

PHILEMON

INTRO: The “book” of Philemon was one of the four Epistles written by Paul from his first Roman imprisonment. It is the smallest of Paul’s Letters. It helps us deal with the question, “How do you respond to a person who wrongs you and truly repents?”

I. THE AUTHOR OF THE BOOK IS PAUL, vs. 1, 9, 19.

He refers to himself as:

- A. A prisoner of Jesus Christ, vs. 1, 9
- B. The aged (probably around 70 years old), vs. 9
- C. A partner with Philemon, vs. 17
- D. A penman of the Letter, 19, 21

II. The RECIPIENT OF THE BOOK IS PHILEMON, vs. 2.

He is not mentioned anywhere else in the Scripture. From this Letter we learn that Philemon was:

- A. Apphia & Archippus, mentioned in vs. 2 are usually believed to be Philemon’s wife and son.
- B. Philemon is described as
 - 1. Paul’s beloved fellow laborer, vs. 1
 - 2. One in whose house where the Church met. He was probably a gospel preacher, vs. 2
 - 3. Known for his love & faith toward Christ & the saints, vs 5
 - 4. The owner of a slave named Onesimus vs. 10-16

III. The Date & Place of Writing

- A. Place: Written together with Philippians, Colossians & Ephesians from Rome, while Paul was awaiting trial before Caesar, vs. 1. Compare Acts 28:30; Eph. 3:1; 4:1; Col. 4:10
- B. Date: Probably written in 62 or 63 AD.

IV. PURPOSES OF THE BOOK.

- A. To plead with Philemon to forgive Onesimus & receive him not as a slave but as a brother in Christ, and perhaps with hope that Onesimus might return him to Paul, vs. 12-16.

NOTE: Play on words profitable, unprofitable

B. Paul reminds Philemon that he is indebted to the apostle –
and then promises to repay anything owed to Philemon
by Onesimus, vs. 18-19.

C. To request Philemon to prepare a place for him to lodge, vs.
22

V. KEY WORDS:

A. Brother, vs. 7, 16, 20

B. Beloved, vs. 1, 2, 16

CONCLUSION: The spirit of brotherhood in Christ should enable
one to break down social barriers and rise above past injustices that
we may go onward & upward to a deeper, more meaningful
relationship with Christ.

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, July 20, 2003