

# To Philemon

BYU New Testament Commentary Translation  
*(prepublication version)*

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# About the Brigham Young University New Testament Commentary Series

Welcome to the BYU New Testament Commentary, a project by a group of Latter-day Saint specialists offering to readers a careful, new look at the biblical records that witness the life and ministry of Jesus Christ and the first generation of his church. The commentary series seeks to make the New Testament more accessible to Latter-day Saint general readers and scholars by employing much of current biblical scholarship while reflecting important LDS insights. At the same time, this effort may also be helpful to interested readers of other faiths who want to learn how a group of Latter-day Saint scholars understands the Bible. A fundamental article of faith for Latter-day Saints (Mormons) affirms the Bible “to be the word of God” while adding, understandably, that it needs to be “translated correctly” in order for it to be accurately comprehensible to modern language speakers.

These objectives have helped shape the purposes and parameters of this commentary series. Serious LDS readers of the Bible search the scriptures, looking for depth and breadth in passages whose meanings and mandates may ultimately be plain but not shallow. Such readers and interpreters are served by treatments that unite faith and research, reason and revelation, in prayerfully confronting profound and difficult issues that arise in the texts and affect one’s path of progression. The New Testament has served as an influential guide to western civilization for centuries. As such, its records have long been studied by lay people and scholars alike, resulting in a rich reservoir of information that illuminates the New Testament era culturally, historically, and linguistically. Selectively, the BYUNTC builds upon this vast body of knowledge, resting on the Greek texts of the New Testament and connecting helpful elements of linguistic, literary, historical, and cultural research and traditional scholarship together with LDS scriptures and doctrinal perspectives. The combination of all these features

distinguishes the BYUNTC from other commentaries, which are readily available elsewhere and which readers may also want to consult for more encyclopedic or specialized discussions.

The tone of the BYUNTC aims to be informative rather than hortatory, and suggestive rather than definitive in its interpretation. The opinions expressed in this series are the views of its contributors and should not necessarily be attributed to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; Brigham Young University, where many of those involved here are headquartered; or anyone else, though these works have benefitted from input and guidance from a number of colleagues, advisors, editors, and peer reviewers.

Each volume in this series contains a new working translation of the New Testament. Calling it the “BYU New Testament Commentary Translation” ties it to the Commentary series and clarifies that it does not seek to replace the authorized KJV adopted by the LDS Church as its official English text. Rather, it aims to enhance readers’ understanding conceptually and spiritually by rendering the Greek texts into modern English with LDS sensitivities in mind. Comparing and explaining the new Translation in light of the KJV then serves as one important purpose for each volume’s notes, comments, analyses, and summaries. This effort responds in modest ways to the desire President J. Reuben Clark Jr. expressed in his diary in 1956 that someday “qualified scholars [would provide] . . . a translation of the New Testament that will give us an accurate translation that shall be pregnant with the great principles of the Restored Gospel.”

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**To Philemon**



# To Philemon

1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother; to Philemon, beloved of us and our coworker, 2 and to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in your house: 3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4 I give thanks to my God, always mentioning you in my prayers, 5 hearing of your love and faith, which you possess for the Lord Jesus, and for all the saints, 6 so that the sharing of your faith may become effective in acknowledgment of every good thing in us for Christ, 7 for I have had much joy and encouragement over your love because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

8 Though I possess much boldness in Christ to order you to do what is needed, 9 rather, because of our love, I appeal to you merely as Paul, an old man, but now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

10 I appeal to you about my child, whom I have spiritually begotten while in prison—Onesimus, 11 the one who was once useless to you, but now useful both to you and to me, 12 whom I sent back to you—him who is my heart, 13 whom I was desirous to keep with me, that he might serve me on your behalf while I am in prison for the gospel's sake. 14 But not having your consent I wanted to do no such thing, so that your kindness would not be forced, but according to your own willingness.

15 Perhaps this is why he was separated from you for a short time, so that you might have him back forever, 16 no longer as a slave, but, more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me and how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

17 If then you regard me as a partner, receive him as you would me; 18 but if in anything he has wronged you or owes you, charge this to my account. 19 I, Paul, wrote with my own hand, "I will repay"—not that I say you also owe me your very self.

20 Yes, brother, may I have this benefit from you in the Lord? Refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Having confidence in your obedience, I wrote to you knowing that, even beyond what I say, you will do. 22 At the same time, also prepare lodging for me; for I hope, through your prayers, to be restored to you.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, 24 as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke—my coworkers. 25 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.