

P
R
O
B
L
E
M

S
O
L
U
T
I
O
N

Argument of the Book

Determining the Protagonist and Antagonist

(Refer to the previous chart)

The analysis of Philippians is fairly straightforward as Paul identifies clearly both sides of the issue. Of course, he is representing God and will occupy the right side of the chart teaching “righteousness” or “God’s revelation,” while the “success gospel” Judaizers will occupy the left side of the controversy, that of “human wisdom.”

Antagonist/Theology: Judaizers: Self-righteousness through Judaism

These are clearly a negative influence on the church as Paul states clearly, “Beware!” (3:2). They are Jews (“false circumcision,” literally, “mutilation”), whom he calls “dogs”¹ and “evil workers” (3:2). By direct contrast to Paul in the following verses, they were those who claimed righteousness through their Judaistic heritage and the works of the Law. This is what Paul means by “the flesh,” self-achievement through the Law to determine one’s standing before God.

Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
(Phil. 3:2)

³ for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,⁴ although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:⁵ circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee;⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.

¹ Psalm 22:16,20 is the most likely allusion here. These “dogs” were enemies of Messiah, where the Psalmist references his attackers in terms of animals, likely due to their operating only on instinct, lacking the perception of God.

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. ¹⁷ I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me; ¹⁸ They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots. ¹⁹ But You, O LORD, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance. ²⁰ Deliver my soul from the sword, My only *life* from the power of the dog. (Ps. 22:16-20)

⁹ and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, (Phil. 3:3-9)

Protagonist/Theology: Paul: Righteousness through Christ (Imputation)

The identification of Paul and his theology is focused on the same verses just listed. Not only does Paul believe in imputed righteousness, but also that it is to be accompanied by suffering in this age to be rewarded at the bodily resurrection into the future earthly kingdom.

and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the Law*, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,¹⁰ that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,¹¹ in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. (Phil. 3:9-11)

Book Background (Why?)

The Philippians had previously supported Paul in his ministry (both by receiving it and supporting it) even though others had not (4:3,15). However, dissension in the church had arisen over the validity of Paul's message of imputed righteousness (3:4-14) as opposed to the works of the Law promoted by certain Judaizers (1:28, 3:1-3). This division had brought into question whether they would continue to support Paul in his needs since it appeared to them that his lack of success revealed the falseness of his gospel (4:10).

This "success" message of the Judaizers (as opposed to Paul's message) seemed validated by Paul's imprisonment (1:12, 1:27-28), since apparently God was not delivering him (1:19).² Thus, it appeared to them that his suffering was a judgment by God for false theology (1:29).

Paramount to this disagreement in the church was whether to send a gift to Paul to help him in his imprisonment. If his theology was false, to support him would be to identify with his errant theology and oppose God. Epaphroditus stood up on behalf of the church (2:30), and personally carried the gift to Paul, not fearing the threat of the Judaizers (1:28) that the judgment of God would fall on him for colluding with the false teacher, Paul.

Interestingly, during his stay with Paul, Epaphroditus came down with what appeared to be a terminal illness. Epaphroditus feared that due to this terminal illness the

² It is of note that it was this very city, Philippi, that Paul had supernaturally walked out of a prison with Silas (Acts 16:23-32).

Judaizers would seem to have their theology confirmed and the church would turn against Paul (2:26).

Paul wrote this letter in order to teach them the proper theology regarding his own situation as well as that of Epaphroditus and thus instruct them in the proper behavior, that is, sacrifice for the gospel, toward those who serve the Philippians in the gospel, and thus to be servants of the gospel themselves.

Theology of the Background

That the antagonists are Jews is evident from 3:1-3 and Paul's retort as to what he used to claim as righteousness but now considers naught. If they were not Jewish (or practicing Judaism), then the ridicule by way of comparison makes little sense.

Deliverance: That "deliverance" as a principle is important is indicated by occurrence in the text at opportune moments (1:19, 28; 2:12; 3:20). It is typically translated as "salvation", errantly leading the reader to believe that the issue is positional soteriology. However, the "deliverance" claim of the antagonists is that of visible success through obedience to the Law (3:1-3). Yet Paul claims that "deliverance" is the identification with Christ in the midst of suffering (3:4ff.) that he might "attain" (i.e., have walked worthy of) the future bodily resurrection. Ultimately the full "deliverance" is when Christ appears and his suffering is validated as godly (3:20).

19 For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (1:19-21)

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (3:20-21)

Paul's point is not that he *will* be delivered from prison (see 1:22) but that his deliverance is that Christ will be exalted through his suffering *in* prison or even death. Thus, it is the issue of "deliverance" that is critical between the antagonists and Paul. In 1:28, his confidence in the doctrine of suffering indicates a judgment for the antagonists. In 2:12 Paul indicates that the doctrine of suffering for Christ should be played out in their own lives ("work out" should be translated "bring to fruition"). Finally, in 3:20 after pointing out that the antagonist's "deliverance" is health and wealth success (3:18-19), he points out that his deliverance is present in our relationship with Christ, and future in that He is the "Deliverer" (translated "Savior") (3:20-21).

The issue that is at the forefront is not only the imprisonment, but the imprisonment at the hands of Gentiles. This was an indication of a curse (Lev. 26:17,

"and those who hate you shall rule over you . . . " (see also Deut. 28 for Gentile rule indicating a curse). Thus, Paul's point regarding the Roman soldiers who guarded him and their coming to Christ was an indication of God's ministry during the "Times of the Gentiles" (cf. Daniel 2, 7), where Gentiles were ruling over God's nation as a judgment and would Israel not be freed until the return of Christ.

If Paul was under a curse (he had walked out of a Philippian jail earlier; cf. Acts 16) and since he did not seem able to escape this one, then they preached that God was indicating that Paul was a false prophet. And since he was a false teacher, convincing the Philippians of a gospel of belief and sacrificial suffering, was heresy (according to the antagonists of 3:1-3). The duty of those who found a false prophet was to reject him and turn him in for stoning (in the O.T. under the theocracy) according to Deuteronomy 13:1-11. To align oneself with a false prophet, instead of rejecting him, was to support the false prophecy and incur the same judgment. This is the situation in Philippians. If they sent the gift and the antagonists were correct, then only physical cursing awaited the participants. Yet Paul claims that their gift was for the purpose of supporting Paul's gospel (cf. 1:6-7) which was an indication of their participation with God.

This curse thus was the threat by the antagonists (1:28, "in no way be alarmed by your opponents"). Epaphroditus then became the representative from the group to be aligned with Paul and according to 2:30 was doing what the Philippians were reluctant to do (send the gift or even take the gift and publicly identify with Paul).

Definitions

- Judaizers** A broad term to indicate Jews who try to influence the church to accept self-righteousness through the Law and other related Jewish items. They felt that success, physical benefits, came through the keeping of the Law, or by their Jewish standing, as they understood it.
- Flesh** Here identified as 'self-works' or 'self-righteousness'. It is the reliance on one's own person and self-validity before God as opposed to 'the imputed righteousness of God'. In Philippians it is more specifically one's determination that through works one can provide a standing before God. The result is that the flesh is glorified instead of God through the Spirit.
- Gospel** The gospel is identified in 3:9 (positional and sanctificational) as the fullness of the provision of righteousness through Jesus Christ alone. This gospel as revealed by Paul would include the joint heirship of Jews and Gentiles into the body based solely on imputed righteousness.
- Apostle** An apostle's function was to have eye-witnessed Jesus resurrection and reveal Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament requirement of righteousness. This was accomplished through direct revelation from Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (see John 14--16, 1 Thess. 1:13). The understanding that Jesus is the fullness of the Old Testament expectation of righteousness, which is imputed to the believer, can only come through the apostles.

Interpretive Argument

Problem: [Antagonists] Judaizers
 [Antagonist action to] are accusing Paul of being a false teacher due to his imprisonment (suffering) and scaring the Philippians with the gospel of success and cursing [reader] to the Philippians so that they will embrace them and their theology
 [resultant reader action] resulting in selfish activities, the pursuit of pleasure and disunity in the body
 [antagonists' theology] based on the theology that relationship with God is based on self-righteousness accomplished through the keeping of, and Jewish physical identity with, the Law which results in pleasure and success now and no future reward

Solution: [Author/protagonist] Paul is accusing the Judaizers of teaching false theology and warning [reader] the Philippians so that they will listen to him and his theology
 [resultant reader action] resulting in sacrificial love and care for one's brother and sacrifice and unity in Paul's gospel
 [Author's theology] based on the theology that relationship with God is based on imputed righteousness through belief in Christ's sacrifice, indicating one's righteous relationship with God should be displayed by sacrifice in the present resulting in reward with Christ in the future bodily resurrection.

- I. **Background:** Their past behavior of supporting Paul's gospel has been godly, even though he is disgraced in prison which urges them to continue in Paul's theology in order to refute the Judaizers' accusation of Paul as a false teacher because he is in prison seemingly under a curse (1:1-11).

Humility in suffering for the sake of the gospel has been demonstrated by the Philippians in their past behavior and their support of him as an apostle, and Paul hopes it will continue. He addresses them as participants with him in Jesus Christ (1:1-4).

This first paragraph is quite positive, particularly relating their sending of the gift to Paul and thus affirming their alignment with him and his gospel (1:5-7). These verses focus on the gift, and not as is often interpreted, as some guarantee of one's continued sanctification or success in this life ("He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." The "good work" is their support of Paul, and particularly the gift, which he confirms is a contribution to the eternal gospel. It is the gospel that will continue and be successful, and their gift and participation is of eternal value. This is contrasted

with the antagonists' accusation that participating with Paul would be a curse and would result in their destruction.

The remaining verses (1:8-11) then encourage them to stand firm in Paul's gospel, since it is that truth that guides them in their relationship with God.

1:1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants³ of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons⁴: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, 4 always offering prayer with joy⁵ in my every prayer for you all, 5 in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 *For I am* confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work⁶ in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. 7 For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me⁷. 8 For God is my witness, how I long for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. 9 And this I pray, that your love may abound⁸ still more and

³ Paul will use this word later of Christ in 2:7, saying Christ is the example, and thus his behavior is appropriate.

⁴ The reason Paul uniquely mentions the overseers and deacons is that this is a book of service and humility, not elevation. Thus, the leaders need to be sure they are included.

⁵ The issue of joy here is a large one in the book. However, the Philippians do not have it, but Paul does. The Philippians are concerned ("anxious) about Paul, while Paul rejoices over his own suffering and their suffering (in the gift and support) on his behalf (cf. 1:4).

⁶ This word "work" will influence the rest of the text. The Judaizers are claiming "works of the Law". Here Paul states that it is God who begins the work and will complete it. Apparently the Judaizers were claiming that the support of Paul would separate them from God and thus the work of the gospel would not be completed. Thus, Paul is very confident that God, from whom they have derived the basis of their gift, will make sure their gift will fulfill its mission in taking the gospel forth, up to the day Christ appears. Verse 7 talks about their participation with him in the gospel of Christ and how that is where God will prosper them.

⁷ Since they had given the gift and had suffered for the gospel, Paul says that they have identified and thus participated with the gospel, and in fact their suffering in the face of false doctrine was a confirmation of the truth (revelation over reason).

⁸ Paul loves them with the love of Christ. The question is, will their love continue to grow for Paul (as it had when they sent the gift) or would it abate as they listened to the false prophets?

more in real knowledge and all discernment,⁹ 10 so that you may approve the things that are excellent¹⁰, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ;¹¹ 11 having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which *comes* through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.¹²

II. **Beneficial results of imprisonment:** In order to contradict the false teachers' attack on his apparent lack of success, Paul explains that his suffering in prison is the will of God, since it is his sacrifice for the benefit of the gospel to others (1:12-26):

A. The gospel is going forth through his sacrifice which is the will of God (1:12-18)

God's purpose in Paul is that the gospel is proclaimed (1:12). Paul covers his personal experience to show that the Roman jailers (whom the antagonists have noted are part of the curse on Paul)¹³ have come to Christ (1:13) and that others have been emboldened to preach the gospel, though some are doing it selfishly, some are doing it out of pure motives (1:14-18).

⁹ Real knowledge and discernment is the perception of the true gospel, the message of God and the discernment is the ability to discern between him and the false teachers as being true to the gospel.

¹⁰ The things that are excellent are the things of the revelation of God, revealed in Paul, the truth of his apostleship and the discernment of the true gospel which includes suffering.

¹¹ If they listened to the Judaizers and pursued a trail of self-righteousness and pleasure then they would not be blameless since they had misused the opportunity to walk with God and instead pursued self-success.

¹² This is the fruit of imputed righteousness (which the Judaizers deny for self-righteousness). It will result in the praise of God not self.

¹³ According to Deuteronomy 28--29 and Leviticus 26, the curse for disobedience was that their Gentile enemies would rule over Israel. Now Paul is in prison under the Roman guard. This, to these Jewish opponents, is a clear sign of Paul's being judged by God. However, Paul notes that this is the "Times of the Gentiles" where Israel is under the curse for disobedience, and it was self-righteousness that put them there, which is the very doctrine of the antagonists. Thus, one must always follow imputed righteousness during this time when Gentiles rule. One day Jesus will return and deliver (2:20) them from this Gentile Satanic rule.

12 Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel,¹⁴ 13 so that my imprisonment in *the cause of* Christ has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else,¹⁵ 14 and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.¹⁶ 15 Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife,¹⁷ but some also from good will; 16 the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel;¹⁸ 17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.¹⁹ 18 What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and in this I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice.²⁰

¹⁴ Paul's imprisonment would seem as though the gospel had been defeated since if he was in prison it couldn't go out. Thus, if he was God's man, how would God get the message out? The conclusion was that he was not God's man, and thus his claim as an apostle, the unique revealer of God's truth, must be false. Thus, to the Judaizers he is getting his just deserts as a false teacher.

¹⁵ Since Paul has been imprisoned the testimony of suffering for the cause of Christ is enlarged. In other words, they should note Paul's willingness to suffer for the cause and thus pay attention to the message.

¹⁶ They have seen the apostle himself suffer for the cause and thus they are also willing to suffer, without fear. Fear implies that they were afraid of what the rulers could do to them. Paul was saying since he is not afraid, they have followed his example.

¹⁷ These are teaching the gospel of Christ but rejecting Paul as the unique speaker for the gospel. This is possible only because the gospel has come through Paul plus others, and the word stands on its own. Thus, denial of a man as an apostle but yet an embracing of the gospel is possible, and apparently that is the case here. However, the difficulty is not that of their preaching but of their elevation of themselves at the cost of Paul's humiliation. These somehow seem to not be advocating a different gospel at its core, but they are advocating self-elevation based on some sort of spiritual markers.

¹⁸ This is a crux issue here. Those who love are those who recognize the truth of the gospel delivered by Paul and love others, thus are willing to sacrifice for the cause of the gospel, while the others are doing it for their own glorification.

¹⁹ These do not like Paul and feel that their prominence in the gospel at his expense in prison will bother him. His point is that it does not bother him since he is submissive to the gospel, and thus does not need the personal praise for it.

²⁰ Again, the rejoicing here is Paul's rejoicing even though he is in prison, and others are carrying the gospel, even though they are doing so in order to spite him.

- B. Their understanding of deliverance (being in the will of God) is wrong (1:19-26).

Based on his jail experience being profitable for the gospel, Paul concludes that their principle of ‘physical success validates the will of God’ is wrong. He is in the will of God (delivered) even in prison (1:19). However, he expands that further to say that he would really rather even die, for thus he would be with Christ, and that clearly is the will of God (delivered) (1:20-24). Thus, he implores them to change their minds about his imprisonment being a failure in God’s eyes (1:25) so that they might have joy in his circumstances and his return to visit them (1:26).

19 For I know that this shall turn out for my deliverance through your prayers²¹ and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,²² 20 according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but *that* with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. ²³21 For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.²⁴ 22 But if *I am* to live *on* in the flesh, this *will mean* fruitful labor for me; and I do not know which to choose.²⁵ 23 But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the desire to depart and be with

²¹ His deliverance here is the very thing they are accusing him of not having. Since he is not physically delivered from prison, so how could he be blessed? In addition, it is the Philippians’ participation through their prayers that will allow him to be delivered. “Deliverance” here does not mean that he will get out of prison, but that he will not be under the opponents’ or God’s wrath. Thus, Paul is “delivered” in prison, since he is succeeding in spite of the oppression.

²² The provision of the Spirit of Christ is the impartation of the knowledge of Jesus Christ (and His suffering, see Ch. 2) to Paul which enables him to emulate Jesus and His sufferings.

²³ This explains the revelation of the Spirit regarding Jesus. Paul is not a shame to the gospel, of which he has been accused, but is boldly and joyfully confident that his experience is of God.

²⁴ Paul’s point is that while the Philippians are worried about the impression that prison brings to the gospel, Paul goes on to state that he identifies with Jesus totally, and if they think prison is something, Paul is willing to go to death, which is really a shame in their eyes.

²⁵ For Paul, life is to emulate Christ in ministering to those in need, particularly here the Philippians.

Christ, for *that* is very much better;²⁶ 24 yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake. 25 And convinced of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again.²⁷

- III. **Content Theology: Solution:** In order to defend Paul's doctrine that suffering for Jesus precedes the future reward, he points out that humility and suffering for the sake of the gospel was revealed by the life of Jesus and illustrated through examples of those who had suffered so that the Philippians could have the gospel. (1:27--2:30).

The problem of the Philippians was that they have been listening to a gospel of physical success. Paul counters it with the theology of Jesus' life, followed by examples of those who had suffered for their cause; Paul, Timothy, and finally one of their own, Epaphroditus.

- A. **Definition:** Suffering and humility in faith is the calling of the gospel (1:27--2:4).

The issue is suffering here. They are to conduct themselves in a worthy manner of the gospel, which means that they should unite under Paul's gospel apart from this success gospel teaching and application (1:17-28). While they have "believed" (1:29), they are also to suffer for His sake (1:29). The "suffering" that is a sign of destruction for the Judaizers is that if "suffering now" is the true doctrine of God, then the fact that the Judaizers hold ("pleasure now") means that it will all be destroyed as well as them in their relationship with God (1:28). The "suffer" was to join in following Paul's example of suffering sacrificially for the gospel (1:30).

Following the example of Paul, he exhorts them to strive for acting on behalf of Paul's gospel of sacrifice by looking out for others rather than looking out after their own self-success and prosperity like the Judaizers (2:1-4).

²⁶ Not only will Paul be with Christ which is clearly the desire of his heart, but he will be elevated in position, being with Christ instead of here.

²⁷ Again, the point of service for others comes up here. That is Paul's point, and service requires suffering and sacrifice. And Paul is willing to continue on for their sakes. But also, he wants them to have joy, that is, understand Paul's success in light of the seeming problems.

[Excursus: The issue of “destruction,” which shows up here and in 3:19 is somewhat difficult. Is he saying that they will end up in hell, or that they are believers and will be destroyed in some sanctificational sense? The overwhelming point is that one’s relationship with God is the issue here. If they are unbelievers then their destruction is in the present (no relationship with God) and in the future (the Lake of Fire). If they are believers then the destruction is also in the present (no sanctificational relationship with God) with implications for rewards in the future (see 1 Cor. 3:15), since their relationship with the Lord is minimized based on their gospel of prosperity and denial of imputed righteousness for sanctification. The word for “destruction” is ἀπώλεια, which indicates “destruction,” “calamity,” or even “waste” (Matt. 26:8). While the word is not used there, Paul describes the destruction of the believer’s values at the Judgment Seat of Christ in 1 Cor. 3:15. One difficulty here is that if some believing Philippians may follow the antagonists and join them (e.g., Euodia and Syntyche). Would they, even though eternally secure, be also described as having entered “destruction,” but in sanctificational and reward implications?

The word comes from Deuteronomy 28—29, where “perishing” is used to remove Israel from the land and the earth through death, etc. One can see this in the use of Hebrew parallelism in this passage. “18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it. (Deut. 30:18)]

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;²⁸ 28 in no way alarmed by *your* opponents-- which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that *too*, from God. 29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me, and now hear *to be* in me.

2:1 If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one

²⁸ The unity of the gospel message here will soon be given; it is suffering, and suffering together for one another.

another as more important than himself; 4 do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

- B. **Theological Basis:** *Jesus Christ* suffered for them and was delivered (rewarded) for it following His resurrection and return (2:5-11)

The point here is that Jesus is God and could not have had a higher position than He had, but yet gave it all up to suffer for the gospel, for them. The term “emptied” Himself, while frequently overanalyzed regarding the actual attributes that He gave up, is simply related to His position in heaven as the Son of God, one that was of the highest (2:5-7). Then He left that position in heaven to suffer as a Man, even to a degrading death on the cross. Ultimately, however, Jesus will be regarded as the highest position, that of everyone bowing to His position, a position obtained through suffering (2:8-11).

Paul quotes from Isaiah 45:23, regarding the Great Davidic Servant King who returns from suffering for their sin (Isaiah 53) to deliver them from the Gentile oppressors.

"I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. 24 "They will say of Me, 'Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength.' Men will come to Him, And all who were angry at Him will be put to shame. 25 "In the LORD all the offspring of Israel Will be justified and will glory." (Isa. 45:23-25)

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (2:5-11)

- C. Exhortation: Themselves: Their own deliverance into the will of God (i.e., sacrifice for the Gospel) should be enacted looking at the example of Jesus (2:12-16).

Paul desires that they understand suffering for the will of God in the gospel for others in their own specific situation. Thus, they should “work

out,” or “bring to fruition,” their deliverance (sacrifice for the gospel) in their own situation. The “fear and trembling” appears to be a play against the “fear” that the antagonists are giving them (1:28), and so they should fear God as they could go down the same path as the antagonists and turn to a success gospel (1:12-14). Thus, they will be different than those (of Israel) who pursue godliness through self-righteous behavior (“crooked and perverse generation”), and will instead by “lights” (through the apostolic gospel). He fears that when they arrive in the presence of Christ at His return that they will be shown to have lived for themselves and will be without reward, and he will be disappointed because the gospel for which he suffered on their behalf will not have brought forth life and reward in their case (1:15-18).

12 So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, bring to fruition²⁹ your salvation with fear and trembling; 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure. 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing;³⁰ 15 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,³¹ among whom you appear as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may have cause to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.³²

D. **Example #1: Paul** suffers for them (2:17-18)

²⁹ This phrase, “work out your own salvation,” should be translated “bring to fruition your own deliverance,” meaning that they should act on their belief and begin to suffer for the gospel in their own situations.

³⁰ This would occur because they believe in the “success” gospel, thus opposition and suffering would result in grumbling and disputing, not in joy.

³¹ This phrase, “a crooked and perverse generation” is typically used for Gentile behavior, but has an Old Testament basis in Deuteronomy 32:5 and 32:20 regarding Israel when they rejected God.

"They have acted corruptly toward Him, They are not His children, because of their defect; But are a perverse and crooked generation. (Deut. 32:5)

³² Here Paul relates his own concern for them, that is, that they will follow the Judaizers and have their Christian sanctification brought to naught. He is worried that his efforts for their benefit in Christ become nothing.

Again, his point is that he is joyful in his suffering for them, and he wants them to rejoice with him in his suffering (and hopefully in theirs for the gospel as well).

17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all. 18 And you too, *I urge you*, rejoice in the same way and share your joy with me.

- E. **Example #2:** *Timothy* is selfless, he can be trusted, and thus will be sent to them so that Paul will be reassured they have understood his theology (2:19-24).

Paul is sending Timothy since he alone is someone who understands suffering for the gospel, and is “concerned” (literal: “anxious”³³) regarding their alliance with Paul. Paul appears to be convinced that he will be returning to visit Philippi to confirm their steadfastness.

19 But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, so that I also may be encouraged when I learn of your condition. 20 For I have no one *else* of kindred spirit who will genuinely be concerned for your welfare. 21 For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know of his proven worth that he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child *serv*ing his father. 23 Therefore I hope to send him immediately, as soon as I see how things *go* with me; 24 and I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall be coming shortly.

- F. **Example #3:** *Ephaphroditus* is a fellow sufferer who was humble and suffered for their benefit and they need to acknowledge his Godly actions (2:25-30).

Epaphroditus was the one who, although many were uneasy about supporting Paul, volunteered to identify with Paul in prison despite the antagonists’ warnings about incurring a curse by identifying with Paul. Epaphroditus did not have that fear and supported Paul totally with his boldness to carry the gift on their (wavering) behalf.

³³ Note that the same word “anxious” is used here and in 4:6. Thus, anxiety is not condemned for everything, but is condemned when it is unbiblical, as in the case of the Philippians who are anxious for Paul, fearing that he is under a curse. But Timothy is anxious rightly because the Philippians may be lured by the false teachers. Anxiety is exhorted when a Scriptural concern is the issue, but condemned when one is concerned about non-Scriptural items, that is, suffering is a cause of a curse.

Unfortunately, Epaphroditus got sick onto death, which both Paul and Epaphroditus feared would be taken as validation of the Judaizers' theology of cursing. But he was delivered from death, and Paul rejoiced because not only would he have lost Epaphroditus, but he might have lost them to the Judaizers' theology of suffering being a curse ("sorrow upon sorrow").

25 But I thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need; 26 because he was longing for you all and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I have sent him all the more eagerly in order that when you see him again you may rejoice and I may be less concerned *about you*. 29 Therefore receive him in the Lord with all joy, and hold men like him in high regard; 30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me.

- IV. **Antagonists**: In order to dissuade the antagonist, Paul reveals that the theology of those who promote physical success as the will of God are enemies of the gospel (3:1-21)

Paul now attacks directly the source of the theology, the Judaizing legalists themselves. They serve only themselves, as he had in his past. He finds that kind of behavior repulsive in light of the privilege of serving Christ in suffering.

- a. **Antagonist/Theology**: They glory in their self-accomplishments which is opposed to the Old Testament anticipation of total fulfillment in Christ (3:1-3).

3:1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things *again* is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Beware of the dogs,³⁴ beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;³⁵ 3 for we are the *true* circumcision,³⁶ who

³⁴ This is likely an allusion to "dogs" in Psalm 22:16,20, where they are described as animals attacking the Messiah, since they operate by instinct and not according to God's desires.

For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. (Ps. 22:16)

worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,

- b. **Author's Theology:** Paul excels them in self-accomplishments but the doctrine of righteousness in Christ makes self-righteousness valueless. (3:4-9)

4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless. 7 But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, 9 and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from *the* Law, but that which is

³⁵ This is due to their claim of the validity of circumcision for a relationship with God. However, Paul states it is the false circumcision, since in Christ it is the circumcision of heart (Deuteronomy 30:6), which the physical circumcision was to anticipate.

³⁶ This is the prophecy of the “circumcision of heart” of Deuteronomy 30:6 which came in the New Covenant with Christ. This is referenced as being present in Romans and Colossians.

6 "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live. (Deut. 30:6)

14 For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, 15 in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them, (Rom. 2:14-15)

²⁹ But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God. (Rom. 2:29-3:1)

11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; 12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (Col. 2:11-12)

through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith,

- c. **Author's Activity:** Paul wants to follow Christ through to his own bodily resurrection into the earthly kingdom (3:10-11).

It is important to recognize of what Paul is speaking here in these verses. Paul wants to follow Christ, who as the elder brother, has preceded the believer into glory. So, the believers are to suffer as they identify with his death on the cross as our death to self-righteousness (see Romans 6). This process is the path to the bodily resurrection into the kingdom. This is Paul's goal to successfully follow the path of Christ and follow Him in resurrection from the dead.

10 that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; 11 in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

- d. **Author's Activity:** He wants to imitate Christ, to share His example of suffering so that he might perform appropriately for the sake of the gospel (3:12-16).

Paul is continuing the issue of resurrection from the dead. He does not claim that the resurrection has already occurred, as the Judaizers. They claimed, in essence, that one would receive their reward now, while Paul claims it at the bodily resurrection in the future. It is what his goal is.

[Excursus: This doctrine of the bodily resurrection is immense as it is in some ways denied in today's churches with their emphasis on one's prosperous life in this age. The preaching of the future bodily resurrection into a new earth is essential as that is the reward, not the successful life now.]

12 Not that I have already obtained *it*, [i.e., the resurrection³⁷] or have already become complete,³⁸ but I press on in order that I may

³⁷ Paul is indicating that he has not obtained the bodily "resurrection from the dead" yet. The antagonist were, in essence, claiming that one had their reward now in the pleasures of the world. That, in Paul's terms, was a denial of the physical resurrection for a philosophical resurrection, thus they would claim, in essence, that this reward, this "resurrection" had already occurred. Paul states clearly that it has not, that it is a physical resurrection and that it is his goal.

³⁸ "Complete" is a better translation as it indicates Paul's completion and reward at the resurrection from the dead.

lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus.³⁹ 13 Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as are perfect,⁴⁰ have this attitude; and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you; 16 however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained.

- e. **Readers Activity:** Continuing to show how the antagonists are contrary to godliness, he gives a contrast of those who followed Paul's example and those who have rejected him showing how they believe in deliverance differently as theirs is a present pleasure and shame, while the believer is a future deliverance at the Lord's return and bodily resurrection (3:17-21).

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.⁴¹ 18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.⁴² 20 For our citizenship is in heaven,⁴³ from which also we eagerly

³⁹ That which Jesus laid hold of was His bodily resurrection and reward. Paul follows Jesus through this path, looking forward to his own bodily resurrection and reward.

⁴⁰ The use of this same word as an adjective is relating to one's righteousness, where in 3:12 he is relating it to the fulfillment in the bodily resurrection as a verb. The "complete" here is relating back to the Judaizers in the beginning of the chapter who are constantly trying to attain their righteousness, but Paul has already attained it, having received in through Christ as stated in 3:9.

⁴¹ This is not saying Paul is the perfect standard to follow, thus equating himself with Christ, but is talking about his following Christ in the doctrine of suffering for the gospel as he laid out in chapter 2.

⁴² While this might seem that he is saying they are unbelievers, it is not conclusive that this is the case. If they are believers he is simply claiming that all that they have will be destroyed, while the believer will have enduring rewards. On the other hand, if they are unbelievers, then their lure of pleasure now is clear to end them and their pleasures in total loss.

⁴³ This is not to say that one will live in heaven forever, but one's citizenship is "with Christ," not on earth with a Roman government. Noticing the next phrase, it is important to note that Christ will return to earth to set up His government, of which the believer will be a citizen then on earth with the King.

wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (Phil. 3:17-21)

V. **Application**: Based on this correct theology that Paul espouses standing firm in the gospel of Paul and its purity of motivation (4:1-19).

A. They are to **Stand firm in the true gospel** which Paul espouses (4:1)

Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. (Phil. 4:1)

B. They are to **Support Paul** and those who support him (4:2-3).

It is not, as is often stated, that Euodia and Syntyche are arguing with each other, but are separately opposing Paul as is indicated by the “harmony in the Lord.” He indicates, using the perfect tense, that the past behavior of these women and others has been to support Paul, but apparently these two are leaning away from their previous support.

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche⁴⁴ to live in harmony in the Lord. 3 Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

C. They are to **Rest in the Lord** instead of a theology of anxiety because of suffering (4:4-7).

The Philippians are to be calm knowing that Paul’s imprisonment and their own sacrifice for the gospel is the desire of Christ and thus they can have joy instead of anxiety regarding Paul.

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near. 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:4-7)

⁴⁴ The use of a separate verb with each of the women tends to indicate that he is speaking to them separately, that is, that they each are opposing Paul to some degree as opposed to fighting each other.

- D. They are to **Focus their minds on theological purity** (Pauline doctrine of humility) instead of self-centered theology (success and physical blessing = spirituality) (4:8-9)

Thus, the Philippians are to concentrate on Biblical things, that of sacrifice for the gospel, which Paul has exemplified for them.

8 Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. 9 The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you. (Phil. 4:8-9)

- E. They are to **Understand the appropriateness of giving and supporting Paul** as he continues sending the Apostolic doctrine. (4:10-19).

Here, Paul reaffirms his doctrine of suffering for the gospel in his own case and theirs as they sent the gift to encourage him. Thus, Paul's needs are met since he is "delivered," and their needs will be met in the same way as they "suffer" for Christ. This is not saying that physical needs will be met, but that God will give them what they need to "suffer" for Him, that is He will be with them in "delivering" them.

10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned before, but you lacked opportunity. 11 Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. 12 I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. 13 I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. 14 Nevertheless, you have done well to share with me in my affliction. 15 You yourselves also know, Philippians, that at the first preaching of the gospel, after I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving but you alone; 16 for even in Thessalonica you sent a gift more than once for my needs. 17 Not that I seek the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases to your account. 18 But I have received everything in full and have an abundance; I am amply supplied, having received from Epaphroditus what you have sent, a fragrant aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well-pleasing to God. 19 And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. (Phil. 4:10-19)

- VI. **Conclusion:** Based on Paul's sufferings many have come to join the unity of the gospel (including the oppressive Roman soldiers), and these greet their brothers, the Philippians (4:20-23).

20 Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen. 21 Greet every saint in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you. 22 All the saints greet you, especially those of Caesar's household. 23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. (Phil. 4:20-23)

Application

Historical

1. **Support Paul's gospel:** Continue to support Paul, financially, prayerfully, and by following his example in teaching and practice.
2. **No self-righteousness:** Recognize that all one has been given (particularly righteousness) has come through Jesus Christ and not through works.
3. **Aid brothers:** Look out for brother's best interest for the sake of the gospel.
4. **Unity:** Strive for unity in the church as regards a true understanding of the apostolic doctrine. Euodia and Syntyche need to return to their former support of Paul.
5. **Joy in suffering:** Regard suffering for the testimony of Jesus Christ as assurance of being in God's will (1:28). So rejoice in Paul's suffering and their own.

Preaching Application

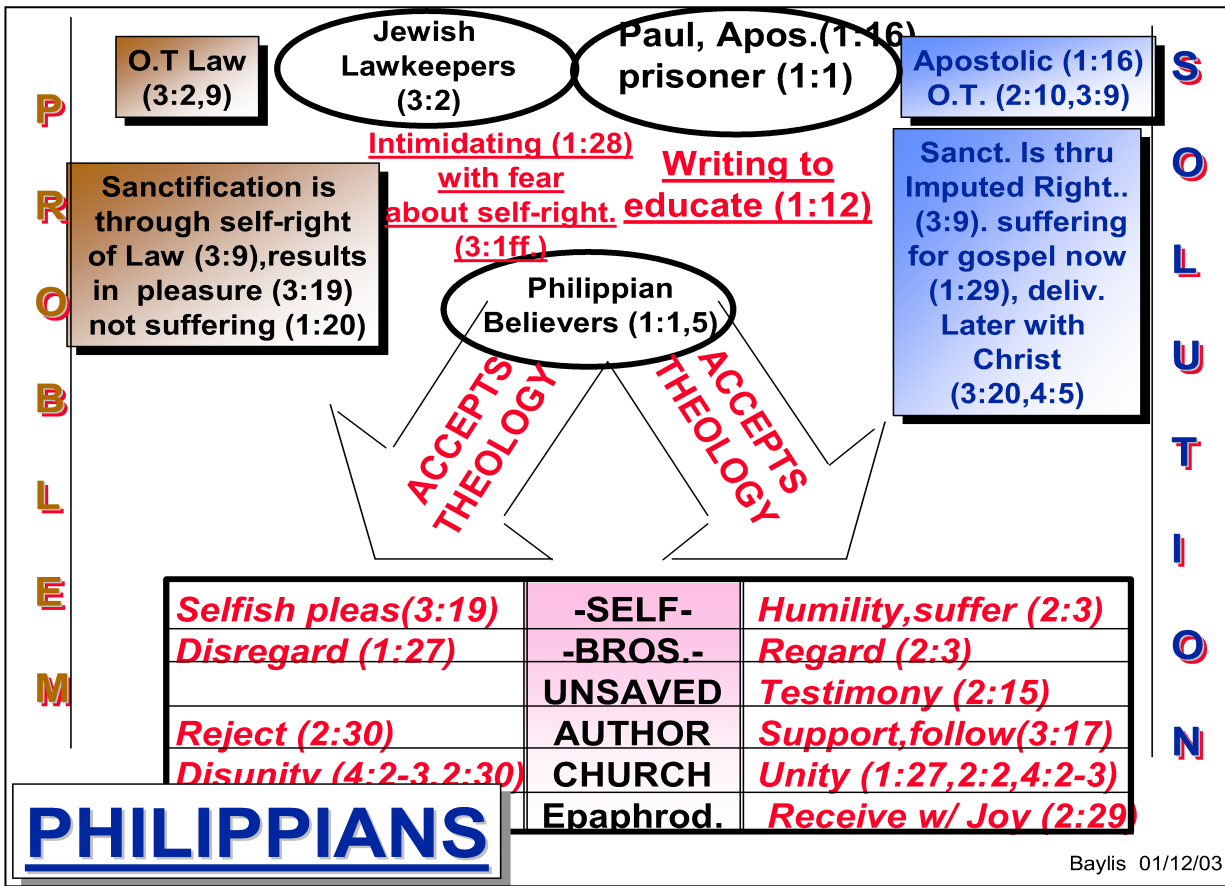
1. **Know the gospel:** Deliverance is participating in the gospel (imputed righteousness) which results in suffering now, deliverance at the Second Coming.
2. **Humility:** Recognize that all than one has been given (particularly righteousness has come through Jesus Christ and not through works.
3. **Regard for brothers:** Look out for brother's best interest for the sake of the gospel.
4. **Unity:** Strive for unity in the church as regards a true understanding of the apostolic doctrine.
5. **Joy in suffering:** Regard suffering for the testimony of Jesus Christ as assurance of being in God's will (1:28).

Specific Application

1. **Know the gospel:** Personal regular, accurate Bible study on a regular basis.
2. **Humility:** Desire to serve in the church in areas where there is a need as opposed to a position of recognition. Be ready to look for areas to serve those who are not appealing.

3. **Regard for brothers:** Sacrifice time for the sake of other, as in taking time for personal discipleship, teaching Bible studies, hosting those who are not appealing.
4. **Unity:** Teach a Sunday School class so that the church might be united in the apostolic doctrine.
5. **Joy in suffering:** Be sure that my testimony is one of praise for God's deliverance when hard times come my way. Pray specifically to give thanks daily for the times of victory over suffering.

IDENTIFICATION AND INTERACTION



Characters (Who?)

Antagonist(s)

Physical Traits: Prominently Jewish, since they are physically circumcised (3:2).

3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision⁴⁵

Theology:

Beliefs: Self-centered, elevated based on their good works (3:4).

3:4 If anyone has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more.

⁴⁵ The word should be literally translated, “the mutilation”.

Positions: Advocators (by example at least) of sanctification through works of the flesh.⁴⁶

3:16 however, let us keep living by that same *standard* to which we have attained.

3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* enemies of the cross of Christ,

Reader(s)

Physical Traits: People who belong to the church at Philippi (1:1). Euodia and Syntyche are specifically identified (4:2), as well as an unnamed ‘true fellow-worker’ (4:3).

4:2 I urge *Euodia* and I urge *Syntyche* to live in harmony in the Lord.

4:3 Indeed, *true fellow-worker*, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel

Theology:

Beliefs: Believers (1:1) in the gospel presented by Paul (1:5).

1:1 To all the *saints in Christ Jesus*, who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons (1:1)

⁴⁶ There is a question as to who are the people of 1:15,17, and are they the same as those of 3:2ff.? They have the same attributes of character, that is they are both against Paul, envying and striving with him, and are selfishly ambitious. So, at the very least, these share these attributes with those of 3:2ff, who are clearly the Philippian antagonists. The difficulty is the question of the fact that they preach the gospel and Paul rejoices in that Christ is proclaimed. If they were teaching the things advocated by those in 3:2ff. (even accompanied by the gospel message) could Paul have rejoiced? He did not do so when it was present in Galatians? That appears to be the difficulty. However, if one preaches out of self-ambition, envy and strife, is one not advocating the very doctrines of the Judaizers, that is, self-elevation based on position, works, or other physical items? Thus, those who preach salvation through Christ, but seek glory for themselves, actually are advocating the doctrines of 3:2ff., but sanctificationally, not positionally. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find one preaching the gospel of salvation by faith, who seeks self-glory who does not advocate (even if not formally) self-elevation through deeds or status. So they are related, but whether the same or not is difficult to establish at this point, and is best left as an illustration until proven.

1:5 ... in view of *your participation in the gospel from the first day until now.*

Positions: Believers and overseers and deacons (1:1)

1:1 To all the *saints* in Christ Jesus, who are in Philippi, *including the overseers and deacons* (1:1).

Author(s)

Physical Traits: Paul and Timothy identified as the names of the authors (1:1). Paul is physically in prison (1:13).

1:1 *Paul and Timothy*, bond-servants of Christ Jesus

1:13 ...so that *my imprisonment* in the cause of Christ has become well-known...

Theology:

Beliefs: Paul a defender of the gospel (1:16).

1:16 ...”knowing that *I am appointed for the defense of the gospel*

Positions: Paul is an apostle (1:16, 4:15-16). Timothy was his emissary (2:22)

1:16 ...”knowing that *I am appointed for the defense of the gospel*

2:22 ... *he served with me in the furtherance of the gospel like a child serving his father.*

4:15-16 (The relationship which the Philippians understood was church to Apostle.)

Problem (What?)

Problem Physical Activities

Antagonist Action Toward Reader

Advocating: The antagonists were contrasting themselves with Paul (3:2ff.), but as elevated based on works (Law) sanctification. By doing this they were opposing Paul, who advocated humility through imputed righteousness.

- 3:2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
- 3:3 for we are the *true* circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh,
- 3:4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more:

Reader's Actions resulting from errant theology (and Affected)

Self: Selfishness, conceit (2:3), abandonment of grace (3:18), pleasure-seeking, living for now (3:19).⁴⁷

- 2:3 **Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit**, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;
- 3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, **that they are enemies of the cross of Christ**,
- 3:19 whose end is destruction, **whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.**

Brothers: Due to teaching of self-righteousness men would become elevated and selfish, thus treating their brothers with disdain, not aiding them when they suffer for the gospel.

- 2:3-4 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind **let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.**

Church: Dissension over Paul and his gospel, particularly in the case of Euodia and Syntyche, who opposed the sending of the gift to Paul by way of Ephaphroditus (2:2, 4:2).

⁴⁷ Note that 3:18-19 may be referring to the antagonist (or their followers) who have gone astray from the cross and its imputation. Thus, while directly referring to the antagonist, he is implicating the readers as potential followers. Note however by contrast that he is contrasting them with the followers of Paul.

- 1:27 standing firm in one spirit, *with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*
- 2:2 make my joy complete by *being of the same mind,* maintaining the same love, *united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*
- 4:2-3 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to *live in harmony in the Lord.* 3 Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of the gospel*

Author: Opposition to Paul and his gospel (1:17,2:30,4:2-3)

- 1:17 the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, rather than from pure motives, *thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.*
- 2:30 because he came close to death for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete *what was deficient in your service to me.*
- 3:18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* *enemies of the cross of Christ,*
- 4:2-3 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to *live in harmony in the Lord.* 3 Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of the gospel*

Problem Theology

Source of Antagonist's Theology

Old Testament: The Old Testament is the basis of their theology. However, Paul defines their interpretation as self-centered (fleshly), generated from their minds (“earthly”) and their desires (“appetite”) (3:19)

- 3:2 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
- 3:4-6 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.
- 3:9 not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law
- 3:19 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Content of Antagonist's Theology

Keeping of the Law brings righteous standing before God (sanctificational), which results in the blessing of pleasures (deliverance) as opposed to the judgment of suffering (wrath).

- 3:2 2 Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision;
- 3:4-6 4 although I myself might have confidence even in the flesh. If anyone else has a mind to put confidence in the flesh, I far more: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the Law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to the righteousness which is in the Law, found blameless.
- 3:9 not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law
- 3:19 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* appetite, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things (contrast with “wait for a Savior”, 3:20)

Application of Antagonist's Theology

Self-Elevation

Self-righteousness leads to self-elevation. The fact that someone feels that they have earned their standing before God based on self, results in an false elevation of themselves.

Greediness, lack of mercy toward brothers

From this comes greediness, lack of mercy toward brothers (since they themselves have not needed mercy), and division in the church with those who would hold for imputed righteousness (sanctificational).

Riches, food, pleasure now

This self-righteousness makes the doer feel that he deserves blessing such as riches, food, pleasure, as opposed to suffering. From a reading of the Old Covenant (particularly Deut. 28) the Judaizer assumes that since he is prospering he is blessed. Suffering would thus indicate being under the wrath of God for disobedience (as Paul in prison).

Problem Summary Statement

Jewish believers are preaching to **Philippian believers** that **the self-righteousness of the law brings deliverance now** which is causing **them to be greedy, reject Paul and his support, be unconcerned about others, and divisive in the church**

Solution (What?)**Physical Activities****Author's Action Toward Reader**

Writing to instruct them of the truth of his present situation (imprisonment for the gospel) and to send Ephaphroditus to test their reception of Paul's explanation and exhortation.

1:12 Now ***I want you to know***, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for the greater progress of the gospel.

2:25-30 25 But I thought it necessary ***to send to you Epaphroditus***, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need . . . 28 Therefore ***I have sent him all the more eagerly in order that*** when you see him again you may rejoice and ***I may be less concerned about you*** . . .

Reader's Actions resulting from author's theology (and Affected)

Self: Humility before God and others.

2:3-11 2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but ***with humility of mind*** let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; 4 do not *merely* look out for your own

personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 *Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus* . . .

A knowledge of the revelation of God through Paul, so that they may be true representatives of the Father in action.

2:12-13 12 So then, my beloved, just as *you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out⁴⁸ your salvation⁴⁹ with fear and trembling;* 13 for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

Brothers: Regard the brother's interest ahead of selfish interest, i.e., represent God's interest in the brother sacrificially.

2:2-5 2:2 make my joy complete by . . . *maintaining the same love* . . . 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind *let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;* 4 *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.* 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Church: Be unified in embracing the gospel of Paul.

1:27 27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you *are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*

2:2 2 make my joy complete by *being of the same mind . . . united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*

Author: Adopt Paul's theology and Paul himself including his financial support.

⁴⁸ The word here is *katergazesqe* which is used primarily as action to bring about fruition, best translated "bring about". Thus Paul is not urging them to figure out what he says, but to *do* what he says.

⁴⁹ The word here is *swthri,an*, which is 'salvation' but is better translated 'deliverance' as should be the translation in 1:19, 1:28 and 2:12. The Philippians are concerned about Paul's physical 'deliverance' from prison. Paul is pointing out that he is already 'delivered' as he is exactly where God wants him. But ultimately he points out that he is waiting for the 'Deliverer' (*swth/ra*) from heaven, pointing out that his ultimate deliverance is at the Second Coming. He states, "from which (heaven) also we eagerly wait for a Savior (alternate translation: "Deliverer"), the Lord Jesus Christ . . ." (3:20). He adds later "the Lord is near" (4:5).

- 1:27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;
- 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.
- 4:2 I urge ***Euodia*** and I urge ***Syntychē*** to live in harmony in the Lord.
- 4:3 Indeed, true comrade, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel, together with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.
- 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned *before*, but you lacked opportunity.

Outsiders: The revelation of the gospel is to be seen in the testimony of the readers to those who are without it.

- 2:15 that you may prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,⁵⁰ among whom you appear as lights in the world,

Theology

Source of Author's Theology

Author is an apostle

- 1:16 the latter *do it* out of love, knowing that ***I am appointed for the defense of the gospel***

Godly understanding of the Old Testament

- 3:9 and may be found in Him, ***not*** having a righteousness of my own ***derived from the Law***, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness ***which comes from God on the basis of faith***

⁵⁰ While this phrase is generally taken to mean unsaved Gentiles, it is used frequently of the nation Israel who has rejected God. It appears in Deut. 32:5 and Acts 2:40 (“perverse generation”) in reference to rejecting Israel. This would be applicable to the antagonists who are Jews as well as the present-day Israel.

Content of Author's Theology

Belief in and suffering for the sake of the gospel (imputed righteousness through Jesus) with deliverance delayed until the return of Jesus Christ.

- 1:29 For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, **not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake** . . .
- 3:9-11 and may be found in Him, not having **a righteousness of my own derived from the Law**, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which *comes* from God on the basis of faith, 10 that **I may know** Him, and the power of His resurrection and the **fellowship of His sufferings**, being conformed to His death; 11 **in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead**.
- 3:17 Brethren, **join in following my example**, and **observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us**.
- 3:20 For our citizenship is in heaven, **from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior**, the Lord Jesus Christ;
- 4:5 . . . **The Lord is near**.

Application of Author's Theology

Clearly if one accepts the doctrine of imputed righteousness,

1. he will be humbled before God and others (having no value of apart from Christ),
2. he will therefore aid his brother (as God aided him),
3. he will support Paul and his gospel (since this is exactly what he teaches against the opposition),
4. and he will regard suffering for the gospel with joy (because he realizes that is the plan of God).

Solution Summary Statement

Paul, the apostle is writing to educate Philippian believers concerning suffering for the gospel of imputed righteousness (sanctificational) which will cause them to be humbled, concerned about others, supporting of Paul, and joyful in suffering for the gospel.