

22S06 Philippians 1:1-2 Greeting

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today I want to begin our new series the study of Philippians with Philippians 1:1-2.

Before we start, we should learn a little about this short letter. The author of this letter is the Apostle Paul. Most scholars believe this letter was written sometime in AD61-62 while Paul was in prison in Rome. Paul had first visited Philippi during his second missionary journey after he had a vision which resulted in Paul changing his planned course to enter Macedonia instead. Paul has great affection for the church in Philippi and they have been helping him by providing support during his journeys and while in prison. Welcome to the amazing letter to the church in Philippi, Philippians. This letter is sometimes called “the Joy Epistle” because of thankful and joyful tone. But remember Paul is in prison in Rome, not very happy circumstances. But, it has a truly amazing statement at the end in Philippians 4:22 where Paul is concluding his letter with his customary greeting and blessing and he says this, *“All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar’s household”*. *Yes, Paul is in prison in Rome awaiting trial by Caesar but he’s still doing God’s work. So much so he greets the Philippians by saying the saints in Caesar’s household greet them. Think about as we study this beautiful letter from Paul Philippians.*

Let’s pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from Philippians, help us see why Paul is so thankful and joyful despite his situation. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

I’m reading from the New King James version (NKJV) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let’s read Philippians 1:1-2 (NKJV) *1Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul’s greeting says it comes from both himself and Timothy. Do you know who Timothy was? This is the same Timothy that Paul writes the letters 1st and 2nd Timothy to. We believe Timothy was from Lystra and probably had a Greek father and Jewish mother. Timothy served as Paul’s representative to several churches and he was later the leader or pastor of the church in Ephesus. Paul shows great affection for Timothy throughout his letters. And it is very likely the people in Philippi knew Timothy. Paul says, *“to all the saint in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi”*. Saints in Philippi. Well, when I grew up, I thought that saints was just a Catholic thing but in fact if you are a follower of Jesus, you are a Saint. You don’t need a church to saint you, Jesus has already do it. Paul is greeting all the followers of Jesus in Philippi as Saints. The Greek word here is *agiois* or *hagios* (had’-ee-os) which literally means holy or sacred. Paul is writing to

those who are holy in Christ Jesus. Or you might say it this way, Paul is greeting all those who belong to Jesus.

But then he makes a distinction. *“with the bishops and deacons”*. So Why the distinction. Do you know what a bishop or deacon are? Now I’m not talking about how our modern churches use these terms. My mind spins with all the different ways different denominations use these terms bishops, deacons, elders, etc.

No, what does the Bible actual mean when these terms are used.

First Bishop. The Greek word used here is episkopois (ep-is’-kop-os) which means overseer and in fact many English translations use the word overseer instead of bishop. Bishop is church term, not necessarily a bible term. Bishop is typically someone with authority within the church. But in Paul’s case, he is specifically acknowledging those who are “overseers” of the church. They probably handle decisions much as an elder and in fact they are probably elders. Why Paul chooses this word here in Philippians is anyone’s guess.

Next is Deacon. What is a deacon. The Greek word used here is diakonois (dee-ak’-on-os) which means servant or minister. Minister here is one who does a service for someone. So, deacons are servants.? More likely Paul is acknowledging those in the church that do things for the church family, organizers, speakers, comforter, encouragers. These deacons are those who help other church members in someway. These are not rulers. And I don’t think Paul is in anyway setting up a hierarchy in the church. I think it is more likely Paul is giving a special acknowledgement to those in the church that are going way beyond simply being members of the group. These are the ones who get things done, organize, comfort, take care of. I think this is more of the caretakers and those in service than those in charge.

Then Paul finishes his greeting by reminding us who we all serve *“God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”*

It’s all about Jesus. It’s sometimes important to remind ourselves of this. Then Paul jumps into his letter. Which we will look at next time.

Let’s Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from Paul. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to follow Paul’s example and acknowledge those who help us and those who deserve our respect. Then help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king oof kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you Lord. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

I hope you will join us for the rest of our study of Philippians. Please email me comments or feedback. Thank you for joining me today. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.