

Philemon & Titus

These two small books are found after 2 Timothy and prior to Hebrews in your New Testament. Titus is grouped with 1 & 2 Timothy. Many times these three books are referred to as the Pastoral Epistles. They tend to deal with issues for the structure of local church organization.

Titus, like Timothy, was a traveling companion, as well as a spiritual son to Paul [Titus 1:4]. In the next verse we see where Paul has left Titus, who is a Gentile, on the western shores of the island of Crete to set the churches in order. Many people will interpret that to mean Titus would select elders to oversee the various house churches there. We find a similar theme in 1 Timothy.

Many today like to run through the listings of character traits in Titus 1 and compare those traits to what we see in 1 Timothy 3. Here it appears Paul is giving a very similar list to Timothy, who we know was the pastor/evangelist/minister at the church in Ephesus.

One of the specific items of interest in Titus is Paul asking Titus to come and meet with him at the city of Nicopolis as soon as his replacement arrives. However, no real reason is ever given for this meeting of the two leaders [Titus 3:12].

We know Titus was written near the end of Paul's ministry thus making it difficult to assign an exact date for this letter.

Philemon is a small letter written by Paul, while in prison at Rome, to his friend Philemon. We believe Paul wrote 4 letters at or near this same time. Philemon along with Ephesus, Philippians, and Colossians. These letters are often referred to as the Prison Epistles.

The main story plot reveals a young man, who was a slave by the name of Onesimus, had run away from his owner Philemon. A slave who ran at this time would face the death penalty. Onesimus has come to Rome, met with Paul and given his life to Christ.

Paul now writes to his friend, saying that Onesimus is returning back home and Paul asks that Onesimus be treated as a brother in Christ and that Philemon might treat Onesimus as he would if Paul had come to be a guest in his home.

For years this small letter has been studied for its content on slavery in the Roman Empire. I think you will find Paul's concern and love for both men a great point of interest.