

#16. THE LETTER TO TITUS

1. This letter from Paul was sent to Titus in order to assist him in his oversight of the churches on the island of Crete. Titus was a Gentile who was part of Paul's apostolic team, a helper who was especially effective during Paul's Third Missionary Journey. The fact that Titus was not circumcised (Galatians 2:3) indicates he was neither raised in Judaism, nor was he a proselyte. Though Titus is mentioned frequently, we know very little about him. Titus is mentioned more than a dozen times in the New Testament. Like Timothy, he was considered one of Paul's "Sons in the Faith".

2. **Authorship and date** - Paul's authorship is virtually undisputed, and the letter was composed in about 64AD. - probably about the same time as 1 Timothy. It is possible that Paul wrote either from Corinth or Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). It is noteworthy that Titus was mentioned nine times in 2 Corinthians. He accompanied Paul to the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15.

3. **Paul's emphasis** is on quality Christian living within a culture known for its dishonesty, poor work ethic, and unrestrained lifestyles. There is a clear call for the people of God to live as "counter-culture" ambassadors of God's Kingdom.

4. **Key Chapters**
 - Chapter 1 discusses the need for competent leadership in the churches of Crete.

 - Chapter 2 discusses Christian lifestyle among Believers.

 - Chapter 3 discusses Christian lifestyle in the Cretan culture.

5. **Key Verse**
 - **Titus 1:5 NLT** - "I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there and appoint elders in each town as I instructed you."

6. Key People

- **Titus** - Titus is a Gentile converted to Christianity by Paul and consecrated by him as Bishop of the Island of Crete. Titus brought a fundraising letter from Paul to Corinth, to collect for the poor in Jerusalem. Later, on Crete, Titus appointed presbyters (elders) in every city and according to tradition, he remained there into his old age, dying in the city of Candia (modern Heraklion). It has been argued by some that the name "Titus" in 2 Corinthians and Galatians is an informal name used by Timothy. The point is made that even though both are said to be long-term close companions of Paul, they may never appear in common scenes. The theory proposes that a number of passages all refer to the same journey of a single individual, Titus-Timothy. However, 2 Timothy seems to dispute this, by claiming that "Titus has gone to Dalmatia" (2 Timothy 4:10) The fact that Paul made a point of circumcising Timothy in Acts 16 but refused to circumcise Titus (Galatians 2) indicates that they are clearly different men. There appears to be absolutely no reason to assume Titus and Timothy are the same person. In addition, the historical record indicates two separate ministries in separate locales.

7. Key Place -

- **Crete** - Crete is an island in the Mediterranean about 160 miles long, and 35 mile across at its widest point. Paul had visited there on his trip to Rome (Acts 27), and returned for ministry later. Titus was left to conduct affairs on Crete while Paul continued on to Macedonia. Chapter three indicates either Artemas or Tychichus were scheduled to take responsibility for Crete, and Titus was instructed to meet Paul in Nicopolis for the winter.
- **Nicopolis** - The name means "City of Victory", and no less than nine cities were designated by this name throughout the Roman Empire. This particular city was in southern Greece, and it appears Paul planned to spend the winter of 64-65AD in this town.

8. Key Themes -

- **Character and Culture** - Even though Cretans were known for sub-par lifestyles, Christians in Crete were to become examples for Believers anywhere.
- **Character and Church Relationships** - **The** best way to change society is to model the desired behavior in our homes and churches.
- **Character And Citizenship** - Although Christians are primarily citizens of Heaven, or testimony should include an honorable sense of civic responsibility.

9. The Contents of Titus -

- Greetings to Titus (1:1-4)
- Effective Leadership Goals (1:5-9)
- Dealing With False Teachers (1:10-16)
- Holy Living and Sound Doctrine in the Church (2:1-15)
- Holy Living and Sound Doctrine in the World (3:1-11)
- Farewell and Final Instructions (3:12-15)

Worth noting about Paul's Letter to Titus:

- As in the letters to Timothy, Paul reminds the pastor about the importance of “sound doctrine” (1:4,9,13; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 5, 7,8,10, and 3:15).
- The letter to Titus seems to be a condensed version of 1 Timothy, but there are major differences. Timothy was ministering to an established church whose internal leadership appeared to be in rebellion, while Titus was assisting new churches in their initial set-up.
- There is no conflict, theologically or in practical living, between the idea of “being good” (grace) and “doing good” (works).

When reading Titus:

- Remember Paul's correction of false teachers in Timothy seems to be Jewish-based and arising from within the established church. Paul is instructing Titus to “head it off at the pass”, to use a cowboy term.
- It is clear that Timothy is dealing with a mature, established church, while Titus is doing the work of a church planter.

- There are three terms used by Paul to describe the leadership of the church. We see them used together and interchangeably in Acts 20:17, 28, 29, indicating the terms are designations indicating the idea of a pastor.
 - Shepherd (poimen), which refers to one who cares for, leads and protects the flock.
 - Overseer (episkopoi) which means “one who looks over or supervises”.
 - Elder (presbuteroi) which means an older, mature one”.