

Titus Chapter 1

Paul wrote this letter to Titus about the year 63 A.D. Titus was a Gentile who had been saved under Paul's ministry. It seemed that Paul was very fond of Titus, as he was of Timothy. He thought of Titus as his son in the ministry, because Paul had taught Titus. Titus had gone on several journeys with Paul and even went to Rome with Paul.

Titus went to Jerusalem with Paul, and the Jewish Christians there wanted to circumcise Titus. Paul would not allow them to do this, because it would cause all the Gentile Christians to be of less importance to God.

When there was trouble with a church and Paul could not go himself, he would send Titus. The very next best thing to being there himself would be to send Titus, because Titus had been trained by Paul, and it was as if Paul were ministering.

This, like the book of Timothy, is a personal letter that Paul sent Titus to help him in his ministry.

Verses 1-4: The author, Paul, describes himself as a servant (Greek *doulos*, "slave" or "bondservant") who has no right of his own. An apostle (Greek *apostolos*), is one sent with a commission. According to the faith of God's elect means "with a view to". Hence Paul was made an apostle, in order to call the elect to faith in Christ by preaching the gospel to all men.

This salutation emphasizes the nature of Paul's service as an apostle of Jesus Christ. He proclaimed:

- (1) Salvation: God's purpose to save the elect by the gospel;
- (2) Sanctification: God's purpose to build up the saved by the Word of God; and
- (3) Glorification: God's purpose to bring believers to eternal glory.

Titus 1:1 "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness;"

"Servant": Paul pictures himself as the most menial slave of New Testament times, indicating his complete and willing servitude to the Lord, by whom all believers have been "bought with a price" (1 col. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19).

"Apostle": The word has the basic meaning of messenger or literally "sent one" and, though often used of royal emissaries who ministered with the extended authority of their sovereign, Paul's exalted position as "an apostle", also was an extension of his being a bond servant to "God," which came with great authority, responsibility, and sacrifice.

“God’s elect”: Those who have been graciously chosen for salvation “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4). But who must exercise personal faith prompted and empowered by the Holy Spirit. God’s choice of believers always precedes and enables their choice of Him (John 15:16; Acts 13:46-48; Rom 9:15-21; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:8-9, 2:10; 1 Pet. 1:1-2).

“The truth”: Paul had in mind gospel truth, the saving message of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Tim. 2:3-4; 2 Tim. 2:25). It is that saving truth that leads to “godliness” or sanctification (see 2:11-12).

We have discussed before that the word "apostle" could be ambassador. An ambassador does not bring his own message, but the message of the person he is representing. We can see from that one word that Paul is bringing to the Gentile world the message of Jesus Christ.

Paul, as much as anyone, was a servant of God. He had dedicated his life to the service of the Lord. The purpose of the message Paul was bringing, was to stir up faith in Jesus Christ in those elected of God to receive the Truth. Of course, God elected all mankind who will, to receive the Word of God. The Word of God teaches godliness.

Titus 1:2 "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;"

“Hope”: This is divinely promised and divinely guaranteed to all believers, providing endurance and patience (John 6:37-40; Rom. 8:18-23; 1 Cor. 15:51-58; Eph. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:8:11, 20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 1 John 3:2-3).

“Cannot lie” (1 Sam. 15:29; Heb. 6:18). Because God Himself is truth and the source of truth, it is impossible for Him to say anything untruthful (John 14:6, 17; 15:26; Num. 23:19; Psalm 146:6).

“Before the world began”: God’s plan of salvation for sinful mankind was determined and decreed before man was even created. The promise was made to God the Son. (Eph. 1:4-5; 2 Tim. 1:9).

The hope of every Christian is the resurrection to eternal life in Jesus. The plan of salvation was from before the world began.

2 Timothy 1:9 "Who hath saved us, and called [us] with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"

This does not remove the free will of each individual to decide to be saved and follow Jesus. God's foreknowledge allowed Him to know who would be saved. That is how he knew and wrote the names in the book. This plan was not just the Father's, but God the Word's, and the Holy Spirit's, from the beginning.

The Word of God was to take on the form of flesh, become Jesus, and save His people. He was the one to save us, since He was our Creator.

Hebrews 6:18 "That by two immutable things, in which [it was] impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:"

Titus 1:3 "But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Savior;"

“His word ... preaching”: God’s Word is the sole source of content for all faithful preaching and teaching (1 Cor. 1:18-21; 9:16-17; Gal 1:15-16; Col. 1:25).

“God our Savior” (2:10; 3:4). The plan of salvation originated in eternity past with God.

"Manifested" means made real. Then we see that God chose to make His Word real by preaching. We are told over and over in the Scriptures, preach the Word. Paul was a mouth piece for God. That is exactly what Paul was called to do, when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

1 Corinthians 1:18 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."

1 Corinthians 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

"God our Savior" is of course speaking of Jesus Christ.

Titus 1:4 "To Titus, [mine] own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, [and] peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior."

“Own son”: A spiritual son, a genuine believer in Christ, like Timothy (1 Tim. 1-2).

“Common faith”: This may refer to saving faith or to the content of the Christian faith, e.g., “The faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3).

“Our Savior”: Christ is called Savior each time He is mentioned after (verse 1; 2:13; 3:6).

Titus had been saved by Paul's preaching, and that is why Paul speaks of him as his son in this Scripture. Some believe that Titus was saved about 14 years after Paul was saved on the road to Damascus. This possibly happened at Antioch.

Paul was not married and had no natural sons. This blessing that he speaks on Titus is from Paul, and Jesus, and the Father. He adds Savior to Jesus showing that He is what brings us not only salvation, but grace, mercy and peace.

Verses 5-9: God's standards for all believers are high; His requirement for church leaders is to set that standard and model it. Such leaders are not qualified on the basis of natural ability, intelligence or education. But on the basis of moral and spiritual character and the ability to teach with skill as the Spirit sovereignly has equipped them.

Titus is to set in order the church. The church had been established but needed to be organized to function effectively.

“Ordain elders in every city”: Elders (Greek presbuteroi), were to be appointed in every city to rule and teach in the churches. The qualifications listed here are similar to those (in 1 Timothy 3).

“Blameless” means without blame or rebuke. It does not mean sinless. Husband of one wife (literally “a one-woman man”): This may preclude those who are divorced and certainly any who are polygamous.

“Bishop” (Greek episkopos, literally (“overseer”), shows that the elders mentioned (in verse 5), are also called the steward of God, meaning God's household servant.

“No striker” means not a brawler or fighter.

“Not given to filthy lucre” means not greedy of financial gain.

Titus 1:5 "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:"

“Set in order”: Titus was to correct wrong doctrine and practices in the Cretan churches, a task that Paul had been unable to complete. This ministry is mentioned nowhere else.

“Elders”: Similar qualifications are (in 1 Tim. 3:1-7). Mature spiritual leaders of the church, also known as bishops or overseers (verse 7; 1 Tim. 3:2), and pastor (literally shepherds; see Eph. 4:11), were to care for each city's congregation (see also Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Peter 5:1-2). This ministry of appointing leaders is consistently Pauline (Acts 14:23).

“Appointed thee”: A reminder of past apostolic instructions.

“Crete” is the large island southeast of Greece in the southern portion of the Aegean Sea. It is 156 miles long and ranges in width from 7 to 35 miles. In ancient times two great civilizations existed on Crete: the Minoan, involving the semi-mythical King Minos, and later the Mycenaean. Then, after a one thousand year period of decline it was conquered by the Romans in 67 B.C.

Crete enters into New Testament history three times. First, on the Day of Pentecost. Jews from Crete were in Jerusalem witnessing the notable events. Second, when Paul was being sent he visited Crete and left Titus to establish the churches (verse 5).

Paul had every confidence in Titus. He knew Titus would do everything the way he would do it, if he were there. It seems that Paul had left Titus the task of establishing the churches in this area. Paul had so much faith in Titus, that he left it up to Titus to choose someone in each church to be the elder.

An "elder" is the spiritual advisor of the church. It is the job of the elder to make sure that the church is kept spiritually sound in its doctrine. We will see in the next few verses, that Paul gave Titus some guidelines to use in choosing these leaders.

Titus 1:6 "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly."

“Blameless”: This word does not refer to sinless perfection but to a personal life that is beyond legitimate accusation and public scandal. It is a general and primary requirement of spiritual leaders that is repeated (verse 7), and explained in the next verse (1 Tim. 3:2, 10).

“Husband of one wife”: Literally “a one-woman man.” I.e., a husband who is consistently, both inwardly and outwardly, devoted and faithful to his wife (1 Tim. 3:2). An otherwise qualified single man is not necessarily disqualified. This is not speaking of divorce, but of internal and external purity in the sexual area (see Prov. 6:32-33).

This necessity was motivation for Paul’s commitment to control his body (1 Cor. 9:27).

“Faithful children”: This refers to children who have saving faith in Christ and reflect it in their conduct. Since (1 Tim. 3:4), requires children to be in submission, it may be directed at young children in the home, while this text looks at those who are older.

“Not accused of riot or unruly”: “Riot” connotes debauchery, suggesting, again, that the reference is to grown children. “Unruly” carries the idea of rebelliousness to the gospel. Here the elder shows his ability to lead his family to salvation and sanctification (see 1 Tim. 3:4-5), an essential prerequisite for leading the church.

Blameless means that there is nothing he has done that anyone in the community will blame him for. He does not even give the appearance of evil. His marriage is solid; he is not jumping from one wife to the other. His children are Christians, as well as he is. The children are not a problem to the community as well.

Titus 1:7 "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;"

“Bishop or Overseer”. This is not a hierarchical title, but a word meaning “elder” or “bishop” (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2).

The bishop is like the superintendent of the church, it means in general charge of the church. We might even call him chairman of the board today.

“Steward”: The term refers to one who manages someone else’s properties for the well-being of those his master cares for. In this context, one who manages spiritual truth, lives on God’s behalf, and is wholly accountable to Him. The church is God’s (Acts 20:28; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Peter 5:24), and elders or overseers are accountable to Him for the way they lead it (Heb. 13:17).

“Wine”: Applies to drinking any alcoholic beverage in any way that dulls the mind or subdues inhibitions (Prov. 23:29-35; 31:4-7). By application, it also indicts any other substance, e.g., drugs, which would cloud the mind.

“Filthy lucre”: Even in the early church, some men became pastors in order to gain wealth (see verse 11; 1 Pet. 5:2; 2 Peter 2:1-3).

It appears to me; the description of this person is showing a man who is completely sold out to the Lord. He is Christ-like. He is an easy-going person who loves other people. He has his will under control at all times, because he does not take drugs or alcohol. He is not greedy for wealth.

Titus 1:8 "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;"

“Hospitality”: The word actually means “a lover of strangers.” Most men who truly love other people are hospitable. This describes a man who loves good, whether in man or in the good things of life.

“Sober”: Serious with the right priorities. Sober is the reverse of riotous. This man is not living in sin. He is living in Jesus who has overcome sin, thus holy.

Temperate means master of one's self. This is a perfect description of someone who has his flesh under the control of his spirit.

Titus 1:9 "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

“Faithful word”: Sound biblical doctrine not only should be taught but also adhered to with deep conviction (1 Tim. 4:6; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:15; 3:16; 4:2-4).

The power of Christianity is in the Word of God (Jesus). The faithful Word would be the true Word of God. Holding fast, would mean that he had stored the Word of God down deep in his heart. The only way to be an effective soul winner, is to have the Word of God totally imbedded into your own heart to the extent that when you open your mouth, the Word of God comes forth.

“Exhort ...convince”: The faithful teaching and defending of Scripture which encourages godliness and confronts sin and error (those who contradict).

"Gainsayers", are disputers. The Truth will convince the worst of the disputers, if it is brought forth faithfully long enough.

Verses 10-16: The false teachers in the Cretan churches were much like those with whom Timothy had to deal in Ephesus (see 1 Tim. 3:7; Romans 16:17-18; 2 Pet. 2:1-3).

Titus 1:10 "For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision:"

“Many unruly”: Because those men were so numerous, Titus’ job was especially difficult which made the appointment of additional godly elders (verse 5), all the more crucial. Some of the false teachers may have opposed even Paul’s apostolic authority during his brief ministry on Crete.

“The circumcision”: These were Jews who taught that salvation required the physical cutting of circumcision and adherence to Mosaic ceremonies (Acts 15:1-12; Gal. 3:1-12; Eph. 2:11-12; Col. 2:11-12).

The problem with these people is that they had not left their Jewish teaching behind, when they came to Christ. Law and grace are like oil and water, they cannot mix. The circumcision leaves no doubt that they are speaking of the Jews. The Jewish converts were the most difficult for Paul to get to conform to the teachings of Christianity.

Titus 1:11 "Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake."

“Whole houses” (see 2 Tim. 3:6).

“Filthy lucre’s sake”: False teachers are always in it for the money (1 Tim. 6:5; 1 Peter 5:2).

"Filthy lucre" is dirty money. At the time this was written many people sold all their worldly belongings and had things common. Perhaps, this is speaking of wanting to be in control of the wealth that was generated from those sales.

They were bringing another message other than what Paul had brought, and were even getting whole families to break away to their false teaching. Most of this had to do, however, with conforming to the Jew's customs.

Titus 1:12 "One of themselves, [even] a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians [are] always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies."

“A prophet”: Epimenides, the highly esteemed sixth century B.C. Greek poet and native of Crete, had characterized his own people as the dregs of Greek culture. Elsewhere, Paul also quoted pagan sayings (Acts 17:28; 1 Cor. 15:33). This quote is directed at the false teachers’ character.

They did not have a very high opinion of the members of the church. The Jews had always thought themselves better than the Gentiles, and it seemed they were bringing in a distinction here. It seems the Cretians had a reputation of being liars.

"Evil beasts" means they were a cruel, brutal people. The "slow bellies" mean that they were gluttons.

Verses 13-14: Paul instructs Titus to perform a task of reproof. He is to rebuke them sharply. Jewish fables refer to Jewish myths, that is, legalistic error (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

Titus 1:13 "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;"

“Sound in the faith”: True and pure doctrine was to be required of all who spoke to the church. Any who fell short of that were to be rebuked.

Paul is saying, the accusations are true, but when they become a Christian, they must change. Titus must tell them of the new birth in Christ. They must bury that lying, brutal, glutton, and become a new creature in Christ.

Titus has a hard job ahead, breaking customs of many years. They must totally change. They must be solidly planted in the faith in Jesus Christ. There must be such a change that the whole world can see.

Titus 1:14 "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

Jewish fables and commandments of men”: Paul reemphasized (see verse 10). “Those of the circumcision”, that most of the false teachers were Jewish. They taught the same kind of externalism and unscriptural laws and traditions that both Isaiah and Jesus railed against (Isa.29:13; Matt. 15:1-9; Mark 7:5-13).

The worst thing a person can do is to listen to something, thinking it will not hurt them. You retain some of the things you intend not to believe. It is best not to listen at all. We discussed that the Jewish fables, spoken of here, are the things like circumcision.

The continuing to sacrifice after Jesus made the one sacrifice for all time for everyone, is like saying His sacrifice was not sufficient.

I believe God allowed the temple in Jerusalem to be destroyed in 70 A.D., to stop the people from continuing to sacrifice. The laws, commandments, and regulations were all fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It is almost blasphemy to continue with that, because it defames Jesus.

Verses 15-16: False teachers are corrupt on the inside (“mind” and “conscience”), and the outside (“deeds and “disobedient”; Matthew 7:15-16).

Titus 1:15 "Unto the pure all things [are] pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving [is] nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled."

“Defiled”: The outwardly despicable things that those men practiced (verses 10-12), were simply reflections of their inner corruption (see Matt. 15:15-20).

“Mind ... conscience”: If the mind is defiled, it cannot accurately inform the conscience, so conscience cannot warn the person. When conscience is accurately and fully infused with God’s truth, it functions as the warning system God designed. (2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2; 1 Tim. 1:19-20).

Jesus (the Supreme Sacrifice), made all Christians free from sin. He abolished sin in our lives.

Mark 7:15 "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man."

The Jews were caught up in formality of religion. They washed thoroughly before they ate, as if it were a practice of religion. The things you think are dirty are dirty.

Romans 14:17 "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

It is the precious blood of Jesus Christ that clears the conscience of man. We cannot do enough in our self to be right with God. We must depend entirely on the shed blood of Jesus making us right in God's sight.

Titus 1:16 "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny [him], being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate."

Profess ... deny”: Some of the false teachers in the church were not believers at all. Eventually, even the seemingly noble “deeds” of unbelievers will betray them.

“Abominable”: They can do nothing that pleases God (1 Cor. 9:27; 2 Tim. 3:8).

You can say all day long that you are a Christian, but I will not believe you until I see Christ living in you. We see in the following Scripture a Truth about this very thing.

1 Peter 4:2 "That he no longer should live the rest of [his] time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God."

Not everyone who says he is a Christian is a Christian. The life we live shows the world, if we are truly living for Christ, or not. If we are practicing sin, we are of our father the devil. If we are living the Christian life with signs following, we are of our heavenly Father.

Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Titus Chapter 1 Questions

1. When was the letter to Titus written (approximately)?
2. What was Paul's connection to the man Titus?
3. Why did Paul think of Titus as his son?
4. Was Titus ever in Rome with Paul?
5. What did the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem want to do to Titus, which Paul said no to?
6. Why did Paul send Titus to the troubled churches he could not go to himself?
7. Why did Paul write this letter to Titus?
8. What does Paul call himself in verse 1?
9. What is another thing "apostle" could be?
10. What does this word show us about Paul?
11. What is the hope of every Christian?
12. What had Paul dedicated his life to?
13. When had God promised eternal life?
14. How had He manifested His Word?
15. What does "manifested" mean?
16. It pleased God that by the foolishness of _____ to save them that believe.
17. What was the blessing Paul spoke on Titus?
18. When was it believed that Titus was saved?
19. Where had Paul left Titus to work?
20. Why had he left him there?
21. Who was to decide who to ordain?
22. What is an "elder"?
23. What were some of the qualifications Titus was to judge by?
24. What are some of the qualifications of a bishop?

25. What was meant by faithful Word?
26. Who are "gainsayers"?
27. What one word, in verse 10, leaves no doubt this is speaking of Jews?
28. What does verse 11 say, is the reason they were doing this?
29. What is "filthy lucre"?
30. What reputation did the Cretians have?
31. What did Paul tell Titus to do about this?
32. In verse 14, Paul warned to not give heed to what?
33. Why does the author believe the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D.?
34. Unto the pure all things are _____.
35. Who was the Supreme Sacrifice?
36. What clears the conscience of mankind?