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PHILIPPIANS

1:1-2 PAUL GREETES THE PHILIPPIANS

¹Paul and Timothy, servants² of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers³ and deacons⁴

²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹ Or slaves; Greek δουλοῦμαι. ² Or helpers; Greek ἐπίσκοποι. ³ Or servants; or ministers; Greek διάκονοι.

Overview Paul, along with Timothy, introduces the letter to the Philippians, extending grace and peace to the church in the city. The Reformation commentators set out the grand themes of the letter and its significance for the faith and life of the church and its mission in the world. They also notice in passing the use of ἐπίσκοποι ('overseers'), as for them it raised issues of church government that were keenly debated at the time, especially in Reformed circles, where in general the typical medieval episcopacy was rejected in favor of a presbyterian church order. Hence John Calvin and the Geneva Bible are at pains to argue the weak scriptural basis for the understanding of bishops as primarily figures of authority and status. Even the Lutheran Johannes Bugenhagen argues that bishops should be primarily preachers of the Word, to be distinguished from deacons, who serve the poor.

Introduction to Philippians

THE GENESIS OF THE PHILIPPAN CHURCH: A WOMAN AND A JAILOR. GEORGE MAJOR: The history of how the Lord God first gathered

a congregation for himself in Macedonia through the preaching of the Holy Gospel is diligently set forth in Acts 16. It is not described without reason. For by the angel Saint Paul was called into this premier city on the Macedonian border, that is, he came to Philippi. Now on the sabbath he began to preach the gospel outside the city near the water. From that very hour the Lord stirred the heart of a woman named Lydia, a seller of purple goods from the city of Thyatira (as well as many other women who listened to Saint Paul) so that she had regard for the word Paul proclaimed. . . . And we see the same thing with the jailor . . . how Paul told the jailor—who asked him what he should do to be saved—'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you and your household will be saved.' . . .

They, Lydia and the jailor, believed the gospel and through faith received the Holy Spirit, righteousness, and eternal life. . . . Now this was only the beginning of the gathering and calling of the congregation of God in Macedonia, born in Philippi. The congregation grew rapidly and flourished in this city, as we see in this Epistle of Saint Paul's to the Philippians. On account of

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