



Book Nine of the Apostolicon  
The Epistle  
of the Apostle Paul  
**To Philemon**

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## **Preface**

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### *What is the Apostolicon?*

The Apostolicon (together with the Evangelicon) is the original canon of Christian scripture; compiled by Marcion of Sinope<sup>a</sup>; and, according to one tradition, delivered by him to John the Apostle. The Apostolicon contains ten epistles of the Apostle Paul as follows:

1. Galatians
2. Corinthians
3. Corinthians (2)
4. Romans
5. Thessalonians
6. Thessalonians (2)
7. Laodiceans (Ephesians)
8. Colossians
9. Philemon
10. Philippians

The Evangelicon is a gospel narrative carefully compiled by Marcion from only the most reliable sources available in his day (about 110 to 145 AD). It was considered, by the adherents of the Marcionite faith, to be equivalent to "The Gospel of Paul" (Galatians 1:8-9, 1:11, 2:2, 2:7, Romans 2:16, Thessalonians 1:5, Thessalonians (2) 2:14). It was from about 170 to 180 AD that the Catholic Church wrote "The Four Gospels" (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), using older gospels as source material<sup>b</sup>. For the "Gospel of Luke", the Evangelicon was used as the primary source for its writing.

The so-called epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus are non-canonical works of the second century; apparently written in opposition to the Marcionite faith as they contain explicit anti-Marcionite theology.

There are no surviving manuscripts of the Apostolicon. However, the Apostolicon (in Latin and Greek) was quoted extensively by early Catholic Fathers. By careful examination of their quotes and their descriptions of the differences between the Apostolicon and the books of the Catholic scriptures the Apostolicon can be reconstructed.

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a Without Marcion, there likely would not have been any surviving letters of Paul.

b For an examination considering the dating of The Four Gospels, see Charles Burlingame Waite's work, "The History of the Christian Religion, to the Year Two Hundred", particularly chapter 26.

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*Reconstructing and Translating*

**POTENTIAL INTERPOLATIONS**

Potential interpolations are identified by the characteristics described by Melissa Cutler<sup>c</sup>:

- They do not match the writing style of the original author. Sometimes this is so obvious that it can be seen even in an English translation of the text.
- They do not fit in with the original flow of thought – they often cause the text to jump abruptly to a new subject, and then back to the original subject when the interpolation ends, in a confusing and disjointed way.
- They do not fit in with the structure of the text – ancient documents had a logical structure with sections that introduced the topic, contained background information, and summarized the conclusions, etc. – Interpolations do not fit in with this structure, as the original author did not plan for them to be there.
- They disrupt the original text – sometimes sentences that were meant to refer back to something that had just been mentioned will be separated from it by the inserted text, so that they become confusing or meaningless. Sometimes interpolations were added mid-sentence, disrupting even the sentence structure.
- They often express ideas and opinions that contradict those of the original author.

**CONFIRMED INTERPOLATIONS**

Interpolations are “confirmed” if evidence can be found in a reconstruction source that the interpolation could not have been present in the Apostolicon. Confirmed interpolations are removed and unconfirmed interpolations remain, but are **marked in red**.

**HOW QUOTES ARE INCORPORATED INTO THE APOSTOLICON**

Where a reconstruction source has a quote from the Apostolicon, and it is determined that the quote is essentially the same as the text from a commonly accepted Greek manuscript, that Greek text is considered to be the same as the Apostolicon; regardless of whether the quote is in Latin or Greek. In the case where the two are substantially the same, except for only one or two words, and unimportant verbal differences, the Greek with those words inserted into the text is considered to be the same as the Apostolicon. In the case where the quote is significantly different from any commonly accepted Greek manuscript a translation of the quote is incorporated directly

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<sup>c</sup> Quotation from “Misogynistic Interpolations in the Letters of Paul”: <http://www.original-bible.com/Misogynistic-Interpolations-in-Paul.html> .

into the reconstruction, this is then considered to be the same as the Apostolicon.

#### **STRONG IMPLICATION**

Where a certain meaning is strongly implied in the Greek, but that implication becomes weak when translated into English, a few words are added to the translation in order to strengthen the implication in English. All words added to strengthen an implied meaning are *italicized*.

#### **ESTIMATION OF LOST TEXT**

In some cases where there are reasons to believe original text was completely removed, but a reasonable estimation of the lost text can be recreated, then, in as few words as possible, an estimation of the lost text is provided in the translation. All words added for an estimation of lost text are both *italicized* and [*contained in square brackets*].

#### **SPECIAL WORDS**

Where it can be determined that "God" refers to the Father of Jesus, "GOD" (all capitals) is used. Where it can be determined that "God" does not refer to the Father of Jesus, "god" is used. Otherwise, when there is uncertainty, "God" is used. Where it can be determined that "Christ" refers to Jesus, "the Good One" is used. Evidence suggests that "chrestos", meaning "the good one", was changed to "christos", meaning "the messiah", by copyists.

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## Sources

This reconstruction is based on the following source(s):

1. "Against Marcion" by Tertullian, book 5, chapter 21;

I will also incorporate references to other sources if and when I become aware of them.

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## Color Codes

Light Green – Text unchanged as confirmed by quotation or paraphrase in the reconstruction sources

Green – Text substantially the same, except for some unimportant verbal differences, as confirmed by quotation or paraphrase in the reconstruction sources

Dark Green – Text different, original text restored, as confirmed by quotation or paraphrase in the reconstruction sources

Red - Unconfirmed interpolation

Because most of the text of the Apostolicon is in black, it may appear that there are large portions of the text with no information; however, keep in mind that Tertullian and Epiphanius focused their attention mainly on passages with important differences between the two versions. As a result, the passages for which we have no information are places where both versions of the text are likely to be the same.

## A Play on Words and Women in the Church

There are apparently no interpolations in Philemon. Tertullian said, "To this epistle alone did its brevity avail to protect it against the falsifying hands of Marcion" (Against Marcion 5:21); which, of course, means that the Catholic redactors decided to leave this one alone. It is, however, still assumed that each occurrence of 'Christ' was 'Chrest' (meaning "the Good One") in the original Apostolicon. This assumption opens up a nice play on words in verse 6, "in the knowledge of every good thing coming through you, from the Good One", not unlike the play on words with Onesimus in verses 10 and 11.

It is noteworthy that 'sister Apphia', a woman, is addressed as equals in the greeting to Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus, which is then immediately followed by "and to the church in your house". The implication is that sister Apphia was a leader of the church. Epiphanius said, "They [the Marcionites] even permit women to administer baptism!" (Panarion 42:4:5). Considering how immense the rite of baptism is in the Marcionite faith the significance of allowing women to perform the rite cannot be underestimated. Baptism is referred to as the "resurrection rite" and those who undergo this rite are considered to have already attained to the resurrection! Early accounts of Paul depict him as one who considers Christian women equal with Christian men. One such account is the 'Acts of Paul and Thecla'. The following from page 25 of Waite's book, the 'History of the Christian Religion to the year Two Hundred':

One of the earliest Christian writings, was the Acts of Paul and Thecla. It was a sort of romance. Thecla, who was engaged to be married, had heard, from an upper window, Paul, preaching. She had fallen in love with him; had deserted her lover and relatives, and had followed Paul; had become a devoted Christian; had baptized; first baptizing herself. Then she worked miracles, became a saint, and finally a martyr. She was held in the highest veneration by the fathers. But the book gave implied sanction to the right of women to baptize. On that account it was declared heretical, and search was made for the author; an unusual proceeding in those days. It was traced to a presbyter of one of the eastern churches, who acknowledged he had written it "for the honor of Paul." He was tried for the offense, and being convicted, was deposed from the ministry (Tertullian, de Baptismo, ch. 17; Jerome. de Vir. 1. 7. Jerome states, erroneously, that Tertullian had said he was convicted before John).

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*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in the Good One Jesus."*  
*Galatians 3:28*

## The Epistle of the Apostle Paul To Philemon

### The Marcionite Prologue<sup>d</sup>

*To Philemon he sends a private letter for Onesimus his slave, and writes to him from Rome out of prison.*

### To Philemon

[1:1] Paul, a prisoner of the Good One Jesus, and brother Timothy, to Philemon our beloved and fellow-worker,

[1:2] and to sister Apphia<sup>e</sup>, and to Archippus our fellow-soldier, and to the church in your house:

[1:3] Grace to you and peace from GOD our Father and the Lord Jesus the Good One.

[1:4] I thank my GOD always, making mention of you in my prayers,

[1:5] hearing of your love, and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints;

[1:6] that the fellowship of your faith may become effectual, in the knowledge of every good thing coming through you, from the Good One<sup>f</sup>.

[1:7] For I had much joy and comfort in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, brother.

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<sup>d</sup> The "Marcionite" prologues are found in many ancient Latin Catholic biblical manuscripts. Surprisingly they were accepted by the Catholics, in spite of the fact that they complement the Marcionite interpretation of the letters. Many scholars believe that these prologues are of Marcionite origin.

<sup>e</sup> Note that the Apostle also addresses the epistle to a woman. Sister Apphia is listed as equals in the greeting to Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus, which is then immediately followed by "and to the church in your house". Hence, the only implication in the greeting is that sister Apphia was one of the leaders of the church. In accord with this Marcion is said to have permitted women to assume prominent leadership positions. Epiphanius said, "They [the Marcionites] even permit women to administer baptism!" (Panarion 42:4:5). If you consider just how immense the rite of baptism is to the Marcionite faith the significance of allowing women to perform the rite cannot be underestimated. For the Marcionite faith baptism is supreme! It is referred to as the "resurrection rite" and those who undergo this rite are considered to have already attained to the resurrection out from the dead! Most Marcionite believers remain Catechumen most of their lives, waiting until their deathbed to be baptized. As the heavens are higher than the earth, baptism is a higher rite than marriage, so it is sacrilegious to partake of marriage after baptism. "Those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection out from the dead [baptism], neither marry nor are given in marriage" (Luke 20:35).

<sup>f</sup> A play on words, "every good thing coming through you, from the Good One". This play on words would not be evident if the Greek word 'christos' (the anointed one) was not restored to the original 'chrestos' (the good one).



[1:8] Therefore, though I have all confidence in the Good One to command you to do what is proper,

[1:9] yet for love's sake I rather make an appeal, being such a one as Paul the aged<sup>g</sup>, and now a prisoner also of the Good One Jesus:

[1:10] I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus<sup>h</sup>,

[1:11] who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable both to you and to me:

[1:12] whom I have sent back to you in person, with my very heart:

[1:13] whom I would wish to have kept with me, that on your behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel:

[1:14] but I don't want to do anything without your consent; that your goodness should not be of necessity, but of free will.

[1:15] For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a season, that you should have him for ever more;

[1:16] no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, yet more so to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord.

[1:17] If then you regard me a partner, receive him as you would me.

[1:18] But if he has in any way wronged you, or owes you anything, put that to my account;

[1:19] I put it in writing with my own hand, 'I Paul will repay it', (not mentioning how you even owe to me yourself as well).

[1:20] Yes, brother, let me have joy of you in the Lord: refresh my heart in the Good One.

[1:21] Having confidence in your obedience I write unto you, knowing that you will do even beyond what I say.

[1:22] But prepare me also lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you.

[1:23] Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in the Good One Jesus, greets you;

[1:24] and so does Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow-workers.

[1:25] The grace of our Lord Jesus the Good One be with your spirit. Amen.

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g Paul is an old man at the time of this letter.

h 'Onesimus', a common name for a slave, means 'profitable', hence a play on words: "Onesimus, who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable both to you and to me".



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