

Eternal Optimist

Philippians 1:12-14

I. Circumstantially Good v. 12

a. Circumstances

- i. Most likely he included all the events from his imprisonment at Jerusalem through his imprisonment at Rome. These were the riot, the two-year imprisonment at Caesarea, the appeal to Caesar, the threat on his life, the trip to Rome with its shipwreck, his house-arrest and restricted freedom, and the impending trial. However, the focus is on the Roman events. As Paul described them, he spoke in terms of the effect on the soldiers and the Roman church.
- ii. When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and shut away in prison in Caesarea (Acts 23–24), one could easily imagine that this was the end of his ministry, especially as his imprisonment dragged on month after month (Acts 24:27). But in the providence of God both the place of his imprisonment, the Praetorium of Herod (Acts 23:35), and the length of his imprisonment served to thrust the gospel up into higher levels of Roman society than it had ever reached before. Roman military officers, chiliarchs, and centurions (Acts 23:24, 26), as well as Roman soldiers, heard the gospel in Jerusalem and Caesarea. Two Roman governors, Felix and Festus, along with King Herod Agrippa and their wives heard Paul speak about faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 24:24–27; 25:1–26:32). One of these governors, over a span of two years, often sent for Paul to converse with him (Acts 24:26). News of this celebrated prisoner and his teaching must have spread through the Praetorium, the barracks, and out into the surrounding community.

b. Greater Progress

- i. The church might have expected the worse, but Paul countered that quickly. The gospel advanced. The term “advanced” (*prokopēn*) was used in the Greek-speaking world to describe blazing a trail before an army
- ii. Thus, what appeared at first to be the fatal blow to the Christian mission, the arrest of Paul, turned out to be the means of its revitalization, the key to preaching the gospel before governors and kings (cf. Mark 13:9) and their staff personnel. It became evident, therefore, to those in all parts of the residence of the provincial governor of Caesarea
- iii. Though you feared that my circumstances might injure the cause of the gospel, they have rather promoted it. progress of a young minister

1. opposite is expressed by ἔγκόπτειν, 'to cut into,' 'to throw obstacles in the way of,' and so 'to hinder' (Gal. 5:7; 1 Thess. 2:18; 1 Pet. 3:7).
- iv. Far from hurting the gospel's cause, Paul's "sufferings and restraints" (Lightfoot) actually helped it; far from slowing it down, they really advanced it. προκοπήν, "progress," is a metaphorical word that pictures "pioneers *cutting* a way *before* an army and so furthering its march"
- c. Gospel

II. Greater Good v. 13

- a. Imprisonment
 - i. Cause of Christ
 1. In Eph 3:1, he referred to himself as the prisoner of Christ. Surely he intended a similar meaning here, though neither passage is determinative.
 2. In the truest sense, he was a prisoner of Christ
 3. Moreover, the force of the statement lies in the fact that his imprisonment has become a matter of notoriety as being *for Christ*. His confinement as a Christian would excite attention and inquiry.
 4. These results are: (1) It has now become clear that Paul is a prisoner, not for any crime he committed, political or otherwise, but simply because he is a Christian (v 13).
 - b. Well Known
 - i. Whole Praetorium
 1. The advance came partly because **the whole palace guard**, as well as others, were hearing about Christ (vv. 12–13). The "palace guard" (*praitōriō*) likely refers to the praetorian guard, made up of Roman soldiers. Though Paul resided in his own rented facility (Acts 28:30), he was guarded by these soldiers all the time. The custom was for a prisoner to be chained at the wrist to a soldier.
 2. The evidence from Acts reveals that Paul had his own leased dwelling, so he could not have been incarcerated at the praetorium (Acts 28:30).
 3. Paul, therefore, saw the events as forging new territory for the gospel. They took Paul into contact with a select group of people, soldiers and Roman officials, who otherwise would have had no relationship to him, and they also prompted a renewed evangelistic effort in the city. While others may have seen the end of missionary activity, Paul saw the new ways the gospel could advance. The events which seemed to inhibit the freedom of the gospel became its springboard. Paul did not say "in spite of" these events, but rather "through them."

4. Paul was committed to the charge of these troops, the soldiers relieving each other in mounting guard over him in his private lodging.
 5. Vitellius increased their number to sixteen thousand. They were distinguished by special privileges and by double pay.
 6. In (or throughout) the whole praetorian guard.' The praetorians formed the imperial guard. They were ten thousand in number, picked men, originally of Italian birth, but drawn later from Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain
- ii. Everyone Else
 1. His imprisonment as a Christian became known beyond the limits of the guard, in the city at large. Immediately upon his arrival he addressed the chief of the Jews (Acts 28:17), and later a larger number (vs. 23), and for two years received all that came to him (vs. 30).

III. Everyone's Good v. 14

- a. Brethren
 - i. Trusting the Lord
 - ii. Because of Imprisonment
- b. Spread the Word
 - i. More Courage
 1. Paul's incarceration had another effect: it encouraged those who had been reluctant about speaking for Christ (v. 14). Large numbers of believers became bold for Christ when they saw how God was spreading the gospel through Paul.
 2. His use of περισσοτέρως, "all the more," merely indicates that their courage and efforts, while continuing, were now heightened to a much greater degree. And these renewed efforts were directed toward preaching the word without fear.
 3. somehow gained confidence in the Lord or were infused with courage by the Lord because of Paul's imprisonment, and they dared to preach more than they had ever dared to preach before.
 - ii. Without Fear
 1. In actuality, the church at Rome had two different reactions. Some members were encouraged by Paul and preached out of sympathy; others hoped to get Paul into more trouble with the Roman officials. Paul focused first on the brethren who supported him. In addition, he was able to see beyond the differences in motivation and realized that Christ was proclaimed. He was comforted by this reality

Word Studies

Circumstances -

Turned Out -

Greater

Progress - **a movement forward to an improved state, *progress, advancement, furtherance***
Phil 1:25; 1 Ti 4:15. ¹

Imprisonment - **that which serves as a means of restraint by tying or fastening, *bond, fetter***²

Courage - *dare, have the courage, be brave enough*³

Without fear - **to being without fear of what might happen, *fearlessly***⁴

12 γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι, “now I want you to know.” Although this expression is a trite formula of transition, apparently a standard part of personal letters of the first century, Paul nevertheless uses it here sincerely to inform his friends about himself and how he fares, or

¹ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 871.

² William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 219.

³ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1010.

⁴ William Arndt et al., [*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*](#) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 158.

rather, about his mission and how it progresses. His use of γινώσκειν, “know,” here is a possible recall of ἐπίγνωσις, “deeper knowledge,” in Phil 1:9.

ἀδελφοί, “my brothers [and sisters].” Paul greets them affectionately as brothers and sisters (NRSV⁵ renders ἀδελφοί inclusively as “beloved,” but this loses the image of the family; see also Phil 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8, 21; see J. Beutler, *EDNT*⁶ 1:29 for familiar language in early Christianity as in Hellenistic cults). He does so because he sees himself with them as belonging to the same family, closely and lovingly related to each other, not by birth but by faith in Jesus Christ and by commitment to doing the will of God (cf. Mark 3:34–35; see also M⁷M, 9). ἀδελφοί, “brothers [and sisters],” is a favorite word with Paul (used by him 133 times), and its significance must not be forgotten. Later when he tells the Philippians about those who preach Christ for wrong reasons (Phil 1:15–18), he nevertheless calls them “brothers [and sisters]” (cf. 1:14 with 1:15). By doing so he says, in effect, that although he regrets their motives, he does not reject them. Osiek (38–39) has wise comments on the term as connoting equality and denying Paul’s androcentrism in this letter (cf. 4:2).

ὅτι τὰ κατ’ ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν, “that the things that happened to me have advanced the progress of the gospel [rather than retarded it].” Unfortunately, however, the apostle is silent about what exactly it was that had happened to him. He refers to it in the briefest possible way: τὰ κατ’ ἐμὲ, “my affairs” (cf. Col 4:7; cf. Eph 6:21). The thought is connected in a slightly different phrase in Phil 1:27. Whatever it was—whether a change of mind on Paul’s part from a desire for martyrdom to a determination to secure release for himself, a change of mind that may have angered and alienated his radical followers (Collange), or a lengthy prison term—it was something, however, that could rightly be assumed by some to injure the cause of the gospel and prompt Christians to remain silent out of pique or fear. (That Paul’s change of mind may have angered his followers is opposed by Fee [1999]. But Capper [*ThZ* 49 (1993) 193–214] wants to see a rift between Paul and the Philippians. This is regarded as unlikely by Bockmuehl [72]. Turner’s proposal that the phrase “my affairs” relates to Paul’s lawsuit on the basis of Acts 25:14 [τὰ κατὰ Παῦλον, “Paul’s affairs”] is more appealing [Moulton et al., *Grammar*, 3:15].) But Paul writes to tell his friends at Philippi that the reverse of this was true. With the introduction of μᾶλλον, “rather,” he announces the unexpected (Omanson, *BT*⁹ 29 [1978] 446–48). Rumors to the contrary, Paul assures them that his “present situation,” which should have hindered the spread of the gospel, in fact caused it to spread more than (μᾶλλον) it otherwise would have without this hindrance.

Far from hurting the gospel’s cause, Paul’s “sufferings and restraints” (Lightfoot) actually helped it; far from slowing it down, they really advanced it. προκοπὴν, “progress,” is a metaphorical word that pictures “pioneers *cutting* a way *before* an army and so furthering its

⁵NRSV New Revised Standard Version (1989)

⁶EDNT H. Balz and G. Schneider (eds.), *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*

⁷MM J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (London: Hodder, 1930)

⁸ThZ *Theologische Zeitschrift* (ThZ)

⁹BT *The Bible Translator*

march” (Vincent, 16; G. Stählin, *TDN¹⁰T* 6:703–19; Bonhöffer, *Epiktet*, 128; see also Sir 51:17; 2 Macc 8:8; 1 Tim 4:15; there are also Stoic parallels that may or may not illumine Paul’s word). On the term εὐαγγέλιον, “gospel,” in this letter see O’Brien, “Importance of the Gospel in Philippians.”

13–14 Proof that events have advanced the gospel lies in tangible results. Therefore, Paul now proceeds to name these results in the long sentence structured as follows: ὥστε ... γενέσθαι ... τολμᾶν, “as a result ... to become ... to dare.” These results are: (1) It has now become clear that Paul is a prisoner, not for any crime he committed, political or otherwise, but simply because he is a Christian (v 13). (2) Most of his fellow believers are inspired by his imprisonment to speak the word daringly and fearlessly (v 14). (ὥστε, “as a result,” and the infinitives, as used here, contrary to classical idiom, indicate actual result, not mere potential or intended result [Moulton et al., *Grammar*, 3:136 (4)].)

13 ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ γενέσθαι ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν, “As a result it has become clear throughout the entire praetorium and to everyone else that I am a prisoner because I am a Christian.” Paul writes that his imprisonment is ἐν Χριστῷ, “in Christ.” The actual title “Christian” came later, though there are antecedents in Acts 11:26; 26:28; 1 Pet 4:16 preparing for the more common second-century nomenclature (cf. Plin¹¹, *Ep¹²*, 10.96, 97).

When Paul was arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21) and shut away in prison in Caesarea (Acts 23–24), one could easily imagine that this was the end of his ministry, especially as his imprisonment dragged on month after month (Acts 24:27). But in the providence of God both the place of his imprisonment, the Praetorium of Herod (Acts 23:35), and the length of his imprisonment served to thrust the gospel up into higher levels of Roman society than it had ever reached before. Roman military officers, chiliarchs, and centurions (Acts 23:24, 26), as well as Roman soldiers, heard the gospel in Jerusalem and Caesarea. Two Roman governors, Felix and Festus, along with King Herod Agrippa and their wives heard Paul speak about faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 24:24–27; 25:1–26:32). One of these governors, over a span of two years, often sent for Paul to converse with him (Acts 24:26). News of this celebrated prisoner and his teaching must have spread through the Praetorium, the barracks, and out into the surrounding community. Thus, what appeared at first to be the fatal blow to the Christian mission, the arrest of Paul, turned out to be the means of its revitalization, the key to preaching the gospel before governors and kings (cf. Mark 13:9) and their staff personnel. It became evident, therefore, to those in all parts of the residence of the provincial governor of Caesarea (ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ, “throughout the entire praetorium”) and to all outside it (τοῖς λοιποῖς, “to everyone else”) that Paul was a prisoner because he was a Christian. (On the wide range of

¹⁰*TDNT* G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

¹¹Pliny Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae*

¹²*Ep.* Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae*

meanings of “praetorium” see BDA¹³G; R. E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, A¹⁴B 29A [Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966] 845; Gnlika; Collange. On the location of this praetorium see Lohmeyer; contrast Reicke, “Caesarea, Rome,” 283; and see the discussion in the *Introduction, Place and Date of Writing*.) Christianity, therefore, gained public notice because of Paul’s bonds. His imprisonment produced notoriety as being for Christ (φανερους ἐν Χριστῷ, “manifest in Christ”) and provided extraordinary opportunity for bearing witness to the saving power of Christ in the gospel (Lightfoot, Vincent, Lohmeyer, Benoit, Hendriksen).

14 καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον λαλεῖν, “furthermore, my being a prisoner has made most of the brothers [and sisters] confident in the Lord, so that they dare all the more to preach the gospel without fear.” Paul’s affairs had yet a second result that advanced the gospel still more—the majority (πλείονας; cf. BD¹⁵F §224[3]), though not all, of his fellow Christians (τῶν ἀδελφῶν, “brothers [and sisters]”) somehow gained confidence in the Lord or were infused with courage by the Lord because of Paul’s imprisonment, and they dared to preach more than they had ever dared to preach before. The device of not naming one’s friends and one’s opponents is here employed (see Marshall, *Enmity in Corinth*, 36–67). (It is best to take ἐν κυρίῳ, “in the Lord,” with πεποιθότας, “confident,” rather than with τῶν ἀδελφῶν, “the brothers [and sisters],” since by τῶν ἀδελφῶν Paul already means “the brothers [and sisters] in the Lord”; to add ἐν κυρίῳ, “in the Lord,” to it would be tautological. Cf. also Phil 2:24.)

Paul does not intend to suggest by this statement that these people, most likely his fellow Christian workers in Caesarea, had ever lacked courage or had ever failed in their preaching mission. His use of περισσοτέρως, “all the more,” merely indicates that their courage and efforts, while continuing, were now heightened to a much greater degree. And these renewed efforts were directed toward preaching the word without fear. τὸν λόγον, “the word,” used here absolutely (cf. Gal 6:6; 1 Thess 1:6), but explained by its variants—“the word of God,” and “the word of the Lord” (see *Note* ¹⁶a)—refers to the totality of the Christian message (so Collange, 55 ¹⁷n. 3; G. Kittel, *TDN*¹⁸T 4:114–19), against which all the hatred of the world

¹³BDAG Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3d ed. Chicago, 1999.

¹⁴AB Anchor Bible (New York: Doubleday)

¹⁵BDF F. Blass, A. Debrunner, and R. W. Funk, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (University of Chicago/University of Cambridge, 1961)

¹⁶a There is no textual variant here, but in several mss of Paul’s other letters the formula appears both as Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, “Jesus Christ,” and as Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, “Christ Jesus” (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; cf. Eph 1:1). In Philippians the following variations of this title appear: Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, “Jesus Christ” (1:6), 11, 19; κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, “Lord Jesus Christ,” 1:2; 2:11; 3:20; 4:23; Χριστός, “Christ,” 1:10, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 27, 29; 2:1, 16, (30); 3:7, 8, 9, 18; Χριστὸς Ἰησοῦς ὁ κύριός μου, “Christ Jesus, my Lord,” 3:8; Ἰησοῦς, “Jesus,” 2:10.

¹⁷n note

¹⁸TDNT G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, eds., tr. G. W. Bromiley *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ET (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

concentrated itself. The “Tempter,” the “Opponent,” puts everything into action so as to make the gospel ineffective by intimidating those who proclaim it. The history of the church, then as later, was a history under the cross (Eusebius, *Hist. ecc*¹⁹. 5, Prolegomenon). Stauffer notes the church’s response: “But the people of God withstood this general attack of God’s enemies in the fearlessness of those who fear God” (*New Testament Theology*, 187).²⁰

12. γινώσκειν δὲ ὑμᾶς βούλομαι: ‘now I would have you know.’ This phrase does not occur elsewhere in N.T., but Paul uses several similar expressions in order to call special attention to what he is about to say. Thus, θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς εἰδέναι (1 Cor. 11:3; Col. 2:1); οὐ θέλω (ομεν) ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν (1 Cor. 10:1; Rom. 1:13; 1 Thess. 4:13); γνωρίζω (ομεν) ὑμῖν (1 Cor. 15:1; 2 Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:11).

ἃ κατ’ ἐμὲ: ‘The things pertaining to me’; my experience as a prisoner. (Comp²¹. Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7.) Not ‘that which has been undertaken *against* me,’ which would require ἐμοῦ.

μᾶλλον: Not ‘more’ (quantitatively), but ‘rather.’ Though you feared that my circumstances might injure the cause of the gospel, they have *rather* promoted it. The comparative is often used without mention of the standard of comparison. (See 2:28; Rom. 15:15; 1 Cor. 7:38, 12:31; 2 Cor. 7:7, 13, etc.; Win²². xxxv. 4.)

προκοπήν: Only here, vs. 25, and 1 Tim. 4:15. A word of later Greek, occurring in Plut²³., Jos²⁴., and Philo. (See Wetst²⁵.) In LX²⁶X, see Sir. 51:17; 2 Macc. 8:8. The figure in the word is uncertain, but is supposed to be that of pioneers *cutting* a way *before* an army, and so *furthering* its march. The opposite is expressed by ἐγκόπτειν, ‘to cut into,’ ‘to throw obstacles in the way of,’ and so ‘to hinder’ (Gal. 5:7; 1 Thess. 2:18; 1 Pet. 3:7).

εὐαγγελίου: Originally ‘a present given in return for good news.’ (See Hom²⁷. *Od.* xiv. 152; Aristoph²⁸. *Knights*, 647; 2 Sam. 4:10, 18:22.) In class²⁹. Gk. it meant, in the plu., ‘a sacrifice for

¹⁹*Hist. eccl Historia Ecclesiastica*

²⁰Gerald F. Hawthorne, *Philippians*, vol. 43, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2004), 42–45.

²¹Comp. Compare.

²²Win. Winer: *Grammar of N. T. Greek*. 8th ed. of Eng. Transl. by Moulton. *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms*, 8 Aufl., von P. W. Schmiedel. 1 Theil, 1894.

²³Plut. Plutarch.

²⁴Jos. Josephus.

²⁵Wetst. Wetstein.

²⁶LXX Septuagint Version.

²⁷Hom. Homer.

²⁸Aristoph. Aristophanes.

²⁹class. Classics or Classical.

good tidings'; hence the phrase εὐαγγελία θύειν (Aristoph³⁰. *Knights*, 656; Xen³¹. *Hell.* i. 6, 37, iv. 3, 14). Later, 'the good news' itself, as 2 Sam. 18:20, 25, 27; 2 Kings 7:9. Hence 'the joyful tidings of Messiah's kingdom—the gospel.' In the N.T., never in the sense of a book.

εἰς ... ἐλήλυθεν: Not elsewhere in Paul. (See Sap. 15:5.) 'Has redounded to'; 'fallen out unto.'

13. ὥστε τοὺς δεσμούς μου φανεροὺς ἐν Χριστῷ:

Ὡστε with the accus. w. inf., as 1 Cor. 1:7. With an explanatory force, the explanation being regarded as a result of the notion of προκοπήν. (See Jelf, *Gram.* 863, obs. 7.) Render: 'so that my bonds became manifest in Christ'; not 'my bonds in Christ,' against which is the position of the words. Moreover, the force of the statement lies in the fact that his imprisonment has become a matter of notoriety as being *for Christ*. His confinement as a Christian would excite attention and inquiry. (Comp³². Ign³³. *Smyr.* xi. δεδεμένος θεοπρεπεστάτοις δεσμοῖς πάντας ἀσπάζομαι: "A prisoner in bonds which are divine ornaments, I salute all men.") Jerome says: "Vincula mea manifesta fierent in Christo. Non solum non obsunt sed etiam profuerunt, dum manifestatur me non pro aliquo crimine, sed pro Christo omnia sustinere."

ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ πραιτωρίῳ:

'In (or throughout) the whole praetorian guard.' The praetorians formed the imperial guard. They were ten thousand in number, picked men, originally of Italian birth, but drawn later from Macedonia, Noricum, and Spain. They were originally instituted by Augustus, who stationed three of their cohorts in Rome, and dispersed the others in the adjacent towns. Tiberius concentrated them all at Rome in a permanent and strongly fortified camp. Vitellius increased their number to sixteen thousand. They were distinguished by special privileges and by double pay. Their original term of service was twelve years, afterwards increased to sixteen. On retiring, each soldier received a bounty amounting to nearly nine hundred dollars. Paul was committed to the charge of these troops, the soldiers relieving each other in mounting guard over him in his private lodging. (See note at the end of this chapter.)

καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς πᾶσιν: (Comp³⁴. 2 Cor. 13:2.) 'All the rest,' as distinguished from the praetorians. Not as A.V³⁵., 'in all other places' (so Chrys., Thdr³⁶., Calv³⁷.). His imprisonment as a Christian became known beyond the limits of the guard, in the city at large. Immediately upon his arrival he addressed the chief of the Jews (Acts 28:17), and later a larger number (vs. 23), and for two years received all that came to him (vs. 30).

14. καὶ τοὺς πλείονας τῶν ἀδελφῶν ἐν κυρίῳ πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου: 'And the majority of the brethren having confidence in the Lord by reason of my bonds.'

³⁰Aristoph. Aristophanes.

³¹Xen. Xenophon.

³²Comp. Compare.

³³Ign. Ignatius.

³⁴Comp. Compare.

³⁵A.V. Authorized Version.

³⁶Thdr. Theodoret.

³⁷Calv. Calvin.

ΤΟΥΣ ΠΛΕΙΟΝΑΣ: Not as A.V.³⁸. ‘many,’ but ‘the greater number.’ (Comp³⁹. 1 Cor. 10:5.)

Differences as to the connection of the words. 1. ἐν κυρίῳ: (a) with ἀδελφῶν, ‘brethren in the Lord’ (Alf⁴⁰., Kl⁴¹., Dw⁴²., Weiss, De W⁴³., Weizs⁴⁴. [Trans.]); (b) with πεποιθότας τοῖς δεσμοῖς, ‘relying on my bonds in the Lord.’ According to this, ἐν κυρίῳ is the modal definition of πεπ. τ. δεσμ. The ground of confidence is τοῖς δεσμ., not ἐν κυρ., which marks the nature and sphere of the confidence (so Mey⁴⁵., Lightf⁴⁶., Ellic⁴⁷., Lips⁴⁸., Ead⁴⁹.). 2. ΠΕΠΟΙΘΟΤΑΣ: (a) with τοῖς δεσμοῖς, as that in which confidence is reposed (Mey⁵⁰., Kl⁵¹., Ead⁵²., Lightf⁵³., Alf⁵⁴., Lips⁵⁵.); (b) with ἐν κυρίῳ, as the ground of confidence (Beet, Hack⁵⁶.).

As to 1 (a), ἀδελφοὶ ἐν κυρίῳ does not occur elsewhere. None of the passages cited by Kl⁵⁷. and others, such as 1 Cor. 4:17; Col. 4:7; Philem. 16, are in point, since in none of them does the preposition depend directly on ἀδελφός. Moreover, the addition of ἐν κ. would seem superfluous. 1 (b) is grammatically defensible. (See Gal. 5:10; 2 Thess. 3:4.) But the sense is forced, if it can be called sense. What is meant by ‘having confidence in,’ or ‘trusting in my bonds?’ 2 (b) is a legitimate construction. (See Jer. 31:7, LX⁵⁸X, *Eng. Bib.* 48:7; Phil. 2:24; and the analogous constructions, Phil. 3:3, 4.) It is true that in such cases ΠΕΠΟΙΘ. usually precedes; but the change of position is for the sake of emphasis, as Phil. 3:3. Ἐν κυρίῳ is the ground of πεποιθ., and τοῖς δεσμ. is instrumental. The sense is thus simple and consistent. By Paul’s bonds the brethren have had their confidence in the Lord strengthened. He has already said that his bonds have become manifest in Christ. The testimony borne by his imprisonment has been distinctly that of Christ’s prisoner, and has therefore encouraged confidence in Christ.

³⁸A.V. Authorized Version.

³⁹Comp. Compare.

⁴⁰Alf. Alford.

⁴¹Kl. Klöpper.

⁴²Dw. Dwight.

⁴³De W. De Wette.

⁴⁴Weizs. Weizsäcker.

⁴⁵Mey. Meyer.

⁴⁶Lightf. Lightfoot.

⁴⁷Ellic. Ellicott.

⁴⁸Lips. Lipsius.

⁴⁹Ead. Eadie.

⁵⁰Mey. Meyer.

⁵¹Kl. Klöpper.

⁵²Ead. Eadie.

⁵³Lightf. Lightfoot.

⁵⁴Alf. Alford.

⁵⁵Lips. Lipsius.

⁵⁶Hack. Hackett.

⁵⁷Kl. Klöpper.

⁵⁸LXX Septuagint Version.

περισσοτέρως τολμᾶν ἀφόβως τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ λαλεῖν: ‘are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear.’ For περισσοτέρως, comp⁵⁹. 2 Cor. 1:12, 2:4; Gal. 1:14. It belongs with τολμᾶν, not with ἀφόβως.

Τολμᾶν is to carry into action the feeling of resolute confidence expressed by θαρσεῖν. (See 2 Cor. 10:2, and *W. St.*⁶⁰. ad loc.)

τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ: The message of God; the gospel. Very frequent in N.T. Once in the sense of ‘the declared purpose of God’ (Rom. 9:6). Not elsewhere in Paul with λαλεῖν. For the phrase τὸν λόγ. λαλ. or τὸν λόγ. θε. λαλ., see Acts 4:31, 13:46, 14:25.

Paul’s boldness and patience in his captivity have stirred up the courage and zeal of the Roman Christians, and probably have awakened shame in some recreant disciples. Chrys. remarks that their courage had not failed before, but had grown by the apostle’s bonds.⁶¹

PAUL’S IMPRISONMENT (1:12)

1:12 Rather than detail the hardships he faced, Paul took a divine perspective. He recognized that all events could be redeemed for the Lord’s sake, and he took what advantage he could to continue his mission. The primary concern was that the gospel go forward. This happened through adverse circumstances, but as long as it happened, Paul could be joyful.

Paul did not specifically mention his imprisonment. The Greek text says simply “the things to me” (*ta kat’ eme*). Most likely he included all the events from his imprisonment at Jerusalem through his imprisonment at Rome. These were the riot, the two-year imprisonment at Caesarea, the appeal to Caesar, the threat on his life, the trip to Rome with its shipwreck, his

⁵⁹comp. Compare.

⁶⁰*W. St. Vincent: Word Studies in the N. T.*

⁶¹Marvin Richardson Vincent, [*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon*](#), International Critical Commentary (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1897), 15–18.

house-arrest and restricted freedom, and the impending trial.⁵⁶²³ However, the focus is on the Roman events. As Paul described them, he spoke in terms of the effect on the soldiers and the Roman church.

The church might have expected the worse, but Paul countered that quickly. The gospel advanced. The term “advanced” (*prokopēn*) was used in the Greek-speaking world to describe blazing a trail before an army, the philosophical progress toward wisdom, and the progress of a young minister.⁵⁶³⁴ Paul, therefore, saw the events as forging new territory for the gospel. They took Paul into contact with a select group of people, soldiers and Roman officials, who otherwise would have had no relationship to him, and they also prompted a renewed evangelistic effort in the city. While others may have seen the end of missionary activity, Paul saw the new ways the gospel could advance. The events which seemed to inhibit the freedom of the gospel became its springboard. Paul did not say “in spite of” these events, but rather “through them.” There is a note of sacrifice here. Paul’s private concerns did not matter; the gospel did.

REACTIONS TO PAUL’S IMPRISONMENT (1:13–17)

In explaining the situation at Rome, Paul disclosed two important results of the events that had happened to him. Neither of these was expected, and thus Paul’s word was news to them. At the same time, both reactions advanced the gospel; Paul made specific what he had claimed to be the case in 1:12. His statement there did not come without evidence. Even here, however, one of the reactions continued to be a mixed blessing, and it proved to be a continuing circumstance of the gospel’s advance through difficulties.

The Gospel Spread Among Roman Soldiers (1:13)

1:13 In this undesirable situation, the gospel spread through the ranks of the soldiers. Basically, Paul said that they knew he was a prisoner of Christ, not just of Rome. The clarification of that fact was an encouragement since Paul would later state “to live is Christ” (1:21). Two matters deserve comment: the meaning of the phrase “manifest in Christ” (*phanerous en Christō*), which the NIV translates “become clear ... for Christ,” and the meaning of “the praetorium” (*praitōrion*), which the NIV translates “palace guard.”

Paul’s basic reason for encouragement was that his real imprisonment became clear. Commentators differ on the meaning of the words “in Christ.” Some think they go with “chains,” with the resultant meaning being something like “it became evident that I was a Christian,” or “that I was a prisoner of Christ.” Since Paul lived for the gospel, perhaps he stated that he was not guilty of any charge brought against him and that the soldiers knew he could be released except for his commitment to Christ. In the truest sense, he was a prisoner of Christ.⁵⁶⁴⁵ That

⁶²⁵³ A. T. Robertson, *Paul’s Joy in Christ: Studies in Philippians* (Nashville: Broadman, n.d.), 41, adds all these events to the statement. It seems unlikely that Paul stressed them all.

⁶³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 40–41. Interestingly he says, “The opposition to Paul in Rome had kicked the gospel upstairs.”

⁶⁴⁵⁵ G. B. Caird, *Paul’s Letters from Prison* (Oxford: University Press, 1976), provides a list of charges brought against Paul as found in Acts. They were sacrilege (21:28) and

prior relationship caused him to be literal prisoner of Rome. Others, like the NIV translators, interpret the phrase to mean that the chains were manifest that they were “for Christ.” Pointing out the awkwardness of the construction in Greek if any other interpretation holds, they state that Paul was really a prisoner for the sake of Christ.⁵⁶⁵⁶ His predicament was because of the Christian message he proclaimed.⁵⁶⁶⁷

Paul actually took advantage of the situation to call to mind a deeper slavery. In Eph 3:1, he referred to himself as the prisoner of Christ. Surely he intended a similar meaning here, though neither passage is determinative. Paul did use words in such a way that they conveyed deeper meanings (not in violation of simpler meanings, however). The first interpretation fits better than the second. Paul’s joy came because what he lived for (the manifestation of Christ) was actually happening. Further, the principle he held so dear was clarified to those around. They understood his slavery to Christ.

Paul said this knowledge spread in the praetorium. Considerable debate focuses on whether the *praitōrion* (praetorium or palace guard) was a place (i.e., a barracks) or a people (i.e., an elite imperial guard). On one hand, the praetorium was a place.⁵⁶⁷⁸ Those who interpret it as a place assume that the place was the barracks of the imperial guard. The evidence from Acts reveals that Paul had his own leased dwelling, so he could not have been incarcerated at the praetorium (Acts 28:30). Seen this way, Paul stated that the topic of conversation in the barracks was Paul and Christ. On the other hand, the praetorium was also a group of men. The term stood for the emperor’s bodyguard of nine cohorts. They were the only troops stationed in Italy

political agitation (24:5). He continues, “He had therefore been at pains to prove to all he met that loyalty to *Christ* was his sole offence” (110).

⁶⁵⁵⁶ The Greek construction puts “in Christ” after “my chains manifest.” That is awkward if “chains in Christ” belong together. However, the verb “became” is also dislocated from the rest; the entire construction is unusual.

⁶⁶⁵⁷ K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (Richmond: John Knox, 1962), 26–27, n.1, assumes that such interpretations were commonly accepted but fail to satisfy the text. They assume that Paul was expecting release because it became apparent that his “crime” was being a Christian. At that time, that was no crime. He argues: (1) that the positive outcome was an assumption of the interpreters and would not have been prominent in Paul’s opening words; (2) that the Roman Christians would have taken courage because there was nothing to fear for being a Christian is a wrong assumption; and (3) that the Greek order argues against it. His arguments lose their weight because this is not an essential assumption to the position. In fact, regardless of the outcome of the trial, Paul lived for “Christ magnified in my body,” and so would have joy regardless. Barth offers the rather strange interpretation that the bonds were “publicized in Christ,” that the *fact* of his imprisonment became a problem to all concerned, and many were reached through this word. His interpretation has little to commend it.

⁶⁷⁵⁸ Lightfoot, 99–104, indicates that the word could mean the general’s tent, the residence of a governor or prince, any spacious palace, the imperial residence on the Palatine, the barracks attached to the imperial palace itself, the great camp of the praetorian soldiers, a body of men, the imperial guard. His discussion provides the basic evidence of the varieties of usage.

after the settlement of Augustus.⁵⁶⁸⁹ Although Paul did not claim that people of the guard were converted, he did claim that they heard his message.⁶⁶⁹⁰

Christians Encouraged to Speak (1:14–17)

1:14 The second result of Paul's circumstances involved the church at Rome. A new evangelistic effort sprang up that affected the entire Christian community. Paul saw that his situation was the catalyst for this renewed interest in outreach, and he knew it would be good news to the church at Philippi.

In actuality, the church at Rome had two different reactions. Some members were encouraged by Paul and preached out of sympathy; others hoped to get Paul into more trouble with the Roman officials. Paul focused first on the brethren who supported him. In addition, he was able to see beyond the differences in motivation and realized that Christ was proclaimed. He was comforted by this reality.

Most of the Christians took heart from Paul's situation.⁶⁷⁰¹ They preached more courageously and fearlessly. Some commentators have suggested that the believers' preaching came because they knew that Paul's only crime was Christianity, and that was no crime at all. Before they had feared their own imprisonment; now that fear no longer existed. There is no evidence for that interpretation, however. While Paul's general tone was optimistic, he never indicated that he knew the trial would exonerate him. Paul actually stated that "the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak." He emphasized their spiritual motivation, not the evidence they might have derived from Paul's circumstances.⁶⁷¹² Further, the context assumes

⁶⁸⁵⁹ Caird, 110.

⁶⁹⁶⁰ This conclusion assumes that Paul wrote from Rome. If Ephesus or Caesarea were the location of writing, the term possibly could have referred to a building. The arguments for and against a building rest on some assumptions. Certainly Paul would not call the emperor's residence on Palatine Hill a "praetorium," yet some say a visitor from the east could easily call a building something it was not. The text is best satisfied if Paul had the guard in mind. Naturally, the guard needed barracks, but the stress appears to be on the people who heard and transmitted the word.

⁷⁰⁶¹ Some statements reveal that Paul expected to be freed. He knew how law operated because he was a Jewish lawyer and knew where he stood with the Roman government officially. Nevertheless, Christianity was an unknown factor in the empire, and Paul was the first serious test case of the official Roman attitude. Paul's optimism resulted from his reading of the situation coupled with his spiritual insights. There is no evidence that he had an inside track on the outcome of the trial.

⁷¹⁶² A major concern occurs in the placement of the phrase "in the Lord." Some see the phrase as "brethren in the Lord," i.e., Christians, who were encouraged. The arguments in favor of it are: the natural reading of the text makes a prepositional phrase follow what it modifies, and normally πέποιθο ("encouraged") comes first in its clause. Others take the phrase as "encouraged in the Lord." They say the phrase "brothers in the Lord" involves a redundancy (where else would brothers be?), "in the Lord" comes first for emphasis, and other times the verb πεποιθα is followed by the preposition "in." The arguments do not clearly favor one over the other. However, similar constructions with

their preaching was encouraged by the imprisonment, not by the expected release. As the next verses indicate, their support for Paul had given them courage to preach God's word.⁶⁷²³

Paul acknowledged that they preached the word, but not all preached with proper motivations. In vv. 15–17 Paul described two groups of preachers who reacted to him. The verses fall into a literary pattern of a chiasm.⁶⁷³⁴ The literary pattern reveals three important aspects of their preaching. First, the "outside" members of the chiasm receive the emphasis. When Paul turned his thoughts to these preachers, therefore, he thought first in terms of those who opposed him.⁶⁷⁴⁵ Second, each group has two sets of descriptive phrases accompanying it. All of these contribute to an understanding of the motivations involved. Third, the chiasm further describes the preachers of v. 14. "Most of the brothers" included those supportive and those opposed to Paul.

The ones preaching to harm Paul are discussed in 1:15, 17. The content reveals a close connection between vv. 14–15, but the translators show a separation. The only word against the preachers of 1:15 is that they had wrong motives. They were still brothers. The first portion of the chiastic unit, however, mildly changes to describing an activity unexpected of brothers. The translation "It is true that" captures the thought. Some opposed Paul, but that was a minor obstacle.⁷⁵

the verb occur in Phil 2:24; 3:3–4, and the prepositional phrase follows. The better understanding, therefore, is that these are "brethren encouraged in the Lord."

⁷²⁶³ The UBS Greek text simply says "to be speaking the word." Some of the translations follow, including the KJV. The NIV, however, has "to speak the word of God." This translation is no doubt correct, as the variant readings affirm. The stronger external evidence supports it, and the internal evidence is undeterminative. The words "of God" were probably part of the original, but if not, the earliest interpretations worked their way into the text.

⁷³⁶⁴ A chiasm is a literary device containing two or more sets of members arranged in an ABBA pattern. In chiasms the outside members (A, A) receive the emphasis.

⁷⁴⁶⁵ This exegetical factor is softened further by the fact that vv. 15–17 describe v. 14. In v. 14 the preachers in general are addressed so that the pattern is general to specific. If Paul had desired to expose the preachers in a harsh way, he would have placed them first in his discussion and used a more direct means of identification.

⁷⁵ Richard R. Melick, [*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*](#), vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 70–73.

STALWART TESTIMONY (1:12–18)

1:12–14. From his own experiences Paul wanted the believers at Philippi to learn an important truth: there are no accidents with God. Instead of Paul’s ministry being curtailed because of his bondage, it was being advanced.

The advance came partly because **the whole palace guard**, as well as others, were hearing about Christ (vv. 12–13). The “palace guard” (*praitōriō*) likely refers to the praetorian guard, made up of Roman soldiers. Though Paul resided in his own rented facility (Acts 28:30), he was guarded by these soldiers all the time. The custom was for a prisoner to be chained at the wrist to a soldier.

All in Rome who came in contact with Paul heard about Christ. It was well known that he was not under guard for being a lawbreaker. Instead he was **in chains for Christ** (Phil. 1:13). In an effort to silence the truth, the authorities had incarcerated the one who spoke it, but their plan did not work.

Paul’s incarceration had another effect: it encouraged those who had been reluctant about speaking for Christ (v. 14). Large numbers of believers became bold for Christ when they saw how God was spreading the gospel through Paul. The positive response Paul received in the face of opposition caused others to speak **more courageously and fearlessly** for Christ. Paul’s confinement was doing what his circumstances outside of prison could never do.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Robert P. Lightner, “[Philippians.](#)” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 650–651.