

Valley Bible Church - Bible Survey

Bible Survey Lesson 82: The Book of Titus

Introduction:

Since the historical time frame around the Book of Titus is the same as that of 1 Timothy, we can get by with a very brief review. Let's highlight the events with some approximate dates:

1. **A. D. 62:** Paul was released from house arrest in Rome before he ever went before Caesar (Acts 24:1; 28:30). This moves us beyond the purview of the historical account in the book of Acts.
2. Paul visited Ephesus, left Timothy to supervise churches in the area of Asia Minor, and traveled on to Macedonia in the north of Greece.
3. **A. D. 62-64:** While there, Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy (1 Tim. 1:3).
4. Some time later, he visited the Isle of Crete, leaving Titus to supervise those churches, then returned up to the eastern coast of Achaia to the city of Nicopolis (1 Tim. 3:12).
5. **A. D. 63-65:** From there or somewhere else in Macedonia he wrote his letter to Titus.
6. **A. D. 65:** Paul traveled west to Troas (1 Tim. 4:13) where he was re-arrested, carted off to Rome, and imprisoned.
7. **A. D. 66-67:** While in a Roman dungeon he wrote his second letter to Timothy.
8. **A. D. 67:** Paul was beheaded.

Let's follow the format we used for the letters to Timothy looking at who it was to, for, and what it was regarding.

FROM: The Apostle Paul (see 1 Timothy)

In his early epistles to the church at Thessalonica, Paul wrote of the return of Christ as a dynamic hope that should affect our entire life-style. Some modern critics say that this was youthful excitement, and that he changed as he matured and realized that the "catching up" wasn't as imminent as he thought. To those critics we offer Titus 2:13, "*looking for the blessed hope and the appearance of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.*"

The word rendered "looking" means constantly entertaining the idea. This hope was foremost in Paul's mind, occupying his heart throughout his entire life and ministry, from the road to Damascus to the wretched Roman dungeon.

Paul knew that the church must be built on Christ, not on a person, and he knew that he, perhaps very soon, would not be there to build, encourage, discipline and teach. Therefore, he continually urged young believers to:

1. Keep their eyes on Christ, not on human leaders (1 Cor. 3).
2. Use their spiritual gifts to build up the body (1 Cor. 12).

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3. Take responsibility for their own spiritual growth (Phil. 2).
4. Pray for church leaders (1 Thess. 5).

Paul also developed young men who would assume leadership in the church after he was gone. He urged these young leaders to center their lives and ministries on the Word of God (2 Tim 3), and train others to carry on as well

(2 Tim. 2:2). Three of those young men were John Mark, Timothy, and Titus.

TO: The Pastor Titus

Titus is not mentioned in the account of Paul's travels in the Book of Acts, but he was certain prominent in his ministry. He met Paul on or before his first trip and was probably led to Christ at that time since Paul refers to him as "*my true child in the Christian faith*"(1:4).

Titus probably traveled with Paul on his second and third missionary trips, and he certainly had a major role to play in his ministry in Corinth. Paul referred to him as "*my partner and fellow worker among you*" in 2 Corinthians 8:23.

He was also one of a party of three that Paul sent back to Corinth to remind them of their promise to share in the offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem.

As a very young man he accompanied Paul and Barnabas to the Jerusalem Council, where the issue of circumcision for Gentile converts was argued.

You will remember that it was decided at that meeting that Gentile converts were to have freedom from the ceremonial Mosaic Law.

This applied to Titus since he was a Gentile and he, unlike Timothy, was never circumcised. This experience made him well aware of the beliefs and teachings of the Judaizers that would be a factor in his future ministry.

After Paul's release from house arrest in Rome, he and Titus traveled to Crete, an Island south of Greece, in the Mediterranean Sea. When Paul returned to the mainland he left Titus in Crete to "*set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city*" (1:5, 11, 13).

Later Paul sent Artemas or Tychicus to relieve Titus, freeing him to join Paul in Nicopolis for the winter (3:12). His last assignment from Paul was to minister in Dalmatia, in what is modern Turkey (II Tim. 4:10). Church tradition records that he returned to Crete and ministered there until he died.

RE: Ministry in Crete

Crete is one of the largest islands in the Mediterranean, 160 miles long by 35 miles wide and covered with mountains. Its location made it a prominent seaport and trade center and, even in ancient times, it boasted of highly developed civilization and large population. Cretans were great sailors and famous bow men who had a notorious reputation for immorality.

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We have no definitive information on the founding of the church, but we do know that Cretans were present in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Acts 2:11), so it is logical to think that converts brought the gospel home. Paul first visited Crete on his voyage to Rome to appear before Caesar (Acts 27).

In contrast to several of Paul's other letters, including those to Rome and Galatia, Titus does not focus on explaining or defending doctrine. Paul seemed to have complete confidence in Titus' training, understanding, and convictions to meet the challenges of ministry in such a demanding place.

Although it warns against false teachers, it gives no theological correction indicating that the young church had been well-taught and was firmly grounded. Its main thrust is equipping the saints for effective evangelism.

Paul points out that the ideal church is one that is orderly in its organization, sound in its doctrine, pure in its living, and *"ready for every good work."*

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF TITUS

I. ORGANIZATION (Chapter 1)

Paul began his letter to Titus by identifying himself as a bond-servant of God and an Apostle of Jesus Christ. He is a voluntary slave of God and one chosen personally by Jesus, face to face, to further the faith of God's elect so that they might acquire full knowledge of Christian truth (v 1).

That Paul would refer to Titus, Timothy, and Onesimus as, *"my true children in a common faith,"* indicates that he was their spiritual father having seen them born again, nurturing them in the faith, and training them for the ministry.

A. Elders (5-9)

When Paul and Titus arrived on Crete they found a flourishing church spread throughout the island. They ministered among those churches to bring order and growth, but Paul had to leave before their job was complete. He left Titus there with the express purpose of setting things in order by appointing elders to serve in each city church.

1. Character (5-9)

Paul had given Titus specific instructions on the type of men he should look for in seeking candidates for elder. Notice they are all character qualities:

- 1) Above reproach in their family life. A one-woman man with control over his household (v 6).
- 2) Above reproach in their stewardship, a personal life marked with humility, righteousness, and self-control (vv. 7-8).
- 3) Above reproach in their ministry, true to the Word and able to teach sound doctrine and refute false doctrine (v 9). Unlike 1 Timothy 3, no deacons are mentioned, suggesting that the organization of the church was not yet fully developed.

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2. Calling (5-9)

There are several general principles that can be stated:

- 1) There is to be a plurality of Elders, not an individual man.
- 2) Elders are appointed, not elected.
- 3) Men are disqualified by lack of Christian character.
- 4) Men are qualified by their teaching and defense of the truth.

B. False Teachers (10-16)

The elders were needed on Crete to defend the truth because they were being contradicted by false teachers (v 9). Paul described them in this portion of his letter and condemns them for their heresies.

Observe that their problems are all problems of character.

1. Character (10-12)

- 1) They were "rebellious men," refusing to put themselves under authority and rejecting the true teaching of the gospel message.
- 2) They were "empty talkers," using flamboyant and impressive speech which accomplished nothing constructive.
- 3) They were "deceivers," who lead members of the church astray, even entire families, who were not mature enough to recognize their error.
- 4) They were in it "for the sake of sordid gain."
- 5) They were "liars," or as their own Cretan poet Epimenides said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons," and therefore they cannot be trusted.

2. Condemnation (13-16)

The people need to be rebuked for allowing these men to function, and the false teachers need to be rebuked for teaching "*Jewish myths and commandments of men*" (Judaizers), because they, "*profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient, and worthless for any good deed.*" (v 16)

It is important to notice, believers who have been purified by the work of Christ can perceive all things as pure. Unbelievers, especially legalists, do not enjoy true freedom in Christ. These false teachers were setting up human standards against which matters of purity and impurity could be judged, and they being human, were corrupt.

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II. OPERATION (Chapter 2)

After dealing with the appointment of qualified leaders and the silencing of false teachers, Paul turns to the day-to-day operation of the church.

A. Groups (1-10)

He began by addressing a series of groups of believers individually in broad but vital terms:

1. Titus (1)

In contrast to the false teachers, the pastor is to *"speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine."* This refers to a doctrine which produces behavior in accord with belief, since sound doctrine always leads to ethical conduct in the life of a believer.

2. Older Men (2)

Men of advanced age are to be mature in their temperament and in their spiritual lives.

3. Older Women (3-4)

Women in this category are to be mature in behavior and example, teaching and encouraging young women to mature as well.

4. Younger Women (4-5)

The young women, under the teaching of the older, are to center their lives round the love and keeping of their husbands, children, and home. This is one way in which the world judges the reality of the Word of God in their lives and in their church.

5. Younger Men (6-8)

The world was especially looking at the Christian young men. Looking for things to discredit the faith. Were they silly, mischievous, uncaring, unrighteous, coarse in daily conversation? These were the evidences of the counterfeit believer.

6. Titus (7-8)

Overlapping here is an admonition to Titus to be the example to those young men of a righteous life-style that is beyond reproach.

7. Slaves (9-10)

In an Empire where men, women, and children were owned as property and had virtually no rights, Paul asks them to live and serve in such a way as to make the doctrine of salvation attractive to non-believers.

The Bible never condones or condemns slavery but teaches clearly that freedom from the slavery of sin is infinitely more important than freedom from human bondage (Romans 6:22).

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B. Godliness (11-15)

This is the heart of the letter, the foundation for Paul's instructions.

God's sovereign purpose in calling elders (1:5), and commanding his people to live righteously (vv. 1-10) is to provide a witness that makes clear His plan of salvation. Paul's great presentation of the gospel includes salvation from the penalty (v 11), power (v 12) and presence (v. 13) of sin.

He instructs us to live our lives today:

1. Negatively -- Denying ungodliness and worldly desires.

2. Positively -- Living sensibly, righteously, and godly.

God by His grace has saved us, teaching us both what to do, and providing the enabling to do it. That grace flows from the work of Jesus who *"gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."* (v 14)

These are the truths Titus should teach in order to encourage the church and effectively rebuke the false teachers (v 15).

IV. OBEDIENCE (Chapter 3)

Paul moved his thoughts to the duties of all believers.

A. To Government (1-4)

1. Method (1-2)

Though Christians are special people, chosen by God, redeemed from the world, and no longer dependent on its system, they are not above obedience to earthly authorities.

Being confrontive and contentious only raises hostility in non-believers, so we need to exercise Christian character, *"showing every consideration to all men."* (2)

2. Motivation (3-4)

The sobering truth of who we were without Christ should make us humble in our dealings with non-believers, even very bad ones.

If it weren't for God's grace we would be exactly as they are.

B. To God (5-15)

1. Grace (5-7)

We owe God everything, including obedience, because . . . *"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit."* (v. 5)

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2. Good (8-11)

Our humility should drive us from foolish actions and to good deeds, not because they save us, but because we have been saved.

If those "who have trusted God" fail to do good and argue over foolish controversies (v 9) they will bring division and should be warned twice then rejected. The word "fractious," in this case, means one who divides the church by unprofitable and worthless argument.

Conclusion:

Paul announced his plan to send Artemus and Tychicus to carry on Titus' work so that he could winter in Nicopolis with Paul. Again, Paul stresses the idea that believers need to be known by their good deeds. All the workers with Paul joined in sending greetings and Paul closed with a typical blessing.