

BOOK OF PHILEMON

Page 1

INTRODUCTION

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- A. Written by the apostle Paul, from prison in Rome, probably at same time the Colossian letter was written, About 61 - 63 A.D.
 - B. Deals specifically with a private, domestic matter.
 - C. The principal may be stated as follows: 'what impact will the world and its social standards have on the church and what influence will the church have on the world and how will this influence be exerted.'
 - D. A plea for the reconciliation of two of God's children.
 - 1. One a slave....the other his master.
 - 2. But many things about reconciliation in other areas can be learned.
 - E. Christianity does not remove moral, financial and legal obligations it sanctifies them and establishes additional reasons why should be honored.
 - F. It is also a repudiation of the dogma of the social gospel.
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The Support For The Appeal

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- A. His authority.
 - B. His age
 - C. His imprisonment.
 - D. His relation to both Philemon and Onesimus.
 - E. His offer to pay for Onesimus' wrong (whatever it was).
 - F. His hope that Philemon will rejoice his heart.
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HIS AUTHORITY

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- A. V. 8....but rather I beseech”
 - B. Authority is a motivating force whether in the home, the church or community
 - C. And it is desperately needed.
 - D. But we notice that Paul here appeals to love. Loving husband, father...etc.
 - E. Christ has all authority as our King- We view it through His love (Jn. 3;16).
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HIS AGE

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- A. “Being such a one as Paul the aged”
 - B. This must have made some impression Philemon.
 - C. HIS IMPRISONMENT:
 - 1. Philemon would have known the reason for Paul's imprisonment.
 - 2. Paul desired Philemon to pray for the Roman government to release him so that he might come to Philemon v. 22.
 - 3. Could he pray for the release of Paul, his brother, and have no compassion for Onesimus, him brother?
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Page 2

HIS RELATION TO BOTH

- A. Onesimus becoming a child of God made him a brother in the Lord of the one who was his master in the flesh.
 - B. Name "Onesimus" means "helpful" or "profitable".
 - C. Paul makes a play on the words when he talks of previous unprofitableness but "now is profitable."
 - D. Paul could have rationalized..how God's providence had sent Onesimus, how he needed him...etc.
 - E. But remember his love for Philemon and his responsibility.
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OFFER TO PAY

- A. Pay for what?
 - B. Be difficult to get from Colossae to Rome without some funds and goods from some place.
 - C. Paul implies in the letter that the slave has wronged the master or owed him.
 - D. Maybe he had stolen from Philemon.
 - E. Or perhaps he had been sent to Rome by Philemon and just didn't return.
 - F. We don't really have any way of knowing..but there was a debt and Paul wanted to pay that debt.
 - G. Paul wanted their reconciliation enough he was willing to pay the cost.
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CONCLUSION

- A. Christianity is for plain, honest, earnest people who have a heart.
 - 1. Men upon becoming Christians, must as possible, right their past wrongs.
 - 2. Regardless of cost...Onesimus return to Philemon.
 - 3. In no place does Paul hint that Philemon is to let Onesimus go free.
 - 4. But he would be free of any fear of the master if request followed.
 - 5. Philemon is not requested to set Onesimus free but...what is more difficult...to love him and see in the converted slave a brother.
 - 6. Philemon becomes to Christians a precious paper because it provides an object lesson in applied Christianity.
 - 7. Truly, in Christ Jesus all become one! In Christ the love is genuine, the hope is sure; the reward is for the now and for eternity.
 - B. "REJOICE MY HEART"
 - 1. To see his brethren reconciled in the Lord. **"A brother beloved"**
 - 2. Like John, could have no greater joy than "to hear of my children walking in the truth."
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