

“Grace to You!”  
Philemon 1-3

Paul states that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ. The evident meaning is that his bonds are the result of his life turned over to his Master, Christ Jesus. Christ is His title. It means anointed one, and is the Greek (*Christos*) equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah (Dan. 9:25-26; John 1:41, 4:25). Jesus is His personal name (Hebrew *Yehowshu*, meaning Savior). He is God in the flesh (Ps. 106:21; Isa. 43:3, 11; Hos. 1:34; Matt. 1:21, 23; Luke 1:1:47, 2:11; John 1:1, 14, 4:42; Col. 1:15, 17, 19, 2:9; 1Tim. 1:1, 2:3, 3:16, 4:10; 2Tim. 1:10; Heb. 1:8; 2Pet. 3:2, 18; 1John 4:14, Jude 25).

The name Philemon means friendly. He is only mentioned in this New Testament epistle. Paul calls him beloved (Greek *agapetos*), a strong word of endearment. He is also a fellow laborer (Greek *sunergos*). Believers are to labor for the real riches and the truth (Prov. 10:16, 14:23, 23:4; Matt. 11:28; John 6:27; 1Cor. 4:12, 15:58; 2Cor. 5:9; Eph. 4:28; 1Tim. 4:10, 5:17).

Paul includes Apphia, probably Philemon’s wife, in his address. Archippus (Greek *Archippos*), whose name means “horse ruler,” was likely Philemon’s son (Col. 4:17). Paul calls him a fellow soldier, consistent with his admonition to put on the full armor of God (2Tim. 2:3-4; Eph. 6:10-17). Paul also addresses the church (Greek *ekklesia*), literally “called out ones.” The church in the New Testament was birthed on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Israel in the wilderness was also called the church (Acts 7:38). Jesus built the church (Matt. 16:18). He gave His life for it (Eph. 5:25) and is its’ Head (Eph. 5:23). We should love the church as Christ did! The early church met in homes as church buildings did not appear until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century.

The apostle now greets his readers with words common in all his letters to the churches (Rom. 1:7; 1Cor. 1:3; Gal. 1:3, etc.). Grace and peace originate in God the Father and God the Son, affirming Christ’s deity. Grace (Greek *charis*) is God’s unmerited favor and gift towards His children. It is getting what we do not deserve. It is personified by Christ (John 1:14, 17; Rom. 1:5, 11:6; 2Cor. 12:9; Eph. 2:5-9; Tit. 2:11; Heb. 10:29; 1Pet. 3:7, 4:10, 5:5, 10). Peace (Greek *eirene*, tranquility, well being) is found in the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). It is different than the peace of the world (John 14:27, 16:33). Jesus gives us peace **with** God ( Rom. 5:1) so we can know the peace **of** God (Phil. 4:6-7; Rom. 8:6, 14:17; Gal. 5:22; Col. 3:15).