

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 274 – October 1st – Philippians 2:19-3:1

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Philippians

Drane, John	<i>Paul</i> , Lion Publishing, Berkhamstead, 1976
Eadie, John,	<i>A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Epistle of Paul to the Philippians</i> , T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1894
Fee, Gordon D	<i>Paul's Letter to the Philippians</i> (The New International Commentary on the New Testament), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1995
Hendriksen, William	<i>Philippians</i> , Banner of Truth, London, 1962
Lightfoot, JB	<i>St Paul's Epistle to the Philippians</i> , 3 rd Ed., MacMillan, London, 1873
Motyer, J Alex	<i>Studies in the letter to the Philippians</i> , IVF, London, 1966

Verses 19-30

Paul's great concern is for the progress of the gospel in Philippi, even as he wants them to know that the gospel is served in his own circumstances. It is for this reason he sends this letter and with it Epaphroditus (vv. 25-30), and also hopes to send Timothy (vv. 19-24) before coming himself to Philippi (v.24).

Verse 19

Ἐλπίζω δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Τιμόθεον ταχέως πέμψαι ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ἐν ψυχῶν γνοῦς τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν.

ἐλπίζω hope, expect

On the phrase ἐν κυρίῳ Ἰησοῦ Lightfoot comments, "The Christian is part of Christ, a member of His body. His every thought and word and deed proceeds from Christ, as the centre of volition. Thus he loves in the Lord, he hopes in the Lord, he boasts in the Lord, he labours in the Lord, etc. He has one guarding principle in acting and in forbearing to act, μόνον ἐν Κυρίῳ (1 Cor 7:39)."

Eadie says it expresses dependency, "Only if Christ willed it could it happen, and he felt and hoped that his intention to send Timothy, after a brief interval, was in accordance with the mind of Christ."

ταχέως adv. quickly, at once, soon

Here 'as soon as possible.'

πέμπω send

καὶ ἐγώ a compound word = καὶ ἐγώ

ἐνψυχεῶ be encouraged, be cheered

This verb is found here alone in the New Testament.

γνοῦς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s γινώσκω

Verse 20

οὐδένα γὰρ ἔχω ἰσόψυχον ὅστις γνησίως τὰ περὶ ὑμῶν μεριμνήσει,

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing
ἰσοψυχος, ον sharing in the same feelings

This adjective occurs nowhere else in the NT. Lightfoot says that Paul's meaning is that he has none *like Timothy* who has such genuine concern for the Philippians.

Eadie suggests that the comparison implied in the adjective is not between Timothy and other of Paul's helpers but between Timothy and the apostle himself – i.e. there is no-one, other than Timothy, who cares for the Philippians in the way Paul does. So Fee who says, "Paul emphasises that the primary reason for *Timothy's* coming is that he can count on him to carry Paul's own deep concerns at heart."

ὅστις, ἥτις, ὅ τι who, which

γνησίως adv genuinely

μεριμναῶ be anxious, be concerned about

Verse 21

οἱ πάντες γὰρ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ζητοῦσιν, οὐ τὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον see v.7

ζητεῶ seek, search for, look for

Cf. 2 Tim 4:10.

Fee argues that 'all' is not a reference to other co-workers who are not quite like Timothy: "Given what we know of Paul elsewhere and the high regard with which he holds those who travel with him, and that in 4:21 he sends greetings from 'the brothers who are with me,' it does not seem possible that he should here slander them with this kind of barrage." He thinks rather that Paul is referring to people like those mentioned in 1:15 and 17 who preach Christ but for their own ends. The words are also intended also for the Philippians for they are to beware of such people and to follow rather the example of Paul and Timothy – or more correctly of Christ. They are to put the needs of others before self-interest and so follow Christ in the way of the cross.

Verse 22

τὴν δὲ δοκιμὴν αὐτοῦ γινώσκετε, ὅτι ὡς πατρὶ τέκνον σὺν ἐμοὶ ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον.
δοκιμη, ης f character, proof, proven character

"'approved character' as in 2 Cor 2:9; 9:13 ... Timothy was personally well known to the Philippians." Lightfoot

πατηρ, πατρος m father
τεκνον, ου n child
ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγὼ
δουλευω serve, be a slave
εὐαγγελιον, ου n good news, gospel

In the ancient world it would have been common for a son to learn his trade from his father. Timothy had been like a son to Paul, learning from him the business of being a minister of the gospel.

Verse 23

τοῦτον μὲν οὖν ἐλπίζω πέμψαι ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ ἐξαυτῆς·

ἐλπίζω see v.19
ἀφίδω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἀφοραω fix one's eyes on; ὡς ἂν ἀφίδω τὰ περὶ ἐμὲ as soon as I know my situation

Another verb which occurs here only in the NT.

ἐμὲ Pronoun, acc s ἐγὼ
ἐξαυτῆς adv immediately, at once

"Although the clause is awkwardly expressed in the Greek, Paul's point is clear. As soon as he has any inkling as to the outcome of the trial, he will send Timothy to fill them in further on 'my affairs.' Thus Timothy's reason for coming is twofold: in the first instance for Paul's sake, to see how the letter has affected them; and second for their sakes, to be encouraged and brought up to speed about the outcome of his imprisonment." Fee

Verse 24

πέποιθα δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ὅτι καὶ αὐτὸς ταχέως ἐλεύσομαι.

Cf. 1:24-26.

πέποιθα Verb, perf act indic, 1 s πειθω persuade; perf have confidence, be confident

ταχέως see v.19

ἐλεύσομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s ἔρχομαι

Verse 25

Ἀναγκαῖον δὲ ἡγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην μου, ὧν δὲ ἀπόστολον καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς,

ἀναγκαιος, α, ον necessary, urgent
ἡγησάμην Verb, aor midd dep indic, 1 s ἡγεομαι think, regard, consider

An 'epistolatory aorist' (as also ἐπεμψα v.28). The perspective of the verb is from the time of expected receipt of the letter, not the time of writing.

We know nothing of Epaphroditus except what we read of here.

συνεργος, ου m fellow-worker
συστρατιωτης, ου m fellow soldier

Fee thinks that "the imagery is that of a wounded comrade-in-arms, who is being sent back home for a rest."

"The true Apostle, like St Peter or St John, bears the title as the messenger, the delegate, of Christ himself, while Epaphroditus is only so styled as the messenger of the Philippian brotherhood; and in the very next clause the expression is explained by the statement that he carried alms to St Paul... For this sense of ἀποστολος, 'a delegate or messenger of a church,' see 2 Cor 8:23." Lightfoot

λειτουργος, ου m servant, minister
χρεια, ας f need, want
πεμψω send

"In a culture where prisoners were not cared for by the state, but whose 'necessities' for life (especially food) had to be supplied by friends or relatives, this is no small thing that they had done. They have thus 'offered priestly service' (to God, is implied) by their sending Epaphroditus with the gift necessary for him to sustain life in prison. This present word about Epaphroditus anticipates the full acknowledgement in 4:14-20." Fee

Verse 26

ἐπειδὴ ἐπιποθῶν ἦν πάντας ὑμᾶς, καὶ ἀδημονῶν διότι ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἠσθένησεν.

ἐπειδὴ since, because, for
ἐπιποθεω long for, desire

The present participle indicates continual longing.

ἀδημονεω be distressed or troubled

Cf. Matt 26:37; Mk 14:33 where the verb is used of Jesus' agony.

"It describes the confused, restless, half-distracted state, which is produced by physical derangement, or by mental distress, or grief, shame, disappointment, etc." Lightfoot

διότι because, for, therefore

ἀσθενεω be sick, be ill, be weak

Fee suggests that Epaphroditus may have been taken ill on his way to Rome (cf. comments of Eadie on v.30), and one of his travelling companions returned to Philippi with the news. Epaphroditus continued on his way to Rome at great risk to his health and even his life (v.30).

Verse 27

καὶ γὰρ ἠσθένησεν παραπλήσιον θανάτω· ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἠλέησεν αὐτόν, οὐκ αὐτόν δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐμέ, ἵνα μὴ λύπην ἐπὶ λύπην σχῶ.

παραπλησιον Adv. nearly, almost
θανατος, ου m death
ἐλεαω and ἐλεεω be merciful, show kindness
μονος, η, ον only, alone
λυπη, ης f grief, sorrow, pain

Perhaps meaning the sorrow of Epaphroditus's death on top of the sorrow of his present sufferings.

σχῶ Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἔχω

Verse 28

σπουδαιότερως οὖν ἐπεμψα αὐτόν ἵνα ἰδόντες αὐτόν πάλιν χαρῆτε κἀγὼ ἀλυπότερος ᾶ.

σπουδαιότερως all the more eagerly; with greater urgency
πεμψω send

"I.e. with the letter, as in Eph 6:22; Col 4:8; Philemon 11 and perhaps also 2 Cor 9:3."

Lightfoot

ιδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὄρω

see

πάλιν again, once more

χαρῆτε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl χαίρω

rejoice, be glad

Eadie provides evidence that Paul, almost always puts πάλιν before the verb to which it relates. Hence the sense is that they will rejoice again.

κἀγω a compound word = καὶ ἐγω

ἀλυπότερος, α, ον relieved of sorrow or anxiety

ᾶ Verb, pres subj, 1 s εἶμι

Verse 29

προσδέχεσθε οὖν αὐτόν ἐν κυρίῳ μετὰ πάσης χαρᾶς, καὶ τοὺς τοιοῦτους ἐντίμους ἔχετε,

προσδεχομαι receive, welcome, accept
τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun and adjective such, of such kind

ἐντιμος, ον valuable, honoured, esteemed

"and hold such in honour,' that is, such as Epaphroditus. The more usual classic form of expression is, ἐντιμας ἔχειν ... The class of men οἱ τοιοῦτοι, of whom Epaphroditus is a noted example, deserve the esteem and gratitude of the church for their self-denying and disinterested labours." Eadie

Verse 30

ὅτι διὰ τὸ ἔργον Χριστοῦ μέχρι θανάτου ἤγγισεν, παραβολευσάμενος τῇ ψυχῇ ἵνα ἀναπληρώσῃ τὸ ὑμῶν ὑστέρημα τῆς πρὸς με λειτουργίας.

μεχρι unto, as far as
θανατος, ου m death
ἐγγιζω approach, draw near
παραβολευσάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s παραβολευσομαι risk
ψυχη, ης f self, inmost being, life, 'soul', living being, person
ἀναπληρωση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s
ἀναπληρωω complete the full measure of, fill

ὑστερημα, τος n what is lacking

"The lack was not in the gift itself, but in the ministrations of it. They were absent and could not minister to the apostle; but Epaphroditus, by his kind and assiduous attentions, fully made up what was necessarily wanting on their part." Eadie

λειτουργια, ας f service

"The probability is, either that his attendance on the apostle in Rome had exposed him in some way or other to a dangerous malady, or that, in his extreme haste to convey the Philippian gift and tender personal service to the prisoner, he had brought on an alarming sickness during his journey." Eadie

Verse 1

Τὸ λοιπόν, ἀδελφοί μου, χαίρετε ἐν κυρίῳ. τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν ὑμῖν ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐκ ὀκνηρόν, ὑμῖν δὲ ἀσφαλές.

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining: (το) λοιπον
adv. finally, henceforth, from now on

Many think that Paul begins his conclusion, but then breaks into a new subject only to resume his conclusion in 4:8. Fee disagrees and suggests that the meaning here is not 'finally' but 'as for the rest [of what needs to be spoken to].' It marks "a transition to the final matters to be taken up in the letter, not its conclusion." Cf. 1 Thess 4:1; 2 Thess 3:1.

χαίρω rejoice, be glad; imperat used as a greeting

Lightfoot argues that the verb means 'Farewell' but also carries with it the injunction to rejoice. Fee, however, argues that this *is* a call to rejoice and "serves as Paul's first antidote to their being taken in by the possible attractiveness of the Judaizing option."

γράφω write

τὰ αὐτὰ γράφειν What are these 'same things'? Lightfoot thinks the words introduce what was intended to be a closing exhortation against dissention, a topic needful to the Philippians and which chapter 2 had touched on by way of exhortation to Christ-like humility. Fee thinks that the reference is to the warning and exhortation that follows and that v.18, and the insistence that this repetition is for their safety, provide confirmation for this view.

ἐμοὶ Pronoun, dat s ἐγώ
ὀκνηρός, α, ον troublesome, irksome
ἀσφαλής, ες safe, sure; safeguard;
definite; the facts