

NEW TESTAMENT SYNTHESIS NOTES by Dr. Fred Wittman
THE EPISTLE TO FEELÁYMOHN (PHILEMON) BY PAUL

INTRODUCTION:

What would you say if you were asked to explain the scriptural meaning of the doctrine of ‘Imputation’ with reference to The Salvation provided by The Lord Jesus Christ?

Review:

1. The Theme of The Bible: **The Coming of The Messiah, The King and His Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace.**
2. The Purpose of The Bible: **To Present The Lord Jesus Christ as The Redeemer or To Teach The God’s Plan of Redemption.**

PRESENTATION:

I. Facts to Be Noted

A. Pertinent Facts.

Author: Paul, the Apostle Date Written: late mid A.D. 62 Key Verse: 1:18 Key Word: “receive” (3x)
Destination: **Feeláymohn** (Philemon), his wife, and son at **Kohlohssaí** (Colossæ) (1:2 cf. Col.4:17).
Provenance: Rome Theme: Receive the offender Content: The Christian Brother
Thrust of The Book: Christological: Christ is all and in all (1:15-19)

1. Authorship

- a. The Writer of this Epistle was the Apostle Paul, whom God used to write fourteen New Testament Books (cf. Notes on First Thessalonians. He was chosen by The Lord Jesus Christ to replace Judas Iscariot and to be the Apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15; Gal. 1:1,15; 2:7-9; 1 Cor. 9:1,2; 15:9; 2 Cor. 1:1; 12:12; Eph. 1:1; Col. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:1,11). He was a fellow-laborer and companion of **Bahrnáhbahs** on the first missionary journey, who befriended him and testified in behalf of him upon his return to Jerusalem from **Dahmahskóhs** (Acts 9:27,28).
 - c. Evidence of Paul’s Authorship:
 - (1) Internal Evidence to Paul’s authorship is clear both by the accepted title that bears his name and the text. Paul identified himself in his opening greeting (1:1) and in his statement assuring repayment of damages (vs. 18,19) incurred by **Ohnýseemohs** (Onesimus). He also refers to his bonds (v. 10) and his anticipation of his release and future visit to **Feeláymohn** (v. 22).
 - (2) External Evidence comes from the writings of the “Church Fathers” (patristic tradition of The Early Church) and The Muratorian Canon (A.D. 160-200): “For the Epistles of Paul . . . he wrote to not more than seven churches, . . . He wrote beside these, one to **Feeláymohn**.” There is no contradictory evidence found in Early Church writings, but Paul’s authorship was an accepted fact and never doubted until the eighteenth century.
2. The **recipient** of this Epistle is **Feeláymohn** (Philemon), a slave master and resident of **Kohlohssaí** (Colossæ) and the host of the Colossian church, which meets in his house (1:2). He was legally obligated to the face of Paul (v. 19) probably for his new life in The Lord Jesus Christ. His son, **Ahr-kheép-pohs** (v. 2). was a fellow-soldier of Paul and a deacon of the Colossian church (Col. 4:17). This clearly links **Feeláymohn** with Colossians (cf. v. 2).
 3. The **dating** of the Epistle is determined by the fact that Paul was in prison in Rome for two years from March A.D. 61-63 (3:1; 4:1; 6:20 cf. Acts 28:16,30). Shortly thereafter he wrote this Epistle in mid A.D. 62. Both the Ephesian (6:21,22), Colossian (4:7,8) Epistles and this one to **Feeláymohn** were delivered by **Tukh-eeekóhs** (Tychicus) along with **Onáýseemohs** (Col. 4:7,9) so all three were written at approximately the same time with **Feeláymohn** last in late mid A.D. 62.
 4. The Purpose for writing **Feeláymohn** was to appeal to a Christian slave-master to restore and accept his runaway slave, **Onáýseemohs** whom Paul met in prison and to develop the maturity and blessing of **Feeláymohn**. Under Roman Law, runaway slaves were subject to extreme brutal punishment. In the New Testament, slavery is not specifically condemned, but Christian influence has removed it and provided for restoration and forgiveness, especially in the case of **Onáýseemohs**. But even more that restoration must be manifest in the love of The Lord Jesus Christ for the offender who has repented, committed total faith to The Lord Jesus Christ, been regenerated by The Holy Spirit and exchange Masters to become truly the bondslave in obedience to Righteousness and to The God (Rom. 6:16-18-19,22) and brother in union with The Lord (Phlm. 16). But this restoration must be of ones own free will and grace and not of obligation, even as The Lord Jesus Christ’s forgiveness came from His own free will surrendered to The Father and in grace.

5. This is the only private letter addressed to one other than a coworker of Paul's included in Epistles regarded and preserved in The Canon of Scripture.
6. Characteristics of **Feeláymohn**
 - a. Personal and appealing.
 - b. Private.
 - c. Tactful and courteous.
 - d. Merciful (vs. 8-12).
 - e. Ethical (v. 13,14).
 - f. Doctrinal: Imputation (vs. 17,18).
- B. Localities mentioned in **Feeláymohn** (Philemon):
Kohlohssaí (Colossæ) understood (v. 2e cf. Col. 1:1; 4:17) and Rome in prison (vs. 1,9,10,13 cf. Col. 1:7; 4:3,10,12,18; Eph. 4:1; 6:20; Phil. 1:12,13 cf. 4:22)).
- C. Characters mentioned in **Feeláymohn** (Philemon):
Paul, **Teemóth-ehohs** (Timothy), **Feeláymohn** (Philemon), **Ahpféeah** (Apphia), **Ahr-khéepohs** (Archippus), **Ohnýseemohs** (Onesimus), **Ehpahfráhs** (Epaphras), **Máhrkohs** (John Mark), **Ahrée-stáhrkohs** (Aristarchus), **Daymáhs** (Demas), and **Loukáhs** (Luke).
- D. Values of **Feeláymohn** (Philemon)
 1. Personal - between Paul and **Feeláymohn** concerning **Ohnýseemohs** (vs. 1,2,10) and indicates some aspects of the character of Paul.
 2. Ethical - discreet, courteous, gracious, polite, and sensitivity to do right to his fellow saint (vs. 7,8-10,14,19,20).
 3. Providential - Paul's meeting **Ohnýseemohs** from **Kohlohssaí** in prison in Rome to be brought into union with The Lord Jesus Christ. The God engineers it all.
 4. Practical - illustrates the high principals by which the saints are to care for young disciples and to relate in forgiveness to one another in The Lord Jesus Christ.
 5. Evangelical - illustrates how the saints are to reach out to all people even to slaves and prisoners with The Gospel in endeavor to win them to The Lord Jesus Christ.
 6. Social - illustrates how the saints are to relate to slavery and how to minister to missionaries of The Lord Jesus Christ in anticipation for their visit (v. 22).
 7. Spiritual - illustrates how the saints are to encourage one another by recognition and deal with them graciously, with tender-affection and love in The Lord Jesus Christ politely (vs. 7,12-18).
 8. Doctrinal: Imputation - illustrates how Paul exemplifies the meaning and practical application of the doctrine of Imputation of Sin and Disobedience to sinners before regeneration and of The Lord Jesus Christ's Righteousness and Obedience upon regeneration (vs. 17,18).

E. The Definition of Imputation:

Imputation is the act of The God whereby The Father judicially transferred the Sin of Adam to all his posterity, and in the fullness of time He accounted the sins of all the world, committed throughout all time, to The Lord Jesus Christ in His Death on the cross at Calvary. Since the resurrection-ascension of The Lord Jesus Christ The God imputes the righteousness of The God to all who repent and persistently commit total personal trust to The Lord Jesus Christ, His perfect work of atonement on Calvary's cross, and His resurrection-ascension to apply His blood on The Mercy Seat in Heaven, and judicially reckons them to be righteous in union with The Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 4:4-6, 8-11, 22-24; 5:12-14; 2 Cor. 5:19,21; Isa. 53:5-7; Rom. 3:21-24; Phile 1:17,18; James 2:23. Note synonyms underlined in these references!). Without this perfect righteousness imputed to a human through true repentance and persistent totally committed trust to The Lord Jesus Christ, every human is unable to enter Heaven to defile its holiness and perfection.

The Apostle Paul reflected his understanding of the doctrine of Imputation in this Epistle by calling upon **Feeláymohn** to reckon the debt **Ohnýseemohs** owed (legally obligated) to him be charged to Paul's own account, therefore forgiveness by **Feeláymohn** was legally obligated just as the debt of Sin which every sinner is legally obligated to pay in eternal darkness as punishment in The Lake of Fire was paid on the cross in the fire of The God's wrath for all creation on the cross especially in the hours of supernatural darkness over all the Earth (Lk. 23:44 cf. Lam. 1:12,13; Rev. 1:12-15c). Upon The God's required action of Repentance toward God and total persistent commitment of Faith to The Lord Jesus Christ on the part of humans, The Lord Jesus Christ's own perfect righteousness is imputed to them. However Imputation only becomes effective when Redemption has been appropriated by repentance toward The God, totally committed persistent trust to The Lord Jesus Christ, and forgiveness has been received before Imputation becomes effective and proper relationship between those in union with The Lord Jesus Christ is obtained.

- F. Outline of The Epistle to **Feeláymohn** (Philemon):
 - I. The Salutation of Paul's Letter (1-3).
 - II. The Sanction of Philemon's Life (4-7).
 - III. The Solicitation of Philemon's Love (8-22).
 - IV. The Salutes of Paul's Fellow-Laborers (23,24).
 - V. The Sentiments of Paul's Longing (25).
- G. Prophecies cited: None.

II. The Theme of The Bible: The Coming of The Messiah and His Coming Kingdom of Righteousness and Peace: Since the initial coming of the Messiah has taken place and His Return was imminently expected, and since Paul discussed the doctrine of The Coming-Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ rather extensively in both of The Epistles to Thessalonians and in 1 Corinthians, and in Romans Paul only succinctly referred five times to The Coming-Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ. Then He reminded his readers that we all must present ourselves before the **Báymah** (Judgment Seat on steps) in anticipation of the coming-again of The Messiah. However in Ehféhseeous (Ephesians), Paul does not mention The Coming-Presence of The Lord Jesus Christ directly, but alludes to His coming when referring to The Lord Jesus Christ loving The Church. He "delivered Himself over in Her behalf of Her . . . so that He present Her to Himself, The Church Glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things." Likewise The Kingdom of The God is not mentioned positively, but rather from the negative standpoint by reminding his readers of those who are sexually immoral or unclean or covetous or idolaters continually are not having inheritance in The Kingdom of The Christ and of God. Then in Kohlóh-sah-eh-ées (Colossians), The Kingdom is called "The Kingdom of The Son of His Love" (1:13 APT) as well as "The Kingdom of The God" (4:11). Firstly, Paul reminded his readers that in This Kingdom we are recipients of Redemption through His Blood and forgiveness of Sins and then he cited only the ones out of the circumcision (Jewish heritage) in Rome whom he deemed as fellow-workers in The Kingdom of The God. Then in Feeláymohn (Philemon), since Paul was dealing with a personal matter between himself and two brothers (**Ohnáyseemohs** and **Feeláymohn**) in union with The Lord Jesus Christ in The Kingdom of The God, The Kingdom is not specifically mentioned.

III. The Purpose of The Bible: To Teach The God's Plan of Redemption: So far, with regard to The Plan of Redemption, The Word of The God has revealed these Truths: in James the problem of faith demonstrated by works was clarified. In Galatians it is revealed that Faith is the means whereby we live in union with The Son of God, receive The Promise of The Spirit, become the sons of The God, and are in the sphere of Spirit. Also in Galatians a new dimension to Redemption is added, Justification by means of The Lord Jesus Christ's Faith [note: it is our personal faith in The Lord Jesus Christ's Faith that results in Salvation]. To be justified is to be declared righteous freed of: blame, guilt, and / or penalty of Sin as a result of The Lord Jesus Christ taking Sin upon Himself and becoming: a curse in behalf of us and the propitiation of our sins in order to provide Redemption which includes complete freedom from bondage to Sin and Satan. In Thessalonians we are taught that the exchange of bond-slavery of which Jesus spoke takes place at Redemption. Paul referred to the redeemed disciple-saints as "Salvation's purchased possession." Then Paul presented The God's determined will as a result of Redemption and emphasized sanctification (separation unto a holy relationship with The God and the consequences of rejecting it. Thus far (up to early winter of A.D. 58), the contents of the plan of Redemption contain these practical doctrines emphasized in Romans: Salvation, Sin, exchange of Masters in bond-service, Redemption, Reconciliation and Justification (3:26-30; 4:25-5:18; 8:30-34), Sanctification, and Eschatology {the doctrine of last things} (8:19). The in Ehféhseeous (Ephesians) Redemption was referred to in three instances. In the first instance (1:7), 'Redemption' referred to the initial occurrence of Redemption of every disciple-saint, when the sinner is identified in union with The Lord Jesus Christ through totally committed faith unto Him and His shed-blood results in forgiveness of gross stupid errors (sins). In the second instance (1:14), Paul referred to the occasion of the completion of Redemption of every disciple-saint, when the whole person in the glorified body united with the soul and spirit appears in the presence of The Lord Jesus Christ. In the third instance (4:30), Paul referred to the sealing by The Holy Spirit for security upon totally committed faith unto The Lord Jesus Christ which permanently lasts until the Day of completion of redemption (cf. 1:7). Then in Kohlóh-sah-eh-ées (Colossians) redemption is only mentioned once (1:14), where the recipients of Redemption through the blood of The Son of The God's Love are identified with Him. Then in Feeláymohn (Philemon), since Paul was dealing with Redemption based upon love and forgiveness of seriously offensive Sin deserving death and resulting in a huge debt, discretely he tactfully analogized the imputation aspect of the redemptive work of The Lord Jesus Christ by alluding to the payment of the debt for Sin on our behalf which was charged to Him and His righteousness imputed to us. Paul requested **Feeláymohn** to charge **Ohnáyseemohs'** debt to Paul's account even as every sinner's debt was charged or 'imputed' to The Lord Jesus Christ's account and graciously received by The God even as The God received Paul and **Feeláymohn** as Jesus Himself did in union with Himself, so Paul urged **Feeláymohn** to do with **Ohnáyseemohs** (Phlm. 12,17-19).

III. The Progressive Revelation of The God: Previously it was noted that foundation Truths of The Christian Faith were revealed, especially explaining The Righteousness of The God, Sin, condemnation and Judgment, Justification by Faith, Salvation including Sin, Exchange of Masters, sphere of the flesh. It was revealed that Israel's fall resulted in her being set aside, which resulted in blessing for the Gentiles for the duration of Grace and The Church Age until The Christ raptures The Church, followed by Israel's suffering in Tribulation for seven years "until the fullness of The Gentiles enter." This will take place before The Messiah King returns to Earth to set up The Promised Kingdom. Israel's fullness in restoration will bring greater blessing for the world. Practical, reasonable, sacred service to The God is to be performed by a public presentation of the body as an Absolutely-Living sacrifice in return for the dying Sacrifice by The New Master, The Lord Jesus Christ. After this occasion transpires, each one is to be renewed in the mind so as to utilize the grace-gifts, serving as bondsalves to The Lord in love. The Truth concerning the future judgment of all saints, who shall present themselves to The Christ's **Báymah** Seat was disclosed.

Then in Ehféhseeous (Ephesians) at least sixty-three (63) doctrines, many of which were previously expressed, were mentioned or given, one of which is enlightenment, another dealing with the gifted leaders of The Church with their selected realm of ministry for the purpose of building-up The Church as The Body of The Christ to grow unto maturity by means of discipleship with each one having a part in adding to The Body increase of members and nurturing them to maturity in The Christ. Paul especially dealt with three doctrines specifically, on the one hand with unity (oneness) and union with The Lord Jesus Christ; on another hand The God's determined will for a persistently, godly, daily walk and on another hand with the necessary armor with which the disciple-saints are to clothe themselves to be able to stand-

fast strongly against the wiles of the Devil and his evil forces of various sorts of fallen spirit-beings. In addition to these two important doctrines, the following were further expanded or introduced throughout this Epistle: the determined will of The God; the sealing ministry of The Holy Spirit; the completion of Redemption when the glorified body shall acclaim His glory; the dead condition of all sons of the disobedience {unregenerated people under The God's wrath and citizens of Earth}; three dispensations {periods of time under The God's administration}: Dispensation of The Fullness of Times of The Gentiles, The Dispensation of The Grace of The God, and The Dispensation of The Mystery; and four more Mysteries to that which was previously noted: The Mystery of His Determined Will, The Mystery of The Christ, The Great Mystery of Christ and The Church, and The Mystery of The Gospel, also The God's purpose and plan in providing redemption; and His method of revealing His mysteries to the world, angels, and all created beings; and The God's determined will for every saint is a persistently, godly, daily, walk and the persistent stand and withstanding in warfare by every disciple-saint of The God. **Finally**, Paul made it very clear that the warfare of the true child of The God, who is a summoned disciple-saint is on the spiritual level and not on a flesh and blood level, nor on a social level, nor on a moral level, nor on a legal level, and not a political level, nor even on a religious level. But on the contrary our warfare is spiritual. So often those claiming to be Christian, succumb to the trap and wile of the Devil, which is to get involved in battle on one or more of these other levels: religious, social, moral, legal, or political, all of which are aspects of flesh and blood warfare. A warfare on these levels shall result to the detriment of our intricate relationship with our Blessed Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ as well as hindering the effect of The Gospel in the Salvation of souls.

In Kohlohs-sah-eh-êes Paul emphatically stated that the spread of The Gospel extended to bearing fruit in the whole world, but more. It was proclaimed to every creature under heaven. This was accomplished by late mid A.D. 62, the time when this Epistle was written. This could only be accomplished by the precise obedience to The Lord Jesus Christ's third and fourth commandments by every regenerated disciple's enthusiastic participation in discipleship by training as disciples. and in turn, training others to become disciples and then disciple others. Next Paul reemphasized Christology: The Lord Jesus Christ is The Glorified Head of The Church, which is His Body: He also is The Preeminent One, absolutely preeminent in the sphere of all things (1:18). Paul's aim should be the aim of every disciple saint, that is to present every human perfectly complete in union with The Lord Jesus Christ at The **Báymah** Seat judgment immediately after The Rapture of His Church. Then Paul exhorted this local church to deal positively with seven heresies that threatened to destroy the union with The Lord Jesus Christ that the saints had initially experienced. These were: Jewish festivals, new moon and Sabbath observance; angelology, gnosticism, asceticism, will-worship, prohibition of normal body ingestion and abuse thereof, elements of the world: spirits, philosophy, vain deceit, and dogmas according to the commands and teachings of humans, and exclusivism. Then in light of the fact of the glorification of the saints at Christ's coming again is displayed, the readers are commanded to persistently mind the things above and not on things upon Earth and to put to death their body members, which were previously serving in union with sins as sons of disobedience, by stripping off the old human with his practices and clothe themselves at once with the New Human. Finally, the fact that there were two other churches established and existing in southeast Asia in addition to this one in **Kohlohssai** (Colossæ) being ministered to by **Ahr-khéepohs** (Archippus(4:15-17), one in **Lah-ohdee-keh-éeah** (Laodicea) meeting in the house of **Numfáhs** (Nymphas) and the other one in **Hee-ehráhpohlees** (Hierapolis).

Then **in Feeláymohn** (Philemon), it is disclosed that the saints at **Kohlohssai** (Colossæ) met in the house of **Feeláymohn** (vs. 1,2) and that **Ohnýseemohs** belonged to **Feeláymohn** as a runaway bonds slave. For some reason he was imprisoned in Rome and converted under Paul's prison ministry and began to serve Paul domestically in the bonds of The Gospel in union with The Lord Jesus Christ (10-16). **Ohnýseemohs** was sent back to **Feeláymohn** by means of **Tukh-eekóhs** (Tychicus) with this epistle (Col. 4:7-9). This Epistle exemplifies and applies the doctrine of imputation to the lives of the regenerated-disciple saints both in Paul's and throughout the remaining time until The Second Coming of The Lord Jesus Christ.

DISCUSSION:

- A. Since no one will enter Heaven without perfect righteousness, how did The God make it possible for humans to become perfectly righteousness?

- B. How does the doctrine of 'Imputation' relate to the doctrine of 'Salvation'?

- C. How did Paul practically apply this doctrine to offences between fellow saints in union with The Lord Jesus Christ?

- D. How will you explain the doctrine of 'Imputation' to others you know whether they are in union with The Lord Jesus Christ or need to be so?

APPLICATION: How often will you seek to explain the doctrine of Imputation to others?