

TITUS & PHILEMON

THE BOOK OF TITUS: WHO WAS TITUS?

As we've already learned, the book of Titus is one of four letters in the New Testament that were written to _____. [a]. So, who was Titus? Not much is said about him in the New Testament, but he was clearly a traveling companion of Paul's, and one of Paul's most trusted lieutenants. Paul called him "my true child in a common faith" (Tit 1:4). He was probably _____ [b] by Paul during his first missionary journey (probably around AD 48). What makes us think this? Well, in Acts 15 Paul and Barnabas "and certain others of them" (Acts 15:2) headed to Jerusalem at the end of their first missionary journey to deal with the matter of Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem who were saying "It is necessary to _____ [c] them [Gentiles] and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses" (Acts 15:5). Paul refers to this trip to Jerusalem in his letter to the Galatians, and there he says, "I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking _____ [d] along also" (Gal 2:1). So, Titus was one of the "certain others of them" that Luke says went with Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:2.

From a reference to Titus in Galatians 2 we also learn that he was a _____ [e]. There Paul said he refused to budge an inch when "false brethren" were insisting that Titus needed to be _____ [f]. Paul wrote, "we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour" (Gal 2:5).

Several years later, around AD 56, Paul began receiving reports about the church in _____ [g]. After sending a stern letter (1 Corinthians) and then making a visit to Corinth that was painfully confrontational, Paul decided to send _____ [h] to Corinth with an even stronger letter in hand (this letter is not part of the New Testament). While the difficulties in Corinth required Titus to remain much longer than planned, he faithfully completed his task and then brought good news to Paul: mission accomplished. The Corinthian believers had decisively confronted the sin in their midst, and they again held Paul close to their hearts (2 Cor 7:13-16).

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF TITUS

While Paul was on his way to _____ [i] for his _____ [j] imprisonment, he briefly visited the island of _____ [k] (in the Mediterranean Sea), south of modern-day Greece and Turkey (it is the largest and most

populous of the Greek islands today). After his release, apparently Paul returned to Crete with Titus for ministry. After they had evangelized the island, Paul left Titus there to continue the work (Tit 1:5). In contrast to _____[l] who was working with an established church at Ephesus (1 Timothy), Titus was working with _____[m] planted churches. His task, then, was to help these newly formed churches grow in a climate that was particularly challenging—Crete’s inhabitants were known for their lying, gluttony, and laziness (Tit 1:12-13). This letter was written as a _____[n] to help “set in order the things that are lacking” in these churches. Paul probably wrote this letter in response to a letter from Titus or a report that came to him from Crete. He also probably wrote the letter to give Titus an authoritative letter to “_____ [o]” Titus’ claim to be Paul’s personally authorized representative to the churches in Crete.

CONTENT OF THE BOOK OF TITUS

After opening with a brief greeting, Paul points Titus to one his major duties, and that’s to _____[p] qualified _____[q] in the churches on Crete. So, Chapter 1 is about the work and qualification of _____[r] These men are to refute false teachers and to encourage God’s people to live godly lives in the midst of their notoriously pagan neighbors.

In Chapter 2 Paul instructs Titus to speak sound words of _____[s] to men and women, different age groups, and slaves so that they show a pattern of good _____[t] and gain credibility before an unbelieving world. Then Paul gives his second instructive statement touching on the basis for righteous living—Jesus Christ, through whom we receive God’s gracious gift of salvation, redeems us so that we may be His special people, a people who are zealous to do _____[u] works (Tit 2:11-14). Paul urges Titus to proclaim these truths with authority (Tit 2:15).

Paul tells Titus in Chapter 3 that he is to remind the church members of their responsibilities in society. They are to be _____[v] to rulers (Tit 3:1), to _____[w] God and be ready for every good work (Tit 3:1), to speak _____[x] of no one (Tit 3:2), and to be peaceable, gentle, and show humility to all people (Tit 3:2). Paul then tells Titus to remind his readers that they were all once foolish and disobedient, yet God their Savior still came to bring salvation to them not on the basis of their works but His mercy. They are to be reminded that they have been made _____[y] of eternal life, having been justified by His grace (Tit 3:4-7). Paul next exhorts Titus to deal firmly with those who cause _____[z] and controversies (Tit 3:9-11). He then closes this letter by asking Titus to come to him after Titus’ replacement arrives (Tit 3:12), and then he challenges all God’s people to continue to be involved in good works and not to be unfruitful (Tit 3:16).

THE BOOK OF PHILEMON: WHO WAS PHILEMON?

The book of Philemon is unique among New Testament books. It's the shortest of Paul's writings—only twenty-five verses—and is the only one of the Prison Epistles addressed to an individual. It's easily overlooked among the heavy doctrinal books of the New Testament and is often ignored. But don't let its size and often overlooked status fool you. Although it's brief in comparison to most of Paul's letters, it contains one of the most magnificent studies of _____[aa] in the Bible.

Now, who exactly was Philemon? He was a _____[bb] Christian from _____[bb]. We know he was a man of some means because he owned at least one _____[cc], and he had a _____[dd] that was large enough to for the Colossian church to meet in (Phlm 2). He was obviously active in the cause of Christ because Paul refers to him as a "fellow worker" (Phlm 1). Perhaps this means that Paul and Philemon had at one time worked together for the gospel, but we can't be sure. What we can be sure of is that Paul thought very highly and very warmly about him. Afterall, Paul calls him a "beloved brother" (Phlm 2), "brother" (Phlm 7, 20), and "a partner" (Phlm 17).

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK OF PHILEMON

And that brings us to the reason Paul wrote this letter. As I just said, we know that Philemon owned at least one slave, a man by the name of _____[ee]. Onesimus ran away from his master and fled more than 1,000 miles from his home in Colossae to the city of _____[ff]. He probably believed that running that far and going to a city that big would ensure a safe and permanent getaway. While in Rome, though, he met Paul. We have no idea what circumstances caused their paths to cross. Perhaps he had met Paul earlier through Paul's relationship with his master. Whatever the circumstances by which he met Paul, after he crossed paths with Paul in Rome he became a _____[gg] of Jesus and his life would never be the same.

Onesimus quickly endeared himself to Paul (Phlm 12, 16) and began to live up to his name (Onesimus means "_____ [hh]") by assisting Paul (Phlm 11, 13). Paul would have loved to keep Onesimus as one of his trusted fellow _____[ii], but there was a matter that needed to be settled. As a runaway slave, Onesimus was a _____[jj]. He had defrauded his master of his services. He may have even stolen money from Philemon (Phlm 18). Paul knew the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus needed to be restored, and that meant Onesimus had to return to his master. The evidence suggests that Paul sent Onesimus back with Tychicus to _____[kk] with two letters, the ones we call "Colossians" and "Philemon" (Col 4:7-9). In the letter written to Philemon,

Paul appeals to Philemon, urging him to _____[ll] Onesimus and receive him as a new _____[mm] in Christ. Paul implores him to put into practice the principle taught in Ephesians 4:32 and Colossians 3:13 and treat Onesimus as _____[nn] treated him.

SLAVERY AND THE EARLY CHURCH

_____ [oo] forms the backdrop to Philemon, and it's impossible to fully appreciate the book without some understanding of slavery in the _____[pp] Empire during the first century. Simply put, the Roman Empire at that time was a slave _____[qq]. The whole structure of Roman society was based on it. The number of slaves was enormous accounting for more than _____[rr] of the entire population.

Unlike slavery in American history, slavery in the Roman Empire was *not* _____[ss] based. Most slaves were war _____[tt]. Some became slaves by selling themselves for payment of a _____[uu]. Others were sentenced to slavery by a court for debt. Some slaves were unwanted children who had been abandoned. Still others were slaves because they were _____[vv] to a slave mother. Generally, it was difficult to distinguish between slaves and non-slaves in the marketplace because the two groups often were involved in the same kind of work. Slaves could be doctors, musicians, teachers, artists, librarians, accountants, civil servants. Also, it wasn't uncommon for a master to train a slave at his own trade. They had opportunities for _____[ww] and _____[xx] in almost all disciplines.

Slaves, however, were not actually considered persons under Roman law. Instead, they were pieces of _____[yy] of their owners. They could be sold, exchanged, given away, or seized to pay their master's debt. Also, masters had almost unlimited power to _____[zz] their slaves. The quality of life for a slave, though, depended on the slave owner. In some instances, it could be a _____[aaa] condition. In other cases, slaves were _____[bbb] off than freemen.

It's significant that the New Testament nowhere attacks slavery directly. Remember, slavery was just a normal part of life in the ancient world and the whole structure of Roman society was based on it. Had Jesus and the apostles attacked slavery directly, the result would have been chaos. The gospel would have been swallowed up by the message of _____[ccc] revolution. Christianity, however, sowed the seeds of the _____[ddd] of slavery. It wouldn't be destroyed by social upheaval, but by changed _____[eee]. By teaching first century slave owning Christians that they have a "Master in heaven" and to be fair, just, and _____[fff] to their slaves (Eph 6:9), and by teaching them that their Christian slaves are actually _____[ggg] and sisters in

Christ (Phlm 16), the master-slave relationship would be transformed from within and lead to its ultimate _____[hhh].

LESSONS FROM TITUS & PHILEMON

- _____[iii] and _____[jjj] are foundational aspects of Christianity (Phlm 12, 17).
- We'll all have opportunities in life that will _____[kkk] our ability to _____[lll] (Phlm 8-16).
- Forgiveness is most _____[mmm] when it is given to the _____[nnn] (Phlm 11).
- _____[ooo] on behalf of others is an important function of your Christian life (Phlm 8-11).
- Jesus can produce a dramatic _____[ppp] in people (Phlm 10-11).
- Be a source of _____[qqq] to God's _____[rrr] (Phlm 5, 7, 20).
- Church _____[sss] is essential for church flourishing (Tit 1:5-9).
- _____[ttt] results in a life of _____[uuu] (Tit 1:16; 2:7, 11-14; 3:1, 8, 14).
- Good works don't save us (Tit 3:4-5).
- God saves when we are _____[vvv] and He gives us His _____[www] (Tit 3:5).
- For the church to remain _____[xxx], elders must confront false _____[yyy] and false _____[zzz] (Tit 1:10-16).

KEY PASSAGES FROM TITUS & PHILEMON

- Titus 1:1-2, 16
- Titus 2:11-12
- Titus 3:8
- Titus 3:4-5
- Philemon 7, 14, 21

FILL-IN-THE-BLANK ANSWER KEY

[a] individuals	[ss] race
[b] converted	[tt] captives
[c] circumcise	[uu] debt
[d] Titus	[vv] born
[e] Gentile	[ww] education
[f] circumcised	[xx] training
[g] Corinth	[yy] property
[h] Titus	[zz] punish
[i] Rome	[aaa] horrible
[j] first	[bbb] better
[k] Crete	[ccc] political
[l] Timothy	[ddd] destruction
[m] newly	[eee] hearts
[n] guide	[fff] impartial
[o] backup	[ggg] brothers
[p] appoint	[hhh] demise
[q] leaders	[iii] Forgiveness
[r] elders	[jjj] restoration
[s] truth	[kkk] test
[t] works	[lll] forgive
[u] good	[mmm] Christlike
[v] subject	[nnn] undeserving
[w] obey	[ooo] Mediating
[x] evil	[ppp] change
[y] heirs	[qqq] refreshment
[z] division	[rrr] people
[aa] wealthy	[sss] leadership
[bb] Colossae	[ttt] Salvation
[cc] slave	[uuu] good works
[dd] house	[vvv] baptized
[ee] Onesimus	[www] Spirit
[ff] Rome	[xxx] sound
[gg] disciple	[yyy] teaching
[hh] useful	[zzz] teachers
[ii] workers	
[jj] criminal	
[kk] Colossae	
[ll] forgive	
[mm] brother	
[nn] Christ	
[oo] Slavery	
[pp] Roman	
[qq] culture	
[rr] one-third	