

The Narrative Drama of the Epistle to Philemon

Assume/imagine that the epistle to Philemon is a drama. Every drama has a cast of characters—the *dramatis personae* (“persons of the drama”).

Who are the *dramatis personae* of our letter?

Every drama has a setting or location. Our drama has two settings/locations. They are _____ and _____.

Long ago, Aristotle wrote that a drama/narrative/story is composed of a beginning, a middle and an end.

A. Beginning

1. Scene One

Our drama begins in vv. 18-19. What is being described here?

What is the setting of scene one?

Is the event described in Scene One contemporaneous with Paul’s circumstances when he writes this letter?

Thus, Scene One is a _____.

2. Scene Two

This Scene is set in the location Paul inhabits as he writes the letter. He is _____ at _____.

What has happened since Scene One (above)?

How do you know?

B. Middle

1. Scene One

Setting: same as Scene Two above

Scene Two of the Beginning of our drama ended with Onesimus where?

Our drama continues. What happens to him there?

How do you know?

2. Scene Two

Paul now determines to take action. What does he do (v. 12)?

Why does he do this (vv. 5-7)?

What does he send with him (v. 19)?

C. End

Our story/drama has no actual end from the text of the NT. We must imagine the end based on the contents of Paul's letter to Philemon.

1. Scene One

Imagine Onesimus fulfilling Scene Two of the Middle (above).

The setting is now _____.

Onesimus does what?

2. Scene Two

What is Philemon's response to the letter from Paul?

3. Scene Three

v. 22 indicates that the conclusion of our drama is _____.

Structure of Philemon (#1)

