

PHILEMON

1. TITLES:

- A. Philemon = friendship
- B. The Epistle to Philemon
- C. The Book of Reconciliation

2. AUTHOR:

Written by Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

3. DATE:

Probably written between 57 and 62 A.D. during Paul's first imprisonment at Rome (Acts 28).

4. KEY WORDS:

- A. Brother - 4
- B. Receive - 3
- C. Love ('s) - 3
- D. Prisoner (fellow) - 3

5. KEY VERSES: 9, 15, 16

6. PURPOSE:

- A. To persuade Philemon to receive Onesimus as a brother in the Lord rather than as a runaway slave.
- B. To inform Philemon that Paul would soon be released from prison and would visit him.

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7. MESSAGE:

- A. We are to receive one another as Christ also has received us (Romans 15:7).
- B. Regardless of our social position we are all brethren in the Lord.

8. OUTLINE:

- I. Paul's Commendation of Philemon v. 1-7
- II. Paul's Intercession for Onesimus v. 8-21
- III. Paul's Salutation v. 22-25

9. SUMMARY:

This book is one of Paul's four personal epistles, written to individuals rather than to churches. It centers around three persons:

Philemon -- The Master

Onesimus -- The Runaway Slave

Paul -- The Intercessor

Philemon, a wealthy Christian of Colosse, had apparently been robbed by a runaway slave, Onesimus (v. 10, 11, 16, 18). Onesimus fled to Rome and was there led to the Lord by Paul. Paul then intended to send him back to Philemon (v. 12, 15, 16), and wrote this epistle to intercede for him. Onesimus returned with Tychicus, who carried the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians.

This epistle presents a beautiful picture of the Gospel of the grace of God. God our master (Philemon) receives His runaway slaves (Onesimus) because of the intercession of the mediator (Paul).

10. CHRIST SEEN:

Christ is seen as our Intercessor, our Advocate.