

THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST
as illustrated in Paul's
Epistle to Philemon

Intro: There are three main passages which deal with the
intercessory work of Christ:

- 1) Heb. 7:25.
- 2) Heb. 9:24.
- 3) Rom. 8:34.

All of these are in passages which have to do with salvation.
This is a part of that great saving work of the Lord Jesus
Christ.

The main emphasis in it has to do with the continuation of our
salvation. Or, to state it in an even stronger way -- it has
to do with the permanence of our salvation.

Thus, the eternal security of believers is dependent upon the
present work of Christ in heaven, and not upon our faithfulness
or our feelings -- although our faithfulness will be evidence
that we are truly saved. That is why the reformers spoke of
the perseverance of the saints.

In the little epistle of Paul to Philemon we have a wonderful
illustration of the intercessory work of Christ, and of some of
the things which are involved in it. Paul wrote it along with
Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians -- while he was a prisoner
of Rome in Rome, and while his mind and heart seem to have been
especially exercised with the great truths of salvation.

(Mention the leading characters in the book - Philemon, Onesimus,
and Paul. Let the situation that existed between these 3 picture
our salvation. Christ would be portrayed by Paul interceding
for Onesimus, the transformed runaway, with Philemon who stands
in the place of God. The issue is whether and how Philemon will
accept Onesimus. Note Paul's plea and liken it to the inter-
cession of Christ in our behalf.)

I. "RECEIVE HIM" (v. 12).

This in itself should never cease to amaze us -- far more
than the fact that Philemon would even consider taking
Onesimus back.

II. "RECEIVE HIM FOREVER" (v. 15).

III. "RECEIVE HIM . . . AS A . . . BROTHER (vv. 15, 16).

This meant that he was to be received, not in the same
capacity as that which he had when he left, but much, much,
higher -- as a member of Philemon's family. The first two

would have been more than Onesimus could ever could have hoped for; this is nothing short of being amazing!

Cf. 1 John 3:1.

IV. "RECEIVE HIM AS MYSELF" (vv. 17-19, 21).

It gets better as we go along. Think of what Philemon would do to get ready for Paul.

There are two sides to this -- one having to do with Paul; the other, with Philemon.

- A. On Paul's side -- his responsibility to Philemon (vv. 18, 19).

This is what Judah did for Benjamin. Cf. Gen. 43:9,

"I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever."

This is what the Lord has done for us!

- B. On Philemon's side -- his responsibility to Paul (v. 21).

Cf. Rom. 8:18; Eph. 3:20.

Or, it is like the Queen of Sheba's words when she saw the glory of Solomon (a type of Christ):

"Howbeit, I believed no the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me . . ." (1 Kings 10:7a).

Concl: What encouragement there is for those of us who know the Lord!

And what hope for those who do not know the Lord.

Note that the emphasis is on what took place between Paul and Onesimus, just as our security is based upon what has taken place, and continues to take place, between the Son and the Father.