Philippians

1. Philippians: An Introduction
   “Letter of Friendship”? (Fee) – discussed alongside Philemon

2. Quick Overview
   Theme: Unity (Phil 1.27; 2.1-4)
   Insight into Paul’s history and mindset as he faces possible death
   Insight into Philippian community: external persecution (?) and internal discord
   Thanksgiving for gift from Philippi
   “Opponents”

3. Philippi in the First Century CE
   Small city in eastern Macedonia
   16km inland from Neapolis; on Via Egnatia
   Roman Rule in 167 BCE; Roman kolonia in 31 BCE under Octavian, settled by veterans
   Romans and Greeks (Epaphroditus, Euodia, Syntyche, Clement); Lydia (Acts)
   Gentile community with involvement of women in leadership; any evidence of Jews?

4. The Philippian Church
   Evidence from Paul’s letter and in Acts 16.12-40
   Paul’s initial visit ~49 CE, marked by conflict? (Phil 1.30; 2.22; 3.18; 4.9; 1 Thess 2.2)
   Exorcism of a slave girl and its consequences (Acts 16.16-24)
   Conversion and baptism of Lydia (Acts 16.13-15) and of jailer (16.25-34) and their households
   Generous with material possessions (Phil 4.16) and sent Epaphroditus to assist Paul (Phil 2.25-30; 4.14)
   “Opponents” (Phil 1.28) – 1. not resident in Philippi (1.15-18); 2. threaten unity (1.27-28);
   3. “dogs” and “evil doers” (3.2); 4. “enemies of the cross of Christ” (3.18-19)
   Internal division between Euodia and Syntyche (Phil 4.2)

5. Paul and the Philippians
   Authenticity and Unity of the Letter
   One letter or two (1.1-3.1; 3.2-4.23) or three (+4.10-20)?
   The problem of 3.1 and translation
   Purpose
   Partnership (koinonia), “friendship” (1.5, 7; 2.1; 3.10; 4.14, 15)
   Report from prison (1.12-26)
   Return of Epaphroditus (2.25-30)
   Advice to the community
   Thanksgiving for gift (4.10-20)
   Place of Imprisonment and Date
   Ephesus (mid 50s), Caesarea Maritima (late 50s), or Rome (early 60s)?
   Praetorium (Phil 1.13) and Caesar’s household (Phil 4.22)
6. Overview

1.1-11: Introduction and Thanksgiving
1.12-26: Paul’s Own Situation
2.19-30: Plans for renewed fellowship – Timothy, Epaphroditus
3.1: Rejoice! or Farewell
3.2-4.3: Servants of Christ and Enemies of the Cross – “dogs”, Paul’s example, appeal to 2 leaders
4.4-23: Concluding exhortations, Thanksgiving, Greetings and benediction

7. Critical Questions

Phil 2.5/6-11
Church hierarchy?

8. Philippi after Paul?

Catastrophic earthquakes in 5th-7th centuries CE
Letter from Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in early 2nd century CE
“Basilica of Paul in Christ” in early/mid 4th century

Philippians Bibliography


Paul’s Christology

1. Paul’s Christology: Introduction
“high” and “low” Christology – approaches: titles vs narrative – Paul and Christ

2. Approach
“Titles”: Son, Lord, Christ/Messiah, Adam
Other attributes: human, Jewish, sinless, faithfulness (?), intercessor, model to imitate
Major debates: earthly Jesus and Paul, pre-existence, divinity
Christology and soteriology

3. “Titles”
“Son”: Romans 1.2-4, also Gal 1.15-16; Rom 1.3, 9; 2 Cor 1.19
“Lord”: Romans 14.8-9; “The day of the Lord” (1 Thess 5.2; 1 Cor 5.5, 1.8; 2 Cor 1.14)
connection with LXX and the name of God (see Rom 10.13/Joel 2.32; 1 Cor 1.31 and 2 Cor 10.17/Jer 9.23-24); the “Lord’s supper” in 1 Cor 11.17-34
“Christ”: Jewish expectation and tradition; simply a name/title; honorific (Novenson)
“Adam”: 1 Cor 15.22 and Rom 5.12-21

4. Attributes and Defining Characteristics
Jesus was human: Gal 4.4; 1 Cor 15.21; Rom 5.15, 8.3
Jesus was a Jew: Gal 4.4, 3.16; Rom 1.3, 9.5
Jesus is sinless: 2 Cor 5.21; Rom 8.3 (?)
Jesus’s “faithfulness”: Rom 3-4; Gal 2-3
Jesus as intercessor: Rom 8.34
Jesus as model to imitate: 1 Cor 11.1; 1 Thess 1.6; Gal 6.2; Phil 2.6-11

5. Major Debates/Issues
Paul and the earthly Jesus: is Paul interested?
Pre-existence:
   Incarnation: Phil 2.5-11; 2 Cor 8.9
   Creation: 1 Cor 8.6; Col 1.16 (?)
   Israel: 1 Cor 10.4
Divinity: Rom 9.5; Titus 2.13 (?); 1 Cor 8.6; Phil 2.6-11

6. Paul’s Christology and Soteriology
Intimately connected
1 Cor 15.3-4 (see also Rom 5.9-10; 1 Thess 1.10)
Drawing on sacrificial language and images:
   “sin offering” (Rom 8.3); “Passover lamb” (1 Cor 5.7); “mercy seat” (Rom 3.25);
   “sin” and “curse for us” (2 Cor 5.21; Gal 3.13); “first fruits” (1 Cor 15.20-23)
Christology Bibliography


