

**OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE  
TITUS / PHILEMON**

**February 6, 2019**

**Answers to Lesson 39 – 2 Timothy**

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Second imprisonment stands in sharp contrast to the first. Now Paul is in the cold dungeon of a prison and supposedly chained. Onesiphorus had to search throughout Rome until he found Paul. It was assumed that this imprisonment was sudden and unexpected for he asked Timothy to bring the cloak he left in Troas, along with his scrolls and parchments.

Paul remembered the tears Timothy shed when they parted. He remembered Timothy's sincere faith passed down from a godly mother and grandmother. Paul longed to see his friend. Paul wanted Timothy to remember to *fan into flame the gift of God* and to remember Jesus Christ and to keep reminding those in Timothy's care of the same things.

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Paul stated that the Word of God was never chained. Scripture was not just words written by humans but it was inspired by God. It was authoritative and an inspiration for those who read and studied it. Paul was clear that there was power in the Word.

Paul had confidence that God would preserve and keep him. God never abandons us. God wants to equip us and strengthen us to reach the goal. Paul realized that life was not an end to itself. Goal did not consist in the abundance of our possessions or in the ease of our lifestyle. We had the promise of eternal life.

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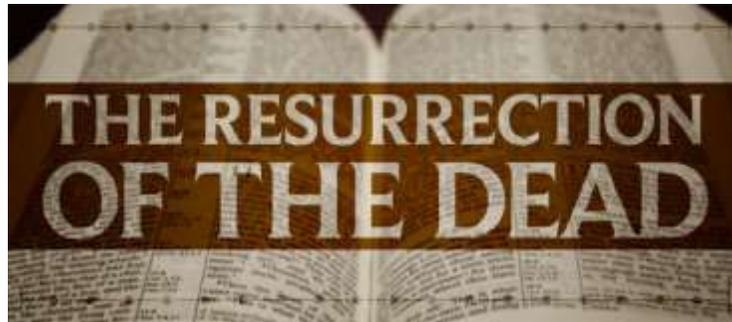
Paul uses the example of the soldier who endures hardships. We are not to get caught up in the affairs of the world but live to please God. In the example of the athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. In this case it means to obey God. In the last example, Paul uses a farmer who should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Emphasis is on the dedicated efforts that will be rewarded in the end.

Timothy should work to present himself to God as one approved, not needing to be ashamed. He was to avoid godless chatter. He was to cast aside the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness. He was not to quarrel but be kind, able to teach, and not be resentful.

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Characteristics of people during these terrible times included those who were lovers of themselves and of money, boastful and proud, abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, and lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God.

Paul once more pointed to Scripture as the safeguard for enduring. Timothy had been learning Scripture since he was a baby, but Paul's admonition was to continue in what he learned and became convinced of ... it was the inspired Word of God that would equip him for every good work. The Word of God was especially needed in times of opposition and persecution.



### **False Teachings**

Ancient Greeks disdained the notion that the body could ever be raised.  
During the time of Jesus, the Sadducees denied the resurrection of the body.  
In Acts 17:32, Paul spoke about the resurrection of the dead and was mocked.  
In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul addressed the heresies of the time and tried to correct their teachings.  
Gnostics also denied the resurrection of the body.

### **Teachings of Paul**

Central for Paul was his confidence that the present age was nearing an end.  
Soon it would be replaced by the rule of God over his creation.  
Questions arose among the Thessalonians.  
Some of their members died without having seen the expected *coming of Christ*.  
Paul uses the term *parousia* in reference to Jesus appearing to establish the rule of God on earth.  
Accompanying him would be the Christians who had already died.  
Dead would rise up first then the living Christians would join them.

In 2 Thessalonians 2 some Christians decided that the *Day of the Lord* had already taken place.  
People feared they had been left behind.  
In this passage Paul explained that there were certain events which would take place first.  
People would have some warning of the end of the age.  
Paul expressed confidence that the Thessalonians would remain faithful to God and his purpose.  
They were to live during the interim performing their regular daily work.

In 1 Corinthians 15 we have the fullest statement about his expectations of these events.  
Resurrection of Christ was the climax of God's redemptive purpose.  
Humans had two choices:  
Follow the model of Adam which led to alienation and death or . . .  
By faith become joined to Christ

God raising Jesus from the dead is what is known as the *first fruits*.  
It represents the start of the fulfillment of the promise.  
God will establish a new creation of obedient human beings.  
When the *parousia* takes place Christ will gather around him all those who belong to him.  
Meanwhile God continues to exercise his power.  
God brings the disobedient powers of creation into submission to his will.

Old humanity was characterized by an earthly, physical body.

New humanity was to be in a *spiritual* body.

The final act of the redemptive promise will be the change that will occur at the *parousia*.

Perishable human nature is replaced by the imperishable.

Full impact of the Resurrection of Christ is still to come.

### **Other Perspectives**

Judaism – It is believed that the God of Israel will one day give life to the dead (to the righteous).

It will take place during the Messianic Age and they will live forever in the life to come.

Belief is based on writings from Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Christian writers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century wrote against the idea that only the soul survived.

Justin Martyr insisted that a human is both soul and body and Christ promised to raise both.

There were no ancient Greek beliefs in a general resurrection of the body.

Once a body had been destroyed, there was no possibility of returning to life.

Pagan belief was that the immortal soul went to the underworld immediately after death.

Close of the medieval period brought a shift in Christian thinking.

Emphasis went from the resurrection of the body back to the immortality of the soul.

Resurrection of the soul was how they defined everlasting life.

Shift was not supported by Scripture but by the religion of the Enlightenment, Deism.

It was once widely believed that to rise on Judgment Day the body had to be whole.

People would be buried with their feet facing towards the east so they could rise facing God.

Act of Parliament (King Henry VIII) (1500s) made specific stipulations.

Only corpses of executed murderers could be dissected and was seen as an extra punishment.

Dismemberment stopped the possibility of the resurrection of an intact body on Judgment Day.

It was not until the 20<sup>th</sup> century that the link between body and resurrection was broken.

Cremation was made legal among the British in 1902.

Catholicism – Spiritual beings will be restored to glorified bodies.

Anglican – When you die you go to an intermediate state then the resurrection into new bodies.

Baptists – Firmly believe that Christ rose triumphant over death in a bodily resurrection.

Lutherans – Most believe in the resurrection of the body in combination with the immortal soul.

Methodists – Belief is in a resurrected body in spiritual form.

Latter Day Saints – Resurrection will unite the spirit with the body again.

Islam – Day of Judgment is believed to be God's final assessment of humanity.

Exact time when events will occur is unknown but there will be major and minor signs.

A trumpet will be sounded which will result in the death of any remaining sinners.

Then there will be a period of forty years.

Eleventh sign is the sound of a second trumpet to signal the resurrection.

Then all will be naked and run to the *Place of Gathering*.

Enemies of Allah will be walking on their faces with their legs upright.

Everybody will account for their deeds in this world.

People will go to heaven and hell forever.



Dates of the three pastoral letters are based on the type of church organization described. Parallels are also examined in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Centuries). Placed alongside the Letters of Ignatius (100 AD) they are dated around 100 or later. Order of reading suggested is 1 Timothy → Titus → 2 Timothy.

### **Letter to Titus**

Shortest of the *Pastoral Epistles* has the longest prescript.

Unlike other personal letters, it has a formal, liturgical character to it.

Author was entrusted with the apostolic message (kerygma).

Special emphasis of the letter is the inseparability of the knowledge of truth and true piety.

We assume Paul is writing to his faithful companion, Titus.

However there is no clear evidence it is the same person that is noted in other letters.

Either way the author reminds him that there is still work to do on the island of Crete.

Author agrees with the local prophet that Cretans are liars, vicious, brutes and lazy gluttons.

Instructions to Titus concerning the various groups resemble the list in 1 Timothy.

Admonitions in 1 Timothy were directed to a leader of congregations already organized.

Titus was written to an organizer of churches (mission starts).

He charges Titus with appointing elders and bishops for the churches in Crete.

He describes (at length) the qualities and characteristics those leaders must possess.

He then describes the lives that all Christians must live and what they are to do.

In the midst of these detailed instructions we find a reminder of what God has done for us.

Author wants Titus to remember why he should live this kind of life.

Grace of God appeared through Jesus Christ who brought salvation to all.

Author declares not only the good news of the incarnation but the message of the cross.

Letter also highlights the second coming of Christ.

We are to live moderate, sensible lives as we wait for the day of glory.

Like Paul, author wrote concerning the moral responsibilities of Christians in a pagan society.

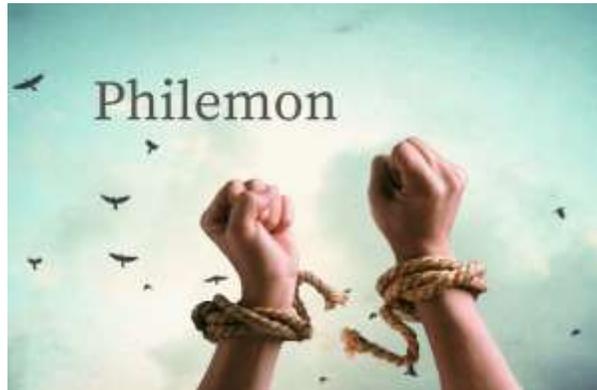
He calls people to a deepening appreciation of the grace of God.

He describes the character of the new life and eternal hope through reminders of former life.

Unlike Paul is the idea that by God's grace people are *trained to renounce* godless ways.

Author sees salvation as a past event although still a matter of hope.

Titus ends on a note that dominates the Letter of James (true faith is known by works).  
Titus is read on Christmas Eve (Titus 2:11-14 and 3:4-7).



Philemon is Paul's shortest letter and it contains only 335 Greek words.  
Paul wrote the letter between 55 and 61 BC from prison.  
As in other letters he is not concerned about his own well-being but that of Onesimus.  
Onesimus was a runaway slave and Paul addresses this letter to his master, Philemon.  
We have the opportunity to listen to a sample of a private communication between the two.

In the ancient Greco-Roman world almost anybody could become a slave.  
About 35-40% of the population was enslaved.  
Considered property, slaves could be bought and sold at the discretion of their master.  
Slaves were often abused and could be expelled from the household if old or sick.  
Urgency of the letter is because a master had the right to kill a slave when he/she ran away.  
We see how Paul tackles this urgent life or death matter.

Paul knows Philemon as a leader (more than likely in the Colossian church).  
He emphasizes his personal ties by calling him his dear friend and co-worker.  
He also expresses his abundant gratefulness for the love and faith of Philemon.  
Paul wants to build up Philemon before bringing up the unpleasant news of Onesimus.

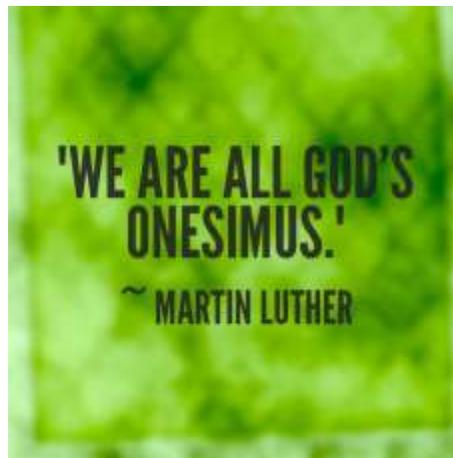
Letter is not only addressed to Philemon but to Apphia, Archippus, and church in his house.  
It is assumed that regular meetings were held in his home.  
At these meetings the letter from Paul had to be read aloud to all the people.  
So others would also be informed of the sensitive but urgent matter.  
They could have been part of the decision if Philemon acted contrary to what Paul proposed.

Finally Paul presents his request on behalf of Onesimus.  
Onesimus is described by Paul as an old man and now a prisoner of Christ Jesus.  
Words are to elicit sympathy and compassion rather than anger.  
Paul does not command Philemon but appeals to him on the basis of love.  
He invites Philemon to do a good deed that is voluntary and not something forced.  
Since others hear these words, Philemon would have a hard time not responding positively.

At the same time, Paul talks about Onesimus as his child during his imprisonment. Referring to a slave as one's child is a particular expression of honor. He also referred to him as *his own heart* and a *beloved brother* of Philemon. Eventually he recommends that Onesimus be welcomed back as Paul would be himself. Paul is giving Onesimus protection through his new status.

Paul sends Onesimus back to Philemon. Letter he wrote would have accompanied Onesimus on his way. While it is not clear why Onesimus left his master, Paul is eager to emphasize he has changed. Before he was useless to Philemon but now he is useful to both of them. Paul is employing a pun on the name of the slave which means *useful* in Greek.

Interesting that Paul did not resort to his apostolic authority in this case. Instead he uses gentle words, references to human relationships, and evokes mutual love. His own behavior was to serve as an example for Philemon to receive Onesimus. Onesimus was to be received as a new brother in Christ. When in positions of authority we can choose a gentle appeal rather than a harsh command.



### **Assignment for February 13**

Complete the Exercises from Lesson 40 on Pages 207-211  
Read *Hebrews* or the portions outlined on Page 211