

Introduction he was  
going to persecute  
the christians.



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## **Introduction**

The book of Philippians was written by Paul, a servant of God by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is one of the Pauline epistles and is found in the new testament of the Bible. The book was written when Paul was in prison in Rome. He had been arrested because of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The book of Philippians is a letter that Paul wrote to the church in Philippi and specifically addressing the saints, overseers and the deacons. Philippi was a roman colony that was inhabited by the veteran of the Roman army and there were Christians that worked together with Paul in his ministry. The author of the book was once a teacher of the law among the Jews. He persecuted Christians for a long time, killed some of them and had others put in prison. He was a strict follower of the Jewish law and completely against Christians. His name was initially Saul but was changed to Paul when he encountered with Jesus whom he persecuted for a long time. The Lord appeared to Saul when he (Saul) was on his way to Damascus on his usual mission of persecuting the followers of Jesus Christ. A great light appeared to Saul and he went blind for three days.

This marked the beginning of his conversion to a true follower of Jesus Christ. He was then sent to witness Jesus Christ to many places including Damascus where he was going to persecute the Christians. When writing the book of Philippians, he was well known as a true follower of Christ and was in chains for the sake of the gospel. This book is basically Paul's expression of gratitude to the Christians at Philippi for the support they offered him when he is in prison. He sends a message of thanks giving to the Philippians, warns

them on how to live in order to advance the gospel. Paul also expresses his joy in his imprisonment as it served as away of advancing the gospel. He asks them to rejoice with him. The purpose of this essay is to analyze the book of Philippians and evaluate its effectiveness to its audience.

A brief summary is presented before analysis and evaluation.

## **Summary of the Book of Philippians**

The book targets the Philippians who had worked together with the author, Paul, in the advancement of the gospel. He first thanks God for the Philippians because of the support that they gave him when he was in prison. They sent him gifts and any other things that he needed through Epaphroditus. Paul prays for tem that their love may continue and that they may live righteously until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He also explains that he rejoices in his suffering in prison because through it the gospel is advancing. He advises them to rejoice with him and also behave always in a manner that is in keeping with the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Philippians are also advised to imitate the humility that was with Christ Jesus who, being in the very nature God, considered himself as a servant and humbled to the point of death. Paul tells them to continue in obedience as they have been in his presence and commendably in his absence. He tells them that through such obedience they will shine as stars amidst a perverse generation. He also promises to send Timothy and Epaphroditus to see how they (Philippians) are fairing.

Philippians are warned of corrupt men who mutilate the flesh and are

advised to have no confidence in the flesh but desire to know Christ the  
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more as he (Paul) desires. Paul also explains his mission of pursuing the goal of his heavenly calling. He then thanks them once more for the gifts they sent him through Epaphroditus. He finally sends them greetings from the saints with him and also wishes them the surpassing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ up on their lives.

## **Analysis of the Book of Philippians**

The book of Philippians, having been written when Paul was in jail, contains a lot of facts that the audience are aware of. They knew that Paul is in chains for the sake of the gospel and they offered him support that he needed.

The letter is quite persuasive yet not by the words of Paul but through the evidence of the facts presented. Paul tells them in chapter one verse 3, 4 and 5 that, “[3]I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,[4] Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,[5] For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now” (KJV Bible 1). This shows that the audience targeted had worked hand in hand with Paul in the course of his ministry from the beginning hitherto. Every word of Paul is very persuasive because they understand his course and the reason for imprisonment. The letter is written in the context of Paul’s experience which the audiences at Philippi were aware of. The confidence he has in Christ Jesus is also convincing because he is writing to the people who are free, but him in jail, encouraging them not to move on with the work of the gospel.

The example of the humility of Christ Jesus used in the book also persuades the audience that they should do as Paul advises. According to KJV Bible (1), Jesus Christ suffered to the point of death, even death on the cross, but God

later glorified him. This gives Paul strength to rejoice in his imprisonment because he knew that as Christ was glorified by God after suffering, his (Paul) suffering will as well be rewarding. In this book, Paul expresses his love for the Philippians because of the support they gave him throughout his ministry. He compares this church with other churches in the early days and feels that it deserves his credit for their incomparable and outstanding support they gave him. In his mission to Thessalonica, for instance, it is only the church at Philippi that shared with him in the matter. They shared in his troubles and even when he is jailed, they still offer him support.

He tells them in chapter four of the letter that, [...14] notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. [15] Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.[16] For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity...] (KJV Bible 1). In this Paul feels that the church at Philippi did exemplary good compared to other churches in supporting him in the ministry.

In his advice to the church concerning humility, he tells them to imitate Christ. Jesus Christ was in the very nature God but chose to be a servant. This is the humility that the Philippians are advised to have in the course of their service to God. In this manner, they should be ready to stand firm in case persecutions come their way without looking back. The book persuades the audience to follow the advice of Paul through presenting to them overwhelming examples like the case of humility of Jesus. The audience is

aware of how the Lord Jesus Christ suffered yet he remained humble to death. Then God glorified him even over death.

The example is therefore quite convincing as it is backed up by the knowledge and faith the audience has on it. The fact that Paul is in jail, his outstanding hope and faith in Jesus Christ serves as strong evidence that the faith and the sufferings of the saints is not in vain. Paul explains that he only desires to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. He is ready to share in the suffering of Christ to death and never compromise. This is really convincing to the audience that there is hope in Christ if Paul has such confidence and is in jail. Paul would expect that the readers of the letter understand the kind of life he lived before he encountered with Christ; how he persecuted the Christ for whom he is now in chains.

According to KJV Bible (1), while advising the saints to move forward to attain the goal of heavenly calling, Paul gives his vision of pressing on towards the goal without thinking that he has attained it. He expects the reader to understand that the race is not yet over. They have to press on until the coming of our lord Jesus Christ. The organization of the book also describes what would be the effect of not following what Paul advises.

He explains the fate of those people that live as enemies of the cross.

According to KJV Bible (1), the destiny of such people is destruction because their minds are on earthly things instead of on heavenly things through Jesus Christ. Paul also assures the readers that for them that follow the will of Christ he taught have heaven as their citizenship.

## **The evaluation of the book of Philippians**

The book of Philippians is effective in what it intends to convey to the saints, in Christ Jesus, overseers and the deacons of the church of Philippi because it has convincing evidence as to why they should comply to what Paul teaches. The message concerning humility and living righteous lives is very convincing and enough to communicate the intentions of the author. The message of thanksgiving is also effective because the person sent was also longing to see the Philippians.

The message was therefore delivered to the intended audience. He says that, “[25] Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. [26] For he longed after you all...”. The letter is delivered by the person who is the messenger of the Philippians and he longed to see them. The overall usefulness to the book is the author giving thanks to the church at Philippi for their support of his ministry, advice the church to imitate Christ humility, live lives worthy of the gospel, and remain obedience so that they may shine as stars amidst a corrupt generation.

The author also explains the joy he has in prison because his being there is serving as way of advancing the gospel. He also advises them to press on towards the goal of their heavenly calling and desire to know Christ the more. He explains this through giving his experience and vision. For instance, he tells them that, [... [14] I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. [15] Let us therefore, as many as be

perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.] (KJV Bible 1).

## **Conclusion**

The book of Philippians is a letter of Paul to the church at Philippi. He specifically addresses the saints, the overseers and the deacons. Paul explains his experience in the work of Christ and how his suffering helps advance the gospel. He commends the Philippians for the support they give him in the work of spreading the gospel and even when he is in jail.

He advises them on how to live lives that will please the Lord.

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