

# PHILIPPIANS

**A** TN Grk “Paul.” The word “from” is not in the Greek text, but has been supplied to indicate the sender of the letter.

**B** TN Traditionally, “servants” or “bond-servants.” Though *δοῦλος* (*doulos*) is normally translated “servant,” the word does not bear the connotation of a free individual serving another. BDAG notes that “servant” for “slave” is largely confined to Biblical transl. and early American times...in normal usage at the present time the two words are carefully distinguished” (BDAG 260 s.v.). One good translation is “bond-servant” (sometimes found in the ASV for *δοῦλος*) in that it often indicates one who sells himself into slavery to another. But as this is archaic, few today understand

its force. Also, many slaves in the Roman world became slaves through Rome’s subjugation of conquered nations, kidnapping, or by being born into slave households.

**S** N Undoubtedly the background for the concept of being the Lord’s slave or servant is to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. For a Jew this concept did not connote drudgery, but honor and privilege. It was used of national Israel at times (Isa 43:10), but was especially associated with famous OT personalities, including such great men as Moses (Josh 14:7), David (Ps 89:3; cf. 2 Sam 7:5, 8) and Elijah (2 Kgs 10:10); all these men were “servants (or slaves) of the Lord.”

**C** SN *The overseers* (or “church leaders,” L&N 53.71) is another term for the same official position of leadership as the “elder.” This is seen in the interchange of the two terms in Titus 1:6–7 and in Acts 20:17, 28, as well as in the parallels between Titus 1:6–7 and 1 Tim 3:1–7.

**D** TN Grk “Grace to you and peace.”

**E** TN This could also be translated “for your every remembrance of me.” See discussion below.

**F** SN *Your participation* (Grk “fellowship”) could refer to Paul rejoicing because of

## Salutation

**1** From Paul<sup>A</sup> and Timothy, slaves<sup>B</sup> of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the overseers<sup>C</sup> and deacons. <sup>2</sup> Grace and peace to you<sup>D</sup> from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

## Prayer for the Church

**3** I thank my God every time I remember you.<sup>E</sup> <sup>4</sup> I always pray with joy in my every prayer for all of you <sup>5</sup> because of your participation<sup>F</sup> in the gospel from the first day until now.<sup>G</sup> <sup>6</sup> For I am sure of this very thing,<sup>H</sup> that the one<sup>I</sup> who began a good work in<sup>J</sup> you will perfect it<sup>K</sup> until the day of Christ Jesus. <sup>7</sup> For<sup>L</sup> it is right for me to think this about all of you, because I have you in my heart,<sup>M</sup> since both in my imprisonment<sup>N</sup> and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel all of you became partners in God’s grace<sup>O</sup> together with me. <sup>8</sup> For God is my witness that I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup> And I pray this, that your love may abound even more and more in knowledge and every kind of insight<sup>10</sup> so that you can decide what is best, and thus be sincere and blameless for the day of Christ, <sup>11</sup> filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God.

## Ministry as a Prisoner

**12** I want you to know, brothers and sisters,<sup>P</sup> that my situation has actually turned out to advance the gospel.<sup>Q</sup> <sup>13</sup> The<sup>R</sup> whole imperial guard<sup>S</sup> and everyone else

the Philippian converts’ “fellowship” in the gospel along with him, but it is more likely that this refers to their active “participation” with him in the gospel by means of the financial support they sent to Paul on more than one occasion, discussed later in this letter (4:10–19, esp. 4:15–16).

**G** TN Several alternatives for translating vv. 3–5 are possible: (1) “I thank my God every time I remember you, yes, always in my every prayer for all of you. I pray with joy because of your participation...” (see NAB; also M. Silva, *Philippians* [BECNT], 43–44; G. D. Fee, *Philippians* [NICNT], 76–80); (2) “I thank my God because of your every remembrance of me. Always in my every prayer for all of you I pray with joy. [I am grateful] for your participation...” (see Moffatt; also P. T. O’Brien, *Philippians* [NIGTC], 58–61). Option (1) is quite similar to the translation above, but sees v. 4a as more or less parenthetical. Option (2) is significantly different in that Paul thanks God because the Philippians remember him rather than when he remembers them.

**H** TN Grk “since I am sure of this very thing.” The verse begins with an adverbial

participle that is dependent on the main verb in v. 3 (“I thank”). Paul here gives one reason for his thankfulness.

**I** TN The referent is clearly God from the overall context of the paragraph and the mention of “the day of Christ Jesus” at the end, which would be redundant if Christ were referred to here.

**J** TN Or “among.”

**K** TN The word “it” is not in the Greek text but has been supplied. Direct objects were frequently omitted in Greek when clear from the context.

**L** TN Grk “Just as.” The sense here is probably, “So I give thanks (v. 3) just as it is right for me...”

**M** TN Or possibly “because you have me in your heart.”

**N** TN Grk “in my bonds.” The meaning “imprisonment” derives from a figurative extension of the literal meaning (“bonds,” “fettters,” “chains”), L&N 37.115.

**O** TN The word “God’s” is supplied from the context (v. 2) to clarify the meaning.

**P** TN Grk “brothers,” but the Greek word may be used for “brothers and sisters” or “fellow Christians” as here (cf. BDAG 18 s.v. ἀδελφός 1, where considerable non-biblical evidence for the plural ἀδελφοί [*adelphoi*] meaning “brothers and sisters” is cited).

**Q** TN Grk “for the advance of the gospel.” The genitive εὐαγγελίου (*euangeliou*) is taken as objective.

**R** TN Grk “so that the whole imperial guard.” The ὥστε (*hōste*) clause that begins v. 13 indicates two results of the spread of the gospel: Outsiders know why Paul is imprisoned (v. 13) and believers are emboldened by his imprisonment (v. 14).

**S** SN *The whole imperial guard* (Grk “praetorium”) can refer to the elite troops stationed in Rome or the headquarters of administrators in the provinces (cf. Matt 27:27; Mark 15:16; John 18:28, 33; 19:9; Acts 23:35). In either case a metonymy is involved, with the place (the praetorium) put for those (soldiers or government