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Final Greetings to the Philippians

4: 20-23

Final greetings to the Philippians DIG: Who are the kedoshim and the saints? What are doxologies a response to? What is the common, essential characteristic of all kedoshim/saints? Why is fellowship so important to the congregations of God? What is the joy of the holy ones? How high is your joy meter?

REFLECT: What are the one or two things that have really made an impact on your life after studying Philippians? What is one thing from this book that you want to apply to your life? Have you had the joy of leading someone to faith in Messiah? What unbeliever are you building a relationship with?

All of God's people [here in Rome] send their greetings to you.

In this concluding portion of **his** letter to **the Philippians**, likely written in **his** own hand (cf. **First Corinthians 16:21; Galatians 6:11; Colossians 4:18; 2 Thessalonians 3:17**), **Paul** reminds **them** of **their** identification as **God's people**. He describes the **character, worship, fellowship, joy**, and **resource** of **God's people**.¹⁸³



Paul now brings the letter to a close with a section of final greetings, a feature in most of **his** letters. But rather than mention specific individuals, the apostle greets all of **the believers** in **Philippi (4:21-22a)**. Doing so likely stems from a combination of **Paul's** close relationship with **the Philippian church** and **his** desire to promote unity within the body. Though **Paul** extends greetings from all the believers in **Rome**, **he** specifically singles out those of **Caesar's household (4:22b)**. Because of **his** house arrest, the Gospel had penetrated a segment of Roman society that otherwise probably could not have been reached. **The apostle** concludes the letter with a prayer that **the grace of the Lord Yeshua Messiah** would be with **the Philippians (4:23)**, effectively framing the entire letter, like two book-ends, with the inclusion of **God's grace (1:2 and 4:23)**.

As brothers and sisters in the same spiritual family, maintaining relationships with other believers is an essential aspect of **the holy ones of God**. We gain encouragement in hearing how the good news of **the grace of our Lord** is transforming the lives of others. After all, the whole life as believers – past, present, and future – is shaped by **the grace of God** shown to us in **Yeshua Messiah** and mediated to us through **the Spirit**.¹⁸⁴

The character of God's people (4:21-22 CJB): God's people . . . God's people. Inherent in the definition of **God's people** is the character of **God's people**. In the TaNaKh they are referred to as **kedoshim** and in the B'rit Chadashah they are referred to as **saints**. Both terms can be translated *set apart one, separated ones, sanctified ones*, or perhaps best, *holy ones, separated from sin to God for holy purposes*. **Greet each of God's people in Messiah Yeshua. God's people are in Messiah Yeshua.** This reality is unique to Messianic Jews and Christians. Those who follow other religions don't see themselves as being united with their deity, they merely follow his teachings. However, we do not just believe that **Messiah** lived, died, rose from the dead, and is coming again; we are also united with **Him**. We are in **Him** and **He** is in us (cf. **Philippians 1:21** and **4:1**; **Romans 8:1** and **16:11-13**; **First Corinthians 1:30, 3:1**, and **7:22**; **Second Corinthians 1:21** and **5:17**; **Colossians 1:2** and **4:7**). Because of this reality, we can say with **Paul**: **I have been crucified with Messiah; and it is no longer I who live, but Messiah who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me (Galatians 2:20).**

Through **His** sacrificial death on the cross, **Yeshua Messiah** has *set us apart* to **God** and makes us holy at the moment of salvation (Justification). This is our

position in **Messiah**; but our *practice* is an entirely different matter. In contrast to our perfect position which never changes; because of our old sin nature inherited from Adam, our everyday experience can fluctuate with victories on one day and defeats on another as we are conformed into the image of **Messiah** (Sanctification). To **the Corinthians Paul** wrote: **Therefore, if anyone is in Messiah, they are a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new (Second Corinthians 5:17 and 21)**. Baptism pictures our union with **Messiah** in **His** death, burial, and resurrection (see the commentary on **Romans**, to see link click [Bp](#) - **The Messianic Mikvah**). As a result, every believer is a **kadosh/saint**, because every believer is *separated from sin* to **God** through faith in **Yeshua Messiah**. By calling **the Philippians kadoshim/saints**, **Paul** reminded **them** that **they** must live holy lives.

The worship of God's people (4:20): Now to our God and Father be the glory forever and ever. Amen (4:20 NIV). This exaltation of **praise** is a sample of the worship of **God's people**. We are not **people** to be worshiped; we are **people** who worship. Worship defines **the redeemed**, and **Paul** began the concluding portion of **Philippians** with a doxology (a short, liturgical expression of **praise** and **glory** directed specifically to **ADONAI**). The English word doxology comes from two Greek words, *doxa* (**glory**) and *logos* (**word**). Thus, a doxology is a **word** about **glory**; it's an outburst of **praise** that gives **glory** to **God**.

Doxologies in the Bible are appropriate responses to doctrinal truth. This one flowed from **Paul's joy** over the magnificent truths **he** had been inspired by **ADONAI** to explain in this letter. True worship always flows from doctrinal truth. In the doxology in **Romans 11:33-36**, **Paul** rejoiced and **praised God** for the wonderful truths revealed in **Romans Chapters 1-11**. As **he** concluded **Romans**, **Paul's** heart was still overflowing with **praise** for the marvelous truths it contained (**Romans 16:25-27**). In **Ephesians**, after three chapters of rich doctrinal truth, **Paul**, again, burst out in a doxology of **praise** and worship. **Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the congregations of God and in Messiah Yeshua to all generations forever and ever. Amen (Ephesians 3:20-21)**. The phrase **forever and ever** indicates the duration of our worship of **ADONAI**. The Greek text literally reads *to the ages of the ages*. Our worship of **the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob** will not be limited to this life, but will extend throughout eternity in heaven. To that truth **Paul** could only add **Amen**.

The fellowship of God's people (4:21-22a): Greet each of God's people in

Messiah Yeshua. All of God's people [here in Rome] send their greetings to you (4:21-22a CJB). As he closed his letter, Paul expressed his love for the members of the **Philippian church** and his concern for their spiritual well-being. His injunction was specifically for the leaders of the **Philippian congregation (1:1)**, who would receive the letter from **Epaphroditus** (see [Bd](#) - **Send Epaphroditus at Once**). The apostle then asked them to greet the individual members on his behalf, and assure them of his love and concern for them. Paul's concern for individuals reflected that of Yeshua. Even when surrounded by large crowds He was still aware of individuals and their needs (see the commentary on [The Life of Christ Fh](#) - **Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman**).

The fellowship of **God's people** is a common bond of love without hierarchy. None of Paul's more prominent **co-laborers** had appointed church titles for themselves. That they were uniquely gifted and used by **ADONAI** didn't make them spiritually superior. In fact, Paul identified himself as **the least of the apostles (First Corinthians 15:9)**, and as **the foremost of sinners (First Timothy 1:15-16)**. They clearly understood the teaching of Yeshua on the equality of all believers. **But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers.** With all due respect to earthly leaders, we ultimately have only one true **Father in heaven. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and He is in heaven. Nor are you to be called leaders, for you have one Leader, the Messiah.** Yes, there is a proper place for spiritual leaders and even for the use of the terms honor and respect, but arrogance must be guarded against. Those who are true disciples of Messiah will prove their leadership abilities by serving others. **The greatest among you will be your servant. Yeshua** assures the crowd that **whoever exalts themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted (Mattityahu 23:8-12).**

The wider circle of believers at **Rome's church** also sent their greetings: **All of God's people send their greetings to you.** Although they had different spiritual gifts, and different levels of faithfulness and spiritual maturity, they were spiritually equal to their more prominent brothers in the Lord. Using the metaphor of the human body, Paul stressed that point to the **Corinthians** (see the commentary on [First Corinthians Cs](#) - **Interdependence, Not Independence**). The sharing of a common, non-discriminating love bond and a mutual desire for each other's spiritual well-being is an essential characteristic of all **kedoshim/saints**.

The joy of God's people (4:22b): The greatest **joy** of believers is to see sinners to faith in **Yeshua**. In **Luke 15**, **Messiah** told two parables that illustrated salvation. The first told of **a man** who rejoiced at finding **his lost sheep** (see **The Life of Christ Hs - The Parable of the Lost Sheep**); the second told of **a woman** who rejoiced at finding **her lost coin** (see **The Life of Christ Ht - The Parable of the Lost Coin**). Both express the **joy** believers have at the salvation of lost sinners. Similarly when **Paul** and **Barnabas** describe **in detail the conversion of the Gentiles [they brought] great joy to all of God's people (Acts 15:3)**.

Paul's reference to **those in Caesar's household** was **especially** meaningful to **the Philippians (4:22b CJB)**. **Philippi** was a Roman colony (**Acts 16:12**) and its citizens were Roman citizens (**Acts 16:21**). Because of **their** close ties with **Rome**, it is possible that **the Philippians** knew some of the members of **Caesar's household** which included all those in **his** direct employ, both lowly slaves and high-ranking freemen. In today's terminology, **they** were government workers. During **his** house arrest, **Paul** would have come into contact with many of **them**, and no doubt led many of them to a saving knowledge of **Yeshua Messiah**.

Some of the members of **the imperial household**, such as those of **the praetorian (palace) guard (1:13a)**, were led to faith in **Messiah** by **Paul**. Others, however, were already believers before **Paul** would have come into contact with many of **them**. There is a striking parallel between the names **Paul** lists in **Romans 16:8-15** and the names of members of **Caesar's household** on lists dating from **Paul's** time. **Paul** includes both groups, those saved through **his** ministry and those already believers, in **his** greetings from **Caesar's household**. Both **he** and **the Philippians** were undoubtedly thrilled that **the household of the pagan emperor** had yielded up so many souls to the Kingdom of **Messiah**. **The joy of the holy ones** is always to see others rescued from the dark depths of sin and brought to salvation in **Yeshua**.

The resource of God's people (4:23): The grace of the Lord **Yeshua Messiah** be with your spirit (**4:23 CJB**). **Paul** has now come full circle. **He** began this letter by wishing **the Philippians grace (1:2)**, and **he** concludes the same way. **The apostle** ended all **his** letters by wishing **God's grace** for **their** recipients (cf. **Romans 16:24; First Corinthians 16:23; Second Corinthians 13:14; Galatians 6:18; Ephesians 6:24; Colossians 4:18; First Thessalonians 5:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:18; 1 Timothy 6:21; 2 Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:15; and Philemon 25**).

The resource all believers need most is **the grace** that comes from **the Lord Yeshua Messiah**. **Grace** is the unmerited favor or undeserved, benevolent love of **God in Messiah** that brought about our redemption (**Ephesians 2:5** and **8; Romans 3:24; Second Timothy 1:9**). **ADONAI's** work of **grace** in our lives will continue until our glorification (see [Bi](#) - **Pursuing the Prize**). We are not only saved by **grace**, but we are also sustained by **grace**. We are governed by **grace**, strengthened by **grace**, sanctified by **grace**, and enabled by **grace**. We are constantly dependent on the forgiveness, comfort, peace, and **joy** that comes through **God's grace**.

God's sustaining **grace** comes to us through **the Lord Yeshua Messiah**. **He** is the theme of this letter, being mentioned almost forty times in its four chapters. **Paul** described **himself** as **a servant of Messiah (1:1)**; **he** addressed **the Philippians** as **kedoshim/saints in Messiah (1:1)**; **his** house arrest was for the cause of **Messiah (1:13)**; for **him to live was Messiah (1:21)**; and **death** ushered **him** into **Messiah's** presence (**1:23**); **he** encouraged **the Philippians** to conduct **themselves** in a manner **worthy of Messiah (1:26)** by having **the attitude of Messiah (2:5)**; **he** called for **them to glory in Messiah (3:3)**; **he** counted **everything** in the past as **garbage** in view of **the riches he found in Messiah (3:8)**; **he** was saved by **faith in Messiah (3:9)**; **he** eagerly awaited **Messiah's return (3:20)**; and had all **his** needs supplied by **Messiah (4:19)**. **Paul** summed up our lives when **he** wrote: **to live is Messiah and to die is gain (1:21)**.¹⁸⁵

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, praise **You** for **Your** great and awesome **grace**! Without your **grace**, I would have no means to ever enter heaven. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves - it is the gift of God. It is not based on deeds, so that no one may boast (Ephesians 2:8-9)**. **You** wisely turned **Paul's** time of house arrest into a time when **he** could share the Gospel with a whole new audience- with some of the members of **Caesar's household**. What joy and peace it brings to put **Messiah** as the #1 goal and focus in my life. **Paul** wisely summed up the very best thing that I should do with my life: **to live is Messiah and to die is gain (1:21)**. To **the One** who sits at **Your** right hand. Amen*