

which lack this passage. It is perhaps better to see this as an interruption of the apostle's train of thought--he may have suddenly remembered this problem, or news of it may have reached him just at this point in his dictation.

Paul obviously wrote Philippians from prison (or under house arrest). Tradition says that he was imprisoned in Rome. Some of the objections to this view are the distance from Rome to Philippi and Paul's westward mission after Acts 20:25. The distance was too great, so the objection goes, to allow for the four trips mentioned in the letter. Paul looked forward to going to Tarshish (cf. Rom. 15:18-29); would he have expected or wanted to reverse his travels to visit Philippi again? For these reasons and others Ephesus is often mentioned as the place from which Paul wrote Philippians. The journey from Philippi to Ephesus took only seven to ten days and it would not entail such a dramatic reversal of his announced intentions if he were to return to Philippi from Ephesus as from Rome. The obvious problem with such a "solution" is that no imprisonment in Ephesus is mentioned in Scripture. Those who support this view refer to several passages in Paul's epistles which seem to point to an Ephesian imprisonment (cf. Acts 20:18-19; 1 Cor. 4:9-13; 15:31-34; II Cor. 1:8-10; 4:8-12; 6:4-10; 11:23-27).

Although there are problems with the traditional designation of Rome as the point of origin of Philippians, the balance of the evidence seems to favor Rome and the traditional view. Paul's anticipation of a decision on his case in the near future points to a date late in the imprisonment, c. AD 63.

Philippians was written to tell the church in Philippi about Paul's circumstances (1:12-26), to address their disunity (1:27-2:11; 4:2-3), to tell them of his plans (2:19-24), and to explain why he was sending Epaphroditus back to them (2:25-30). He also wanted to warn them against legalism (3:3-11), to encourage their faith (3:17-21; 4:4-9) and to thank them for their gift to his ministry (4:10, 14-18). Since that gift had probably been sent by Epaphroditus, Paul's thanks and his explanation of Epaphroditus's return were probably the primary factors in his writing.

Outline:

- I. Greeting and Introduction 1:1-11
- II. Paul's circumstances 1:12-26
- III. Christian Life and Fellowship 1:27-2:1-8
- IV. Paul's future plans 2:19-30
- V. Warning and Example 3:1-4:1
- VI. Exhortations 4:2-9
- VII. Thanks and conclusion 4:10-23