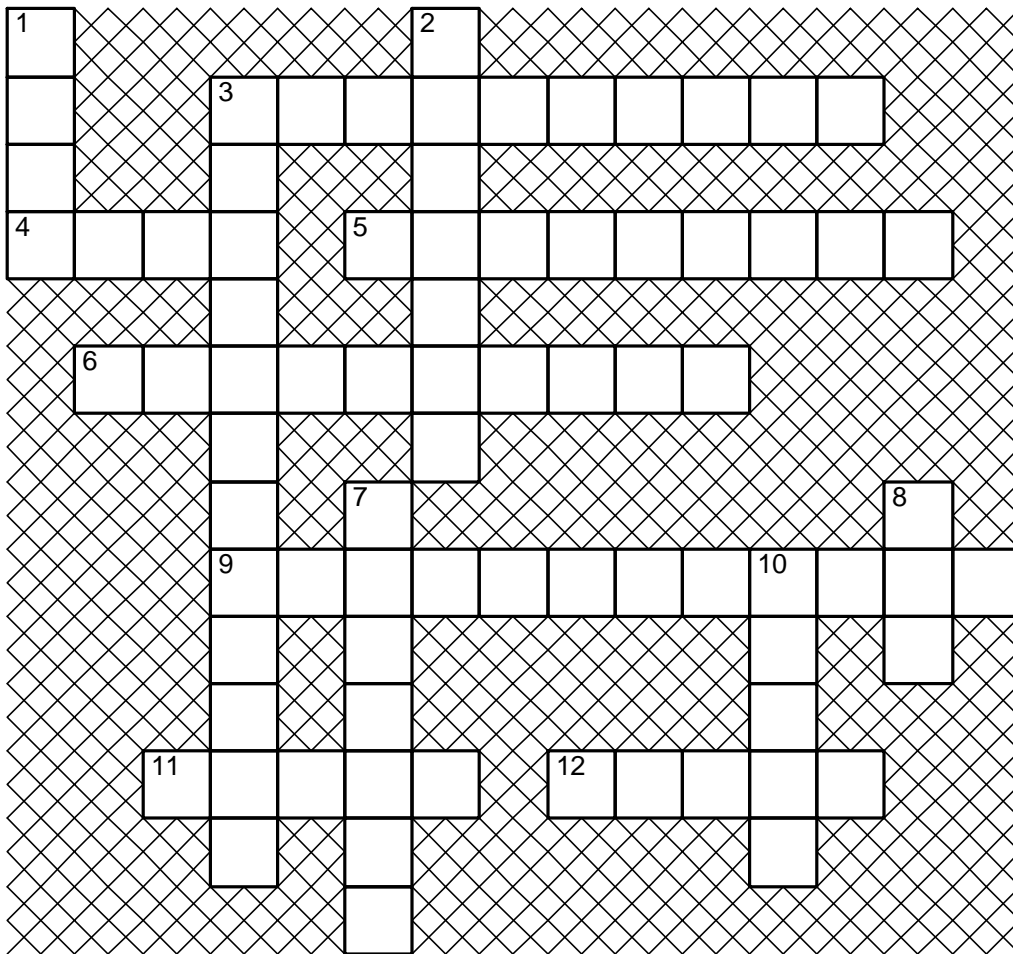
G. Our **Lord** is coming for us. The time schedule is yet to be announced.

**21 who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, (that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.**

A. The **who** is the Lord, of course. He will **fashion anew our body**. We do not know what this will be like. 1 Corinthians 15:42 - 54 develops this point. This runs counter to the views of the Stoics that believed all material matter was sinful.

B. This new **body** will be like that of the resurrected and **glorified** Jesus. He was different after the grave.

Philippians 3  
by Lois Dailey



Apr 30, 2001

Across

3. The mark of a good teacher.
4. Paul counted his credentials as \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Cutting apart and cutting off.
6. To prove his zeal Paul \_\_\_\_\_ the church.
9. Original requirement of the Old Covenant.
11. A word for LAW.
12. A good speaker presents a truth \_\_\_\_\_ ways.

Down

1. To boil over.
2. Paul started his warnings with an upbeat word.
3. The core message preached.
7. Likely spoken in Paul's childhood home.
8. True righteousness comes from \_\_\_\_\_.
10. Number of items on Paul's credential list.

**Introduction:**

1. This chapter is best introduced by looking at the sentence before it:  
Phil 3: 20 - **For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 21 who shall fashion anew the body of our humiliation, (that it may be) conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working whereby he is able even to subject all things unto himself.** ASV
2. Based on the truth that we have a heavenly citizenship, Paul launches into some very practical and applicable requests.
3. Adam Clark believes that verse 1 should have been put with chapter three.

**4:1 Wherefore, my brethren beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my beloved.**

- A. How the **Lord** has changed Saul of Tarsus into Paul the Apostle!  
Consider Acts 9:1-2:  
*Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.* NASU  
  
The **Lord** still changes the lives of believers. Remember, it took a few years to remake Saul into Paul. Romans 12:1-2. We must not expect instant transformation either in ourselves or others.
- B. He **longed** to be with them and to know how they were faring because he loved them deeply. The word **beloved** occurs twice in the same sentence. In fact, there are six terms of endearment in this opening sentence.
- C. This first church in Europe was his crown, his *stephanos*, in the **Lord**. This is the crown given upon winning the games or to a guest at a banquet.

- D. He felt closer to them than any other congregation that he had launched amid trouble and heartache.
- E. **Stand Firm**, *sthkete* - *steékete*. "...used for a soldier standing fast in the shock of battle." - Barclay.

## **2 I exhort Euodia, and I exhort Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord.**

- A. **Euodia** means *Success* and **Syntyche** was named after the goddess of fortune. "**I exhort** Success and Lucky . . ." They had pagan backgrounds.
- B. Imagine this letter being read aloud to the church! The ladies were probably embarrassed a bit.
- C. Paul has been pressing for unity earlier. (Like in 2:2.) He may have had these two ladies in mind then. He asks them **to be of the same mind in the Lord**.
- D. Leaders have more friction! These ladies evidently played leading roles. Paul was neutral in the dispute. He must have heard about their differences from Trophimus.
- E. Barclay observes: "The brotherhood of man is impossible without the Lordship of Christ."

## **3 Yea, I beseech thee also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow-workers, whose names are in the book of life.**

- A. The identity of the **true yokefellow** is very uncertain and speculation is rampant. It was someone the Philippians could readily identify.
- B. Reconciliation between those disputing may involve others in the church. At times, another person may have to step in to **help** the discordant settle their differences enough to keep the church together.

- C. These **women** had been in the church from a very early time because they had worked beside Paul. Perhaps they were some of Lydia's ladies.
- D. *1 Clement* is at [www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-05.htm](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/ANF-01/anf01-05.htm) on the Internet. The author is generally thought to be the same person that Paul references here. Other commentators point out that Clement was a common name.
- E. Paul did not believe that the salvation of the dissidents was hanging in the balance. They were all written **in the book of life**. This is a reference to an Old Testament truth. Psalm 69:28.
- F. It is probable that the names of the citizens of Philippi were recorded in a book and Paul is alluding to a better **book**.

#### **4 Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice.**

- A. This statement has been set to music and is among the choruses of the church. It is closer to a chant than a chorus.

#### **Rejoice In The Lord Always**

Rejoice in the Lord always  
And again we sing rejoice.  
Rejoice in the Lord always  
And again we sing rejoice  
Rejoice, rejoice, and again  
We sing rejoice  
Rejoice, rejoice  
And again we sing rejoice.

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- B. Happiness is a choice, not something that "happens" to unusual people. He is requiring that believers choose **rejoicing** over taking sides in a dispute. Compare Psalm 64:10.

#### **5 Let your forbearance be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand.**

- A. **Forbearing** spirit, ἐπιεικής, *epieikes* - equitable, fair, mild, gentle - Thayer.

B. We *each* need to have the reputation of **forbearance**. See Barclay

C. **At hand** :εγγου\$ *eggus* - near, used of place and position - Thayer. This is Thayer's first definition of the word. Psalm 145:18. We have the **Lord's** constant company. He understands our feelings of exasperation.

### **6 In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

- A. "Thinking it through" is wisdom but "reprocessing the matter" is worry or as one person put it: "To care is a virtue, but to foster cares is sin."
- B. **Everything**: Items small; items large. We must get past the idea that our problem is too small to submit to **God**. He made some incredibly tiny items in this world and he cares about our incredibly tiny problems.
- C. **God's** alternative to **anxiety** is **prayer**. This is a great step of faith for inveterate worriers.
- D. Asking in prayer is combined with learning to **give thanks**. When we give **thanks** for what **God** has already done, we are helped to experience reality and keep balanced in our outlook.
- E. Such implied power! God **knows**, but we still must ask. Our dependency on Him is revealed this way.

### **7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.**

- A. Inner **peace** is the fruit of believing prayer.
- B. "The **peace of God** is that tranquility of spirit that God enjoys and only God can give." (from The Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1962 by Moody Press)
- C. **Guard**, φρουρησει- from *phroureo*- "to protect by a military guard, . . . to prevent hostile invasion, or to keep the inhabitants of a . . . city from flight" - Thayer



- D. We cannot comment on the extent of the **peace** that **God** provides as the writer has already stated that it is beyond **understanding**. What is there left to say?
- E. With a striking metaphor Paul here portrays the **peace of God** as a sentinel standing watch over the citadel of man's inner life — mind, will, and affections.
- F. “Shall guard your emotions and **thoughts**”
- G. All of this happens **in Christ Jesus**.

**8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.**

- A. **True:** The opposite of fiction, fantasy. This writer generally avoids reading fiction for this reason. We live in a world where **truth** is often relative rather than fixed and morality is up for grabs.
- B. **Honorable:** “That which has the dignity of holiness upon it.” - Barclay
- C. **Just:** “Duty faced and duty done.” - Barclay
- D. **Pure:** “So cleansed that it is fit to be brought into the presence of God” - Barclay
- E. **Lovely:** “Winsome is the best translation...” - Barclay
- F. **Good report:** “The things which are fit for God to hear” - Barclay  
Another translator says “That which has a good ring.”
- G. **Virtue:** High quality; includes modesty and purity according to Thayer.
- H. **Praise:** “Anything worthy of praise, or that ought to be praised.”  
(from *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft)
- I. **Think on these things:** Rather than being anxious.

**9 The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you.**

- A. There is a step beyond **learning**. It is possible to learn without **receiving**.
- B. **Received** relates to accepting a body of information. 1 Cor. 15:1,3; Gal. 1:9; 1 Thess 2:13.
- C. Paul uses his own life as a model.
- D. **These things do:** This is in the present tense.
- E. **The God of peace be with you** - as in verse 5. Paul is always conscious of the presence of **God**. He makes this personal rather than saying *the peace of God*. Further, he is closing this letter amidst a strong charge to be **peaceful** in the congregation. Our **God** is a **God of peace**.

**10 But I rejoice in the Lord greatly, that now at length ye have revived your thought for me; wherein ye did indeed take thought, but ye lacked opportunity.**

- A. The financial support that others might consider routine, Paul **rejoiced** about **greatly in the Lord**. Consider the comments of 2 Corinthians 8: 1 - 5. He **rejoiced** that they **thought** of him, sending help again. It is like a perennial blossoming again.
- B. There was a period when he did not hear from them.
- C. Evidently there were no Christian travelers coming from them to Rome.

**11 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content.**

- A. With Paul, there was always an alignment to what was available. He was not describing for the Philippians some terrible need that he had.

- B. **Content:** Paul was *autárkees*, *autárkees*, self-sufficient. He was not constantly shopping and wanting more things. His sufficiency came from Christ and not the inner sufficiency of the Greek Stoics.

**12 I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want.**

- A. Considering Lydia's business and the ladies living with her, she probably had a nice home in Philippi. It was a sharp contrast to some of the places Paul had been since visiting there.
- B. **I have learned the secret.** Paul chose a technical word from the mystery religions. He had been initiated into the **secret** of how to do with and how to do without.
- C. Paul was the truly flexible man. He was not fed by the prison system, but had to provide his own sustenance. He may have been **hungry** and in **want** at times.

**13 I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me.**

- A. Paul's success in handling a variety of conditions did not come from his own special insights, but from the Lord.
- B. The power to adjust came from Christ. He had infused **strength** into Paul and the word is in the present tense, so it was still happening.

**14 Howbeit ye did well that ye had fellowship with my affliction.**

- A. They had sent a money gift in times past and that was **fellowship**, *working together*. The word is a compound of *syn* and *koinoneo* (koy-no-neh'-o) making *synkoinoneo*.
- B. **Did well.** Did a noble thing.
- C. He considered his confinement an **affliction**, even if it was the means for infecting the top ranks of the Roman Military with the Gospel.

**15 And ye yourselves also know, ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but ye only; 16 for even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need.**

- A. **In the beginning of the gospel:** When he first brought his team and the gospel to Europe. The departure may have been that of Acts 17:14. If so, they sent an offering for him at his very next stop.
- B. They were the only **church** that was concerned about Paul's finances past their city limits. It seems that they had sent money gifts more than **once**.
- C. They were financially loyal. Read 2 Corinthians 11:7-9

**17 Not that I seek for the gift; but I seek for the fruit that increaseth to your account.**

- A. Since Paul could handle a wide variety of conditions, he was not waiting and waiting for their **gifts**. He did not view them as a money source.
- B. But he knew that God would bless them in a special way for their thoughtfulness and concern. This is one of the intangibles of giving to the Lord.
- C. His language suggests that God will add interest to their **account**.

**18 But I have all things, and abound: I am filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things (that came) from you, an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God.**

- A. The gift was ample. His needs were met for the foreseeable future.
- B. Their gift had been delivered by their **Epaphroditus**.
- C. The language of an aroma was used frequently in the Old Testament. Genesis 8:21; Lev. 1:9,13,17.
- D. Christian are to conduct life to **please God**. This financial gift was on that list.

**19 And my God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.**

- A. “My Master will repay you.” **God** would bless the entire church for their generosity. One writer calls it a “tit-for-tat” arrangement. If they would help Paul, God would supply their needs.
- B. **God’s** resources are limitless.

**20 Now unto our God and Father (be) the glory for ever and ever. Amen.**

- A. Since God is not only God, but our **Father**, he will recognize and supply needs.
- B. May the **glory** be to Him through and endless succession of indefinite periods.

**21 Salute every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren that are with me salute you.**

- A. Perhaps the elders would read the letter to the church.
- B. It has been suggested that Paul himself penned these last few words, a practice to prove authenticity.

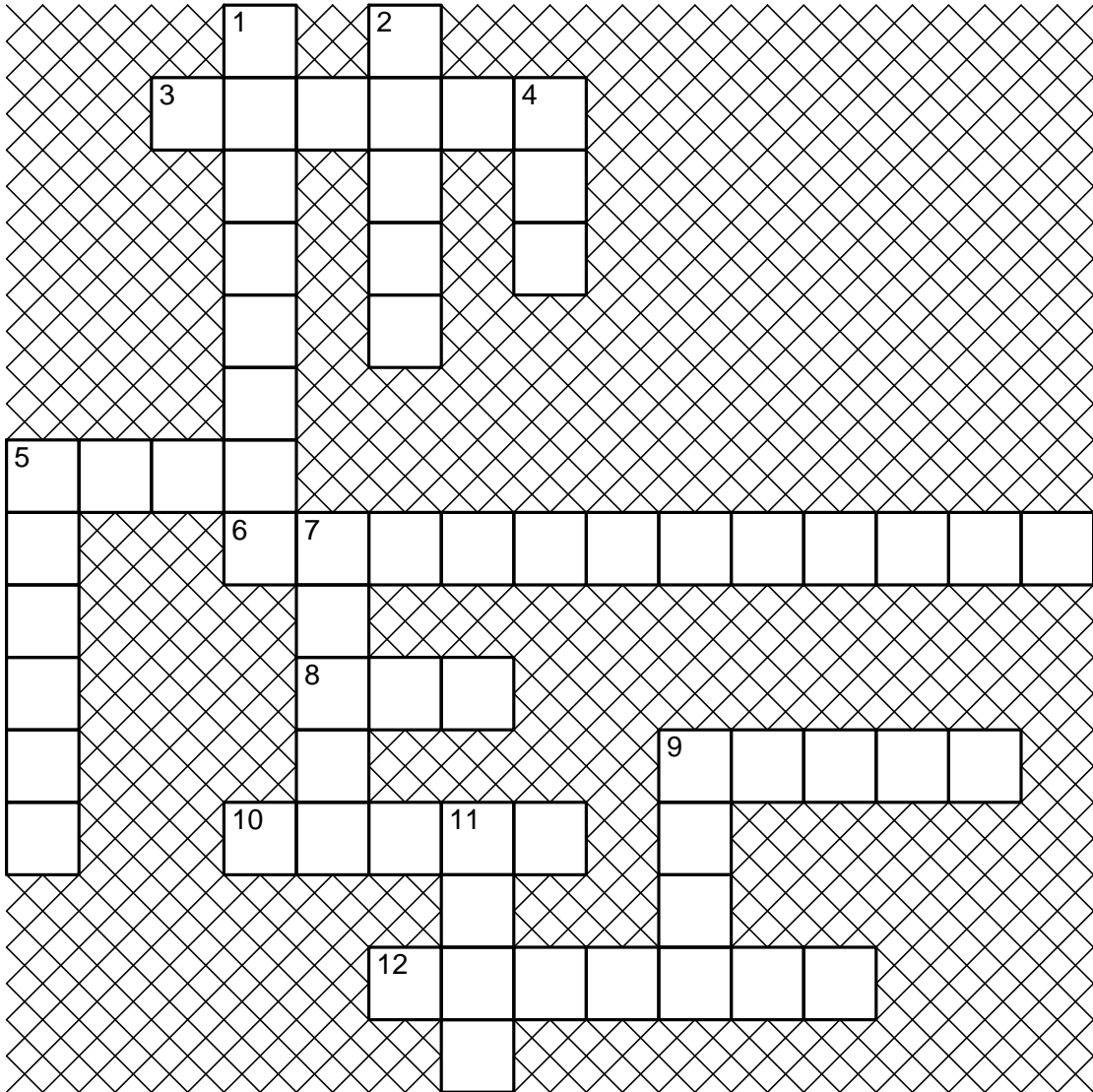
**22 All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Caesar's household.**

- A. This would be the **saints** at the church in Rome sending greetings to their unknown brethren in Philippi.
- B. Barclay says “Caesar’s Household” is equal to saying “The Imperial Civil Service.” This includes the administrators, the secretaries and other civil servants. These were Romans greeting Romans. The gospel had penetrated to the trusted employees of Nero. The message had already begun to conquer the Roman Empire.

**23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.**

- A. Note that he addresses the church as one, your spirit. Even in his concluding sentence, Paul is calling for unity in the Philippian church.

Philippians 4  
by Lois Dailey



May 7, 2001

Across

- 3. The likely letter readers.
- 5. He penned the last few words.
- 6. He delivered the gift to Paul.
- 8. Has limitless resources.
- 9. Meaning of Syntyche
- 10. Paul is calling for it in the last sentence.
- 12. Meaning of Euodia

Down

- 1. What type of man was Paul?
- 2. What is the fruit of believing prayer?
- 4. Number of terms of endearment in the opening sentence.
- 5. God's alternative to anxiety.
- 7. Religious background of Euodia and Syntyche.
- 9. Define winsome.
- 11. Opposite of fiction.