

Investigating the Word of God

Titus



The Island of Crete

Gene Taylor

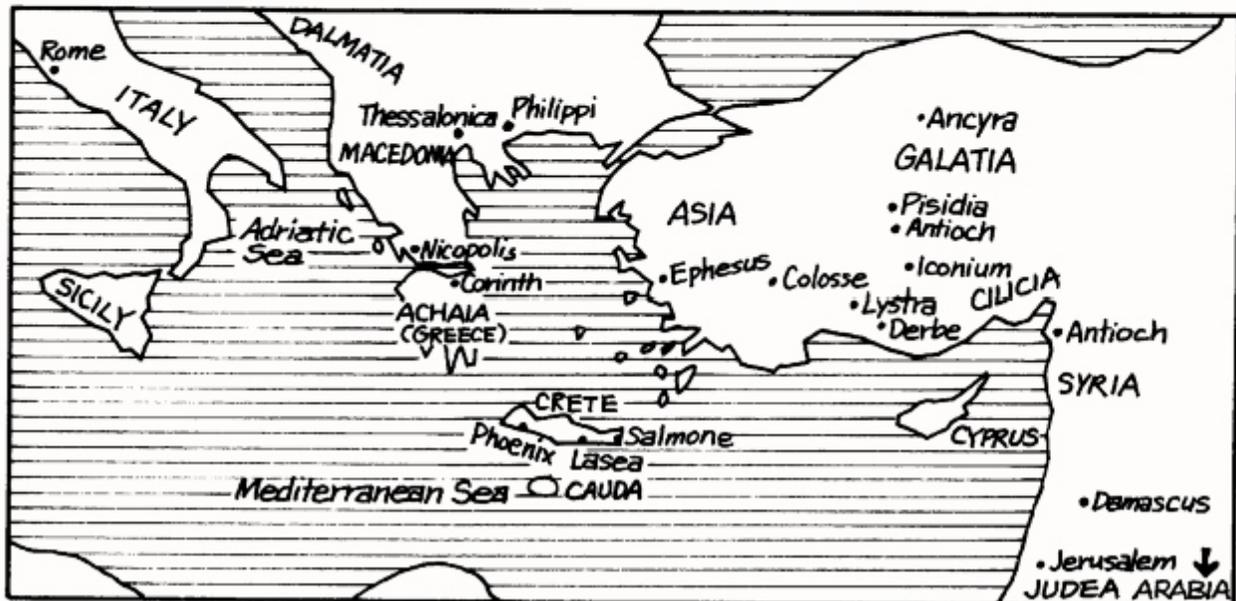
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An Introduction to Titus

Titus, the Man

Titus was a full Greek since all his family were Greeks. When the question arose as to whether or not Gentiles who were being converted needed to be circumcised, Paul and Barnabas took him to Jerusalem as evidence that circumcision was not needed (Acts 15:1-5). Paul used him again as evidence to the churches of Galatia that circumcision was unnecessary (Gal. 2:1-3).

Titus had evidently been converted by Paul, perhaps at Antioch of Syria, since Paul called him “a true son in our common faith” (1:4). He had been a fellow-worker with Paul for 15 years or more at the time this epistle is written. Evidently he accompanied Paul on his third preaching journey. Though he is not mentioned by name in the book of Acts, he may have been included in the “us” of Acts 20:5. He acted as Paul’s messenger to the church at Corinth (2 Cor. 7:1-16). He went among the churches of the Gentiles, probably because he was a Gentile, to stir them up to make a contribution to “the relief of the poor among the saints in Jerusalem” (2 Cor. 8:6, 16-24).



“Evidently Titus was not as closely associated with Paul as was Timothy, but apparently he was a more stable personality and a strong man. Nothing is said of his physical condition, as was the case when writing to Timothy. Possibly he was the better of the two when it came to handling difficult matters. Note that Paul sent him to Corinth to handle difficult matters there and gave him a tough assignment in Crete. He may have been Paul’s best “trouble-shooter” among his co-workers” (William S. Deal, *Baker’s Pictorial Introduction to the Bible*, p. 385).

It is not known whether he was with Paul during his imprisonment in Caesarea or his first Roman imprisonment. He did travel with Paul during some of the months of Paul’s release between his first and second imprisonments in Rome. Paul later took him to Crete and left him there to work with the churches he had established on that island (1:5). Later, Paul wanted him to rejoin him at Nicopolis, in western Greece (3:12).

The last mention of Titus in Scripture was when Paul stated, in his last epistle, that Titus had left Rome for Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10). Tradition states that, in his senior years, he worked among the churches on Crete and that he died naturally on that island.

The Church on Crete

Crete was a large island in the Mediterranean Sea located southeast of Greece. It is about 150 miles long and varies from 6 to 35 miles wide. Since it was very mountainous, its people depended on the sea for their living. During the first century, it was very prosperous. It had upwards of 100 cities on it. Its people were known as “liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons” (1:12). They were also depicted that way by Epimenides, one of their own poets. Many of the classical writers wrote of the Cretans that way. The expression, “to act the Cretan,” became an idiom meaning “to play the liar.”

On the day of Pentecost, Cretans who were in Jerusalem to worship heard Peter’s sermon (Acts 2:11). If some were converted, they may have carried the gospel back to the island with them.

During his voyage to Rome, Paul had briefly stopped at Crete (Acts 27:7-21). When he was released from his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul probably journeyed to Crete and preached the gospel there. When Paul sailed from Crete, he left Titus behind to “set in order the things that are wanting” (1:5).

Merrill Tenney said, “The situation in Crete was discouraging. The church was unorganized, and its members were quite careless in behavior. If the injunctions in chapter 2 are any indication of what the churches needed, the men were lax and careless, the older women were gossips and winebibbers, and the young women were idle and flirtatious” (*New Testament Survey*, p. 336).

Roy Cogdill adds, “The situation of the church in Crete was discouraging. The government of the church needed to be set in order, the careless behavior of its members needed to be corrected, and the church needed to be ‘grounded in sound doctrine’ and stirred to ‘diligence in good works.’ Some of these needs arose in the dispositions of the Cretans (1:12-13). In addition to this, the Judaizing group that had followed Paul around disturbing the churches had some influence (1:14)” (*The New Testament Book-by-Book*, p. 112).

The Author of the Book

“Paul’s authorship of this epistle is unquestioned by the best of authorities. He asserts this in the opening words (1:1), and the general tenor of the writing is quite Pauline throughout” (Deal, p. 385).

“The case for Pauline authorship of these epistles (1 & 2 Timothy and Titus - GT) is substantial” (*Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*, p. 434).

The Date of the Book

“The letter was probably written shortly after First Timothy (A.D. 62), from Macedonia, Nicopolis, or Ephesus” (Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey*, p. 310).

“It appears the book of Titus was written c. A.D. 63, shortly after Paul’s release from the Roman imprisonment described in Acts 28 and shortly after the composition of I Timothy” (*Nelson’s*, p. 434).

Why This Book Was Written

“The main purpose of this epistle seems to be to give advice, counsel, final instruction, and admonition to Titus, both as a personal son in Christ and as a Gospel minister...” (Deal, p. 384).

“This brief letter focuses on Titus’s role and responsibility in the organization and supervision of the churches on the island of Crete” (*Nelson’s*, p. 434).

“Generally, the book was written to urge Titus to finish the organization of the work begun by Paul (1:5). Specifically, the apostle wrote to list the qualifications of the elders whom Titus was to ordain (1:5-9), to warn against the perverting influence of the Jewish legalists (1:10-16), to give instructions concerning proper Christian domestic behavior (2: 1-10), to demonstrate that a correct knowledge of the doctrine of the grace of God should issue in good works rather than looseness of living (2:11-15), to give guidelines for proper relationships to the unsaved, especially the civil rulers (3:1-8), to point out the right order in church discipline (3:9-11), to inform Titus of Paul’s future plans for his associate (3:12-13), and to send greetings (3:14-15)” (Gromacki, p. 310).

The Themes of the Book

“The general theme of Paul’s letter to Titus could well be described as “*things which befit the sound doctrine*” (2:1)” (Cogdill, op.cit., p. 113).

One of the book’s themes is the responsibilities of Titus as a gospel preacher. He was to:

1. Set in order the things lacking by ordaining elders in every city (1:5).
2. Speak the things which become sound doctrine (2:1).
3. Show himself as a pattern of good works (2:7-8).
4. Speak, exhort and rebuke with all authority in such a way that no one would despise him (2:15).
5. Remind his listeners to be subject to authorities, to be ready to do every good work, to not speak evil of anyone, to not be brawlers but to be gentle and show meekness toward all (3:1-3).
6. Remind Christians that God had richly poured out His mercy upon people, providing for their salvation through Jesus Christ (3:5-7).
7. Affirm constantly the necessity of the believers to maintain good works (3:8-14).

“A related theme can be seen in the use of the word ‘sound.’ Both the elders and Titus were to preach sound doctrine supported by sound speech (1:9; 2:1, 8). The believers were to be sound in faith (2:2)” (Gromacki, p. 310).

Titus Chapter One

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verse 5

“For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you...”

Key People

Paul

Titus

Key Places

Crete

Key Words

Elect

Dissipation

Insubordination

Circumcision

Subvert

Gluttons

Testimony

Fables

Abominable

Disqualified

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. Who wrote this book? How does he describe himself?
2. According to verse two, what is one thing God cannot do?
3. How did God manifest His word?
4. To whom was this book written? How did the author describe him?
5. What had Paul left Titus? Why did he leave him there?
6. List the qualifications for elder (bishop) given in verses six through nine.
7. Whose mouths did Paul say must be stopped?
8. How are Cretans described in verse 12? Who described them in that way?
9. Why was Titus to rebuke the Cretans?
10. According to verse 14, to what were the Cretans not to give heed?
11. To whom are all things pure?
12. To whom is nothing pure?
13. What is defiled in the unbelieving?
14. How, even though they profess to know God, do the unbelieving deny Him?
15. For what are the unbelieving disqualified?

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | 1. God cannot lie. |
| T | F | 2. God's word was committed to Paul by the commandment of God. |
| T | F | 3. A bishop must be quick-tempered and self-willed. |
| T | F | 4. Cretans are never liars or gluttons. |
| T | F | 5. To the pure nothing is pure. |

Discussion Question

Why is it important for every church to have elders?

Titus Chapter Two

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verses 11-12
“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”

Key Words

Reverent

Temperate

Slanderers

Discreet

Chaste

Sober-minded

Pattern

Integrity

Incorruptibility

Pilfering

Fidelity

Zealous

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. What did Paul want Titus to speak?
2. What are older men to be?
3. What are older women to be?
4. What are young women to do?
5. What are young men to be?
6. What was Titus to show himself to be in all things?
7. What are bondservants to do?
8. How are people to live in the present age?
9. Who gave Himself for us? Why?
10. For what are Christians to be zealous?

Matching

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ 1. Older men | A. Discreet, chaste. |
| _____ 2. Older women | B. Not answering back. |
| _____ 3. Young women | C. Reverent, temperate. |
| _____ 4. Young men | D. Not slanderers. |
| _____ 5. Bondservants | E. Sober-minded. |

True - False

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| T | F | 1. Titus was to speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine. |
| T | F | 2. Titus needed to show himself as a pattern of good works. |
| T | F | 3. Bondservants can pilfer from their masters. |
| T | F | 4. Bondservants are to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. |
| T | F | 5. Titus had no authority to rebuke anyone. |

Discussion Question

What does it mean to “live soberly, righteously and godly?” How does a person know what to do in order to live that way?

Titus Chapter Three

Keys to This Chapter

Key Passage: Verses 4-5
“But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.”

Key People

Artemas

Tychicus

Zenas

Apollos

Key Places

Nicopolis

Key Words

Authorities

Humility

Malice

Regeneration

Renewing

Justified

Heirs

Genealogies

Contentions

Divisive

Admonition

Warped

Urgent

Key Lesson

Questions on the Text

1. To whom were the people to be subject?
2. For what were the people to be ready?
3. What were the people to show to all men?
4. According to verse three, what had Paul and other Christians previously been?
5. How, according to verse five, did God save Paul and the other Christians?
6. Whom was poured out abundantly on the saved through Jesus Christ?
7. Having been justified by God's grace, what did the saved become?
8. What should those who believe in God be careful to maintain?
9. What was Titus to avoid? Why was he to avoid them?
10. Who was Titus to reject? When was he to reject him?
11. Why was Titus to reject the person in the above question?
12. Who was Paul going to send to Titus?
13. Where did Paul want Titus to meet him?
14. Who did Paul want Titus to send on their journey with haste?
15. What were the people to meet?

True - False

- T F 1. Christians do not need to be subject to rulers or authorities.
T F 2. God saves people through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit.
T F 3. Paul wanted Titus to constantly affirm that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works.
T F 4. Paul was going to spend the winter in Zenas.
T F 5. All those who were with Paul sent greetings to Titus.

Discussion Question

Why do you think Paul kept stressing to Titus that the people should be actively doing good works?

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