

Paul's Letter to Philemon (c. 60)

Philemon

Salutation

1 From Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon, our dear friend and co-laborer,
2 to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your house.
3 Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

Thanksgiving for Philemon's Faith and Prayer for the Knowledge of Every Good Thing

4 I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers,
5 because I hear of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.
6 I pray that the faith you share with us may deepen your understanding of every blessing that belongs to you in Christ.
7 I have had great joy and encouragement because of your love, for the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

Paul's Appeal to Philemon to Accept Onesimus

8 So, although I have quite a lot of confidence in Christ and could command you to do what is proper,
9 I would rather appeal to you on the basis of love—I, Paul, an old man and even now a prisoner for the sake of Christ Jesus—
10 I am appealing to you concerning my child, whose spiritual father I have become during my imprisonment, that is, Onesimus,
11 who was formerly useless to you, but is now useful to you and me.
12 I have sent him (who is my very heart) back to you.
13 I wanted to keep him so that he could serve me in your place during my imprisonment for the sake of the gospel.
14 However, without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your good deed would not be out of compulsion, but from your own willingness.
15 For perhaps it was for this reason that he was separated from you for a little while, so that you would have him back eternally,
16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, as a dear brother. He is especially so to me, and even more so to you now, both humanly speaking and in the Lord.
17 Therefore if you regard me as a partner, accept him as you would me.
18 Now if he has defrauded you of anything or owes you anything, charge what he owes to me.
19 I, Paul, have written this letter with my own hand: I will repay it. I could also mention that you owe me your very self.
20 Yes, brother, let me have some benefit from you in the Lord. Refresh my heart in Christ.
21 Since I was confident that you would obey, I wrote to you, because I knew that you would do even more than what I am asking you to do.
22 At the same time also, prepare a place for me to stay, for I hope that through your prayers I will be given back to you.

Greetings and Benediction

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you.
24 Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my co-laborers, greet you too.
25 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

Jude's Letter to Those Who are Called (c. 61–62)

Jude

Salutation

1 From Jude, a slave of Jesus Christ and brother of James, to those who are called, wrapped in the love of God the Father and kept for Jesus Christ.
2 May mercy, peace, and love be lavished on you!

Contend Earnestly for the Faith—Reject Those Who Pervert the Grace of God

3 Dear friends, although I have been eager to write to you about our common salvation, I now feel compelled instead to write to encourage you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.
4 For certain men have secretly slipped in among you—men who long ago were marked out for the condemnation I am about to describe—ungodly men who have turned the grace of our God into a license for evil and who deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Examples of God's Past Judgment

5 Now I desire to remind you (even though you have been fully informed of these facts once for all) that Jesus, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, later destroyed those who did not believe.
6 You also know that the angels who did not keep within their proper domain but abandoned their own place of residence, he has

kept in eternal chains in utter darkness, locked up for the judgment of the great Day.

7 So also Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighboring towns, since they indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire in a way similar to these angels, are now displayed as an example by suffering the punishment of eternal fire.

The Sins of the Intruders

8 Yet these men, as a result of their dreams, defile the flesh, reject authority, and insult the glorious ones.

9 But even when Michael the archangel was arguing with the devil and debating with him concerning Moses' body, he did not dare to bring a slanderous judgment, but said, "May the Lord rebuke you!"

10 But these men do not understand the things they slander, and they are being destroyed by the very things that, like irrational animals, they instinctively comprehend.

Woe Oracle Against the Intruders

11 Woe to them! For they have traveled down Cain's path, and because of greed have abandoned themselves to Balaam's error; hence, they will certainly perish in Korah's rebellion.

12 These men are dangerous reefs at your love feasts, feasting without reverence, feeding only themselves. They are waterless clouds, carried along by the winds; autumn trees without fruit—twice dead, uprooted;

13 wild sea waves, spewing out the foam of their shame; wayward stars for whom the utter depths of eternal darkness have been reserved.

Enoch's Prophecy of God's Eschatological Judgment

14 Now Enoch, the seventh in descent beginning with Adam, even prophesied of them, saying, "Look! The Lord is coming with thousands and thousands of his holy ones,

15 to execute judgment on all, and to convict every person of all their thoroughly ungodly deeds that they have committed, and of all the harsh words that ungodly sinners have spoken against him."

16 These people are grumblers and fault-finders who go wherever their desires lead them, and they give bombastic speeches, enchanting folks for their own gain.

Exhortation to Believers

17 But you, dear friends—recall the predictions foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.

18 For they said to you, "In the end time there will come scoffers, propelled by their own ungodly desires."

19 These people are divisive, worldly, devoid of the Spirit.

20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 maintain yourselves in the love of God, while anticipating the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that brings eternal life.

22 And have mercy on those who waver;

23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; have mercy on others, coupled with a fear of God, hating even the clothes stained by the flesh.

Closing Doxology

24 Now to the one who is able to keep you from falling, and to cause you to stand, rejoicing, without blemish before his glorious presence,

25 to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time, and now, and for all eternity. Amen.

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Chronological Notes

1) Philemon.

- A) "The date for Philemon depends largely on the date assigned to Colossians. The evidence for the close relationship between the two letters is as follows: (1) Colossians refers to Onesimus (Col 4:9); (2) both letters have Timothy as the co-sender (Phlm 1:1; Col 1:1); (3) both letters refer to Epaphras (Phlm 1:23; Col 1:7) and Archippus (Phlm 1:2; Col 4:17); and (4) both letters include Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke among Paul's companions (Phlm 1:24; Col 4:10, 14). Assuming the

Roman provenance of Colossians, the letter should be dated to around the year 60.”¹ As already mentioned, I follow Kostenberger’s chronology for Paul’s prison epistles and date Philemon to c. 60.

2) Jude.

- A) “The date for Jude depends in part on its relationship with 1 and 2 Peter, particularly the latter. A comparison between Jude’s letter and 2 Peter suggests that Jude’s letter was written first and that Peter in his second letter adapted Jude for his own purposes and circumstances. In light of the considerable number of parallels between the letters, a literary relationship between the two is more likely than the independent use of a common source by both writers. The probability Jude’s having been written prior to 2 Peter can be illustrated by the way in which these writings used Jewish apocryphal literature. Jude included three such quotations or allusions: (1) to The Assumption of Moses in verse 9; (2) to 1 Enoch in verses 14–15; and (3) to an otherwise unattested saying of the apostles in verse 18. All three quotations are lacking in 2 Peter. It seems more likely that Peter avoided reference to these apocryphal works rather than that Jude added these references on the assumption of Petrine priority. Another factor is the question of a possible literary dependence between Jude and 2 Peter. If 2 Peter postdates and is dependent on Jude (a view held by most, though not all, commentators today), and 2 Peter is authentic, the fact that Peter died a martyr’s death in circa 65–66 requires the early 60s as the latest possible date for the book of Jude. Since there is no good reason to question the authenticity of 2 Peter, and since it is probable that 2 Peter is dependent on Jude rather than vice versa, 55–62 as a date of composition is most likely. But it must be noted that the lack of clear internal evidence regarding the date of composition renders this estimate tentative at best.”² I have chosen to date Jude to c. 61–62 and group it with Philemon in today’s reading.

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 623.

² Kostenberger, pp. 766–767.