The Epistle to Philemon

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If you don't know me, my name is Rachel✡, and these are my scripture notes on the Epistle to Philemon. The verses are presented sequentially in English and Greek, followed by my commentary. Think of it as a living midrash: whenever I learn something new, I add a note. My notes draw from an eclectic range of ancient sources, both Jewish and Gentile. See my about page for more.

The Epistle of Philemon is Paul's✞ request for Philemon's slave Onesimus, whom tradition calls a runaway.

Philemon 1 — Πρὸς Φιλήμονα α΄

> [1] Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer,
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> [1] Παῦλος, δέσμιος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ Τιμόθεος ὁ ἀδελφὸς Φιλήμονι τῷ ἀγαπητῷ καὶ συνεργῷ ἡμῶν,

- Scholars agree Paul of Tarsus✞ (c. 5–65) indeed wrote this letter.
- The heresiologist Tertullian✞ (c. 155–c. 220) notes that the early Christian canonizer Marcion of Sinope✞ (c. 85–c. 160) included Philemon. This is important to dating since Marcion leaves out the Pastoral epistles, which scholars attribute to their forgery and lateness.

> **Tertullian, Against Marcion 5.21** – *To this epistle alone its brevity has been of use, so that it escaped the falsifying hands of Marcion. I wonder, however, since he received a letter written to a single man, why he rejected the two to Timothy and the one to Titus, composed about the state of the church. He aimed, I suppose, at tampering even with the number of the epistles.*
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> Soli huic Epistolae brevitas sua profuit, ut falsarias manus Marcionis evaderet. Miror tamen, cum ad unum hominem literas factas receperit, quid ad Timotheum duas, et unam ad Titum, de ecclesiastico statu compositas recusaverit. Adfectavit, opinor, etiam numerum Epistolarum interpolare.

> **Muratorian Fragment** – *But one to Philemon, one to Titus, and two to Timothy, written out of affection and love, are nevertheless held sacred in the honor of the catholic Church, for the ordering of church discipline.*
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> Verum ad Philemonem una, et ad Titum una, et ad Timotheum duas pro affectu et dilectione, in honore tamen Ecclesiae catholicae, in ordinatione ecclesiasticae disciplinae, sanctificatae sunt.

- Jerome✞ (347–420 CE) shares that some Christians didn't consider Philemon scripture on the grounds that it's too mundane. The argument is that even if Paul ✞ could produce divine accounts, surely not everything he's ever said or done comes from Holy Spirit.

> **Jerome on Philemon, Prologue** – *Those who refuse to receive among the Epistles of Paul the one written to Philemon say that the Apostle did not always, nor in everything, speak with Christ speaking in him, because human weakness could not have borne one unbroken strain of the Holy Spirit, nor could the needs of this poor body be met while the Lord was always present: such as arranging a meal, taking food, being hungry, being full, digesting what was eaten, replenishing what was spent.*
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> Qui nolunt inter Epistolas Pauli eam recipere quae ad Philemonem scribitur, aiunt, non semper Apostolum, nec omnia, Christo in se loquente, dixisse: quia nec humana imbecillitas unum tenorem sancti Spiritus ferre potuisset: nec hujus corpusculi necessitates sub praesentia Domini semper complerentur: velut disponere prandium, cibum capere, esurire, saturari, ingesta digerere, exhausta complere

- Paul✞ calls himself a prisoner, δέσμιος of Jesus, as he does in other letters.

> **Ephesians 3:1** – *[1] For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,*
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> [1] Τούτου χάριν ἐγὼ Παῦλος ὁ δέσμιος τοῦ Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν τῶν ἐθνῶν, —

- Elsewhere he uses slave, δοῦλος, which the KJV renders "servant."

> **Romans 1:1** – *[1] Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,*
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> [1] Παῦλος, δοῦλος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον Θεοῦ,

> **Philippians 1:1** – *[1] Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:*
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> [1] Παῦλος καὶ Τιμόθεος, δοῦλοι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, πᾶσι τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Φιλίπποις, σὺν ἐπισκόποις καὶ διακόνοις·

- Islamic tradition similarly uses this language of submission. Surah Maryam (Mary) includes a story of the infant Jesus miraculously giving his first sermon. He declares himself both a slave, عَبْدُ and prophet of Allah, urging all to serve God.

> **Quran 19:27-36** – *[27] Then she brought him to her own folk, carrying him. They said: O Mary! Thou hast come with an amazing thing. [28] O sister of Aaron! Thy father was not a wicked man nor was thy mother a harlot. [29] Then she pointed to him. They said: How can we talk to one who is in the cradle, a young boy? [30] He spake: Lo! I am the slave of Allah. He hath given me the Scripture and hath appointed me a Prophet, [31] And hath made me blessed wheresoever I may be, and hath enjoined upon me prayer and almsgiving so long as I remain alive, [32] And (hath made me) dutiful toward her who bore me, and hath not made me arrogant, unblest. [33] Peace on me the day I was born, and the day I die, and the day I shall be raised alive! [34] Such was Jesus, son of Mary: (this is) a statement of the truth concerning which they doubt. [35] It befitteth not (the Majesty of) Allah that He should take unto Himself a son. Glory be to Him! When He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only: Be! and it is. [36] And lo! Allah is my Lord and your Lord. So serve Him. That is the right path.*
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> 27 فَأَتَتْ بِهِۦ قَوْمَهَا تَحْمِلُهُۥ ۖ قَالُوا۟ يَٰمَرْيَمُ لَقَدْ جِئْتِ شَيْـًٔا فَرِيًّا 28 يَٰٓأُخْتَ هَٰرُونَ مَا كَانَ أَبُوكِ ٱمْرَأَ سَوْءٍ وَمَا
> كَانَتْ أُمُّكِ بَغِيًّا 29 فَأَشَارَتْ إِلَيْهِ ۖ قَالُوا۟ كَيْفَ نُكَلِّمُ مَن كَانَ فِى ٱلْمَهْدِ صَبِيًّا 30 قَالَ إِنِّى عَبْدُ ٱللَّهِ ءَاتَىٰنِىَ ٱلْكِتَٰبَ
> وَجَعَلَنِى نَبِيًّا 31 وَجَعَلَنِى مُبَارَكًا أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُ وَأَوْصَٰنِى بِٱلصَّلَوٰةِ وَٱلزَّكَوٰةِ مَا دُمْتُ حَيًّا 32 وَبَرًّۢا بِوَٰلِدَتِى وَلَمْ
> يَجْعَلْنِى جَبَّارًا شَقِيًّا 33 وَٱلسَّلَٰمُ عَلَىَّ يَوْمَ وُلِدتُّ وَيَوْمَ أَمُوتُ وَيَوْمَ أُبْعَثُ حَيًّا 34 ذَٰلِكَ عِيسَى ٱبْنُ مَرْيَمَ ۚ قَوْلَ
> ٱلْحَقِّ ٱلَّذِى فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ 35 مَا كَانَ لِلَّهِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ مِن وَلَدٍ ۖ سُبْحَٰنَهُۥٓ ۚ إِذَا قَضَىٰٓ أَمْرًا فَإِنَّمَا يَقُولُ لَهُۥ كُن فَيَكُونُ
> 36 وَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ رَبِّى وَرَبُّكُمْ فَٱعْبُدُوهُ ۚ هَٰذَا صِرَٰطٌ مُّسْتَقِيمٌ

> **Quran 25:63** – *[63] The (faithful) slaves of the Beneficent are they who walk upon the earth modestly, and when the foolish ones address them answer: Peace;*
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> 63 وَعِبَادُ ٱلرَّحْمَٰنِ ٱلَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى ٱلْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ ٱلْجَٰهِلُونَ قَالُوا۟ سَلَٰمًا

> [2] And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house:
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> [2] καὶ Ἀπφίᾳ τῇ ἀγαπητῇ, καὶ Ἀρχίππῳ τῷ συστρατιώτῃ ἡμῶν, καὶ τῇ κατ᾽ οἶκόν σου ἐκκλησίᾳ·

- Archippus also appears in Colossians, though scholars dispute the letter's authorship.

> **Colossians 4:17** – [17] *And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*
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> [17] καὶ εἴπατε Ἀρχίππῳ, Βλέπε τὴν διακονίαν ἣν παρέλαβες ἐν Κυρίῳ, ἵνα αὐτὴν πληροῖς.

- Codex Sinaiticus, Alexandrinus, and Claromontanus call Apphia our sister, ἀδελφῇ, doubtless the original wording. Christian feminists appeal to Apphia as proof women were important in the early church despite later minimization in the Pastorals.
- We see two more important women, Priscilla and Nymphas, in other epistles – the KJV's poor rendering notwithstanding.

> **1 Corinthians 16:19** – [19] *The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*
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> [19] Ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῆς Ἀσίας· ἀσπάζονται ὑμᾶς ἐν Κυρίῳ πολλὰ Ἀκύλας καὶ Πρίσκιλλα, σὺν τῇ κατ᾽ οἶκον αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίᾳ.

> **Colossians 4:15** – [15] *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*
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> [15] ἀσπάσασθε τοὺς ἐν Λαοδικείᾳ ἀδελφούς, καὶ Νυμφᾶν, καὶ τὴν κατ᾽ οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἐκκλησίαν·

- Jerome✞ argues that Archippus was bishop of Colossae, and that Philemon, Archippus, and Onesimus were from this same city.

> **Jerome on Philemon 1** – *There is also another indication, that in this same epistle Archippus too is named, to whom it is written here together with Philemon: "Say," he says, "to Archippus: Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it." What is the ministry that Archippus received from the Lord? To Philemon we read: "And to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that is in thy house." From which I think either that he was bishop of the church of Colossae, who is admonished to preside over it zealously and diligently as a preacher of the Gospel; or, if it is not so, it suffices me for the present that Philemon and Archippus, and Onesimus himself who carried the letter, were Colossians.*
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> Est et aliud indicium, quod in hac eadem epistola et Archippus nominatur: cui hic cum Philemone scribitur: Dicite, inquit, Archippo, vide ministerium quod accepisti a Domino, ut illud impleas. Quod est ministerium quod Archippus accepit a Domino? Ad Philemonem legimus: Et Archippo commilitoni nostro, et Ecclesiae quae in domo tua est. Ex quo puto aut episcopum eum fuisse Colossensis Ecclesiae, cui admonetur, studiose et diligenter praeesse, ut Evangelii praedicatorem. Aut si ita non est, illud mihi impraesentiarum sufficit, quod et Philemon et Archippus, et Onesimus ipse qui litteras perferebat, fuerint Colossenses

[3] Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [4] I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, [5] Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;

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[3] χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ Θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. [4] Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ Θεῷ μου, πάντοτε μνείαν σου ποιούμενος ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, [5] ἀκούων σου τὴν ἀγάπην, καὶ τὴν πίστιν ἣν ἔχεις πρὸς τὸν Κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους,

- Colossians shares the same faith-and-love formula in its opening greeting.

> **Colossians 1:4** – [4] *Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*
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> [4] ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην τὴν εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους,

[6] That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

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[6] ὅπως ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεώς σου ἐνεργὴς γένηται ἐν ἐπιγνώσει παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ τοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν εἰς Χριστόν Ἰησοῦν.

- Manuscripts vary. Some say in you, ὑμῖν while others read in us, ἡμῖν.

[7] For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother. [8] Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, [9] 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.

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[7] χάριν γὰρ ἔχομεν πολλὴν καὶ παράκλησιν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀγάπῃ σου, ὅτι τὰ σπλάγχνα τῶν ἁγίων ἀναπέπαυται διὰ σοῦ, ἀδελφέ. [8] Διὸ πολλὴν ἐν Χριστῷ παρρησίαν ἔχων ἐπιτάσσειν σοι τὸ ἀνῆκον, [9] διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην μᾶλλον παρακαλῶ, τοιοῦτος ὢν ὡς Παῦλος πρεσβύτης, νυνὶ δὲ καὶ δέσμιος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

- All extant manuscripts read Paul the aged, πρεσβύτης, though the RSV emends ambassador, πρεσβευτής. The NRSV reverts to “old man” but keeps a footnote.

[10] I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

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[10] παρακαλῶ σε περὶ τοῦ ἐμοῦ τέκνου, ὃν ἐγέννησα ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς μου, Ὀνήσιμον,

- Onesimus also appears in Colossians.

> **Colossians 4:9** – [9] *With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.*
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> [9] σὺν Ὀνησίμῳ τῷ πιστῷ καὶ ἀγαπητῷ ἀδελφῷ, ὅς ἐστιν ἐξ ὑμῶν. πάντα ὑμῖν γνωριοῦσι τὰ ὧδε.

- Jerome✞ describes Onesimus as a runaway slave. The epistle never explicitly says that, but it's the majority view among scholars.

> **Jerome on Philemon 10** – *At the same time one must marvel at the magnanimity of the Apostle, his mind burning for Christ. He is held in prison, bound with chains, hemmed in by the filth of his body, by separation from his dear ones, by penal darkness; and he does not feel the injury, is not racked by pain, knows nothing else but to think about the Gospel of Christ. He knew the man was a slave, he knew he was a runaway, he knew he had once been a thief, now converted to the faith of Christ.*
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> Simul autem admirandum de magnanimitate Apostoli, et in Christum mente ferventis. Tenetur in carcere, vinculis stringitur, squalore corporis, charorum separatione, poenalibus tenebris coarctatur, et non sentit injuriam, non dolore cruciatur, nihil novit aliud, nisi de Christi Evangelio cogitare. Sciebat servum, sciebat fugitivum, sciebat aliquando raptorem ad Christi fidem esse conversum.

- Ignatius of Antioch✞ (c. 40–c. 108) writes to an Onesimus, bishop of Ephesus. There's a powerful story one could tell if they are indeed the same person.

> **Ignatius to the Ephesians 1** – *Since, then, I have received in the name of God your whole multitude in Onesimus, a man of inexpressible love, and your bishop, I pray you by Jesus Christ to love him, and that you all be like him. For blessed is he who has granted you, being worthy, to possess such a bishop.*
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> ἐπεὶ οὖν τὴν πολυπλήθειαν ὑμῶν ἐν ὀνόματι θεοῦ ἀπείληφα ἐν Ὀνησίμῳ, τῷ ἐν ἀγάπῃ ἀδιηγήτῳ, ὑμῶν δὲ ἐπισκόπῳ, ὃν εὔχομαι κατὰ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ὑμᾶς ἀγαπᾶν καὶ πάντας ὑμᾶς αὐτῷ ἐν ὁμοιότητι εἶναι. εὐλογητὸς γὰρ ὁ χαρισάμενος ὑμῖν ἀξίοις οὖσι τοιοῦτον ἐπίσκοπον κεκτῆσθαι.

- Paul✞ uses this same "I have begotten you" language in 1 Corinthians.

> **1 Corinthians 4:15** – [15] *For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.*
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> [15] ἐὰν γὰρ μυρίους παιδαγωγοὺς ἔχητε ἐν Χριστῷ, ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πολλοὺς πατέρας· ἐν γὰρ Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐγὼ ὑμᾶς ἐγέννησα.

> [11] Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:
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> [11] τόν ποτέ σοι ἄχρηστον, νυνὶ δὲ σοὶ καὶ ἐμοὶ εὔχρηστον, ὃν ἀνέπεμψα·

- The slave-name Onesimus, Ὀνήσιμον means "useful," or "profitable" in Greek. Scholars argue Paul is making a pun here, saying something like "Useful was useless to you, but now he's useful to us both."

> [12] Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels:
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> [12] σὺ δὲ αὐτόν, τοῦτ᾽ ἔστι τὰ ἐμὰ σπλάγχνα προσλαβοῦ·

- receive him προσλαβοῦ is absent from our oldest manuscripts. The KJV reads much smoother here than the critical Greek supports.

> [13] Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: [14] But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly. [15] For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; [16] Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?
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> [13] ὃν ἐγὼ ἐβουλόμην πρὸς ἐμαυτὸν κατέχειν, ἵνα ὑπὲρ σοῦ διακονῇ μοι ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς τοῦ εὐαγγελίου· [14] χωρὶς δὲ τῆς σῆς γνώμης οὐδὲν ἠθέλησα ποιῆσαι, ἵνα μὴ ὡς κατὰ ἀνάγκην τὸ ἀγαθόν σου ᾖ, ἀλλὰ κατὰ ἑκούσιον. [15] τάχα γὰρ διὰ τοῦτο ἐχωρίσθη πρὸς ὥραν, ἵνα αἰώνιον αὐτὸν ἀπέχῃς· [16] οὐκέτι ὡς δοῦλον ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ δοῦλον, ἀδελφὸν ἀγαπητόν, μάλιστα ἐμοί, πόσῳ δὲ μᾶλλον σοὶ καὶ ἐν σαρκὶ καὶ ἐν Κυρίῳ.

- Our Torah forbids returning an escaped slave to his master. Yet Paul✞ does exactly that. If indeed Onesimus is a runaway as Christian tradition teaches.

Deuteronomy 23:16-17 – [16] *Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a bondman that is escaped from his master unto thee;* [17] *he shall dwell with thee, in the midst of thee, in the place which he shall choose within one of thy gates, where it liketh him best; thou shalt not wrong him.*

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[16] לֹא-תַסְגִּיר עֶבֶד, אֶל-אֲדֹנָיו, אֲשֶׁר-יִנָּצֵל אֵלֶיךָ, מֵעִם אֲדֹנָיו. [17] עִמְּךָ יֵשֵׁב בְּקִרְבְּךָ, בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר בְּאַחַד שְׁעָרֶיךָ--בַּטּוֹב לוֹ; לֹא, תּוֹנֶנּוּ.

Rambam, Slaves 8:10 – *A slave who fled from outside the Land to the Land is not returned to slavery, and of him it is said, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master a bondman." And one says to his master that he should write him a bill of release, and he writes him a note of debt for his value until his hand attains it and he pays him. And if the master did not want to free him, the court annuls his ownership of him and he goes free.*

עֶבֶד שֶׁבָּרַח מִחוּצָה לָאָרֶץ לָאָרֶץ אֵין מַחֲזִירִין לוֹ לְעַבְדוּת וְעָלָיו נֶאֱמַר "לֹא תַסְגִּיר עֶבֶד אֶל אֲדֹנָיו". וְאוֹמֵר לְרַבּוֹ שֶׁיִּכְתֹּב לוֹ גֵּט שִׁחְרוּר וְיִכְתֹּב לוֹ שְׁטַר חוֹב בְּדָמָיו עַד שֶׁתַּשִּׂיג יָדוֹ וְיִתֵּן לוֹ. וְאִם לֹא רָצָה הָאָדוֹן לְשַׁחְרְרוֹ מַפְקִיעִין בֵּית דִּין שִׁעְבּוּדוֹ מֵעָלָיו וְיֵלֵךְ לוֹ

- Philo of Alexandria✡ (c. 20 BCE–c. 50 CE) describes profound anti-slavery values among the Essenes, the Jewish sect some scholars suggest produced John the Baptizer.

Philo, Every Good Man is Free 75, 78-79 – [75] *Moreover Palestine and Syria too are not barren of exemplary wisdom and virtue, which countries no slight portion of that most populous nation of the Jews inhabits. There is a portion of those people called Essenes, in number something more than four thousand in my opinion, who derive their name from their piety, though not according to any accurate form of the Grecian dialect, because they are above all men devoted to the service of God, not sacrificing living animals, but studying rather to preserve their own minds in a state of holiness and purity. …*

[78] *Among those men you will find no makers of arrows, or javelins, or swords, or helmets, or breastplates, or shields; no makers of arms or of military engines; no one, in short, attending to any employment whatever connected with war, or even to any of those occupations even in peace which are easily perverted to wicked purposes; for they are utterly ignorant of all traffic, and of all commercial dealings, and of all navigation, but they repudiate and keep aloof from everything which can possibly afford any inducement to covetousness; 79* ***and there is not a single slave among them****, but they are all free, aiding one another with a reciprocal interchange of good offices; and they condemn masters, not only as unjust, inasmuch as they corrupt the very principle of equality, but likewise as impious, because they destroy the ordinances of nature, which generated them all equally, and brought them up like a mother, as if they were all legitimate brethren, not in name only, but in reality and truth.*

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[75] Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἡ Παλαιστίνη Συρία καλοκἀγαθίας οὐκ ἄγονος, ἣν πολυανθρωποτάτου ἔθνους τῶν Ἰουδαίων οὐκ ὀλίγη μοῖρα νέμεται. λέγονταί τινες παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ὄνομα Ἐσσαῖοι, πλῆθος ὑπερτετρακισχίλιοι, κατ᾽ ἐμὴν δόξαν—οὐκ

> ἀκριβεῖ τύπῳ διαλέκτου Ἑλληνικῆς—παρώνυμοι ὁσιότητος, ἐπειδὴ κἂν τοῖς μάλιστα θεραπευταὶ θεοῦ γεγόνασιν, οὐ ζῷα καταθύοντες, ἀλλ᾽ ἱεροπρεπεῖς τὰς ἑαυτῶν διανοίας κατασκευάζειν ἀξιοῦντες. …
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> [78] βελῶν ἢ ἀκόντων ἢ ξιφιδίων ἢ κράνους ἢ θώρακος ἢ ἀσπίδος οὐδένα παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς ἂν εὕροις δημιουργὸν οὐδὲ συνόλως ὁπλοποιὸν ἢ μηχανοποιὸν ἤ τι τῶν κατὰ πόλεμον ἐπιτηδεύοντα· ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ ὅσα τῶν κατ᾽ εἰρήνην εὐόλισθα εἰς κακίαν· ἐμπορίας γὰρ ἢ καπηλείας ἢ ναυκληρίας οὐδ᾽ ὄναρ ἴσασι, τὰς εἰς πλεονεξίαν ἀφορμὰς ἀποδιοπομπούμενοι. [79] δοῦλός τε παρ᾽ αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ εἷς ἐστιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐλεύθεροι πάντες ἀνθυπουργοῦντες ἀλλήλοις· καταγινώσκουσί τε τῶν δεσποτῶν, οὐ μόνον ὡς ἀδίκων, ἰσότητα λυμαινομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἀσεβῶν, θεσμὸν φύσεως ἀναιρούντων, ἣ πάντας ὁμοίως γεννήσασα καὶ θρεψαμένη μητρὸς δίκην ἀδελφοὺς γνησίους, οὐ λεγομένους ἀλλ᾽ ὄντας ὄντως, ἀπειργάσατο·

- Maimonides✡ (c. 1135–1204) says that the early sages would feed their slaves before themselves.

> **Rambam, Slaves 9:8** – *It is permitted to work a Canaanite slave with rigor. But although the law is so, the quality of piety and the ways of wisdom are that a person be merciful and pursue righteousness, and not make his yoke heavy upon his slave nor distress him, and give him to eat and to drink of every food and every drink. The early sages would give the slave of every single dish they ate, and would put the food of the animals and the slaves before their own meal.*
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> מֻתָּר לַעֲבֹד בְּעֶבֶד כְּנַעֲנִי בְּפֶרֶךְ. וְאַף עַל פִּי שֶׁהַדִּין כָּךְ מִדַּת חֲסִידוּת וְדַרְכֵי חָכְמָה שֶׁיִּהְיֶה אָדָם רַחְמָן וְרוֹדֵף צֶדֶק וְלֹא יַכְבִּיד עֻלּוֹ עַל עַבְדּוֹ וְלֹא יָצֵר לוֹ וְיַאֲכִילֵהוּ וְיַשְׁקֵהוּ מִכָּל מַאֲכָל וּמִכָּל מִשְׁתֶּה. חֲכָמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים הָיוּ נוֹתְנִין לָעֶבֶד מִכָּל תַּבְשִׁיל וְתַבְשִׁיל שֶׁהָיוּ אוֹכְלִין. וּמַקְדִּימִין מְזוֹן הַבְּהֵמוֹת וְהָעֲבָדִים לִסְעוּדַת עַצְמָן.

- Colossians expresses a similar sentiment, that the slaveholding follower of Jesus should be mindful of the divine authority all are subject to.

> **Colossians 4:1** – [1] *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*
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> [1] οἱ κύριοι, τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα τοῖς δούλοις παρέχεσθε, εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔχετε Κύριον ἐν οὐρανοῖς.

- Paul's✞ theory of slavery seems to be one of earthly acceptance but with a felt sense of inner spiritual equality. That the enslaved followers of Jesus would continue to obey their earthly masters, knowing that in the eyes of heaven, all are slaves.

> **1 Corinthians 7:21-22** – [21] *Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather.* [22] *For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.*
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> [21] δοῦλος ἐκλήθης; μή σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ᾽ εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι. [22] ὁ γὰρ ἐν Κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος, ἀπελεύθερος Κυρίου ἐστίν· ὁμοίως καὶ ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθείς, δοῦλός ἐστι Χριστοῦ.

> **Galatians 3:28** – [28] *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*
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> [28] οὐκ ἔνι Ἰουδαῖος οὐδὲ Ἕλλην, οὐκ ἔνι δοῦλος οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερος, οὐκ ἔνι ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ.

- Colossians repeats this line, as does Nag Hammadi's Tripartite Tractate in its own Valentinian way.

> **Colossians 3:11** – [11] *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*
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> [11] ὅπου οὐκ ἔνι Ἕλλην καὶ Ἰουδαῖος, περιτομὴ καὶ ἀκροβυστία, βάρβαρος, Σκύθης, δοῦλος, ἐλεύθερος· ἀλλὰ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι Χριστός.

> **Tripartite 29:13-14** – [13] *If we profess the kingdom in Christ, we eliminate the entire diversity of forms, of inequality, and of change.* [14] *For the end will again experience a singularity, just as the beginning was a singularity, the place without male or female, without slave or free, without circumcision or uncircumcision, without angel or human, but Christ is all in all.*
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> [13] ⲉⲛϣⲁⲣ ϩⲟⲙⲟⲗⲟⲅⲓ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛ̄ϯⲙⲛ̄ⲧ̄ⲣ̄ⲣⲟ· ⲉⲧϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲉⲭ̄ⲣ̄(ⲓⲥⲧⲟ)ⲥ ⲁⲩ̄ⲣ̄ ⲃⲟⲗ̀ ⲉ̣ⲃⲟⲗ ⲛ̄ⲧⲟⲟⲧϥ̄ ⲙ̄ⲡⲓϩⲁϩ ⲛ̄ⲣⲏⲧⲉ ⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲁⲩⲱ ⲧⲙⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧϣⲱϣ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ⲡϣⲓⲃⲉ· [14] ⲧϩⲁⲏ ⲅⲁⲣ ⲛⲁϫⲓ ⲡϣⲱⲡⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲛ̄ⲑⲉ ⲁⲛ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲟⲩⲉⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲟⲩⲱⲧ· ⲧⲉ ⲧⲁⲣⲭⲏ· ⲡⲙⲁ ⲉⲧⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ϩⲟⲟⲩⲧ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ⲥϩⲓⲙⲉ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ϩⲙ̄ϩⲉⲗ· ϩⲓ ⲉⲗⲉⲩⲑⲉⲣⲟⲥ· ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ⲥⲃ̄ⲃⲉ ϩⲓ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲁⲧⲥⲃ̄ⲃⲉ ⲟⲩⲇ̣[ⲉ] ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ⲁⲅⲅⲉⲗⲟⲥ ⲟⲩⲇⲉ ⲙ̄ⲛ̄ ⲣⲱⲙⲉ ⲁⲗⲗⲁ ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ϩⲛ̄ ⲡⲧⲏⲣϥ̄ ⲡⲉⲭ̄(ⲣⲓⲥⲧⲟ)ⲥ

- 1 Timothy emphasizes that slaves must continue to accept earthly subordination.

> **1 Timothy 6:1-2** – [1] *Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.* [2] *And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.*
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> [1] Ὅσοι εἰσὶν ὑπὸ ζυγὸν δοῦλοι, τοὺς ἰδίους δεσπότας πάσης τιμῆς ἀξίους ἡγείσθωσαν, ἵνα μὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ ἡ διδασκαλία βλασφημῆται. [2] οἱ δὲ πιστοὺς ἔχοντες δεσπότας μὴ καταφρονείτωσαν, ὅτι ἀδελφοί εἰσιν· ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δουλευέτωσαν, ὅτι πιστοί εἰσι καὶ ἀγαπητοὶ οἱ τῆς εὐεργεσίας ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι.

> ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει.

- All of the above is why I don't think Paul✞ is asking Philemon to free Onesimus as a more favorable reading might argue. Paul's sense of spiritual freedom isn't the same as earthly freedom. So his desire to make Onesimus "beyond a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me" reads more like "I want my slave back but will treat you well" rather than "I'm setting you free."
- If indeed Paul✞ believes that, through Jesus, there are no distinctions between Jews and Gentiles, then he breaks with our tradition that requires him to set Hebrew slaves free after the 6th year.

> **Deuteronomy 15:12-15** – *[12] If thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, he shall serve thee six years; and in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. [13] And when thou lettest him go free from thee, thou shalt not let him go empty; [14] thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy threshing-floor, and out of thy winepress; of that wherewith HaShem thy G-d hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. [15] And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and HaShem thy G-d redeemed thee; therefore I command thee this thing to-day.*
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> [12] כִּי-יִמָּכֵר לְךָ אָחִיךָ הָעִבְרִי, אוֹ הָעִבְרִיָּה--וַעֲבָדְךָ, שֵׁשׁ שָׁנִים; וּבַשָּׁנָה, הַשְּׁבִיעִת, תְּשַׁלְּחֶנּוּ חָפְשִׁי, מֵעִמָּךְ.
> [13] וְכִי-תְשַׁלְּחֶנּוּ חָפְשִׁי, מֵעִמָּךְ--לֹא תְשַׁלְּחֶנּוּ, רֵיקָם. [14] הַעֲנִיק תַּעֲנִיק, לוֹ, מִצֹּאנְךָ, וּמִגָּרְנְךָ וּמִיִּקְבֶךָ: אֲשֶׁר
> בֵּרַכְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ, תִּתֶּן-לוֹ. [15] וְזָכַרְתָּ, כִּי עֶבֶד הָיִיתָ בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם, וַיִּפְדְּךָ, יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ; עַל-כֵּן אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ,
> אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה--הַיּוֹם.

> **Leviticus 25:39-42** – *[39] And if thy brother be waxen poor with thee, and sell himself unto thee, thou shalt not make him to serve as a bondservant. [40] As a hired servant, and as a settler, he shall be with thee; he shall serve with thee unto the year of jubilee. [41] Then shall he go out from thee, he and his children with him, and shall return unto his own family, and unto the possession of his fathers shall he return. [42] For they are My servants, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt; they shall not be sold as bondmen.*
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> [39] וְכִי-יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ עִמָּךְ, וְנִמְכַּר-לָךְ--לֹא-תַעֲבֹד בּוֹ, עֲבֹדַת עָבֶד. [40] כְּשָׂכִיר כְּתוֹשָׁב, יִהְיֶה עִמָּךְ; עַד-שְׁנַת
> הַיֹּבֵל, יַעֲבֹד עִמָּךְ. [41] וְיָצָא, מֵעִמָּךְ--הוּא, וּבָנָיו עִמּוֹ; וְשָׁב, אֶל-מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ, וְאֶל-אֲחֻזַּת אֲבֹתָיו, יָשׁוּב. [42] כִּי-עֲבָדַי
> הֵם, אֲשֶׁר-הוֹצֵאתִי אֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם; לֹא יִמָּכְרוּ, מִמְכֶּרֶת עָבֶד.

- Other scholarly theories exist, such as Peter Lampe's✞ (1954–) view that Onesimus is asking Paul✞ to intercede for him to Philemon. This Roman custom allowed a slave to ask for the intercession of his master's friends. Ulpian✪ (c. 216) quoting the jurist Proculus✪ said such slaves are not fugitives. We see Pliny the Younger✪ (61–c. 113) intercede so.

Digest 21.1.17.4 – *The same author says: Proculus, asked about one who had hidden at home with the intention of seizing a chance to escape, said that although a man who stayed at home could not be thought to have fled, nevertheless he had been a fugitive; but if he had hidden only until his master's anger cooled, he was not a fugitive, just as neither is one who, seeing that his master meant to beat him, took himself off to a friend whom he could bring in to plead for him.*

Idem ait: interrogatus Proculus de eo, qui domi latuisset in hoc scilicet, ut fugae nactus occasionem se subtraheret, ait, tametsi fugere non posset videri, qui domi mansisset, tamen eum fugitivum fuisse: sin autem in hoc tantum latuisset, quoad iracundia domini effervesceret, fugitivum non esse, sicuti ne eum quidem, qui cum dominum animadverteret verberibus se adficere velle, praeripuisset se ad amicum, quem ad precandum perduceret.

Digest 21.1.43.1 – *One who flees to a friend of his master in order to plead is not a fugitive; indeed, even if his intention is not to return home unless he obtains help, he is not yet a fugitive, because the name of flight belongs not to intention alone but also to the deed.*

Qui ad amicum domini deprecaturus confugit, non est fugitivus: immo etiamsi ea mente sit, ut non impetrato auxilio domum non revertatur, nondum fugitivus est, quia non solum consilii, sed et facti fugae nomen est.

Pliny the Younger, Letters 9.21 – *Your freedman, with whom you had told me you were angry, came to me, threw himself at my feet and clung there as if they were yours. He wept much, begged much, and was much silent too; in short, he convinced me that his repentance was genuine. I believe he is reformed, because he feels that he did wrong. You are angry, I know, and justly angry, that too I know; but the praise of mildness is greatest when the cause of anger is most just. You loved the man and, I hope, will love him again; meanwhile it is enough that you allow yourself to be entreated. You may be angry again if he deserves it, and you will do so with more excuse having once been won over. Make some allowance for his youth, for his tears, for your own kindness. Do not torment him, do not torment yourself as well; for you are tormented when a man so gentle is angry. I fear I may seem not to ask but to compel if I join my prayers to his; yet I will join them, all the more fully and freely because I rebuked him sharply and sternly, threatening flatly that I would never ask again. That was for him, who needed to be frightened; not the same for you, for perhaps I shall ask again and obtain again, provided only it be such a thing as it befits me to ask and you to grant. Farewell.*

Libertus tuus, cui suscensere te dixeras, venit ad me advolutusque pedibus meis tamquam tuis haesit. Flevit multum, multum rogavit, multum etiam tacuit, in summa fecit mihi fidem paenitentiae verae: credo emendatum quia deliquisse se sentit. Irasceris, scio, et irasceris merito, id quoque scio; sed tunc praecipua mansuetudinis laus, cum irae causa iustissima est. Amasti hominem et, spero, amabis: interim sufficit ut exorari te sinas. Licebit rursus irasci, si meruerit, quod exoratus excusatius facies. Remitte aliquid adulescentiae ipsius, remitte lacrimis, remitte indulgentiae tuae. Ne torseris illum, ne torseris etiam te; torqueris enim cum tam lenis irasceris. Vereor ne videar non rogare sed cogere, si precibus eius meas iunxero; iungam tamen tanto plenius et effusius, quanto ipsum acrius severiusque corripui, destricte minatus numquam me postea rogaturum. Hoc illi, quem terreri oportebat, tibi non idem; nam fortasse iterum rogabo, impetrabo iterum: sit modo tale, ut rogare me, ut praestare te deceat. Vale.

- Nevertheless, we must remember that Christian tradition did not have this view. The patristic writers aren't justifying this particular scenario, if it's indeed what happened.
- Another view is that Paul✞ is asking Philemon for Onesimus to join him on his missions, likely as some kind of servant. The view isn't necessarily "give me ownership of your slave" but "he would be useful for me, send him here."

> **Philippians 2:25** – [25] *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.*
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> [25] ἀναγκαῖον δὲ ἡγησάμην Ἐπαφρόδιτον τὸν ἀδελφὸν καὶ συνεργὸν καὶ συστρατιώτην μου, ὑμῶν δὲ ἀπόστολον, καὶ λειτουργὸν τῆς χρείας μου, πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς·

- Jerome✞ reads Onesimus as the second Joseph, whose slavery, however unjust, was ultimately part of God's plan.

> **Jerome on Philemon 15-16** – *Sometimes evil becomes the occasion of good things, and God turns the crooked counsels of men to the right. What I say will be clearer by an example. Joseph's brothers, goaded by the stings of their jealousy, sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty gold pieces. This was the beginning of all good things for his father, for his brothers, and for all Egypt. Afterward he himself said to his brothers: "Ye thought evil against me, but God thought good for me." Something similar we can understand in Onesimus, that bad beginnings were the occasion of a good outcome. For had he not fled his master, he would never have come to Rome where Paul was bound in prison. Had he not seen Paul in chains, he would not have received faith in Christ. Had he not had the faith of Christ, he would never have become Paul's son and been sent into the work of the Gospel.*
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> Nonnumquam malum occasio fit bonorum, et hominum prava consilia Deus vertit ad rectum. Quod dico manifestius exemplo fiet. Joseph fratres, sui zeli stimulis incitati, Ismaelitis viginti aureis vendiderunt (Gen. XXXVII). Hoc initium et patri, et fratribus, et omni Aegypto bonorum omnium fuit. Denique ipse postea ad fratres: Vos, inquit, cogitastis de me mala: et Deus cogitavit de me bona (Gen. XLV, 8). Simile quid et in Onesimo possumus intelligere, quod mala principia occasiones fuerint rei bonae. Si enim dominum non fugisset, numquam venisset Romam ubi erat Paulus vinctus in carcere. Si Paulum in vinculis non vidisset, non recepisset fidem in Christum. Si Christi non habuisset fidem, numquam Pauli effectus filius, in opus Evangelii mitteretur.

> **Genesis 50:20** – [20] *And as for you, ye meant evil against me; but G-d meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.*
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> [20] וְאַתֶּם, חֲשַׁבְתֶּם עָלַי רָעָה; אֱלֹהִים, חֲשָׁבָהּ לְטֹבָה, לְמַעַן עֲשֹׂה כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה, לְהַחֲיֹת עַם-רָב.

- Jerome✞ even argues that mastery ends at death and that through faith Onesimus became an eternal brother.

> **Jerome on Philemon 16** – *No master is the eternal master of his slave: for his power, and the condition of both, is ended by death. But Onesimus, who through faith in Christ has become eternal, to the eternal Philemon, since he too had believed in Christ, having received the spirit of liberty, began from a slave to be no longer a slave but a brother, a most beloved brother, an eternal brother.*
>
> Nullus aeternus dominus servi sui: potestas quippe ejus, et utriusque conditio, morte finitur. Onesimus vero qui ex fide Christi factus aeternus est, aeterno Philemoni, quia in Christum et ipse crediderat, spiritu libertatis accepto, jam non servus, sed frater coepit esse de servo, frater charissimus, frater aeternus

- This same yearning can be felt in the Gospel of Philip.

> **Philip 9:55-56** – [55] *In this world it is the slaves who serve those who are free.* [56] *In the kingdom of Heaven, those who were free will serve the slaves.*
>
> [55] ϩⲙ̄ ⲡⲉⲉⲓⲕⲟⲥⲙⲟⲥ ⲛ̄ϩⲙ̄ϩⲁ̄ⲗ ⲣ̄ϩⲩⲡⲏⲣⲉⲧⲉⲓ ⲛ̄ⲉⲗⲉⲩⲑⲉⲣⲟⲥ [56] ϩⲛ̄ ⲧⲙ̄ⲛ̄ⲧⲉⲣⲟ ⲛⲙ̄ⲡⲏⲩⲉ ⲛⲉⲗⲉⲩⲑⲉⲣⲟⲥ ⲛⲁⲣ̄ⲇⲓⲁⲕⲟⲛ[ⲉⲓ] ⲛ̄ⲛ̄ϩⲙ̄ϩⲁ̄ⲗ

> **Philip 12:24** – [24] *The slaves will then be free, and the captives redeemed.*
>
> [24] ⲧⲟⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ϩⲙ̄ϩⲁ̄ⲗ ⲛⲁⲣ̄ⲉⲗⲉⲩⲑⲉ̣[ⲣⲟⲥ ⲁⲩⲱ] ⲛ̄ⲥⲉⲥⲱⲧⲉ ⲛ̄ⲁⲓϫⲙⲁⲗⲱⲧⲟⲥ

> [17] If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. [18] If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;
>
> [17] εἰ οὖν με ἔχεις κοινωνόν, προσλαβοῦ αὐτὸν ὡς ἐμέ. [18] εἰ δέ τι ἠδίκησέ σε ἢ ὀφείλει, τοῦτο ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγει·

- Jerome✞ reads Paul's✞ offer to pay Onesimus's debts as imitating the Messianic example he sees in Isaiah 53.

> **Jerome on Philemon 18** – *An imitator of his Lord, and having Christ speaking in him, he ought according to his strength to do what Christ did. For if he bore our infirmities and grieved at our wounds, justly does the Apostle put himself forward for Onesimus and pledge what the other owed.*
>
> ---
>
> Imitator Domini sui, et Christum in se loquentem habens, ea juxta vires suas debet facere quae Christus. Si enim ille infirmitates nostras portavit, et plagas nostras doluit, juste Apostolus pro Onesimo se opponit, et spondet quae ille debebat.

> **Isaiah 53:4** – [4] *Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried; whereas we did esteem him stricken, smitten of G-d, and afflicted.*
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>
> [4] אָכֵן חֳלָיֵנוּ הוּא נָשָׂא, וּמַכְאֹבֵינוּ סְבָלָם; וַאֲנַחְנוּ חֲשַׁבְנֵהוּ, נָגוּעַ מֻכֵּה אֱלֹהִים וּמְעֻנֶּה.

> [19] 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.
>
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>
> [19] ἐγὼ Παῦλος ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί, ἐγὼ ἀποτίσω· ἵνα μὴ λέγω σοι ὅτι καὶ σεαυτόν μοι προσοφείλεις.

- Galatians and 2 Thessalonians sign off similarly, appealing to Paul's handwriting. Although in these latter cases the author is advocating for authenticity rather than here where Paul is promising he'll repay his debts.

> **Galatians 6:11** – [11] *Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.*
>
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>
> [11] Ἴδετε πηλίκοις ὑμῖν γράμμασιν ἔγραψα τῇ ἐμῇ χειρί.

> **2 Thessalonians 3:17** – [17] *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write.*
>
> ---
>
> [17] Ὁ ἀσπασμὸς τῇ ἐμῇ χειρὶ Παύλου, ὅ ἐστι σημεῖον ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ· οὕτω γράφω.

> **Jerome on Philemon 19** – *What he says is this: What Onesimus seized by theft, I pledge myself to repay; and of this pledge this epistle and my own hand are witness, which I did not dictate in the usual way but wrote out myself with my own hand. Trust me, then, as I promise on behalf of Onesimus.*
>
> ---
>
> Quod dicit tale est: Quod Onesimus furto rapuit, ego me spondeo redditurum: cujus sponsionis, Epistola haec et manus testis est propria: quam non solito more dictavi, sed mea manu ipse conscripsi. Crede igitur mihi pro Onesimo pollicenti.

[20] Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord.

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[20] ναί, ἀδελφέ, ἐγώ σου ὀναίμην ἐν Κυρίῳ· ἀνάπαυσόν μου τὰ σπλάγχνα ἐν Κυρίῳ.

- Ignatius✞ echoes this formula.

> **Ignatius to the Ephesians 2** – *May I have joy of you always, if indeed I am worthy.*
>
> ὀναίμην ὑμῶν διὰ παντός, ἐάνπερ ἄξιος ὦ.

- Jerome✞ notes the difficulty in translating this verse.

> **Jerome on Philemon 20** – *"Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord." The Latin language does not express the Greek idiom. For what he says, ναὶ ἀδελφέ, the ναὶ is a kind of adverb of one who coaxes. But we, translating it "ita, frater," sound out something more watery and diluted, I know not what, other than what is written. For just as that Hebrew ANNA, which the Seventy translators often rendered ὦ δή, in its own language signifies the feeling of one entreating, whence Symmachus sometimes translated ANNA as δέομαι, that is, "I beseech": so we too suffer in the Greek language the same loss that the Greeks suffer in the Hebrew.*
>
> Proprietatem Graecam Latinus sermo non explicat. Quod enim ait, ναὶ, ἀδελφέ: ναὶ quoddam quasi adverbium blandientis est. Nos autem interpretantes, ita, frater, aquatius et dilutius nescio quid magis aliud quam id quod est scriptum, sonamus. Sicut enim ANNA ( ) illud Hebraicum, pro quo frequenter Septuaginta interpretes ὦ δὴ transtulerunt, in lingua sua significat deprecantis affectum: unde nonnumquam Symmachus pro ANNA, δέομαι, hoc est, obsecro, transtulit: ita et nos eamdem in Graeca lingua vim patimur, quam Graeci sustinent in Hebraea.

[21] Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say. [22] But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. [23] There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus;

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[21] πεποιθὼς τῇ ὑπακοῇ σου ἔγραψά σοι, εἰδὼς ὅτι καὶ ὑπὲρ ὃ λέγω ποιήσεις. [22] ἅμα δὲ καὶ ἑτοίμαζέ μοι ξενίαν· ἐλπίζω γὰρ ὅτι διὰ τῶν προσευχῶν ὑμῶν χαρισθήσομαι ὑμῖν. [23] Ἀσπάζονταί σε Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,

- Epaphras also appears in Colossians.

> **Colossians 4:12** – [12] *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*
>
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>
> [12] ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἐπαφρᾶς ὁ ἐξ ὑμῶν, δοῦλος Χριστοῦ, πάντοτε ἀγωνιζόμενος ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐν ταῖς προσευχαῖς, ἵνα στῆτε τέλειοι καὶ πεπληρωμένοι ἐν παντὶ θελήματι τοῦ Θεοῦ·

> [24] Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.
>
> ---
>
> [24] Μᾶρκος, Ἀρίσταρχος, Δημᾶς, Λουκᾶς, οἱ συνεργοί μου.

- Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke also appear in Colossians.

> **Colossians 4:10** – [10] *Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)*
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> ---
>
> [10] Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου, καὶ Μάρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρνάβα (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολάς· ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δέξασθε αὐτόν),

> **Colossians 4:14** – [14] *Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.*
>
> ---
>
> [14] ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Λουκᾶς ὁ ἰατρὸς ὁ ἀγαπητὸς, καὶ Δημᾶς.

- Demas seems to have had a falling out with Paul✞. Or perhaps the author of 2 Timothy needed to discredit his ministry.

> **2 Timothy 4:10-11** – [10] *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.* [11] *Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.*
>
> ---
>
> [10] Δημᾶς γάρ με ἐγκατέλιπεν, ἀγαπήσας τὸν νῦν αἰῶνα, καὶ ἐπορεύθη εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην· Κρήσκης εἰς Γαλατίαν, Τίτος εἰς Δαλματίαν. [11] Λουκᾶς ἐστι μόνος μετ᾽ ἐμοῦ. Μᾶρκον ἀναλαβὼν ἄγε μετὰ σεαυτοῦ· ἔστι γάρ μοι εὔχρηστος εἰς διακονίαν.

- The author of Luke-Acts also mentions Aristarchus, who sails with Paul✞ to Rome, perhaps as a fellow prisoner.

Acts 27:1-2 – [1] *And when it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto one named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.* [2] *And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.*

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[1] Ὡς δὲ ἐκρίθη τοῦ ἀποπλεῖν ἡμᾶς εἰς τὴν Ἰταλίαν, παρεδίδουν τόν τε Παῦλον καί τινας ἑτέρους δεσμώτας ἑκατοντάρχῃ, ὀνόματι Ἰουλίῳ, σπείρης Σεβαστῆς. [2] ἐπιβάντες δὲ πλοίῳ Ἀδραμυττηνῷ, μέλλοντες πλεῖν τοὺς κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν τόπους, ἀνήχθημεν, ὄντος σὺν ἡμῖν Ἀριστάρχου Μακεδόνος Θεσσαλονικέως.

Acts 19:29 – [29] *And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.*

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[29] καὶ ἐπλήσθη ἡ πόλις ὅλη συγχύσεως· ὥρμησάν τε ὁμοθυμαδὸν εἰς τὸ θέατρον, συναρπάσαντες Γάϊον καὶ Ἀρίσταρχον Μακεδόνας, συνεκδήμους τοῦ Παύλου.

Acts 20:4 – [4] *And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.*

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[4] συνείπετο δὲ αὐτῷ ἄχρι τῆς Ἀσίας Σώπατρος Βεροιαῖος· Θεσσαλονικέων δέ, Ἀρίσταρχος καὶ Σεκοῦνδος, καὶ Γάϊος Δερβαῖος, καὶ Τιμόθεος· Ἀσιανοὶ δέ, Τυχικὸς καὶ Τρόφιμος.

[25] The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

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[25] Ἡ χάρις τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ μετὰ τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν· ἀμήν.

- This signoff appears in a forgery claiming to be the lost Epistle to the Laodiceans.

Laodiceans 19-20 – [19] *The grace of the Lord Jesus be with your spirit.* [20] *And cause this epistle to be read unto them of Colossae, and the epistle of the Colossians to be read unto you.*

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[19] Gratia Domini Ihesu cum spiritu vestro. [20] Et facite legi Colosensibus et Colosensium vobis.

Colossians 4:16 – [16] *And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.*

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[16] καὶ ὅταν ἀναγνωσθῇ παρ' ὑμῖν ἡ ἐπιστολή, ποιήσατε ἵνα καὶ ἐν τῇ Λαοδικέων ἐκκλησίᾳ ἀναγνωσθῇ, καὶ τὴν ἐκ Λαοδικείας ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς ἀναγνῶτε.

Faith Symbols

- Christian ✞.
- Dharmic ☸.
- Jewish ✡.
- Muslim: Shia ☙, Sunni ☪.
- Pagan: Apollo ☼, Hermes ☙.
- Atheist ⌀.

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