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History of Redemption:

In Titus Paul emphasizes godly life as the outcome of faith and knowledge of the truth (1:1). Grace is given, not for salvation only, as if salvation could be separated from life, but that men might come to live lives worthy of Jesus (1:16; 2:12, 14; 3:8b, 14). In order for this godliness to work its way out in the church, the men who lead should show by their lives that they have this faith and knowledge (1:5-9; 2:7-8). The gospel, promised before time (1:2), meets man's need of salvation, but different temptations face various groups in the church and these groups, therefore, need to hear differing applications of exhortations to godliness (2:1-9).

Philemon may have been included in the canon because in it Paul gives an illustration of Christ's intercession for his people (especially vv 18-19). He also illustrates the unique nature of the bonds of love and brotherhood in Christ--a slave was no longer a mere piece of property, but a brother in the Lord, a man, and a partner (13-17).

Questions:

Was Paul released from prison? Did he travel to Spain? to Greece, Asia and Crete? Did Onesimus later become bishop of Ephesus (tradition)? Why was such an apparently personal letter addressed to the entire church (Philemon 2)? What was the attitude of the New Testament church toward slavery?

Archaeology

Titus was on Crete when Paul wrote to him. Crete is a large island (c. 156 x 30 miles) southeast of the Greek mainland. In New Testament times Crete was a fertile and prosperous island. Titus 1:12 contains a quotation from the Cretan poet Epimenides--the low reputation of the Cretans was proverbial in the ancient world.

Slaves came from five basic sources in the Roman Empire: kidnaping, debt-enclavement, self-sale, offspring of female slaves, and prisoners of war. In the Roman Empire there was a ratio of about one slave for every five freedmen; in Rome itself the ratio was approximately one for every three. Two benefits were unique to Roman slaves--freedom from direct taxation and freedom from military conscription.