

JOHN CHRYSOSTOM,  
*HOMILIES ON TITUS AND PHILEMON*

# WRITINGS FROM THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

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JOHN CHRYSOSTOM,  
*HOMILIES ON TITUS AND PHILEMON*

*Introduced, translated, and annotated by*

Pauline Allen

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For Madeleine, Andreas, Fleur, and Lyla



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## Preface

My thanks go to Dr. Kosta Simić, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, for assistance in the preparation and presentation of this manuscript. Professor John T. Fitzgerald, University of Notre Dame, reviewed the manuscript, generously providing many suggestions, offering advice and encouragement, and saving me from several pitfalls. I have profited unashamedly from his expertise in the study of Paul's letter to Titus.

Brisbane, 15 January 2021



## Abbreviations

ACCS NT	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, New Testament
APB	<i>Acta Patristica et Byzantina</i>
AThR	<i>Anglical Theological Review</i>
b.	born
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
<i>Bib. hist.</i>	Diodorus Siculus, <i>Bibliotheca historica</i>
BICS	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i> (= <i>Wolf Liebeschuetz Reflected</i> )
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAEC	Critical Approaches to Early Christianity
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–
CCTC	Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries
CLA	Christianity in Late Antiquity
CPG	Geerard, Maurits, ed. <i>Clavis patrum graecorum</i> . 5 vols. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974–1987.
CPL	Dekkers, Eligius, ed. <i>Clavis patrum latinorum</i> . 3rd ed. Steenbruggis: Abbatia Sancti Petri, 1995.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
d.	died
<i>Descr.</i>	Pausanias, <i>Graeciae descriptio</i>
ECF	Early Church Fathers
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistle</i>
Field	Field, Frederick, ed. <i>Ioannis Chrysostomi interpretatio omnium epistularum Paulinarum</i> . 7 vols. Oxford: Parker, 1854–1862.
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HvTSt	<i>Hervormde Theologiese Studies</i>

IDS	<i>In die Skriflig</i>
JECS	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
LAHR	Late Antique History and Religion
LHCC	Library of the Holy Catholic Church
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTAbh	Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen
OCD	Hornblower, Simon, and Antony Spawforth, eds. <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . 3rd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.
OCP	<i>Orientalia Christiana Periodica</i>
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OrChrAn	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
OTRM	Oxford Theology & Religion Monographs
par(r).	parallel(s)
PG	Patrologia Graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.
PGL	Lampe, G. W. H., ed. <i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.
PL	Patrologia Latina. Edited by J.-P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–1864.
Resp.	Plato, <i>Respublica</i>
RevEB	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
RHPR	<i>Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses</i>
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SC	Sources chrétiennes
SGRR	Studies in Greek and Roman Religion
SLLRH	<i>Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History</i>
StCl	Studies in Classics
s.v.	<i>sub verbo, sub voce</i> , under the word
TS	Texts and Studies
TUGAL	Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur
UCPCS	University of California Publications in Classical Studies
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ŽA	<i>Živa Antika</i>

## INTRODUCTION

### QUESTIONS OF DATING AND PROVENANCE

A native of Syrian Antioch, John received the standard education reserved at this time for young men of some status and probably frequented the lectures of the Sophist Libanius before his baptism.<sup>1</sup> Although he was ordained lector by Bishop Meletius of Antioch in 371, John opted for the ascetic life on the outskirts of Antioch<sup>2</sup> until ill health forced him to return to the city. He was ordained deacon in 381 and priest in 386 (an office he held for twelve years under the episcopate of Meletius's successor, Flavian).<sup>3</sup> During this time John became known for his eloquent preaching (hence his sobriquet Chrysostom, or "Golden Mouth"), to the extent that he came to the attention of the imperial court and was chosen as bishop of Constantinople, being consecrated there on 26 February 398.<sup>4</sup> In the capital, John preached

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1. Standard works on Chrysostom are Chrysostomus Bauer, *John Chrysostom and His Time*, 2 vols., trans. M. Gonzaga (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1959–1960); John N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth: The Story of John Chrysostom—Ascetic, Preacher, Bishop* (London: Duckworth, 1995); Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, *John Chrysostom*, ECF (London: Routledge, 2000). Newer to the field are Mayer, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom—Provenance: Reshaping the Foundations*, OrChrAn 273 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Orientale, 2005); Mayer and Pauline Allen, *The Churches of Syrian Antioch (300–638 CE)*, LAHR 5 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012); Chris L. de Wet, *Preaching Bondage: John Chrysostom and the Discourse of Slavery in Early Christianity* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015); Mayer and Allen, "John Chrysostom," in *The Early Christian World*, 2nd ed., ed. Philip F. Esler (London: Routledge, 2017), 1054–71 (a summary of trends in recent scholarship on Chrysostom); Chris L. de Wet and Wendy Mayer, eds., *Revisiting John Chrysostom: New Approaches, New Perspectives*, CAEC 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

2. On John's ascetic phase see Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 14–35; in detail Martin Illert, *Johannes Chrysostomus und das antiochenisch-syrische Mönchtum: Studien zu Theologie, Rhetorik und Kirchenpolitik im antiochenischen Schrifttum des Johannes Chrysostomus* (Zürich: Pano, 2000).

3. On this period in John's life see Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 36–82.

4. See Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 104–44, for details of John's elevation and subsequent episcopal ministry in Constantinople.

forcefully against social abuses, such as those of wealth and ostentation, which are vilified especially in the homilies to the Colossians,<sup>5</sup> and in favor of the proper observance of the Scriptures, activities that earned him many powerful enemies. As a result, he was deposed by a synod (the so-called Synod of the Oak) in 403,<sup>6</sup> but he subsequently was allowed to resume his post. However, after riots instigated by his enemies broke out in the following year, John was exiled to Cucusus in Armenia,<sup>7</sup> where he remained for three years before the order came to transfer him to the east coast of the Black Sea. He died en route on 14 September 407. It was not until 27 January 438 that his remains were ceremoniously returned to Constantinople and buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles.<sup>8</sup>

Chrysostom was a highly productive preacher and writer. Apart from his seventy-six homilies on Genesis, an incomplete set on the Psalms, and homilies on several Old Testament themes, we have ninety homilies on Matthew's Gospel, eight-eight on John's, fifty-five on Acts, and treatments of Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews. In addition, there are catechetical homilies and homilies on feast days, martyrs' festivals, ethical issues, and occasional themes, as well as treatises on various topics. Over 240 letters survive from his years in exile. Chrysostom's admiration for the apostle Paul is evident from the seven homilies he composed in Paul's honor (*Laudes Pauli* 1–7).<sup>9</sup>

Chrysostom gives a detailed chronology of Paul's letters as he perceived it in *Argumentum epistulae ad Romanos* (CPG 4427).<sup>10</sup> At the beginning of the Letter to Titus, he remarks that Paul does not seem to be in prison when writing. Since the eighteenth century what have been termed

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5. See further Pauline Allen, trans., *John Chrysostom: Homilies on Colossians*, WGRW 46 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2021).

6. On this synod see Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 211–27.

7. Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 259–85, deals with this exile and Chrysostom's correspondence during it.

8. See Kelly, *Golden Mouth*, 286–90, on this triumphal return of the relics.

9. Text in André Piédagnel, ed., *Panegyriques de saint Paul*, SC 300 (Paris: Cerf, 1982); English trans. by Margaret M. Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 440–87. See also now Mitchell, trans., *John Chrysostom on Paul: Praises and Problem Passages*, WGRW 48 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022).

10. Frederick Field, ed., *Ioannis Chrysostomi interpretatio omnium epistularum Paulinarum* (Oxford: Parker, 1854–1862), 1:1–6.

the Pastoral Letters encompassed 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, and they are what Hans-Josef Klauck describes as “doubly pseudonymous” because the names of both the writer and the recipients are fictitious. They were composed about 100 CE.<sup>11</sup> The Letter to Philemon, on the other hand, is deemed to be authentic<sup>12</sup> and written while Paul was in prison. However, probably because the Letter to Titus and the Letter to Philemon have been transmitted together toward the end of the so-called Pauline corpus and are quite short, each containing themes that have been considered contentious or at least worthy of comment, they are often spoken of in the same breath—hence their combined treatment in this volume.

While the Antiochene provenance of the homilies on the Letter to Titus has never been disputed, meaning that they would have been delivered between 386 and 398, possibly toward the end of that spectrum,<sup>13</sup> the provenance of Chrysostom’s homilies on Philemon is problematic. Here we turn to recent work on the question of whether we should assume that Chrysostom’s homilies as they have come down to us in series are, in fact, as homogeneous as has been supposed. The debate was opened by Wendy Mayer and Pauline Allen, who argued that some series were not preached in the same place (Antioch or Constantinople) or sequentially.<sup>14</sup> This argument was subsequently contested by Guillaume Bady, who posited that the manuscript tradition of homilies transmitted in series needs to be respected,<sup>15</sup> and by James Daniel Cook, who believes that the evidence of the *lectio continua* in the homilies transmitted in series is evidence of homogeneity.<sup>16</sup> Neither of these counterarguments, however, helps us to assign the commentary on Philemon to a place or a date.

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11. See Hans-Josef Klauck with Daniel P. Bailey, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006), 322–37, with bibliography of modern literature.

12. On this point see Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament*, 328–29.

13. See Mayer, *Homilies of St John Chrysostom*, 186–87.

14. See Pauline Allen and Wendy Mayer, “Chrysostom and the Preaching of Homilies in Series: A New Approach to the Twelve Homilies *In epistulam ad Colossenses* (CPG 4433),” *OCP* 60 (1994): 21–39; and Allen and Mayer, “Chrysostom and the Preaching of Homilies in Series: A Re-examination of the Fifteen Homilies *In epistulam ad Philippenses* (CPG 4432),” *VC* 49 (1995): 270–89.

15. Guillaume Bady, “La Tradition des oeuvres de Jean Chrysostome, entre transmission et transformation,” *RevEB* 68 (2010): 149–63, esp. 159–63.

16. James D. Cook, *Preaching and Popular Christianity: Reading the Sermons of John Chrysostom*, OTRM (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 200–210.

The theme that has attracted attention in the Letter to Titus is the requirements of a person being considered for the role of bishop, and the letter as a whole has received an exhaustive treatment in the volume edited by Hans-Ulrich Weidemann, Wilfried Eisele, and Michael Theobald, *Ein Meisterschüler: Titus und sein Brief; Michael Theobald zum 60. Geburtstag*.<sup>17</sup> In the studies of the Letter to Philemon, Paul's attitude to slaves and their treatment is paramount, and has engendered lively debate between Allen D. Callahan and Margaret M. Mitchell.<sup>18</sup> In addition, it has merited a volume devoted to the interpretation of the letter edited by D. François Tolmie, *Philemon in Perspective: Interpreting a Pauline Letter*.<sup>19</sup>

To be noted in Chrysostom's exegesis of the Letter to Philemon is the shifting nomenclature for slaves in general and household slaves. Slaves are called *δοῦλοι* or *παῖδες*, while household slaves are *οικέται*. Sometimes there is a distinction in the text between these names, at other times not, because

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17. Hans-Ulrich Weidemann, Wilfried Eisele, and Michael Theobald, eds., *Ein Meisterschüler: Titus und sein Brief; Michael Theobald zum 60. Geburtstag*, SBS 214 (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2008).

18. Allen D. Callahan, "Paul's Epistle to Philemon: Toward an Alternative *Argumentum*," *HTR* 86 (1993): 357–76; responded to by Margaret M. Mitchell, "John Chrysostom on Philemon: A Second Look," *HTR* 88 (1995): 135–48; and for a reprisal of the debate see Callahan, "John Chrysostom on Philemon: A Response to Margaret M. Mitchell," *HTR* 88 (1995): 149–56. The debate hinges on Callahan's interpretation that Onesimus was not Philemon's slave but his blood brother, an interpretation refuted by Mitchell. See the discussion on this debate in de Wet, *Preaching Bondage*, 188–89.

19. D. François Tolmie, *Philemon in Perspective: Interpreting a Pauline Letter*, Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche 169 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010). Of particular interest to us here are Paul B. Decock, "The Reception of the Letter to Philemon in the Early Church: Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine," in *Philemon in Perspective: Interpreting a Pauline Letter*, ed. D. François Tolmie, BZNW 169 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 285–300; John T. Fitzgerald, "Theodore of Mopsuestia on Paul's Letter to Philemon," in Tolmie, *Philemon in Perspective*, 333–63; and Chris L. de Wet, "Honour Discourse in John Chrysostom's Exegesis of the Letter to Philemon," in Tolmie, *Philemon in Perspective*, 317–31. In addition it is useful to consult Tolmie's several articles on the letter: Tolmie, "Die retoriese Analise van die Brief aan Filemon in die Lig van Johannes Chrysostomus se homilieë oor dié Brief," *HvTSt* 70 (2014): 1–8; Tolmie, "Paulus als Vredemaker: Oor die Resepsie van die Brief aan Filemon in die vierde en vyfde Eeu n.C.," *HvTSt* 71 (2015): 1–7; Tolmie, "Ambrosiaster se Uitleg van de Filemonbrief en die retorise Analise van hierdie Brief," *IDS* 49 (2015), doi:10.4102/ids.v49i2; Tolmie, "Die Resepsie van retoriese Momente van die Filemonbrief deur Patristiese Eksegete," *HvTSt* 72.4 (2016): 1–8.



the groups all formed part of the Greco-Roman household.<sup>20</sup> However, in general I have translated οἰκέται as “household slaves.”<sup>21</sup>

#### CONTENTS OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM’S *HOMILIES ON TITUS*

The first of Chrysostom’s six *Homilies on Titus* is devoted to an exposition of Paul’s Letter to Titus, Titus 1:1–4, in which initially the preacher introduces us to the addressee of the letter, seemingly a young man in whom Paul had great confidence. According to Chrysostom, the letter was composed during the time when Paul was at liberty and before the letter to Timothy. The exegesis of the text proceeds verse by verse until verse 4, at which point the apostle calls Titus his true son. This leads to a consideration of the meaning of a genuine son and of the prayers that are needed by a bishop. In a memorable sentence, Chrysostom avers: “The greater the dignity, the greater are also the dangers for the one holding the priestly office, for one good act in his episcopate is enough to raise him to heaven, and one error to sink him to hell itself.” A bishop who appoints an unworthy person to high office will be answerable for all the offenses committed by them, because they are assailed by vainglory, love of money, and other evils that affect cities, populations, citizens, children, and those beyond. Therefore, a bishop especially needs God’s grace and peace, says Chrysostom, thus anticipating verses 6–7, where the apostle dilates on the requisite virtues for bishops. The preacher evinces great astonishment at those who desire the burden of episcopal office, which renders the incumbent answerable not only for their own offenses but for those of many others. Chrysostom tells his listeners that the apostles had domestic help and that Christ even washed the feet of his disciples, which leads to a heartfelt description of the plight of the bishop, who is distracted by claims on his time and by demands beyond what he can do. The bishop not only does the bidding of others but is subject to the calumny of their various differences, to the extent that he is accused of bathing, eating, drinking, wearing the same clothes as his congregation, and being in charge of a household. Also riding on an ass and having people wait on him are the subjects of offense for some imaginary members of the congregation. The preacher asks why

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20. On the difficulties posed by the nomenclature see de Wet, *Preaching Bondage*, 46–47, 57 n. 30, 82 n. 2 (with literature), 95–96, 113 n. 118, 201–2, 229–30.

21. On the οἰκέται see Kyle Harper, *Slavery in the Late Roman World, AD 275–425* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 513–18.

the congregation does not send its own servants to wait on the bishop, as Christ waited on his disciples, and why the members are so censorious of a bishop who takes a bath. After all, if he is taking care of his body to minister to them, why should he be blamed? If, on the other hand, a virtuous bishop is confined to bed and cannot carry out his responsibilities, he should be treated favorably, for the office of a bishop is a dangerous one. The homily concludes with an abbreviated doxology.

Although in the manuscripts the pericope given for the exegesis of *Homily 2* is Titus 1:5–6, the preaching, in fact, ranges more widely, encompassing the verses as far as Titus 1:11. Chrysostom deals first with Paul's commissioning of Titus as the head of the churches in Crete and his instructions to ordain suitable men as bishops in every city. Married candidates were deemed suitable by Paul if they had one wife, and this was an attempt, explains the homilist, to muzzle heretics who condemned marriage. The suitable bishop should be judged by the care he bestows on his own children, for if he is a failure in this he will also not be able to look after his spiritual children. Likewise, a bishop should not rule by law and compulsion, for if he cannot rule himself and his passions, he cannot instruct others. Chrysostom runs through Paul's catalog of dos and don'ts of a bishop until he arrives at the apostle's admonishment: "They are upsetting whole households by teaching for base gain what they have no right to teach" (Titus 1:11). The homilist then denounces love of power and love of money before embarking on his moral exhortation to the congregation, who are encouraged to avoid honor and love of money, which lead to vainglory, a vice that is likened to the effects of the masks worn by actors on the stage. Vainglory and masks are to be avoided because they are empty and render the congregation more servile. The audience should flee from this slavery and look beyond honor from the multitude toward heaven.

Once again the manuscripts restrict the pericopes to be treated in *Homily 3* to Titus 1:12–14, whereas, in fact, Chrysostom continues his exegesis to Titus 1:16 and beyond, to Titus 2:1. The starting point of the homily is Paul's quotation of a pagan poet who said that "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." Chrysostom states that there are at least three questions that need to be answered with regard to this quotation: First, who said it? Second, why did the apostle quote it? Third, why does Paul adduce a testimony that is not correct? The subsequent argument is not easy to follow, but Epimenides is said to have ridiculed the Cretans for saying that Jupiter was dead, and Paul agrees with this pronouncement, although he calls the Cretans liars. Hence the homilist ventures the opinion

that the Cretans were deceived, because they believed in other gods, and on this account Paul counts them as liars.

To the third question that was raised at the beginning of the homily, namely, the reason for Paul's citing the testimonies of the Hellenes, Chrysostom replies that this is the best way to refute them: from their own writers. Thus he cites the poet Aratus to demonstrate that we are sprung from god, a statement that the apostle takes as being inappropriately applied to Jupiter and that he restores to the Christian God. A further reason for Paul's citing their own testimonies to refute the Hellenes is they would not have believed sayings from the prophets, just as Jews do not believe testimonies from the New Testament. God has various ways of guiding people to the truth, says the preacher, including the virtue of accommodation in words and deeds, even when it goes against his own dignity. Verse 13, "Rebuke them sharply, so that they may be sound in the faith," is applied by Paul to the Jews, maintains Chrysostom, and being unsound in the faith includes such practices as observing Jewish fasts and Sabbaths and frequenting places such as the cave of Matrona in Daphne. But unsoundness in faith also includes Hellenic practices, and all these deserve sharp rebuke.

The preacher's attack then changes to those who are defiled, who do not understand that nothing is unclean by nature but only by its use. In Titus 1:15–16, the apostle is speaking of unclean minds and consciences, says Chrysostom, in opposition to the Encratite theologian Marcion. Even a leper is not unclean, nor is the woman who has just given birth. The unclean thing is sin, and to desire overmuch is unclean.

*Homily 4* is ostensibly devoted to Titus 2:2–5, where the apostle gives advice to aged men, aged women, and young women, although once again the exegesis exceeds these parameters, ranging as far as Titus 2:10. After several observations on the failings of age, which include the fact that older men are slow, timid, forgetful, insensitive, and irritable, and older women are too partial to wine, the preacher moves on to follow Paul's injunctions about the good order of a household, which depends on marital harmony and the obedience of the wife, resulting even in persuading a Hellene husband or improving a Christian man. It appears that there are mixed marriages in Chrysostom's flock. Chrysostom proceeds quickly through Titus 2:6–8 until he comes to verse 9, which deals with the proper conduct of slaves toward their masters, and he begins to address himself to slaves. This is a race of people, he says, who is intractable and not open to instruction in virtue, but the blame should also be laid at the door of the masters, who are intent on their own comfort rather than on the morals of those

who wait on them. “It’s difficult and surprising,” says the homilist, “that there should ever be a useful slave.” However, a slave by their example can impress their master and prove that the more wicked they are, the more admirable is the preaching that reforms them.

From this point in the homily, Chrysostom explicitly addresses himself to slaves, who must approach their tasks as if they are serving God, not a worldly master. A good slave will win over the master, even if the latter is a Hellene. An extended example of this is given in the history of Joseph (Gen 39–40), who was in servitude to an Egyptian cook of another religion and yet gained his respect and confidence, even after Joseph had been accused by the cook’s wife of impropriety. The cook restricted himself to having Joseph imprisoned, although here too the hero of the story acquitted himself well, because of his virtue ruling in the prison as he had in his previous employer’s house. The moral of the story is that to rule, people must first rule themselves. In this way, they will be loved not only by the virtuous but also by the wicked.

Although the pericope given by the manuscripts at the beginning of *Homily 5* is Titus 2:11–14, the exegesis, in fact, not only deals with the remainder of Titus 2 but continues as far as 3:4. Chrysostom takes up where he left off in *Homily 4* by relating Titus 2:11: “For the saving grace of God has appeared” to servants who have been pardoned and have been given infinite favors. The homilist points out, however, that Paul speaks of two appearances, the first being of grace and the second of retribution and justice. The words “refusing impious and worldly passions” are said to be the foundation of all virtue, and the apostle’s injunction “to live soberly, justly and piously in the present world” is applied to the rejection of love of money and of fornication, which even the ancients concurred with. Chrysostom then takes his evidence not from the Hellenes but from Paul’s writings themselves, in which lawful intercourse is permitted and even second marriage (this second point made also in *Homily 1*). According to the homilist, physical lust is more dangerous than love of money. In verse 15, Paul charges Titus to “exhort and reprove with all authority,” meaning that some sins can be chastised by persuasion, whereas adultery, fornication, and fraud require stern rebuke. The exegesis proceeds through to Titus 2:6, after which “justified by his grace” is elaborated by means of a long exposition on the brutality of human beings before the advent of Christ, during a time when there was no order and no natural or written law. In illustration of this situation, Chrysostom has recourse to examples from Greek literature, which enable him to denounce the subjects of dra-

matic performances, full of adultery, lewdness, and all kinds of corruption, including the presence of women and girls at the theater. The cases of Androgeos, Hippolytus, Oedipus, and Clytemnestra are adduced, and the custom of pederasty lambasted. These examples, says Chrysostom, which are taken from the Hellenes, should convince the gentiles of the prevailing evils in the world at that time. Besides, the evidence of the Scriptures demonstrates this, even after the advent of Christ. The argument moves to a denunciation of Plato's ideas in the *Republic* that women should engage in warfare and should be held in common—a perversion of the natural order, says the homilist, for "God gave the woman the task of looking after the house, while to the man he gave the conduct of public affairs."

Next comes the moral exhortation. "The loving-kindness of God" mentioned in Titus 2:4 should not only lead us to give thanks to God but also encourage us to be kind to those who are against us, for they are sick. Yet we expend any amount of time and trouble on a sick child, for example, but neglect the sick soul, a neglect that is not only dangerous but disgraceful. In all of this, we must keep an eye on the future hope of eternal life.

*Homily 6* on Titus supposedly covers Titus 3:8–11, but, in fact, the exegesis extends to the end of the letter, thus continuing the pattern of previous homilies on this letter in which also the stated pericope to be dealt with is exceeded. Chrysostom opens his preaching with an adjuration to the congregation to follow Paul's advice in maintaining good works, adding that this includes almsgiving in particular. By "stupid controversies and genealogies and dissensions, and quarrels about the law" is meant contention with heretics, whose mind is made up, making it pointless to argue with them, except for talking to them about almsgiving and all other virtues. If after that they persist in their error, they are self-condemned. Next the homilist comments on verses 12–14, where Paul gives directions for the deployment of his associates Artemas, Tychicus, Zenas, and Apollos, before returning to the subject of contention, a situation in which serious and upright people should muzzle their opponents and not be sparing of their words, as they should not be of their money.

Maintaining good works, says the homilist in returning to the opening theme of the homily, involves not waiting for the needy to come to one but seeking out the needy. Doing good in this way not only helps the recipient but much more so also the benefactor, rendering them more confident toward God. This is why the heretic is incorrigible, and whereas it is laziness to neglect those for whom there is hope of conversion, to waste time on a diseased person (the heretic) is extreme madness.

The argument then shifts in the moral exhortation to the question of supporting others and to whether Christ himself and Paul could not have supported themselves without help from others. This leads Chrysostom to say that riches are an impediment and should be given to the poor, while the one who gives to the needy will learn not to receive from benefactors. Thus almsgiving makes us like God, extinguishes sins, and is greater than all other virtues, including virginity, fasting, and sleeping on the ground, which help the persons involved but not others. As recounted in the Acts of the Apostles, the apostles collected possessions brought to them and distributed them among the needy; thus they gained by giving. Another consideration, claims the homilist, is that it is more difficult for a rich person to be moderate and live frugally than it is for the poor, and divesting oneself of possessions brings in its train the riddance of desires, for example, of arrogance and wealth. This but adds fuel to the fire, which the three children in the book of Daniel were able to escape, providing a lesson for those who are afflicted. Like Abraham, the three did not expect deliverance, whereas the congregation impatiently expects God's mercy. The case of two unknown martyrs is adduced, who died different deaths from those they had wished, and the example of Joseph (also the subject of the long passage in *Homily 5*), who was impatient to be delivered from his prison but was left there for a time. All these accounts instruct us not to place confidence in human beings but in God, which leads Chrysostom to urge the congregation to give thanks to God, as he concludes with a doxology.

#### CONTENTS OF JOHN CHRYSOSTOM'S *HOMILIES ON PHILEMON*

The argumentum that prefaces the three homilies is both a general description of the contents of the homilies and an apologia for the fact that this short Letter to Philemon was included in the scriptural canon. Philemon himself is described as an admirable man, who had a slave called Onesimus. When the slave ran away to Rome, he was baptized by Paul, who thereafter tried to reconcile him with his master. In defense of the inclusion of short letters in the canon, Chrysostom argues that not only are they necessary, but also we would like to know still more than we do of the activities of the apostles. After all, the letter was written about important matters, for if Paul took so much care of the runaway slave, thief, and robber Onesimus, we should follow suit and not disregard the slave class. Furthermore, slaves should not be withdrawn from the service of their masters. In addition, says the homilist, the congregation should not be ashamed of slaves.

The homily deals with Phlm 1–3, beginning with Paul’s greetings together with Timothy’s to Philemon and his household, also on behalf of the disciples Apphia and Archippus. When he wrote this letter, Chrysostom says, Paul was in chains, and if being in chains for Christ is not a shame but a boast, much more should slavery not be considered a reproach. The homilist then proceeds to run through the addressees of the letter, heralding their merits but especially those of Philemon, in so doing showing how Paul, by flattering him, lays the ground for granting the favor to accept Onesimus back. That this letter is addressed to Philemon’s house church, according to Chrysostom, demonstrates that slaves are included in the letter, both to honor them by this mention and not to offend Philemon. Paul’s salutation, “Grace and peace to you,” should invite us to be merciful and forgiving to those who have offended us, bearing in mind that the gravity of the offense is determined by the standing of the person wronged, for example, a magistrate or an emperor, which indicates the difference between the wrongs we do to other people on the one hand, and to God on the other. This leads to a discussion of how people honor other humans more than they do God, having no shame before God for their acts of adultery or theft, which they restrain themselves from before their fellow human beings. However, not only do people honor human beings more than God, but also they compel others to do the same, and this includes household servants and slaves. If anyone examined themselves, maintains the preacher, they would see that they do everything on behalf of human beings for fear of losing their respect. For these sins, the congregation should forgive those who injure them, because there is an easy way to forgiveness, namely, to despise wealth and to give alms to the needy. The forgiving person is also a gainer, because of the many friends they will attract. If we forgive our neighbors, are humble and contrite, confess our sins, and condemn ourselves, we will be cleansed of most of our defilement.

The exegesis of Chrysostom’s second homily on Philemon ostensibly covers Phlm 1–6 but, in fact, continues as far as verse 16. It opens with an encomium of Philemon’s love and faith, and Chrysostom points out that Paul does not as yet mention the favor he wants in regard to Onesimus, leaving it until later in the letter. The apostle also covers his tracks by assigning other reasons for his writing, lest he be accused of concentrating on Onesimus’s situation. Quickly the exegesis skips to verse 7, which refers to the joy, consolation, and love on Philemon’s part, qualities with which, says Chrysostom, Paul graciously shames the recipient into giving. At the same time, the apostle begs Philemon for the favor, demonstrat-

ing his confidence in the man. But who, continues the homilist, would not have granted the apostle anything, given his imprisonment? Paul then, according to the argument, apart from mentioning his chains, states that he has begotten Onesimus in his imprisonment, before strategically admitting the slave's faults, saying that previously the slave had been useless but now was useful—a recommendation that cannot go unnoticed, given Paul's high standards. The exegesis thereafter follows text closely, namely, verses 12–16, before Chrysostom arrives at the moral exhortation of the homily, where he begins by advocating sympathetic treatment of slaves and servants, because Christ called them brothers, friends, and fellow heirs. But those who successfully adhere to this admonition should not be puffed up by the fact that they have done a good deed, and the congregation should not laugh at the idea that humility can make one puffed up. The homilist adduces the example of the Pharisee in Luke 18:12, who became arrogant because he paid his tithes to the poor, while the tax-collector was not so. The case of the three boys in the furnace, recounted in the book of Daniel, who after their ordeal were not puffed up but on the contrary confessed their sins and prayed for others, is another example of humility. So too is Daniel, who after being thrown into the lions' den displayed great humility. Thus if one falls into pride by being humble, it is better not to be humble. True humility is exemplified by God, who committed the ultimate act of humility and made us debtors. If we buy slaves and expect them to do everything for us, how much more must it be the case with God, who brought us out of nothing and then redeemed us through sacrificing his Son? So, continues the homilist, the glorious thing for a master is to have grateful slaves, to love them, and not to be ashamed to confess them before everyone.

Before the beginning of the homily the exegesis of what follows is said to deal with Phlm 17–19, yet the treatment of the letters continues to its end, namely, to verse 25. Chrysostom opens the homily by discussing how with great effect Paul argues to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus, to the extent that the apostle does not call the slave's misdemeanor a theft but a wrong. When Paul goes to far as to say that he will repay Onesimus's debt, he writes this in his own hand, so that it is difficult for the master not to receive the slave back, especially as Paul says he seeks Philemon's obedience in this matter. In addition, explains Chrysostom, the apostle's request that a guest room be prepared for him in Philemon's house is to assist him to hear about Onesimus; it is also a proof of the affection of Philemon's house toward Paul. This leads to a listing of the other persons mentioned



toward the ends of the letter—Epaphras, Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke—and a quick summary of how they helped the cause of the gospel. The close of the letter, which the homilist explains is a prayer (“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.”), gives him the opportunity to embark on the moral exhortation concerning the worth of prayer, which, however, has to be accompanied by good works and mercy. If these virtues are not present and we do not pardon or show mercy to our neighbor, how can we expect favorable treatment from God, who through baptism has delivered us from sin so that we should not sin again?

Next, the homilist deals with an objection that he claims to hear regularly among his flock: Why is God unwilling to save the bad? After reminding them that he previously promised to speak to them about Gehenna but had to defer that homily, he now embarks on the topic, arguing that God cannot leave the sins of the present generation unpunished when the people of the old dispensation were chastised. God is good, even in punishing, he maintains. Having no need of us, he created us after a long time. In addition, he put creation at the disposal of the human race, which are all marks of goodness, whereas if he did not call people to account, he would not be good. For if we were not called to account, we would probably have fallen into the state of beasts, and the world would be filled with disturbance, confusion, and disorder. Applying this argument to a house where the master has slaves, Chrysostom asks the congregation whether, if their slaves caused mayhem by insulting the family, plundering everything, and turning everything upside down, it would be a proof of goodness on the part of the owner not to punish or threaten them. In fact, letting such offenders go unpunished causes slaves to become drunkards, wanton, dissolute, and irrational. The same argument applies to someone who has sons and permits them everything and punishes them for nothing. Therefore, because God is good, he has prepared Gehenna. Another instance of God’s goodness, continues the homilist, is that he does not allow the good to become bad. To an imaginary objection that God should only threaten and not punish, Chrysostom replies that if the people of the Old Testament had not been threatened, they would have become negligent; thus a threat is salutary if it is heeded.

#### OTHER ANCIENT COMMENTARIES ON TITUS AND PHILEMON

With the exception of the commentaries of Jerome and Theodore of Mopuestia, other ancient treatments of Titus and Philemon are shorter, sur-

vive only in fragments, or are contained in incidental treatments of the work.<sup>22</sup>

## GREEK

Origen (d. 254?) composed a *Commentarius in Titum* (CPG 1464) and a *Commentarius in Philemonem* (CPG 1465), both of which survive only in fragments.<sup>23</sup>

Severian of Gabala's *Expositio in epistulam ad Titum* (CPG 4219) survives only in a few *catenae* fragments.<sup>24</sup> Severian died after 408.

Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 428) wrote commentaries on the Letters to Titus and Philemon that survive in a Latin translation and Greek and Syriac fragments (CPG 3845).<sup>25</sup>

Theodoret of Cyrrihus (b. ca. 393) composed a short commentary on the Letter to Titus (CPG 6209) and a similarly short one on the Letter to Philemon.<sup>26</sup>

John Damascene (d. ca. 750) is credited with commentaries on the Pauline letters (CPG 7475), but many of them, including the Letters to Titus and Philemon, are reworked versions of Chrysostom's text.<sup>27</sup>

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22. Some of the latter are conveniently collected in Peter Gorday, ed., *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ACCS NT 9 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 281–308.

23. See PG 14:1302–6 (Titus) and 1305–8 (Philemon).

24. Severian of Gabala, *Fragmenta in epistulas s. Pauli*, in *Pauluskomentare aus der griechischen Kirche aus Katenenhandschriften gesammelt und herausgegeben*, ed. Karl Staab, NTabh 15 (Münster: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1933), 344–45.

25. See Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentarii in epistulas Pauli minores*, in *Theodori episcopi Mopsuesteni in epistolas b. Pauli commentarii (The Latin Version with the Greek Fragments, with an Introduction Notes and Indices)*, ed. Henry B. Swete (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882), 2:233–57 (Titus) and 258–85 (Philemon). Also Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Commentary on the Minor Pauline Epistles*, trans. Rowan A. Greer, WGRW 26 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 738–71 (Titus), 772–805 (Philemon).

26. See PG 82:857–69 (Titus) and 871–77 (Philemon). See Theodoret of Cyrus, *Commentary on the Letters of St. Paul*, 2 vols., trans. Robert Charles Hill (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross Orthodox Press 2001), 252–60 (Titus), 261–65 (Philemon).

27. For the commentary on Titus see PG 95:1025–30; on Philemon, 1029–33.

Pseudo-Oecumenius (tenth century) has spurious commentaries attributed to him on the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline letters (see *CPG* 7475).<sup>28</sup>

Theophylact, archbishop of Ochrid (b. ca. 1050, d. after 1126), an exegete and epistolographer among his other roles, commented on all the letters attributed to Paul.<sup>29</sup> Like Pseudo-Oecumenius, he generally follows Chrysostom's exegesis.

## LATIN

Ambrosiaster, who flourished in Rome during the time of Pope Damasus (366–384), wrote short commentaries on the Letters to Titus and Philemon (*CPL* 184).<sup>30</sup>

Jerome (347–420) composed full commentaries on the Letters to Titus and Philemon.<sup>31</sup>

Pelagius (d. 423–429) wrote commentaries on all twelve epistles attributed to Paul (*CPL* 728), including short ones on the Letters to Titus and Philemon.<sup>32</sup>

Cassiodorus (d. ca. 580) has been credited with commentaries on Paul's letters (*CPL* 902), but, in fact, he unwittingly took over Pelagius's

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28. See PG 119:241–61 for the commentary on Titus; 261–72 on Philemon. Blake Goodall discusses the limited value of Pseudo-Oecumenius's work for Chrysostom's text. See Goodall, *The Homilies of St. John Chrysostom on the Letters of St. Paul to Titus and Philemon: Prolegomena to an Edition*, UCPCS 20 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 12–13.

29. For the *Expositio in epistolam ad Titum* see PG 124:142–72; and 171–84 for the Letter to Philemon. Goodall points out that Theophylact's work, like that of Pseudo-Oecumenius, is of limited value (*Homilies of St. John Chrysostom*, 13).

30. Ambrosiaster, *Commentarius in epistolam ad Titum* (*CPL* 184), in *Ambrosiastri qui dicitur Commentarius in epistulas Paulinas*, ed. Henricus I. Vogels, CSEL 81 (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Temsky, 1969), 3:323–34 (Titus) and 337–42 (Philemon). On Ambrosiaster in general see David G. Hunter, "NAPS Presidential Address: The Significance of Ambrosiaster," *J ECS* 17 (2009): 1–26; also Theodore S. de Bruyn, Stephen A. Cooper, and David G. Hunter, trans., *Ambrosiaster's Commentary on the Pauline Epistles*, vol. 1, *Romans*, WGRW 41 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017), xxiii–cxxxviii.

31. See Jerome, *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera* (*CPL* 591), pars 1/8, ed. Federica Bucchi, CCSL 77C (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 3–73 (Titus) and 77–106 (Philemon).

32. See Pelagius, *Expositiones xiii epistularum Pauli* (*CPL* 782), in *Patrologiae Latinae, Supplementum*. ed. Adalbert-G. Hamman (Paris: Garnier, 1958), cols. 1368–72 (Titus) and 1373–74 (Philemon).

commentary on Romans, without its doctrinal parts, and left the other letters to his disciples to treat likewise.<sup>33</sup>

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

The text of John Chrysostom's homilies on Titus and Philemon was established by Bernard de Montfaucon in the eighteenth century in his monumental edition of all Chrysostom's works<sup>34</sup> and was taken over by Jean-Paul Migne in his nineteenth-century edition (PG 62:663–720). For this present translation of the homilies on Titus and Philemon, the 1861 edition of Frederick Field has been used, which has to be considered the best available text until such time as Chrysostom's Pauline homilies receive a modern critical edition.<sup>35</sup> Field based his edition on a Verona edition of 1529, but for the Letter to Titus he used another five manuscripts, and for the Letter to Philemon also another five.<sup>36</sup> An indication of the work still to be done in producing a modern critical edition of these works can be seen from Blake Goodall's conclusion in 1979 that there are at least eighteen manuscripts, complete or partial, of the Letter to Titus, ranging from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries, and an early Syriac translation.<sup>37</sup> Wendy Fick, in her sadly unpublished edition and translation of 1992, estimated that there were thirty-six Greek manuscripts transmitting the Letter to Titus, as well as a Syriac manuscript from the sixth or seventh century containing a partial text, and a Coptic manuscript from the fifteenth century, also with a partial text.<sup>38</sup> For the Letter to Philemon, Goodall discovered sixteen manuscripts, and Fick twenty-four in Greek and one with partial

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33. See *Expositio epistulae ad Titum* (CPL 902), PL 679–84 and 683–86 on Philemon. On the reworking of Pelagius's text see Alexander Souter, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul: A Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927), 210.

34. Bernard de Montfaucon, *Sancti patris nostri Ioannis Chrysostomi archiepiscopi Constantinopolitani opera omnia quae extant, uel quae eius nomine circumferentur*, 13 vols. (Paris: Gaume Fratres Bibliopolas, 1718–1738).

35. For appraisals of Field's text of the Pauline letters, see Goodall, *Homilies of St. John Chrysostom*, 1–5; Cook, *Preaching and Popular Christianity*, 41.

36. These are listed in Field, *Ioannis Chrysostomi interpretation*, 6:xi–xii.

37. Goodall, *Homilies of St. John Chrysostom*, 12, 14.

38. Wendy Fick, "Les homélies de Jean Chrysostome sur les Épîtres à Tite et Philémon: texte grec, traduction et commentaire" (PhD diss., Université de Strasbourg 2, 1992), 45–51.

transmission in Syriac from the sixth century.<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, the work of Maria Konstantinidou on “St John Chrysostom’s Homilies on the Letter of St Paul to Titus” has remained inaccessible to me.<sup>40</sup>

In the translations of the letters to Titus and Philemon that follow, bolded numbers in square brackets refer to the page numbers in Field’s Greek text. I have made grateful use of James Tweed’s translation of 1853,<sup>41</sup> which, of course, did not have the advantage of Field’s text. Fick has an exhaustive list of all editions and translations since 1529.<sup>42</sup>

Verbatim scriptural citations in this volume are reproduced in italics (often within quotation marks) to distinguish them from Chrysostom’s constant paraphrases of biblical texts in the course of his preaching. In order to capture the preacher’s conversational and sometimes even careless style, in the translations I have regularly employed contractions such as “don’t.”

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39. Goodall, *Homilies of St. John Chrysostom*, 38; Fick, “Les homélie,” 67–70.

40. Maria Konstantinidou, “St John Chrysostom’s Homilies on the Letter of St Paul to Titus: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes on Selected Passages” (DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2006). See, however, Maria Konstantinidou, “Opting for a Biblical Text Type: Scribal Interference in John Chrysostom’s Homilies on the Letter to Titus,” in *Textual Variation: Theological and Social Tendencies? Papers from the Fifth Birmingham Colloquium on the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, ed. David C. Parker and Hugh A. G. Houghton, TS (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2008), 133–48.

41. James Tweed, *John Chrysostom on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle: Timothy, Titus, and Philemon*, LHHO (Oxford: Parker, 1853).

42. Fick, “Les homélie,” 88–93.