



Overview for Philemon

Purpose: Paul wanted Philemon to accept Onesimus, his runaway slave, as a brother in the Gospel.

Author: The Apostle Paul

Date Written: About A.D. 60

History: Most Bible scholars believe this book was written while Paul was imprisoned in Rome. Philemon lived in Colosse, and the letter was probably sent by Tychicus along with the Epistle to the Colossians (see Colossians 4:7-9).

Key People: Philemon, Onesimus, Paul

Setting: During the first century, millions of people in the Roman Empire were slaves. Both the government and their masters considered slaves to be property, and they were purchased and sold as such. They could be beaten for small wrongdoings, and if they ran away, they could be killed.

Paul did not specifically write condemning slavery. However, he addressed the Gospel principles of

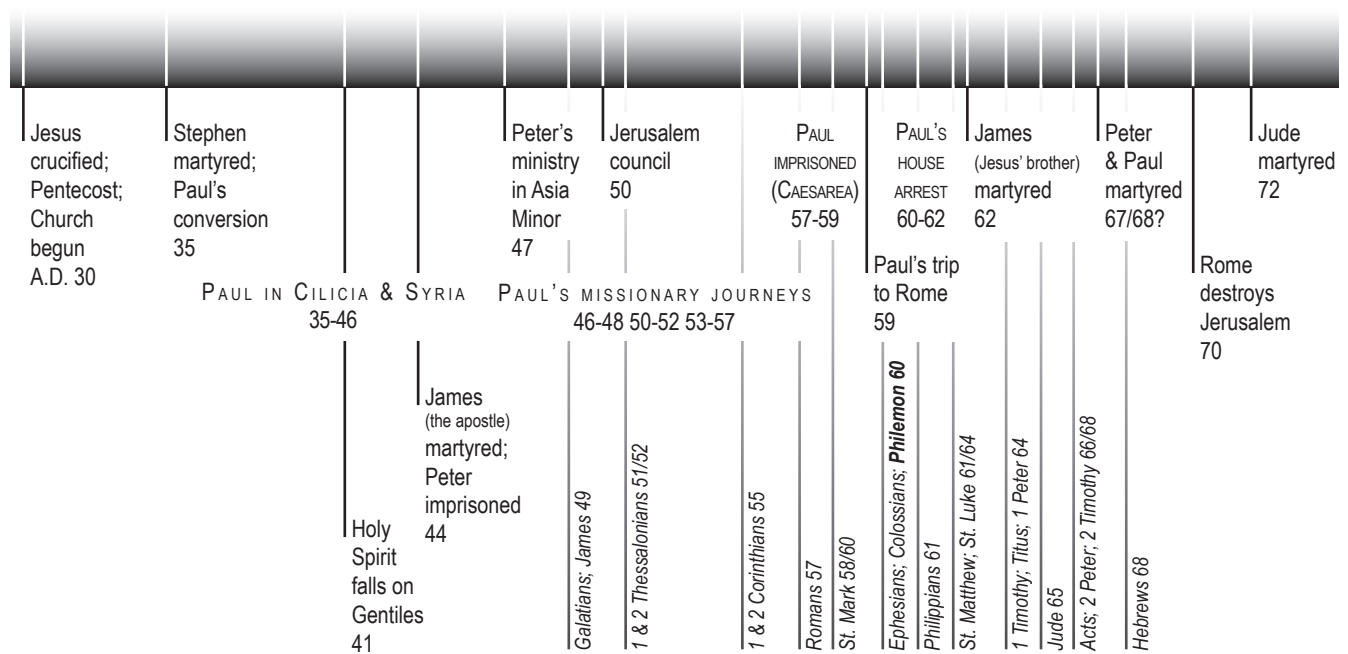
forgiveness and brotherhood in Christ. He wanted the believers of his time to understand that salvation changed people from any culture or class into fellow members of the body of Christ.

Summary: This short book is a personal letter from Paul to his friend, Philemon, and the church which met in Philemon's house. It reflects Paul's deep love for both Philemon, who had been converted under Paul's preaching, and Onesimus, who had been saved while Paul was a prisoner. With incredible tact, Paul encouraged Philemon to forgive Onesimus, and to treat him as a Christian brother rather than a runaway slave.

Beyond the deep Christian love demonstrated by Paul in this letter, the book is also an object lesson in God's love and how He reaches out with forgiveness to those who stray from Him. Additionally, it shows fellowship between Christians being put into practice. It remains today as a challenge for God's people to love those who have done wrong and repented.

Timeline

Many of these dates are approximate, as reference materials differ slightly.



Outline

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A complete amplified outline of this book is available on our website at www.apostolicfaith.org.

- I. Introduction (1:1-3)
 - A. The writers and recipients (1:1-2)
 - B. The salutation (1:3)
- II. The thanksgiving of Paul (1:4-7)
 - A. The fact of his thanksgiving (1:4)
 - B. The cause of his thanksgiving (1:5)
 - C. The petition with his thanksgiving (1:6)
 - D. The motive of his thanksgiving (1:7)
- III. The appeal of Paul (1:8-21)
 - A. The source for his appeal (1:8-9)
 - B. The object of his appeal (1:10-11)
 - C. The reason for his appeal (1:12-14)
 - D. The necessity of his appeal (1:15-16)
 - E. The basis for his appeal (1:17-21)
- IV. Conclusion (1:22-25)
 - A. Personal plans (1:22)
 - B. Personal greetings (1:23-24)
 - C. Benediction (1:25)