

The Book of Philemon

Introduction

- Written by Paul in A.D. 61 while a prisoner in Rome (Acts 28:16)
- This is the most personal of Paul's letter.
- The scarcity of details of this letter will cause our imaginations to fill in the gaps, but the essential story is that a converted runaway slave who is returning to his former master with this letter of intercession by Paul.
- Eleven people in the book:
 - Paul the Apostle – vs. 1 & 19
 - Timothy – vs. 1 – Paul's protégé.
 - Philemon – vs. 1 – Believed to have lived in Colosse and have been pastor of a church that met in his house. He is a dear friend and likely a convert of Paul (vs. 19).
 - Apphia – vs. 2 – Likely was Philemon's wife.
 - Archippus – vs. 2 – Possibly was Philemon's son. Mentioned in Colossians 4:17
 - Onesimus – vs. 10 – A runaway slave that was converted under Paul's ministry. Also mentioned in Colossians 4:9.
 - Epaphras – vs. 23 – A preacher from Colosse, mentioned in Colossians 1:7 and 4:12.
 - Marcus – vs. 24 – John Mark, companion of Paul.
 - Ariastarchus – vs. 24 – companion of Paul.
 - Demas – vs. 24 – companion of Paul.
 - Lucas – vs. 24 – Dr. Luke, companion of Paul.
- Concerning Slavery
 - Slavery was an integral part of Roman society, as it was in most other ancient cultures.
 - We see here the power of the Gospel over that institution because it broke down the barriers between master and slave.
 - See also Galatians 3:27-28, I Corinthians 12:13, and Colossians 3:11/

Notes

- vs. 1-3 – Introduction
- vs. 4-7 – Philemon's Testimony
 - vs. 6 – this is a gentle admonition to Philemon to not be satisfied with the good he was doing, but to press onward to accomplish more.
- vs. 8-22 – Personal Petition
 - vs. 8-9 – Paul is commending not commanding here. He is appealing to a good man to do the right thing.

- vs. 10 – Onesimus is Paul’s “son” or convert like Timothy was – I Timothy 1:2
- vs. 11-13 – Paul implies that Onesimus was truly a changed man through the power of the Gospel.
- vs. 14 – Paul is not acting presumptuously and want Philemon to make the decision.
- vs. 15-16 – See Romans 8:28 and Genesis 50:20.
- vs. 17-19 – Paul intercedes personally for Onesimus.
- vs. 20-21 – Paul’s confidence that Philemon will act properly.
- vs. 22 – Paul’s intent to visit.
- vs. 23-25 – Parting Greetings