

Introduction to NT Books

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X. The Book of Philippians

A. The Authorship of Philippians

1. External Evidence—the Muratorian Canon as well as numerous patristics attest to Pauline authorship.
2. Internal Evidence—Paul called himself the author (1:1); Paul was imprisoned (1:7) and Timothy was associated with him.

B. The Date of Philippians—this was one of the Prison Epistles written during Paul’s first Roman Imprisonment (c. AD 59-61).

C. The Origin and Destination of Philippians

1. Paul started the church during his second journey and left Luke to pastor the new church plant (Acts 16).¹
2. He wrote to the church from Rome, since Epaphroditus brought a monetary gift to Paul, became ill, and then recovered.

D. The Purpose of Philippians—To encourage and to minister to the spiritual needs of the Philippians with rejoicing.

E. The Characteristics of Philippians

1. Paul addressed the saints, bishops and deacons (1:1).
2. The membership was made up of initially Lydia and her entourage, the formerly demon-possessed young lady, and the jailer and his household.
3. The church had supported Paul financially “once and again” (ἅπαξ καὶ δις).
4. He used the verb/noun (rejoice/joy) at least 18x in the Book.
5. The Apostle knew what it was like to be attacked personally by gospel preachers. His response was “*What then?*” (e.g., ‘so what’). Christians either loved him or disliked him, but Paul’s concern was that the truth was put forth (1:15-18).
6. He gave one of the greatest passages on the humility of Christ. The KJV rendered rightly the verb κενόω (“*made himself of no reputation*”) rather than the literal “emptied Himself” (NASV) since he did not lose anything in the incarnation. He manifested His glory through humility, as the Lord Jesus glorified Himself on the cross (Jn. 12:16, 23 *et al*). The so-called kenosis theories result from the literal translation of the verb which should be understood figurative as elsewhere. Christ did not empty Himself of deity or glory in the incarnation.

¹Paul’s missionary journeys included the first (Acts 13-14), the second (Acts 15-18), and third (Acts 18-21), ending up at Rome (Acts 28).

7. He gave glowing testimonies of the faith and service of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30).
8. Paul looked not for signs but for the Saviour from heaven (3:20-21).
9. The Apostle gave some of the soundest advice for believers concerning prayer, peace, and perspective (4:5-8).
10. He concluded with the strong encouragement to give to missions, indicating that God would meet the needs of giving believers and churches (4:19). The principle of tithing was established before the law with Abraham,² during the law, and after the law, as required for all believers of all dispensations. Built upon giving 10%, the believer should give additional in offerings to the Lord's assembly for the work of God (I Cor. 16:1-3).

²Abraham gave tithes to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18).