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A Biographical Study of Philemon

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Philemon

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

- I. The appreciation for and praise of Philemon (Philem. 1–7).
 - A. Philemon was a friend.
 1. To Paul in Rome—“And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy house (Philem. 2).
 2. To Christians in Colosse (Philem. 5)—“Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints” (Philem. 7, NIV).
 - B. Philemon was a family man (Philem. 2)—Note: Apphia was probably Philemon’s wife, and Archippus, his son.
- II. The appeal and plea to Philemon (Philem. 8-17)—“I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds” (Philem. 10).
 - A. The background of this appeal—Onesimus, Philemon’s runaway slave, had been led to Christ in Rome by Paul, and was now being sent back to Philemon with a request that he be received as a Christian brother.
 - B. The basis for this appeal
 1. Forgive him for your sake—“Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me . . . For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever” (Philem. 11, 15).
 2. Forgive him for his sake—“No longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother” (Philem. 16, NIV).
 3. Forgive him for my sake—“Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. . . . If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account” (Philem. 9, 17-18).
- III. The assurance and pledge to Philemon (Philem. 19-25)—“I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides” (Philem. 19).
 - A. His confidence in Philemon—“Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say” (Philem. 21).
 - B. His request to Philemon—“But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you” (Philem. 22).

STATISTICS

Spouse: Apphia (Philem. 2)

Son: Archippus (Philem. 2)

First mention: Philemon 1

Final mention: Philemon 1

Meaning of his name: “Loving”

Frequency of his name: Referred to one time

Biblical books mentioning him: One book (Philemon)

Occupation: Wealthy slave owner

Place of birth: Probably Colosse

Important fact about his life: Paul addressed one of his New Testament epistles to Philemon.