

Titus

INTRODUCTION

Although Titus was a companion and valuable co-worker of Paul, little is known about him, and he is not mentioned in the book of Acts. He was a Greek, and evidently a convert of Paul. The fact that Titus was not circumcised (Gal. 2:3) indicates that he had not been raised in Judaism nor had he become a proselyte.

Paul highly esteemed Titus, and, although the N.T. does not record a ministry of Paul in Crete, it is clearly indicated in Titus 1:5 that together they had conducted a mission there sometime during A.D. 63-64 after Paul's release from his first imprisonment in Rome.

This letter to Titus has an affinity with 1 Timothy, for both young men had been assigned positions of responsible leadership in their churches during Paul's absence. Both epistles are occupied with the qualifications of those who are to lead and teach the churches, and the world corruption that faced the new churches is the same. Titus has three great themes—church organization, sound doctrine and holy living.

Titus 1:1-16

Paul, having only laid the foundations of the church in Crete, and hastening to go to another place, (for he was not the pastor of a single island only, but the Apostle of the Gentiles,) had given charge to Titus to prosecute this work as an Evangelist. It is evident from this Epistle that, immediately after Paul's departure, Satan labored not only to overthrow the government of the Church, but likewise to corrupt its doctrine.

There were some who, through ambitious motives, wished to be elevated to the rank of pastors, and who, because Titus did not comply with their wicked desires, spoke unfavorably of him to many persons. On the other hand, there were Jews who, under the pretence of supporting the Mosaic law, introduced a great number of trifles; and such persons were listened to with eagerness and with much acceptance. Paul therefore writes with this design, to arm Titus with his authority, that he may be able to bear so great a burden; for undoubtedly there were some who fearlessly despised him as being but one of the ordinary rank of pastors. It is also possible that complaints about him were in circulation, to the effect that he assumed more authority than belonged to him, when he did not admit pastors till he had made trial and ascertained their fitness.

Hence we may infer, that this was not so much a private epistle of Paul to Titus, as it was a public epistle to the Cretans. It is not probable that Titus is blamed for having with too great indulgence raised unworthy persons to the office of bishop, or that, as an ignorant man and a novice, he is told what is that kind of doctrine in which he ought to instruct the people; but because due honor was not rendered to him, Paul clothes him with his own authority, both in ordaining ministers and in the whole government of the Church. Because there were many who foolishly desired to have another form of doctrine than that which he delivered, Paul approves of this alone—rejecting all others—and exhorts him to proceed as he had begun.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

Titus was left in Crete to ordain elders and teach the truth to God's elect. Truth is always intended to determine life and to promote godliness. **What guidelines did Titus use to ordain elders?**

Paul also warned Titus about a number with undisciplined life styles—what were some of these practices that hindered the Church that Christ was building? (Especially verse 16).

Titus 2:1-2

"Sound doctrine" is so called from the effect produced by it; as, on the contrary, he says, that unskillful men dote about questions which do no good. *Sound*, therefore, means wholesome, that which actually feeds souls. Thus, by a single word, as by a solemn proclamation, he banishes from the Church all speculations which serve rather to promote ostentation than to aid godliness, as he did in both of the Epistles to Timothy.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

We find today that doctrinal truths are often compromised in an effort to prevent divisions and dissension in the church.

What are the dangers of so doing, and has God given us ample warning against this practice?

Prov. 10:25 1 Cor. 3:9-11 Eph. 2:19-21 2 Tim. 2:15-19 1 Tim. 1:4-7 Rev. 2:4 James 1:5, 6

Titus 2:3-13

Leave the old life.

Live the new life.

Look for that blessed hope and glorious appearing of Christ (2:11-13).

How essential that this be our foundation! Then can we "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things" (2:10). To think that we in any way can adorn the wonderful gospel by our lives! Just as we put a frame on a beautiful picture to enhance its beauty and make it more conspicuous, so we must adorn and make more beautiful the gospel of Christ. A king in his royal robes is more easily recognized as such than one in ordinary clothing. How we can either make or mar the gospel! What is the "gospel according to you"? In all things show thyself a pattern of good works (2:7). The test of fellowship is not warmth of devotion, but holiness of life. One cannot live on strong "feelings." Some mistake religious feeling for holiness, and good thoughts for good conduct. There is use and abuse in religious emotion.

Be so faithful in your attitudes and obligations of life that critics of your religion will be silenced (2:8). Make others say, "If this is what Christ can do for you, there must be something to your religion."

(What the Bible is All About, Henrietta C. Mears)

How can old women, young women, old men, young men and servants “adorn the doctrine of God”? Choose one of the above categories, and from your personal observations, address it from the standpoint of how close, or how far away from these admonitions church people are today; then write a statement regarding this group, telling what is needed for them to obey Paul’s instructions.

Titus 2:14-15

He argues from the design of redemption, which he shows to be a desire to live a godly and upright life. Hence it follows, that the duty of a good teacher is rather to exhort to a holy life than to occupy the minds of men with useless questions. “He hath redeemed us,” says Zacharias in his song,--“that we may serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.” (Luke 1:74, 75) For the same reason Paul says, *the grace of God hath appeared, teaching us*; for he means that it ought to hold the place of instruction to us to regulate our life well. What is proclaimed concerning the mercy of God is seized by some as an occasion of licentiousness; while others are hindered by slothfulness from meditating on “newness of life.” But the manifestation of the grace of God unavoidably carries along with it exhortations to a holy life.
(Calvin’s Commentaries, John Calvin)

Although we have become Christians we still have a tendency to sin because our old sin nature is still residing in our flesh. Then if we inadvertently sin, we are troubled deep within, because we know that God desires us to live according to His Word. Also we do have the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ indwelling us, giving us His wisdom, power and strength to do what He asks of us (1 Cor. 1:30). We can recognize too, that when Jesus went to the Cross, He took our flesh nature (known as our old man) with Him, bringing it to crucifixion also (Rom. 6:3-10). The last thing to go to the Cross is the *self nature* with its ugly pride, but our Lord faithfully looks for that surrender in each one of us, so that only His pure life will be manifest in us, causing others thereby to also be drawn to our Savior. **Was God’s ultimate purpose in redemption to save us from judgment or to purify us from sin?** In history a king-conqueror would bring back the choicest of the spoil to be set apart for himself. **Are we willing to allow the work of Jesus Christ to make us fit to be the special possession of God?**

What remedy does the Word give to handle the lust, hate and pride that so often creeps into our lives?

Rom. 6:3-14 Rom. 8:9-14 Rom. 8:31-37 1 Cor. 11:31, 32 Gal. 6:1 Eph. 4:1, 2 Eph. 4:17-32 Eph. 5:1-8
Eph. 6:10-17 Phil. 2:14-16 Phil. 3:8 Col. 3:12-16 Phil. 4:6-9

Titus 3:1-3

From many passages it is evident that the Apostles had great difficulty in keeping the common people subject to the authority of magistrates and princes. We are all by nature desirous of power; and the consequence is, that no one willingly is subject to another. Besides, perceiving that nearly all the principalities and powers of the world were at that time opposed to Christ, they thought them unworthy of receiving any honor. The Jews especially, being an untamable race, did not cease to mutiny and rage. Thus, after having spoken of particular duties, Paul now wishes to give a general admonition to all, to observe peaceably the order of civil government, to submit to the laws, to obey magistrates. That subjection to princes, and that obedience to magistrates, which he demands, is extended to edicts, and laws, and other parts of civil government.

(Calvin’s Commentaries, John Calvin)

In today’s world of constant change, many government leaders are corrupt and godless. Rom. 12:9-21 and 13:1-7 give Christians guidance and instruction for their actions as citizens. **Here make a few comments on some of the ways God’s people can stand strong in God’s principles and be a true light in their world.**

Titus 3:4

He has with propriety assigned the first rank to “goodness,” which prompts God to love us; for God will never find in us anything which he ought to love, but He loves us because He is good and merciful. Besides, although He testifies His goodness and love to all, yet we know it by faith only, when He declares himself to be our Father in Christ. Before Paul was called to the faith of Christ, he enjoyed innumerable gifts of God, which might have given him a taste of God’s fatherly kindness; he had been educated, from his infancy, in the doctrine of the law; yet he wanders in darkness, so as not to perceive the goodness of God, till the Spirit enlightened his mind, and till Christ came forth as the witness and pledge of

the grace of God the Father, from which, but for Him, we are all excluded. Thus he means that the kindness of God is not revealed and known but by the light of faith.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

Could the kindness and love of God be truly revealed to us if we did not know that we were sinners (all), and that this sin separated us from a holy God? Then, with our knowledge of being sinners, did we not require that a holy entrance back to God be provided for us, fully canceling our sin—one that we were unable to provide? And, finally, what was this matchless provision?

Titus 3:5-8

Let us remember that here Paul addresses his discourse to believers, and describes the manner in which they entered into the kingdom of God. He affirms that by their works they did not all deserve that they should become partakers of salvation, or that they should be reconciled to God through faith; but he says that they obtained this blessing solely through the mercy of God. We therefore conclude from his words, that we bring nothing to God, but that He goes before us by His pure grace, without any regard to works. For when he says, —“Not by works which we have done,” he means, that we can do nothing but sin till we have been renewed by God. This negative statement depends on the former affirmation, by which he said that they were foolish and disobedient, and led away by various desires, till they were created anew in Christ; and indeed, what good work could proceed from so corrupt a mass?

It is madness, therefore, to allege that a man approaches to God by his own “preparations,” as they call them. During the whole period of life they depart further and further from Him, until He puts forth his hand, and brings them back into that path from which they had gone astray. In short, that we, rather than others, have been admitted to enjoy salvation of Christ, is altogether ascribed by Paul to the mercy of God, because there were no works of righteousness in us. This argument would have no weight, if he did not take for granted, that everything that we attempt to do before we believe, is unrighteous and hateful to God.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

What did John Calvin mean in the second sentence of his statement above, implying that we cannot be reconciled to God through faith? Does there need to be a further step on the sinner's part—faith to believe, yes, and then by the power of the Holy Spirit, the *receiving*, the *surrendering* of one's all, allowing *only* the Christ-life to remain? Can you grasp that when this fully takes place, then the sin-flesh-self nature dies, and this is made possible *only* by the sheer mercy of God?

Titus 3:9-15

Avoid an heretical man. This is properly added; because there will be no end of quarrels and disputes, if we wish to conquer obstinate men by argument; for they will never want words, and they will derive fresh courage from impudence, so that they will never grow weary of fighting. Thus, after having given orders to Titus as to the form of doctrine which he should lay down, he now forbids him to waste much time in debating with heretics, because battle would lead to battle and dispute to dispute. Such is the cunning of Satan, that, by the impudent talkativeness of such men, he entangles good and faithful pastors, so as to draw them away from diligence in teaching. We must therefore beware lest we become engaged in quarrelsome disputes; for we shall never have leisure to devote our labors to the Lord's flock, and contentious men will never cease to annoy us.

(Calvin's Commentaries, John Calvin)

Satan is always watching for opportunities to bring divisiveness into a body of Christ's church. **What does God's Word say about these matters in Eph. 4:1-3 and Eph. 4:30-32?**

“Grace be with you all” (Titus 3:15) The Oxford American dictionary defines grace as: “God's loving mercy to all mankind.” **Are you able to tie this beautiful word grace (in the fullness of its meaning) to Paul's last instruction in this chapter, verse 14: “And let our people also learn to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful”?**