

Abounding Grace Christian Church

The Epistle of Paul to Titus – Part 1

I. Introduction: Today we begin a new study through the letter Paul writes to Titus. It's commonly believed that this letter was written after First Timothy and before Second Timothy. It is one of what are called "**The Pastoral Epistles**" which includes both letters to Timothy. The reason they are called this is summed up in the following excerpt:

"First, all three letters show pastoral concern for their recipients, Timothy and Titus. Second, all three deal with pastoral matters involving the care of souls and the orderly conduct of God's people in the church as well as in the world."¹

Unlike the letters to the Thessalonians, which were some of the earliest letters of Paul, all three of these letters are believed to have been written near the end of Paul's life. This epistle was probably written around A.D. 65.

II. Who is Titus?

- A. Titus was one of Paul's most trusted co-workers for the Lord. This is shown in the fact that Paul sent him into some troublesome situations like Corinth and Crete.
- B. He was a Gentile (non-Jew), who came to faith in Christ through the preaching of the Apostle Paul. Unlike Timothy, Paul refused to circumcise him (**Galatians 2:1-5**).
- C. Paul mentions Titus often in his letters (**cf. II Corinthians 2:13; 7:6–15; 8:6–24; 12:18; Galatians 2:1–3; II Timothy 4:10**).
- D. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas at the Jerusalem Council, recorded in **Acts 15**. (**cf. Galatians 2:1-5**).
- E. Dr. Robert Utley makes an interesting point:

"...it is very surprising that Luke does not mention him in Acts. Some commentaries theorize that (1) he may have been a relative of Luke (possibly a brother) and to include his name would have been seen as an act of cultural impropriety on Luke's part or (2) Titus is Luke's major source of information about Paul's life and ministry and, therefore, like Luke, would not be named."²

III. Purpose of the Letter.

"The purpose of the letter is to offer guidance for organizing the church and for answering ethical questions. In addition, it serves to exhort Titus to come to Paul in Nicopolis as soon as possible (3:13) and to insure that Zenas and Apollos have what they need for their journey (3:13)."³

IV. Overview of the Island of Crete.

Crete is a large island in the Mediterranean Sea approximately 100 miles southeast of the Greek mainland; marks the southern border of the Aegean Sea. Crete is mentioned in the account of Paul's journey to Rome (**Acts 27**) and as the location for the ministry of Titus (**Titus 1:5**).⁴

V. Basic Outline.

- A. Salutation (**1:1–4**).
- B. Qualifications of church leaders (**1:5–9**).
- C. False teachers (**1:10–16**).
- D. Regulations for Christian behavior (**2:1–10**).
- E. The theological basis for Christian living (**2:11 –3:7**).
- F. Closing admonitions (**3:8–11**).
- G. Conclusion (**3:12–15**).

VI. Exposition of Chapter One.

¹ Walter A. Elwell & Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering the New Testament: A Historical and Theological Survey*. Third Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 317.

² Robert James Utley, *Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 91.

³ Gary Leggett, *The Complete Biblical Library: Acts – Revelation, Volume 2; Titus*, (Empowered Life, Tulsa, OK, 2016.), 934.

⁴ Mark S. Krause, "Crete," ed. John D. Barry et al., *The Lexham Bible Dictionary* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

A. Verses 1-2 – “Paul, a bondservant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness, in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,”

1. “Paul, a bondservant of God...” - The Greek word for “bondservant” is “*doulos*” which literally means; “slave.” A slavery undertaken voluntarily out of love. Kenneth Wuest writes: “one who was bound to his master in chords so strong that only death could break them, one who served his master to the disregard of his own interests, one whose will was swallowed up in the will of his master.”⁵
2. “...and an apostle of Jesus Christ...” – The word “apostle” means; “one who is sent forth to represent another.” Dr. Bob Utley adds;

“This is literally ‘sent one,’ which had the implication within rabbinical Judaism of one delegated with official authority. It is similar to our concept of ambassador”⁶

3. “...according to the faith of God’s elect...” – This particular translation is somewhat difficult to understand. The New English Translation renders it; “...to further the faith of God’s chosen ones...”. This is consistent with other translations such as the Amplified Bible which reads; “...to stimulate *and* promote the faith of God’s chosen ones...”. So Paul considered the reason for his service and apostleship was to further, stimulate and promote the faith of God’s people. The phrase “God’s elect” has been erroneously understood as meaning God chooses some to be saved and other’s not to be. This is contrary to many Scriptures in the Bible such as II Peter 3:9. On the contrary, God’s elect refers to all who have been united to Jesus Christ, the Elect One, (Matthew 12:18) by faith. In other words, if you’re “in Christ”, then you are “in the elect.”
4. “...and the acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness...” – The word “acknowledgment” means; “precise and correct knowledge; used in the N. T. of the knowledge of things ethical and divine”⁷ In this, Paul is also stating that his ministry was to further, or promote the correct, or accurate knowledge of the truth, which “...accords with godliness...”. Regarding this, Dr. Utley writes: “This was in contrast to the false teachers whose emphasis was on a secret knowledge which was unrelated to a holy life.”⁸ As the believer increases in his knowledge of God, getting to know God more intimately, the more he is empowered by the Holy Spirit to live a godly life. Growing in his knowledge of God was an ongoing goal of Paul (Philippians 3:8-10). Peter exhorted the believers to “...grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (II Peter 3:18).
5. “...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,”

- a. The word “hope” means; “to look forward with confidence to that which is good and beneficial”⁹. In this context, Paul is referring to the future “eternal life” which is promised to all believers. Dr. Utley makes an interesting point;

“Eternal life in Paul’s writings is always the life of the new age, eschatological life (cf. Rom. 2:7; 6:22; Gal. 6:8; 1 Tim. 1:16; Titus 1:2; 3:7). In John’s writings it refers to a present reality based on trusting Christ as Savior (cf. John 3:15; 10:28; 12:25; 17:2–3; 1 John 1:2; 2:25; 3:15; 5:11, 13, 20). Both are true.”¹⁰

- b. “...God, who cannot lie...” – God is a God of Truth and it’s impossible for Him to lie (cf. Numbers 23:19; I Samuel 15:29; Hebrews 6:17-18). Dr. Thomas Constable writes:

“God had long since proved Himself to be consistently faithful to His promises. The unusual epithet ‘who cannot lie’ (apseudes, free from falsehood) brings out the absolute trustworthiness of the hope just mentioned. It also contrasts God, who is to be the Christian’s model, with the characteristic deceitfulness of the Cretans, which undoubtedly marked some of the believers (cf. vv. 10, 12-13).”¹¹

- c. “...promised before time began.” – God, Who is timeless, created time and had a plan for our eternal life before time began! The Bible also states that Jesus was a lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8)

⁵ Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 11.

⁶ Robert James Utley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, Texas: Bible Lessons International, 2000), 94.

⁷ Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti* (New York: Harper & Brothers., 1889), 237.

⁸ Robert James Utley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, 94.

⁹ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 295.

¹⁰ Robert James Utley, *Paul’s Fourth Missionary Journey: I Timothy, Titus, II Timothy*, vol. Volume 9, 95.

¹¹ Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Titus* (<http://www.soniclight.com>: Sonic Light Publication, 2024), 10.