

People in Philemon:

1. **Timothy: "honouring God". Paul's disciple**

2. **Philemon: "one who kisses".**

3. **Apphia: "fruitful"**

APPHIA. Addressed in # Phm 1:2

In a manner suggesting that she was Philemon's wife, and hostess to the Colossian church (but see *PHILEMON, EPISTLE to). RSV's text 'our sister' is probably to be preferred to AV's 'our beloved'. The name was common in W Asia and is probably native Phrygian. (See examples in Lightfoot, *Colossians*, p. 304, *MM*, and the Colossian inscription, *CIG*, 3, 4380K, 3.)A.F.W.

4. **Archippus: "Master of the horse"**

ARCHIPPUS. 'Fellow soldier' of Paul and Timothy

Phm 1:2; the phrase implies previous service together (*cf.*) # Php 2:25

He is addressed with Philemon and Apphia in a manner suggesting that he may have been their son.

This does not necessarily exclude the early suggestion (*cf. Theodore of*

Mopsuestia, ed. Swete, I, p. 311) based on the context of # Col 4:17, and adopted with divergent conclusions by Lightfoot and Goodspeed, that the 'ministry' that the Colossians must exhort him to fulfil was exercised in nearby Laodicea; but the context does not demand, and may not support, this.

Even if he ministered at Colossae, and the charge is to root out the heresy there (*cf.* W. G. Rollins, *JBL* 78, 1959, pp. 277f.), it is curious that the *church* is bidden to convey it. Even more dubious is J.

Knox's suggestion that Archippus was host to the Colossian

house-church, the owner of Onesimus and the principal addressee of Philemon. The expressions in # Col 4:17 imply the reception of a tradition, and can hardly be interpreted in terms of the release of Onesimus. The precise nature of the ministry is unknown, but perhaps Paul's old comrade-in-arms, while still linked with his home church, was again on

missionary service. The solemn charge need not imply actual dereliction (*cf.*) # 2Ti 4:5

(*PHILEMON, EPISTLE TO.) BIBLIOGRAPHY. J. Knox, *Philemon among the Letters of Paul*2, 1960.A.F.W.

5. **Onesimus: "Profitable or useful"**

ONESIMUS. A runaway slave belonging to Philemon, an influential Christian at Colossae. He made the acquaintance of Paul, while the latter was a prisoner, either at Rome or Ephesus (according to the view which is taken of the provenance of

Colossians). He was converted by the apostle # Phm 1:10, and became a trustworthy and dear brother # Col 4:9

His name, which means 'useful', was a common name for slaves, though not confined to them; and he lived up to it by making himself so helpful to Paul that the latter would have

liked to have kept him to look after him as, Paul feels, Philemon would have wished

Phm 1:13

But the apostle felt constrained to do nothing without Philemon's willing consent; so he returned the slave to his former owner, with a covering note-the canonical *Philemon.

In this the apostle plays on the slave's name by describing him as 'once so little use to you, but now useful indeed, both to you and me'; and hints, tactfully but clearly, that he expects

Philemon to take Onesimus 'back for good, no longer as a slave, but as more than a slave-as a dear brother, very dear indeed to me and how much dearer to you, both as man and as

Christian' # Phm 1:15-16,

NEB. Nevertheless, Paul admits that sending him back is like being deprived of a part of himself # Phm 1:12

The mention of Onesimus is one of the links which bind together Colossians and Philemon, and shows that they were sent from the same place at the same time. Some scholars believe that the Onesimus known to Ignatius and described by him in his Epistle to the Ephesians as "a man of inexpressible love and your bishop" was none other than the runaway slave.

This hypothesis, though not impossible, would seem improbable on chronological considerations. It is urged in its support that it supplies a reason why Philemon was preserved as a canonical book. On the other hand, its close connection with Colossians, and its importance for the light it throws on the Christian treatment of slaves, would seem to provide adequate reasons for its canonicity.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. The role of Onesimus in Paul's letter is considered by P. N. Harrison, *ATR* 32, 1950, pp. 268-294. His later career has been made the subject of an elaborate theory by E. J. Goodspeed, *INT*, 1937, pp. 109-124, and J. Knox, *Philemon among the Letters of Paul*, 1959. For a criticism (with bibliography), see R. P. Martin, *Colossians and Philemon*, NCB, 1974, introduction. R.V.G.T. R.P.M.

6. Epaphras: "lovely"

EPAPHRAS. In # Col 1:7; 4:12; Phm 1:23, one of Paul's friends and associates, called by him his "fellow slave" and "fellow prisoner". The name is abbreviated from Epaphroditus, but Epaphras is probably not to be identified with the Epaphroditus of

Php 2:25; 4:18 (as he is by T. R. Glover, *Paul of Tarsus*, 1925, p. 179). We gather that Epaphras evangelized the cities of the Lycus valley in Phrygia under Paul's direction during the latter's Ephesian ministry, and founded the churches of Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea. Later he visited Paul during his Roman captivity, and it was his news of conditions in the churches of the Lycus valley that moved Paul to write the Epistle to the Colossians.

BIBLIOGRAPHY. J. B. Lightfoot, *St Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 1879, pp. 29ff. F.F.B.

7. Mark: "a defenses"

MARK (JOHN). Traditional author of the second Gospel, apparently a Jew and a native of Jerusalem. His Heb. name was the OT $\gamma\alpha\mu\mu\alpha$, "Yahweh has shown grace" (cf.)

2Ki 25:23, etc., shortened in English to the familiar "John". The reason for his adopted Lat. name of "Marcus" is uncertain; sometimes Jewish families that had been captured as slaves in war, and later freed, took, as "freedmen", the name of the Roman family to which they had been enslaved; but this is unlikely in his case, the more so as Marcus is a praenomen, not a family name. It was not uncommon for 1st-century Jews to bear a Gk. or Rom. name in addition to their Heb. name, "in religion"; see # Ac 1:23 for another such "surname", again Lat. and not Gk. in origin.

The same phenomenon is common among Jews today. If his early nickname of *kolobodaktylos*, "stumpy-fingered", is a genuine tradition (see the anti-Marcionite prologue to Mark, dating from the later 2nd century, which is the earliest evidence for it), then it may refer either to a physical peculiarity on the part of the author or to some strange stylistic features of the Gospel which have puzzled critics of all ages. It may, however, be only a late conjecture, due to the confusion of "Marcus" with the Lat. adjective *mancus*, "maimed". Scripture gives some very clear evidence about his family, and there are also several

8. Aristarchus: "the best ruler"

9. Demas: "governor of the people"

10. Luke: "light-giving"