

Philippians 1:1

1:1 – Begins with threefold salutation followed by a prayer to the gods for health and wellbeing. Paul then often added a thanksgiving. These were usually short/shallow, but Paul seemed to use the salutation for substance:

- The writer
- The recipient
- Greeting (1:2)

The Philippian greeting includes a prelude to what will be in the body of the letter:

- Christ
- Gospel
- Servanthood
- Unity/Fellowship/Relationship
- Chains/Suffering
- Future glory focus even in present
- Goals of Love and Fruitfulness

Paul includes Timothy in the salutation as one of the writers (co-authorship) as in 1 and 2 Thess., Philemon, Colossians and 2 Cor. The first person plural is often used, but Paul frequently drifts into the first person singular which clearly indicates Paul is the sole-author. Timothy is mentioned possibly because of these reasons:

1. Timothy wrote the letter down
2. Timothy is well known by the recipients of these six letters
3. Here along with the names of Paul and Timothy are descriptive terms: “Slaves of Christ Jesus”. (Paul does not use “apostle” for himself and “our dear brother” for Timothy. Both are “slaves”. “Slaves” is douloi, plural of doulos which means “slave” to the readers, not servant. Not even the OT meaning of “servant of God.” This sets the mood for the letter: The apostle Paul was a “slave” of Christ; why would the Philippian believers be seeking their own goals, glory or ambitions.

The letter is addressed to “all the saints...in Philippi”, not simply the leadership or the important people.

Paul focus is on:

1. Saints, the covenant people. Built on the concept of the people set apart by God for his service and himself just as Israel had been. They are God’s holy people, and to be separate from the world.
2. They became saints because of their relationship with Jesus Christ. They are nothing unless they are “in Christ” which now makes them God’s.
3. They are “in Philippi” even while they are God’s holy people. They are God’s people with “citizenship” in heaven (1:27 and 3:20), even though they are in Philippi. This is interesting because as the Philippian’s history reveals they are “citizens of the city of Rome while they live even in the Greek city of Philippi.” This concept is introduced here, and it reappears in the letter.

Interesting is the addition of “with the overseers and deacons.

- First appearance in Paul’s writings
- The overseers and deacons are NEVER addressed again
- Both are plural, meaning there is not one overseer and one deacon
- “together with” or “along with” which indicates they are WITH the church, NOT OVER the church
- “Overseer” is episkopos...a form of leadership...it is a function, NOT an office. Acts 20:28 and 1 Tim. 3:5 the qualities are listed for those who care for the church.
- “Deacons” is “diakonos” meaning “servant”...it is a functional term designating someone who serves.