



Philippians 1:1-2 Partnership in the Gospel

¹Paul and Timothy bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the elders and the deacons: ²Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (NASB)

I. PAUL: FROM MURDERER TO MARTYR

Outstanding missionary, theologian, and writer of the early church. Paul is a very important figure in the NT and in the history of Christianity. He wrote 13 epistles, that comprise almost one-fourth of the NT. Approximately 16 chapters of the book of Acts {13-28} focus on his missionary labors. Thus Paul is the author or subject of nearly one third of the NT and the most important interpreter of the teachings of Christ and of the significance of His life, death, and resurrection.

- A. Early life and training {A.D. 1-35} Birth and Family Background:** Paul was born in a Jewish family in Tarsus of Cilicia {Acts 22:3}, probably sometime during the first decade of the first century. According to Jerome, Paul's family moved to Tarsus from Gischala in Galilee. Paul's family was of the tribe of Benjamin {Phil. 3:5}, and he was named for the most prominent member of the tribe—King Saul. Paul probably came from a family of tentmakers or leatherworkers and, according to Jewish custom, was taught this trade by his father. Apparently the business thrived and Paul's family became moderately wealthy. Paul was a citizen of the city of Tarsus, "an important city" {Acts 21:39}. According to one ancient writer, the property qualification for Tarsian citizenship was 500 drachmae, a year and a half's wages.
- B. Roman Citizenship:** More importantly, Paul was born a Roman citizen. Many speculate that Paul's father or grandfather was honored with citizenship because of some special service rendered to a military proconsul. However, early Christian tradition preserved by Jerome and Photius stated that Paul's parents had been carried as prisoners of war from Gischala to Tarsus, enslaved to a Roman citizen, then freed and granted citizenship. Regardless of how Paul's parents received their citizenship, the book of Acts states three times that he possessed it, and his citizenship was accompanied by important rights that would benefit him in his missionary labors. The Roman citizen had the right of appeal after a trial, exemption from imperial service, right to choose between a local or Roman trial, and protection from degrading forms of punishment like scourging. Paul might have carried a wax tablet that functioned as a birth certificate or certificate of citizenship in order to prove his Roman citizenship. However, most people who claimed citizenship were trusted since the penalty for impersonating a Roman citizen was death.
- C. Rabbinic Training:** Acts 22:3 shows that Paul grew up in Jerusalem. Paul used this fact to prove that he was no Diaspora Jew who was more influenced by Gentile culture than Jewish ways. He was educated in Jerusalem in the Jewish religion according to the traditions of his ancestors {Acts 22:3}. The Mishnah taught: "{At five years old [one is fit] for the scripture, at ten years for the Mishnah, at thirteen [for the fulfillment of] the commandments, at fifteen for the Talmud, at eighteen for the bride-chamber, at twenty for pursuing a calling, at thirty for authority. This is probably a fairly accurate description of the regimen of training that Paul experienced. Acts 22 says that Paul was trained by Rabbi Gamaliel I, the member of the Sanhedrin mentioned in Acts 5:33-39. Gamaliel was a leading Jewish teacher in Paul's day. The Mishnah mentions Gamaliel I frequently and expresses many of his opinions. Gamaliel was listed among 13 great rabbis whose deaths marked the decline of Judaism: "When Rabbi Gamaliel the Elder died, the glory of the Law ceased and purity and abstinence died." The passage implies that Gamaliel was as renowned for his high moral standard as for his interpretation of the Scriptures. Paul quickly excelled as a Jewish rabbinical student. As Paul says in Gal. 1:14, "I advanced in Judaism beyond many contemporaries among my people, because I was extremely zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. [see Acts 26:5 cf. Acts 23:6].
- D. Persecution of Christians:** As an ideal Pharisee Paul was probably active as a Jewish missionary winning Gentiles as proselytes. He may have been like the Pharisees Jesus described who traveled "over land and sea to make one convert" (Matt. 23:15 HCSB)...Paul, more than his mentor Gamaliel (Acts 5:34-39),

recognized the serious threat that the followers of Jesus posed to the traditional Jewish religion. The Mishnah taught that a Jewish male was ready for a position of authority at age 30. Thus Paul was probably in his thirties when he, with authorization from the chief priest, began to imprison believers first in the synagogues of Jerusalem and the later in Damascus. Perhaps Paul's clearest description of persecution is found in Acts 26:11, "I myself supposed it was necessary to do many things in opposition to the name of Jesus of Nazarene. This I actually did in Jerusalem, and I locked up many of the saints in prison, since I had received authority for that from the chief priest. When they were put to death, I cast my vote against them (read Acts 7: 54-60 cf. Acts 8:1-3 and for context read Acts 6:7-7:1-60, R.F.).

In all the synagogues I often tried to make them blaspheme by punishing them. Being greatly enraged at them, I even pursued them to foreign cities" (HCSB). Paul's initial and adamant rejection of Jesus as the Messiah may largely have been motivated by Jesus' ignoble death. Death by crucifixion was indicative of divine curse (Deut. 21:23). Certainly the Messiah could not have died under the curse of God. But when Paul wrote his first epistle, this death curse was recognized as the grounds for substitutionary atonement (Gal.3: 10-14). In 1 Cor.1 Paul explained that the idea of a crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to the Jews. Probably Paul was speaking from his own past experience.

E. Paul's Conversion: While Saul was on his way to Damascus to arrest and imprison believers there, the resurrected and glorified Christ appeared to him with blinding radiance. Christ's words "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" indicate that God had already begun his convicting work earlier. Like an ox kicking against a goad in the hand of the ox driver, Paul had been resisting divine guidance and leadership resulting in his own harm and pain. At the appearance of Christ, Saul immediately surrendered to His authority and went into the city to await further orders. There his blindness was healed and he received the Holy Spirit and accepted believer's baptism. No doubt Ananias shared with Paul the message that the Lord had given him in a vision: "This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before Gentiles, Kings, and the son's of Israel. I will certainly show him how much he must suffer for my name!" Paul spent a few days with the disciples in Damascus. (see Paul's Missionary Travels-A.D. 35-61- Early Travels, First missionary Journey A.D. 47-48, Jerusalem Council A.D.49, Second missionary Journey A.D.50-52, Third Missionary Journey A.D. 53-57, Final Years A.D.57-67, (Holman's Illustrated Bible Dictionary Completely revised, updated and expanded).

F. Question: What comes to one's mind when you read and or think about Paul the Apostle?

1. Is 61: 1-3 NLT-The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for He has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim the captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD'S favor has come.
2. J. Alec Motyer...we have far too long, been asking wrong questions and following misleading trails: we need Philipppians to challenge, correct, and guide. Yet these things(and others which could be mentioned) are only by-products: calls to unity, teaching about ministry—*what are these unless we get back to knowing Him, our Lord Jesus, understanding who and what He is, and making Him all our joy.* (*The Message of Philipppians A.J Moyter (excerpt taken from Author's Preface)*)

II. EXEGETING THE PASSAGE

A. Yeshua is the Foundation: ...bond-servants of Christ Jesus...all the saints in Christ Jesus...God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. "Three themes, then, intertwine to make up the letter to the Philipppians. But the uniting factor is not any one of them, nor even all of them—neither a present situation nor a coming event—but the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the fully divine Lord, of one being and equal with God. Rightful possessor of the divine name, together with the Father the source of Grace and Peace and heavenly riches. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. To His people He is The coming One the Lord of the future; but He is also the Jesus of the past—of the Cross, of the experience of personal faith, reposed in Him by the sovereign gift and call of God, and of that gift of righteousness which satisfies God's requirements. Likewise, He is the present Lord Jesus Christ: He will come as the transformer, but He is even now transforming, for He is the source of the present fruit of righteousness which Christians would bring fourth to His glory. He is their joy. In all circumstances He gives confidence and security, for He is Lord of circumstances, and when proved is found sufficient. They regard Him as worthy of all devotion, and will serve Him to the end. Their objective is that He should be seen in them. It is in Him they find their

present oneness, which they seek to implement by loving each other as He has loved them and by conforming their emotions to His. He is their message to the world, and their chief prize when this world is done. This is the richness of Christ; this is the Jesus who is His peoples joy.” *The Message of Philippians*
A.J. Moyer

B. Divine Partnership: Bond-servants and Saints of God

Paul and timothy bond-servants of Christ Jesus...

1. Mind of Christ:
 - a) Title qualifications not used in this opening
 - b) Cf.1Corinthians 2:1,2-NLT- When I first came to you, dear brothers and sisters, I didn’t use lofty words and impressive wisdom to tell you God’s secret plan. For I decided that while I was with you I would forget everything except Jesus Christ, the one who was crucified.
 - c) Paul begins by validating Timothy (Faith Dean) No “I” in team...unity is essential for kingdom expansion...Story from the Big House...Hoppy and Larry...Wayne and I...
 - d) Seeing in another what they don’t see in themselves...spiritual eyes...
2. Quote: “If God be your Partner make your plans BIG”-Robert L. Johnson-
3. *Chesed*: loving-kindness: God’s election, covenant keeping, or steadfast love. It is a love that remains constant regardless of the circumstances.
 - One who is closer than a friend.
 - Shares on multiple, even deep levels...confides from the heart.
 - Unselfish or unreserved in the sharing of one’s life, resources.
 - Each for the welfare of the other.

C. True Companionship is one of life’s sweetest realities: a companion is one who is closer than a friend or an associate. At its roots the word implies the sharing of one’s bread with another; thus, signifying the unselfish, unreserved sharing of life and livelihood, each for the welfare of the other.

Said the Lord Jesus, “Lo, I am with you all the days, even unto the end of the age”! To realize His presence with us on life’s pathway, to know that He shares our joys and our sorrows, and to be confident that He is able to supply all our need, creates a quietness and confidence of spirit that are indispensable for the Spirit-filled life. -V. Raymond Edman-

1. Prov. 18:24 ESV-A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.
2. Prov. 18:24- The man of too many friends [chose indiscriminately] will be broken in pieces and come to ruin, But there is a [true, loving] friend who [is reliable and] sticks closer than a brother.
3. Prov. 18:24 NLT-There are “friends” who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.
4. Prov. 18:24-Some friendships don’t last for long, but there is one loving friend who is joined to your heart closer than any other.

D. Leaders Alongside: How is leadership to be exercised/ What is the relationship between the leader and led? The one word *with* provides the answer: ‘...the saints,’ writes Paul, ‘...*with* the bishops and deacons’. The natural leader chooses the easy path of being out front, taking it for granted that all will follow; the low profile leader ‘plays it cool’ submerges his own identity and takes the risk that the tail will soon wag the dog. The more demanding exercise, the sterner discipline and the more rewarding way are found in companionate leadership, the saints *with* the overseers and deacons. This kind of leadership has many facets. It involves realizing that leader and led share the same Christian experience: both are sinners saved by the same precious blood, always and without distinction dependent on the same patient mercy of God. It involves putting first whatever creates and maintains the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It means that leaders see themselves first as members of the body, and only then as ministers. In this way they face every situation from within the local body of Christ and not as people dropped in from the outside (or even from above!) It involves patiently waiting for the Holy Spirit to grant unanimity to the church in making and executing plans. It involves open relationships in which the leaders do not scheme to get their own way or play off one against another but act with transparent integrity. It involves willingness to be overruled, to jettison role-playing and status-seeking, to be ready to cast a single vote with everyone else. It involves putting the welfare of the body of Christ before all personal advantage, success, or reputation and it

involves co-equal sacrifice for the Lord and His Gospel. It is the leadership of those who are content to stand among the saints as those who serve. *The Message of Philippians A.J. Moyer*

1. Example: Peder, Steve, and myself...enough, learning to serve Christ's church with attitudes united with the mind and heart's joy of Yeshua...pray for us in this regard...flawed vessels on our best days...companionship growth.

III. BONDSERVANTS OF CHRIST

- A. A Bondservant is a Slave:** In some Bibles the word bondservant is the translation of the Greek word *doulos*, which means "one who is subservient to, and entirely at the disposal of, his master; a slave." Other translations use the word slave or servant.
1. In Roman times, the term bondservant or slave could refer to someone who voluntarily served others. But it usually referred to one who was held in a permanent position of servitude. Under Roman law, a bondservant was considered the owner's personal property. Slaves essentially had no rights and could even be killed with impunity by their owners.
 2. The Hebrew word for "bondservant," *'ebed*, had a similar connotation. However, the Mosaic Law allowed an indentured servant to become a bondservant voluntarily: "If the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life" (Exodus 21:5-6).
 3. Many prominent men of the Old Testament were referred to as servants. God spoke of Abraham as His servant (Genesis 26:24; Numbers 12:7). Joshua is called the servant of the Lord (Joshua 24:29), as are David (2 Samuel 7:5) and Isaiah (Isaiah 20:3). Even the Messiah is called God's Servant (Isaiah 53:11). In all of these instances, the term servant carries the idea of humble nobility. Being God's servant is an honorable position.
 4. During the time of Jesus and the first-century church, as much as one third of the Roman population were slaves, and another third had been slaves earlier in life. It was common for freeborn men and women to work side-by-side with slaves as street sweepers, dockworkers, doctors, teachers, and business managers. Convicted criminals became bondservants of the state and usually died working in the mines or on galleys.
 5. Historical records reveal that it was not unusual for Jews to own slaves during the New Testament period. Because slavery was a familiar part of the culture, Jesus sometimes referred to slaves and owners in His parables (e.g., Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 12:41-48). Also, Jesus taught that the greatest in God's kingdom would have to become "the servant of all" (Mark 9:35). Such a concept was unthinkable to a Roman citizen, who prided himself in his freedom and would never identify himself as a bondservant. But Jesus' kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36), and the selfish values of earth are of no consequence in heaven.
- B. Devoted to Jesus:** Throughout the New Testament, the word bondservant, slave, or servant is applied metaphorically to someone absolutely devoted to Jesus. Paul, Timothy, James, Peter, and Jude all describe themselves as "bondservants of Christ" (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1, NKJV).
1. Believers today should still consider themselves bondservants or slaves of Christ (1 Corinthians 7:22; Ephesians 6:6; 2 Timothy 2:24). He is our Lord, and our allegiance is due to Him alone. As bondservants, we renounce other masters (Matthew 6:24) and give ourselves totally to Him (Matthew 16:24).
 2. Being a bondservant of Christ is not drudgery. His "burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). Also, we have this promise: "Now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life" (Romans 6:22).
- C. Bond-Servant Categories**
1. Slaves to sin-Rom.6:16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? Cf. vss. 19-21

2. Slaves of righteousness-Rom. 6:17 but thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed. Vs, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

D. Ha' satan: Holds his Bond-Servants...these are soul ties-see Satan's 4 Tools-

- Blindness / deception-2 Cor.4:4
- Fear-2 Cor. 11:3
- Torment-1 Jn.4:18

1. African Slave-Trade example...willie Lynch...true or not?... horrendous examples

2. Biggest Challenge Post emancipation-convincing former slaves they're free men.

E. Yeshua's Bond-Servants

- Spirit-2 Tim.1:7, For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and discipline...cf. Rom.5:10
- But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I but the grace of god with me.
- Mercy: You, Lord are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you.

1. Scripture: 1 Pet.2:9 But you are a Chosen Race, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a People for God's own Possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

2. Question: What is your spiritual net worth? ...Ira Yates story...

3. Reflection: The greater the transformation, the greater the desire to fulfill the call of God in your life.

4. "is not Holy Spirit the consummate Servant of Christ Jesus? And therefore ONLY through the union of our spirit with Him can we fulfill our calling as bondservants" (Pete Dean)

F. Bondservant/Saint: cf. Mt. 25:14-30...Call to Action!

- Familiar with the master's management style...trained accordingly.
- Resource management, ROI master's top priority.
- Accountability factors play a key role here.
- Rebuke and judgement / praise and reward. -see above reflection-

1. Key verse: Mt. 25:29-For to everyone who has more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; butn from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.

2. Reflection: The greatest resource in the world is the Human soul. The lost soul is our Father's chief concern. Shouldn't it be our main concern as well?

IV. CLOSING

A. Grace & Peace: See weekly encouragement note portion on God's Grace and Peace.

B. How do we want to finish our sojourn here on planet earth? Oscar Shindler ending or Samuel the Prophet.

1. One had regret because he realized, all but too late the true value of a human soul.

2. The latter had a clean conscience before God and men.

C. Intimacy with Yeshua: *The believer should never be satisfied with their current level of intimacy with Yeshua. There is always more because HE IS MORE !*

- Yeshua is your "Present fruit of Righteousness" believe it and live it!
- Yeshua is your joy, believe it and live it!
- Yeshua not only gives you confidence and security as the Lord of your circumstances, He is also your sufficiency in all things, believe it and live it!

D. Final Reflections

1. Is Yeshua worthy of your devotion?

2. Will you serve Yeshua, no matter the call, will you go and will you do whatever He ask of you?

3. Is your greatest desire that others might see Yeshua in you?

4. Are you practicing in the moments of the day seeking and finding Yeshua? He's right there with you!

5. The outflow of Yeshua in your moment is loving others around you. This is the message the world needs most. You are the Saints of God. Believe it and Live it!