



Focus for week 1: 1) background, placement in New Testament, authorship, and its place in the cannon. 2) Hitting the highlights of chapter 1.

At the beginning:

- 1) The Who, What, When, and Where of Philippians? Philippians: why Philippi?
- 2) The Who, When, and Where of the Apostle Paul?
- 3) Philippians and the Book of Acts: a critical relationship for understanding.
- 4) Setting the stage for what is to come: Philippians 1 overview.

Three Insights:

- 1) N.T. Wright writes: "The confidence Paul has throughout this letter is that God himself is a 'finisher' as well as a 'beginner.' The particular work which has begun, and will finish, is the work of grace, through the gospel, in the hearts and lives of the Philippian Christians. Verse 6 sums it up, as a kind of motto or theme for the letter: the God who began a good work in you will complete it by the day of King Jesus."
- 2) Charles B. Cousar has written: "In many respects Philippians follows the pattern of other Pauline letters. Its salutation is familiar and is followed by a prayer of thanksgiving and petition for Paul's readers, a characteristic Pauline way of introducing the body of letters. Furthermore, the conclusion contains traditional features, such as the sending of

greetings and a benediction....One form of exhortation that appears often in Philippians is the use of models, both positive and negative, to advocate a particular style of life. Ancient rhetoric employed models frequently.”

3) Cousar also provides an extensive outline:

- I. Introduction : 1:1-11
 - a. Salutation: 1:1-2
 - b. Prayer for the Philippians: 1: 3-11
 - i. Thanksgiving: 1:3-8
 - ii. Petition: 1:9-11
- II. Reassurance about the sender: 1:12-26
 - a. Paul’s imprisonment and the spread of the Gospel: 1:12-14
 - b. Contrasting preachers of the Gospel: 1:15-18
 - c. Paul’s anticipated deliverance: 1:18-26
- III. Concern for the recipients: 1:27-2:18
 - a. To express unity and courage in the face of the opposition: 1:27-30
 - b. To manifest unity and humility after the manner of Christ: 2:1-11
 - c. To work for wholeness and faithfulness as a community: 2:12-18
- IV. Travel plans and example to be followed: 2:19-30
 - a. The coming of Timothy to Philippi: 2:19-30
 - b. The anticipated coming of Paul to Philippi: 2:24
 - c. The return of Epaphroditus to Philippi: 2:25-30
- V. Further exhortations and warnings: 3:1–4:3
 - a. Call to rejoice, warning against mutilators, the church as the true circumcision: 3:1-4
 - b. Paul’s story to be imitated: 3:4-16
 - c. Take note of the “enemies of the cross”: 3:17-19
 - d. The church’s heavenly citizenship: 3:20-21
 - e. Appeals to steadfastness and unity: 3:20-21
- VI. Closing: 4:4-23
 - a. Final exhortations: 4:4-9
 - b. The matter of giving and receiving: 4:10-20
 - c. Greetings and benedictions: 4:21-23

Three links for further study:

- 1) For a 10 minute overview of Philippians, check out this link from The Bible Project: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/philippians/> (If the link is hard to type, then simply search/Google “The Bible Project Philippians” and it should pop up quickly).
- 2) Philippians is full of joy. For a full definition of joy and its origins and many uses, please see this entry from dictionary.com: <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/joy> (Again, if the link is difficult simply go to dictionary.com and search for joy).
- 3) Want to see three scholars talk about Paul, the author of Philippians on a truly scholarly level? I found this video recently, and it is really “meaty” and good. It is over an hour, but it is worth your time. Here are the three scholars: N.T. Wright (Professor at University of

St. Andrews), Ross Wagner (Associate Professor at Duke Divinity School), Bruce Corley (President of B.H. Carroll Theological Institute).

Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjUYgrz7xe0>

(Again: you can search/Google “A Seminar on Paul with N.T. Wright Lanier Theological Library” and it should pop up quickly).

Admittedly, it is not so much about Philippians, but it gives you a flavor for the scholarly interest and debate over the Apostle Paul, the writer of Philippians. The comment from N.T. Wright on Philippians begins at 1 hour 8 minutes if you want to hear what he has to say.

For next week, January 29, 2024:

Read chapter 2 and complete chapter 2 study guide as able.

Re-read Acts 16 for background and greater understanding of the setting of Philippians.