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Teacher Galatians and Philemon In Galatians, Paul draws the line between the Gospels and the Old Testament Law. It is surprising to see such a thorough understanding/interpretation of:

- 1) Explanation of the Old Testament Law (to show us we are guilty of sin and in need of a Redeemer)
- 2) Summary of the New Testament (Christ Jesus' redemptive power)
- 3) Completion of the promise given to Abraham (Christ [Christian] seed)

The interesting point is that Paul is or was suffering from some sort of illness which seems to be related to his eyes. Paul's disease brings up an incredible metaphor and point of illumination for those afflicted with any type of illness. God does not always heal and, perhaps, this 'eye disease' might be a constant reminder to Paul (as an individual point of reflection related to Paul's specific personality) to always remember where Paul has come from. Paul was blinded in his conversion and maybe this 'remnant' (eye disease) is a constant reminder to Paul of Who/Whom Paul represents. In case someone wishes to push this disease issue aside as an ancillary point, Paul suggest that his disease was remarkable and obvious enough that the disease drew the attention of everyone Paul is speaking to in Galatians (Chap. 4, v. 14). Again, Paul draws specific attention in Philemon to his eye disease (Phl., verse 19) and his need for assistance to write. What follows in Philemon vs. 19-25 is of supreme importance since Paul says he's writing it in his own handwriting (leading readers to believe the writing before verse 19 was transcribed by an assistant [Timothy]). Paul cunningly 'sells' his idea by inferring a business arrangement with Philemon (verse 19) then reminding Philemon of what Paul has done for him (end of verse 19). Paul smartly suggest that as soon as he (Paul) is released he is coming to stay with

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Philemon (vs. 21-22) probably to make sure that Philemon does what Paul is implicating in this letter. One can easily see the 'old' Paul with his dynamic stubbornness and overbearing personality (the Paul who stood by as Stephen was stoned in Acts chapter 8) combined with a loving spirit given to Paul through Paul's conversion. It is interesting to witness Paul suggesting to Philemon that his 'slave' Onesimus is actually considered by Paul to be Paul's own son. Paul also uses his own imprisonment to show the unfairness of Onesimus's continued imprisonment as Philemon's slave. In effect, Paul is telling Philemon that by treating Onesimus differently than a just a Christian 'Brother' (and Paul's own son) is to be acting like the 'Keeper' of Paul's prison keeping Paul unfairly under chains. The implication of Paul's argument is that Christians are all prisoners under Christ if we are Christians and to continue enslavement of Christian Brothers is almost like trying to subvert Christ Jesus' position as leader. Specifically, Paul is suggesting to Philemon that by persecuting Onesimus any further is contrary to Christian principles. In Galatians, Paul goes straight through his road from conversion to evangelizing the Gospel to the Gentiles. With one or two instances where he met and interacted with the 'original disciples', Paul did not evangelize full-throttle until approximately twelve years after his conversion. This is surprising delay, engineered by God (Paul would have given a full reckoning of his own errors if Paul caused the delay), to prepare Paul for what his mission was as an apostle of Jesus.

The precise connection between the understanding of 'human' contracts and promises by God are both exceptionally related in both Galatians and Philemon. In Galatians Chapter 3 vs. 8-23, Paul is explaining the 'contract' that God signed (promise) with Abraham for a 'seed' (Jesus) to fulfill God's

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promise of salvation through Abraham. Paul suggests the non-breakability with human 'contracts', especially God's 'contract' (promise) with humans, and the adoption of the Law and how the Commandments cannot supersede an already signed contract with God by Abraham. Paul is showing that the Law is not a contract but a 'Guide' pointing towards God's promise with Abraham and used to show and remind the people of Israel how important the contract with Abraham is. In Philemon, Paul uses the same type of 'contract' language with Philemon (verses 18-19) to lay the foundation for Paul's commitment to what he is saying and to emphasize Paul's implication (Philemon surely was aware that Paul preached much about the God's promise to Abraham and the difference of that promise with the Law) that Philemon may be guilty of reverting back to living according to the Law. It is a subtle reminder to Philemon of who Philemon was before Jesus and who Philemon must become after Jesus.