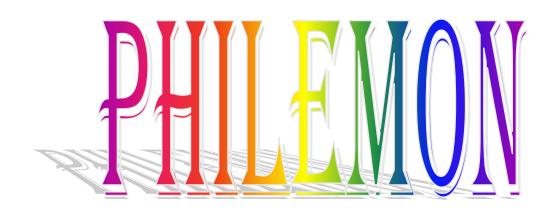
MASTER'S VOICE ALBUM



LEGEND LOVE AND FREEDOM

ALBION BIBLE CLASSICS NO. 18

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO PHILEMON

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INTRODUCTION

This is shortest document from the hand of Paul. He professes to write personally-in all or in part. The Gregory Aland fragment AD250 is the earliest extant fragment we have —the letter was known to Marcion in 150AD & probably to Polycarp 69-156AD If we take the Aramaic"Pela" to mean "soldier" then there are two military men referred to —one of whom is Philemon himself. The Colossian church was never visited by Paul but Epaphras was a leader amongst them and he must have forged a very important link between Paul and Philemon.

The signal event of Onesimus arrival in Rome and in the whereabouts of Paul may have owed something of the company or even mischief he got up to in the capitol. One Roman writer speaks of Rome as a sink that drew undesirable elements of the empire. Onesimus may have fled for freedom. Paul calls his thrust for freedom "a dream moment" or the Aramaic could equally mean "a crazy moment". The man made a break for freedom in a world of slaves where had not Philemon become a Christian his discovery at Rome would have meant death.

It is clear that Paul led Onesimus to faith and that Epaphras who stood in similar relation to Philemon as a father in God so to speak had brought decisive help from the great Colossian benefactor from whom Paul could anticipate a lodging should he be released.

The treatment of the case of Onesimus shows Paul outside his comfort zone for the Jews were not slave managers as Mosaic law forbad it and Egyptian hardships set the Jewish mind as a flint against its enormities. Paul appears to offer a model for manumission of slaves the use of which he did not live to replicate in the empire. The letter in its release by Philemon or someone close to him and its appearance in the Canon in the first century shows that New Testament believers embraced the equality of all men and truly sought a society where there is neither bondman nor slave, neither male nor female in Christ but all are one in the Lord. I could put it that Paul erected a pyramid in holy writ that has stood for millennia showing not what slaves built but how slaves are freed. Its great stones exist even today-faith &love, the joy and abandon of having only Christ as Master; the freedom that is man's birthright and the Right to live as a free man and citizen and testify even in bonds to the gospel that heralds deliverance to captives of every sort.

- 2 To Aphia our beloved and Archippus a soldier/labourer [[of our company and to the assembly that is in your house.
- 3 Grace be with you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus **the Messiah**.
- 4 I am thanking my God on every occasion (of thanksgiving/prayer) and have been actively remembering you in my prayers when I lean on the Lord.
- 5 Behold from when the time I heard of your faith and love that lives(1) [Lan] growing in your case intimately with our Lord Jesus and intimately toward all the saints.
- 6 That there will be partnership [sand haz] of your faith offering fruit in its time [zaz] in service and in personal experience & knowledge of every good or grace that is in Jesus the Messiah.
- 7 For there lives/exists(2)[dest] great joy [(A) school is the Christmas angelic word-(B) school is the Pauline phrase-the first emphasizes the pure scale of the joy-the second the increase of joy with **QTOWINQ** partnership] and comfort where we are concerned for through the power of your love the tenderhearted affections, philanthropy or benevolence of the saints has been eased or rested. This is a Pauline tour de force which being interprested means that because Philemon was so generous others did not need to input so much. The resultant joy had grown steadily.
- 8 Because of this there exists (3)[Last growing freedom[scaries] for me in the Messiah to give you instructions or command for you those things that are righteous. Again there is room for liberty to spread its wings and expand its domain.
- 9 Conversely because of this one thing I continue to beg [Hebraism المعلة "begging I beg"] I Paul who lives on or exists المعلم" as a man growing older as you know exactly —conversely now also as a prisoner (in bonds) of Jesus the Messiah.
- 10 And I plead with you over my son –the one that I begat in bondage-Onesimus. *The proper name is Aramaic transliteration of the Greek for* "useful".
- 11 He who oftimes was by himself of **use to you-conversely** now both to you and **to me is of good use** [בקב נבדנ]

- 12 And I sent him to you -you conversely are to receive him as my own begotten son[not בינ בנול as in John 3.16 but לאל the uniqueness of John3.16 could have no parallel-only the absolute link of Onesimus prison conversion with his spiritual father Paul is intended]. 13 For I was willing to hold him that he should actively minister to me on your behalf in the bonds of the gospel.
- 14 **Conversely** without **your advice** or mandate [בלבץ] I did not want to do anything exactly out of necessity but what would be valuable or favourable [בלאבאלץ) by your will.
- 15 Conversely perhaps[בבי also his one disappearance or removal] mad change of mind/slipping away | for an hour or gamble or dream sh'atha Junder God was because you will have him through life or for ever]. There is a greater richness to "the hour/moment" in Aramaic than simply a clock tick or strike-encompassing a "dream moment" and "a mad moment" and "a dicy moment" also. The word SH'ATHA also has the divine terminal suffix THA classifying it as a "moment in the hands of God". The term "perhaps" is also richer in meaning-its radicle is "to increase, augment or multiply". Paul is saying "Perhaps there is more" "Perhaps it is augmented blessing". 16 Not from now on אבבעל thenceforward-after this and with אם never again/not exactly as a servant but with increased interest beyond a slave-a beloved brother of mine -how much more your brother both in the flesh and in our Lord. This is the most fascinating revolutionary thought muted in the early church by the apostle of the Gentiles-because contrary to Jewish custom other nations promoted slavery but Paul using this "mad moment" or "dream moment" seized the opportunity to powerfully defend the future of a man whose courage implemented an apparently crazy gamble that God's providence could use as a model for the release of captives as Christianity grew and prevailed. Paul must have seen many slaves but concerning this one he made a written statement and doubtless it became a template for future time-albeit it was too late in his ministry as a man under house arrest for it to be promoted. That being said this book entered the canon early and was thus allowed by its recipient to become a basis for the manumission or change of status of slaves.

17 If you living or **growing** (4)[Love lives, joy lives, freedom lives and grows and partnership also lives and grows stronger as increasingly it shares." The whole pyramid of manumission depends on a base of growing love, the support of joy and growing freedom and the glorious apex of equality, growing partnership, fellowship and increased sharing. If faith and love lives joy not sorrow must follow and freedom in its wake and absolute parity in [partnership] as in marriage and every relationship of life.

18 And if you lack anything or this person has debt reckon it up for me or account it to me. Paul was in this matter prepared to lose something of the friendship of Philemon and pay the debt encountering the chagrin if "attitude" there should be in the matter. The letter is polite but one should not mistake this hypothetical for anything less than a real offer. 19 I Paul have written in my own hand-I myself will honour the debt or pay the debt [124] without saying that you owe your soul to me!

- 20 Yes[Ln] my brother I have been refreshed by you in our Lord –give my compassion rest or satisfaction through Messiah. Paul refers to his refreshment through Philemon and now asks that his **philanthropy** be given a rest through Messiah. He is not calling for his "compassion" to cease nor discarding care but he calls on Philemon to assume first responsibility as next of kin to Onesimus because his(Paul's) commitment would be critically endangered by an untoward sentence under Nero.
- 21 Because I am sure and can rely on it [Acad] that **you will listen** to me I have written to you and I know that you will do more than I have said. 22 **Conversely** also **at once** prepare for me a house where I may lodge for I hope that by your prayerful leaning on God I will have been given to you (plural) at Colossae.
- 23 Epaphras a fellow captive intreats or requests everything best for you-your Shalom by Jesus Messiah.
- 24 As also do my helpers Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke. The grace of our Lord the Messiah be with your spirits. Amen.

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