

# EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

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**Author & Audience:**

the Apostle Paul, writing to largely non-Jewish Believers in Philippi

**Date:**

61 C.E.

**Purpose:**

Classified among the Prison Epistles, Paul's letter to the Philippians is a genuine letter of thanks and gratitude toward an ancient group of Messiah followers who meant a great deal to the Apostle. In this letter, we see how central the completed work of Yeshua meant to Paul, and how any human achievement—Jewish or otherwise—is relatively meaningless in comparison to Him.

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## 1

**Salutation**

<sup>1</sup> Paul and Timothy, servants of Messiah Yeshua, to all the holy ones in Messiah Yeshua who are in Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

<sup>2</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Yeshua the Messiah.

<sup>3</sup> I thank my God in all my remembrance of you,

<sup>4</sup> always in every supplication of mine for you all, making my supplication with joy,

<sup>5</sup> for your participation in the good news from the first day until now.

<sup>6</sup> I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Yeshua the Messiah,

<sup>7</sup> just as it is right for me to think this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the good news, you all are partakers of grace with me.

<sup>8</sup> For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment,

<sup>10</sup> so that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense unto the day of Messiah;

<sup>11</sup> having been filled with the fruit of righteousness, which *comes* through Yeshua the Messiah, to the glory and praise of God.

**To Me to Live is Messiah**

<sup>12</sup> Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the things *which have happened* to me have come, rather, to the progress of the good news,

<sup>13</sup> so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Messiah has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest,

<sup>14</sup> and that most of the brothers and sisters, having been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear.

<sup>15</sup> Some indeed proclaim Messiah even from envy and strife, but some also from good will;

<sup>16</sup> the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the good news;

<sup>17</sup> the former proclaim Messiah out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my imprisonment.

<sup>18</sup> What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Messiah is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.

<sup>19</sup> For I know that THIS WILL TURN OUT FOR MY SALVATION<sup>a</sup> [Job 13:16], through your supplication and the provision of the Spirit of Yeshua the Messiah,

<sup>20</sup> according to my earnest expectation and hope, that in nothing will I be put to shame, but *that* with all boldness, as always, even now, Messiah will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.

<sup>21</sup> For to me to live is Messiah, and to die is gain.

<sup>22</sup> But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful work for me; and I do not know what I will choose.

<sup>23</sup> But I am hard-pressed between the two, having the desire to depart and be with Messiah, for *that* is very much better;

<sup>24</sup> yet to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.

<sup>25</sup> And convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,

<sup>26</sup> that your boasting may abound in Messiah Yeshua, in me, through my coming to you again.

<sup>27</sup> Only let your manner of life be worthy of the good news of Messiah, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one soul striving together for the faith of the good news;

<sup>28</sup> and not being frightened in anything by *your* opponents—which for them is a sign of destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God.

<sup>29</sup> For to you it has been granted for the sake of Messiah, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

<sup>30</sup> experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

## 2

### *The Messiah's Humility*

<sup>1</sup> Therefore if there is any encouragement in Messiah, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,

<sup>2</sup> make my joy complete, that you be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty deceit, but in humility of mind consider one another better than himself,

<sup>4</sup> each of you not *only* looking out for his own interests, but each of you also for the interests of others.

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Messiah Yeshua,

### *The Carmen Christi*

<sup>6</sup> who, existing in the form of God<sup>b</sup>, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited<sup>c</sup>,

<sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a human being, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a wooden scaffold.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

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<sup>b</sup> Grk. *en morphē Theou huparchōn*; inappropriately rendered as “was in the form of God” (RSV/NASB/NRSV/ESV), as *huparchōn* is a present active participle, best translated as “existing” (ASV/TLV), followed by “being” (KJV/NIV).

<sup>c</sup> Grk. *ouch harpagmon hēgēsato to einai isa Theō*; the term *harpagmos* is widely rendered as “a thing to be grasped” (NASU), but it can more specifically relate to “**some**th. to which one can claim or assert title by gripping or grasping” (BDAG, 133), often with some degree of violence or abuse involved.

Modern translations which have kept this in view, have more appropriately rendered 2:6 with: “did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited” (NRSV); “did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage” (TNIV); “did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage” (HCSB); “he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit” (Common English Bible); “did not regard his equality with God as something he ought to exploit” (Kingdom New Testament).

Appropriate paraphrased versions of 2:6 include: “For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his privileges as God’s equal” (Phillips New Testament); “He had equal status with God but didn’t think so much of himself that he had to cling to the advantages of that status no matter what” (The Message).

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<sup>a</sup> Grk. *sōtēria*; many modern versions have “deliverance,” which is an appropriate alternative rendering, often chosen on the basis of the “salvation” in view not being eternal redemption from sin, but either Paul’s going to be with the Lord (1:23) or being released from prison. Of course, there are elements to one’s “salvation” beyond that of just redemption from sins.

<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Yeshua EVERY KNEE WILL BOW [Isaiah 45:23], in Heaven and on Earth and under the Earth,

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue will confess that Yeshua the Messiah is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

***Shining as Lights in the World***

<sup>12</sup> So then, my beloved, just as you 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;

<sup>13</sup> for it is God who is working in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without murmuring or disputing;

<sup>15</sup> that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world,

<sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life, so that I may have something to boast in the day of Messiah because I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

<sup>17</sup> But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and rejoice with you all.

<sup>18</sup> And in the same way, you also rejoice, and rejoice with me.

***Timothy and Epaphroditus***

<sup>19</sup> But I hope in the Lord Yeshua to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be cheered when I learn of your condition.

<sup>20</sup> For I have no *else* like-minded, who will genuinely care for the things concerning you.

<sup>21</sup> For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Yeshua the Messiah.

<sup>22</sup> But you know his proven worth, that as a child with a father, so he served with me in the good news.

<sup>23</sup> Therefore I hope to send Him immediately, as soon as I see how things *will go* with me;

<sup>24</sup> and I am confident in the Lord that I myself also will be coming shortly.

<sup>25</sup> But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need;

<sup>26</sup> since he has been longing for you all, and has been distressed, because you heard that he was sick.

<sup>27</sup> For indeed he was sick, nearly to death, but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, so that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore I have sent him quite eagerly, so that when you see him again you may rejoice, and that I may be less anxious.

<sup>29</sup> Receive him then in the Lord with all joy, and hold such people in honor;

<sup>30</sup> because for the work of Messiah he came close to death, risking his life to complete that which was lacking in your service to me.

## 3

***The True Righteousness***

<sup>1</sup> Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is indeed not troublesome, and for you it is a safeguard.

<sup>2</sup> Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the mutilation

<sup>3</sup> for we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Messiah Yeshua and have no confidence in the flesh,

<sup>4</sup> though I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else thinks to have confidence in the flesh, I far more:

<sup>5</sup> circumcised the eighth day, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Torah<sup>a</sup>, a Pharisee;

<sup>6</sup> as to zeal, persecuting the assembly; as to the righteousness which is in the Torah<sup>b</sup>, found blameless.

<sup>7</sup> But whatever things were gain to me, these have I counted as loss for the sake of Messiah.

<sup>8</sup> But even more so, I count all things to be loss for the surpassing value of the knowledge of Messiah Yeshua my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them but refuse in order that I may gain Messiah,

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<sup>a</sup> Grk. *kata nomon*; "according to [the] law" (Brown and Comfort, 691); "in regard to the law" (NIV).

<sup>b</sup> Grk. *en nomō*; best rendered with "in the Law" (ASV/NASU/HCSB), followed by "based on the law" (TNIV); poorly rendered as "under the law" (RSV/NRSV/ESV/Kingdom New Testament); value judgments are present in renderings like "legalistic righteousness" (NIV) or "legalism" (CJB).

<sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own from the Torah, but that which is through the faithfulness of Messiah<sup>a</sup>, the righteousness which is from God on the basis of faith,

<sup>10</sup> that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed to His death;

<sup>11</sup> if somehow I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

**Pressing toward the Mark**

<sup>12</sup> Not that I have already obtained *it*, or have already become perfect, but I press on if indeed I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>13</sup> Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have laid hold of *it*; but one thing *I do*: forgetting the things which are behind and straining forward to the things which are before,

<sup>14</sup> I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward calling of God in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>15</sup> Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you;

<sup>16</sup> however, to what we have attained, let us walk by that same *rule*.

<sup>17</sup> Brothers and sisters, join in imitating me, and observe those who are thus walking according to the example you have in us.

<sup>18</sup> For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the wooden scaffold of Messiah,

<sup>19</sup> whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on Earthly things.

<sup>20</sup> For our citizenship is in Heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Yeshua the Messiah;

<sup>21</sup> who will transform the body of our humiliation, *that it may be* conformed to the body of His glory, according to the working of the power He has even to subject all things to Himself.

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<sup>a</sup> Grk. *dia pisteōs Christou*; the rendering “through the faithfulness of Messiah” treats the genitive clause as subjective (cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, 115); it has been more traditionally approached as an objective genitive: “through faith in Christ” (NASU).

The subjective “faithfulness” is employed to represent the Son’s willful obedience to the Father, to be submissive to die for the sins of humanity.

## 4

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters—beloved and longed for, my joy and crown—in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved.

**Exhortations**

<sup>2</sup> I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche, to be of the same mind in the Lord.

<sup>3</sup> Yes, and I ask you, true yokefellow<sup>b</sup>, help these women, for they contended together with me in the good news, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!

<sup>5</sup> Let your forbearance be known to all people. The Lord is at hand.

<sup>6</sup> Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>8</sup> Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good repute, if there is any virtue and if there be any praise, think about these things.

<sup>9</sup> The things which you have both learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace will be with you.

**Acknowledgment of the Philippians’ Gift**

<sup>10</sup> But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; in which you did indeed have concern *before*, but you lacked opportunity.

<sup>11</sup> Not that I speak in regard to lack; for I have learned, in whatever state I am, to be content.

<sup>12</sup> I know how to be humbled, and I know also how to abound; in everything and in all things have I learned the secret both to be

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<sup>b</sup> Grk. *gnēsie suzugo*; also rendered as “true companion” (NASU/ESV); the CJB renders it with the proper name “Szygyus.”

filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in need.

<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, you have done well to share *with me* in my affliction.

<sup>15</sup> And you yourselves also know, Philippians, that in the beginning of the good news, when I departed from Macedonia, no assembly shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you only;

<sup>16</sup> for even in Thessalonica you sent *me help* once and again for my need.

<sup>17</sup> Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your account.

<sup>18</sup> But I have all things and I abound, I have been filled, having received from Epaphroditus the things *that came* from

you, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God.

<sup>19</sup> And my God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Messiah Yeshua.

<sup>20</sup> Now to our God and Father *be* the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

***Final Greetings***

<sup>21</sup> Greet every holy one in Messiah Yeshua. The brothers and sisters who are with me greet you.

<sup>22</sup> All the holy ones greet you, especially those who are of Caesar's household.

<sup>23</sup> The grace of the Lord Yeshua the Messiah be with your spirit.