

A Survey of the New Testament

Lesson 16: Philemon

“A returning slave”

May 22, 2019

Summary: Paul’s message to Philemon introduces Onesimus as a fellow-brother who should be forgiven.

Author: _____

- He identified himself as the author (1).
- No other writer would have had been motivated to write a book like this.
- Church fathers identified him as the author.

Recipients: _____

- A wealthy man in Colossae (2)
- The owner of Onesimus (10-11)
- Probably converted under Paul’s ministry (16)
- A friend of Paul (22)

Date:

- When Paul was imprisoned in Rome
- After Epaphras came from Colossae to ask some questions.
- At the same time as _____
- Probably shortly after Ephesians
- AD _____

Important People:

- Paul – the author
- Philemon – the book’s recipient and _____ of Onesimus
- Epaphras – the messenger to Rome
- Tychicus – the messenger who carried Paul’s letters to Asia Minor.
- Onesimus – the _____ who ran away and was now returning

Background:

- Slavery in the Roman Empire
 - Slavery was common in ancient Rome.
 - _____ of Rome’s population might have been slaves.
 - Slaves not only did manual and household tasks but also held professional occupations.
 - They were considered _____ – not people – and had no legal rights.
 - Slaves could earn their freedom in a variety of ways.

- Once freed, slaves could become Roman _____.
- Runaway slaves were treated harshly and could be _____.
- Slavery in Christianity
 - New Testament authors did not push for an _____ end to slavery.
 - Slavery was universally recognized.
 - Christian slaves would have depended on their owners for support.
 - Forbidding slavery would have caused an uprising.
 - A slave revolt would have _____ Christianity in the eyes of the government.
 - But New Testament authors did teach principles that ultimately ended slavery.
 - Paul condemned “_____” (1 Tim. 1:10).
 - Jesus commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt 24:12).
 - Christian principles mitigate slavery’s evils (Eph. 6:5-9).
 - Societies based on Christianity eventually _____ slavery.
- Who Was Onesimus?
 - Onesimus means “_____.”
 - He was previously an “unprofitable” servant (11).
 - He probably stole from Philemon when he ran away (18).
 - After becoming saved, he became a “profitable” servant in a new way.
 - He served _____ in Rome.

Book Content Overview:

- Introduction (1-3)
- Prayer of thanksgiving for Philemon’s love and faith (4-6)
- Request for _____ on Onesimus (7-17)
- Paul will repay if Onesimus has offended Philemon (18-19).
- Paul’s _____ of obedience (20-22)
- Conclusion (23-25)

Key Theme: _____

- Repentance: Onesimus repented of his past decisions and became a profitable servant.
- Forgiveness: Philemon was to follow Jesus’ example and forgive Onesimus.
- _____: Paul offered to pay any of the debts that Onesimus had.
- Reconciliation: When Onesimus repented and Philemon forgave, they were reconciled.

Application: Forgive as you have been forgiven.