

BIBLE READING FOR 2023

WEEK #43

PHILEMON, HEBREWS & JAMES

10-22-23

Monday - Philemon - Hebrews 4

Wednesday - Hebrews 9-11

Friday - James 2-5

Tuesday - Hebrews 5-8

Thursday - Hebrews 12- James 1

Philemon is one of four letters that Paul wrote, that we refer to as the prison epistles. The other three in this group are Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. These all would have been written sometime around A.D.62-63 while Paul was in prison in Rome. The evidence suggests that Philemon and Colossians were written very close together and were sent at the same time with two of Paul's companions, Tychicus and Onesimus. They traveled to Colossae together at Paul's request and from what we understand Tychicus carried the letter to the church at Colossae and Onesimus delivered Paul's letter to Philemon, who apparently lived in Colossae. Paul's message to Philemon centered around Onesimus who was a slave belonging to Philemon. He had run away to Rome and had been converted by the apostle Paul there. Paul sent Onesimus back to his master but requested that Philemon treat him appropriately as a new brother in Christ. In his effort to persuade Philemon to show mercy and compassion to Onesimus Paul volunteered to make restitution to Philemon for any indebtedness Onesimus might have incurred, if that was necessary. This letter is an example of how Christianity should affect every relationship we have with other people including that of a master and his slave. The following is an outline for the one chapter of Philemon:

- 1.) Paul is thankful for the faithfulness of Philemon 1-7
- 2.) Paul's request of Philemon concerning Onesimus 8-25

Hebrews was written to a group of Jewish Christians emphasizing the tremendous value of their new relationship with God in Christ. A key word for the book is "better." The old covenant was good but the new covenant is better. Therefore, they are warned not to give up what they have in Christ by turning back to the laws of the old covenant. Since the old covenant involved things that were just shadows and copies of the real things to come in Christ, it would be of no value once Christ came and His new covenant was established. With the coming of the new the old was made obsolete, so to give up Christ was to give up the only sacrifice available to forgive sin. Therefore the only hope for salvation was an enduring and obedient faith in Jesus Christ. Of course that is just as true for us today as it was for them so many years ago. The author does not identify himself although many feel that Paul wrote it. Those not convinced of that would place the book in the general epistles, meaning the books from Hebrews through Jude. Since the destruction of Jerusalem is not mentioned in Hebrews and it appears that Judaism is still being practiced, it is thought the book might have been written around A.D. 65-69.

An outline for the book of Hebrews:

- 1.) The supremacy of Christ 1-4
- 2.) Superiority of the priesthood and new covenant in Christ 5-10
- 3.) Triumph through enduring, obedient faith in Christ 11-13

James is one of the general epistles and is thought by most scholars to have been written by James the Lord's brother. The dates vary as to when it was penned with most appearing to fall into a range of A.D. 45-60. The main theme of the book is the importance of doing what we know to be right. The only saving faith

is a faith that is alive because it is accompanied by works. James also deals with a variety of other subjects including things like suffering, sin, wisdom and the proper use of the tongue. The following is an outline of James:

- 1.) Temptation, sin and saving faith 1-2
- 2.) Use of the tongue and wisdom from above 3
- 3.) Humility 4
- 4.) Riches, endurance and restoration from sin 5

Questions for Philemon, Hebrews and James:

- 1.) What did Paul tell Philemon to do if Onesimus owed him anything?
- 2.) In Hebrews 1:2 what two things does the author say that God has done in and through His Son?
- 3.) What is the anchor of the soul mentioned in Hebrews 6:19?
- 4.) As the writer of Hebrews talks about the old covenant in Hebrews 8:13, he says it is obsolete and growing old and about to do what?
- 5.) In James 4:15, what does James tell us we should say concerning our plans for the future?

Answers to questions for Week #42 – Ezekiel 25-48:

- 1.) The city of Tyre and it called itself perfect in beauty.
- 2.) The day of the Lord.
- 3.) God would not let His holy name be profaned anymore.
- 4.) His voice was like the sound of many waters, and the earth shone with His glory.
- 5.) The Levitical priests, the sons of Zadok.