

PHILEMON

Rome - capital city; where Paul is in prison (Acts 28:16, v23-24, 30-31)

Colossae - city in Phrigia,, 11 miles from Laodicea. Church established there on 3rd journey.
Helpers in the church there include: (Col. 1:7) Epaphras. (Col. 4:17) Archippus.
and Philemon.

Paul - is teaching while a prisoner in Rome and somehow connects with Onesimus.

Onesimus - a runaway slave of Philemon in Colossae and goes to Rome.

Philemon - a slave owner in Colossae and a member of the church in Colossae.

Apphia - Philemon's wife and the church meets in their house (v2).

Archipus - son of Philemon and Apphia; perhaps one of the ministers there (Col. 4:17).

Tychicus - the letter carrier to the church in Colossae and to Philemon (Col. 4:7-9)
He accompanies Onesimus back to Colossae.
He also carries Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus (Eph. 6:21-22).

Epaphras - also accompanies Tychicus and Onesimus.
He came to Rome with news of the church in Colossae (Philippians 2:25-30).
Perhaps he was also a minister to the church in Colossae (Col. 1:7-8, 4:12).

Aristarchus - Paul's travel companion (Acts 19:29, 20:4-5, 27:2; Col. 4:10).

Luke - gospel writer, with Paul in Rome for a while (Col. 4:14).

AD 61 - about the time the letter were written.

Purpose of letter to church in Colossae - to oppose the temptation of the Christians to trust the philosophy and vain deceit of men and not to rely on their so-called "knowledge."

Purpose of letter to Philemon in Colossae - Philemon is to take Onesimus back and exact no penalty or retribution.

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PAUL'S CASE (persuasive reasoning) FOR PHILEMON TO RECEIVE ONESIMUS

1. (v4) after a customary greeting, Paul gives Philemon compliments.
2. (v8) Paul asks instead of using authority of an apostle to "command."
3. (v9) "yet for love's sake I beseech you" - where's the love, Philemon?
4. (v9) "being such a one as Paul, the aged" - do it for the ole man, while I'm alive.
5. (v9, v23) Paul evokes sympathy by reminding Philemon that he is now in prison.
6. (v10) "for my son Onesimus ... begotten in my bonds" - he's family, we're family.
7. (v11) "unprofitable, but now profitable" - not useful as a runaway, but useful as a returnee.
8. (v12) "I am sending him back" - he's OK in my book, now you receive him as being OK.
9. (v12) "receive him, that is, my own heart" - receive him as you would receive me.
10. (v13) "whom I wish to keep" - it would be your ministry to me; but, it isn't fair.
11. (v14) "without your consent I wanted to do nothing" - if you sent him to me would be a different matter, so I'm not keeping him without your consent. Here he comes.
12. (v15-16) "For perhaps he ... that you ... " - see God's purpose (providence) in this.
13. (v17) "if then you count me as a partner" - let's think alike because we are partners.
14. (v18-19) "owes you anything, put that on my account" - I'll repay any loss you sustained.
15. (v19) "not to mention to you that you owe me" - but I will mention it in this case. Just in case you forgot, Philemon, you do owe me.
16. (v20) "brother, let me have joy from you in the Lord" - give this prisoner comfort.
17. (v21) Paul believed in the philosophy which says that people live up to expectations that others have of them. Paul says to meet expectations and do a little more.
18. (v22) "also prepare a guest room for me" - Oh, no, a visit from the boss!
If I'm Philemon, 'm making sure that all is in order, and a little extra.
19. (v22) "through your prayers" - I know, Philemon, that you will be "praying" for all of this to happen in the manner of my request. Put God on your side, Philemon.
20. (v23-25) Remember, Philemon, others know about this request from me to you.
Be gracious.

CLOSE - It's difficult to imagine that Philemon will ignore 20 lines of appeal from Paul.