

Set Free By Christ

The Letter to Philemon

Intro: In this, the shortest and most personal of Paul's letters, he commends the faith and charity of Philemon; and sends back to him his fugitive servant, Onesimus, whom he had led to faith in Christ, in connection with this, his first his Roman imprisonment.

I. Paul's Greeting 1-3

- A. The author: Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus (1a)
- B. The addressee: Philemon (1b-2)
 - 1. Beloved brother and
 - 2. Fellow worker for Christ
- C. The salutation: *grace and peace* = shalom (3)

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

II. Paul's Praise of Philemon 4-7

- A. Paul's thanksgiving (4-5; cf. Col 1:3-4)
- B. Paul's prayer (6; cf. Col 1:9-14)
- C. Paul's testimony (7)

Onesimus returns to
Philemon

III. Paul's Plea for Onesimus 8-17

- A. The threefold basis of his plea (8-9)
- B. The object of his plea: Onesimus, his child in the faith (10-11).
Onesimus, who was formerly *useless*, was now fully *useful* as a child of God!
- C. The reason for his plea (12-16)
 - 1. Permission for Onesimus to return to Paul (vv. 12-14)
 - 2. Providence of God at work (vv. 13-14)
- D. The request: "*Accept him as you would me*" (17)

IV. Paul's Pledge to Philemon 18-20

- A. Paul's commitment to pay Onesimus' debt (18-19a; see 2 Corinthians 5:21)
This is a beautiful picture of the substitutionary atonement Christ has provided for us.
- B. Paul's confidence that Philemon will exceed his request (19b-21)

V. Paul's Parting Salutation 22-25

- A. Paul's personal plans (22)
- B. Paul's personal greetings (23-24)

Memory verse: "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

C. Paul's parting benediction (25)

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