

TITUS

Intro: The book of Titus is the Second of Paul's three Pastoral Epistles. He probably wrote it after First Timothy, and before His last letter - Second Timothy.

Titus, you will notice is very similar in content to His first letter to Timothy, but in a condensed edition.

Titus is the "Conduct Manual" for Christian leaders, and really, for all Christians. Paul will lay out, without apology, how Christians ought to behave and live before the watching eyes of our critics and enemies.

Paul wrote this book either from Corinth or Macedonia, but definitely while between prison stays.

He writes to his "True (Faithful) Son" in the faith, Titus, and sends the letter to the infamous island of Crete. Infamous because Crete had a reputation, and its reputation was bad! But, Crete was the very first missionary focus of the new Church formed in Jerusalem.

THE ISLAND OF CRETE

Crete is located in the Mediterranean Sea a few hundred miles south of Ephesus, (where Timothy is serving) and Crete is the fifth largest of the Greek Islands. it is 150 miles long, and 30 miles wide at its widest. Think of it as a little smaller than Jamaica, but very close in size. Lynette and I visited Crete in 2016 and did our best to support the local economy there.

2000 years before Christ, it was an independent nation ruled by a Monarchy known as the Minoans. But, just as the City of Pompeii was wiped out by a volcanic blast, so was the island of Crete. After the disastrous end of the Minoans the island became part of the Roman Empire and eventually one of the Greek ruled islands.

The Cretans were known for their lack of scruples and for immorality in Paul's day. To be told you were "Acting the Crete" was an insult that you didn't take lying down. If in business, somebody told you that you reminded them of a slimy used car salesman, You were just accused of "Acting the Crete."

Paul reminds Titus of this in the first chapter: " **1:12** One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." 13 This testimony is true." (**OUCH!**)

Don't misread Paul however, He loved the Cretans, spent a lot of time and effort there, and sent some of his best team members there to straighten out their messed-up church, and to battle against the Jewish Fables that were being taught there.

THE TRAINING OF TITUS

Like Timothy, Titus was a young convert of Paul's who was probably present and one of the 120 people waiting for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. In fact, several of the people there that day were from Crete and carried back the account of that day to the Islanders. THEY were the beginning of the Gospel being preached in such a wretched place, and when Paul heard of it, he probably couldn't be kept away from such an opportunity.

BUT, when Paul got there, he discovered that the new little Church was already being spoiled by the Jewish believers who just couldn't help from mixing the Jewish religious rules into the simple gospel message. So, when Paul had to leave the island, he left Titus there to straighten them out.

Like our former associate Pastor Steve Papadopoulos, Titus was young, Titus was faithful, Titus was smart, AND TITUS WAS GREEK!

In fact, Titus was one of the converts that got Paul into so much trouble when they were in Jerusalem, because the Jewish converts wanted nothing to do with worshipping with Greeks, Gentiles or ANYBODY who wasn't a proper eating - dressing - and practicing religious Jew.

Titus 1:1 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 (goes along) with godliness,**

- As the Apostle prepares to talk about godliness to the Cretans, he starts with what will lead them there... THE TRUTH!
- It is still true too. Jesus said in John 8:32
- **John 8:32** "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

ALSO...

2 in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,

- How old is the plan of salvation? Before there were stars in the sky, God was making arrangements for YOUR salvation. Think of that!
- Our hope... Our ONLY hope is in God, who before time began made a way for us to join Him for all of eternity!
- WOW! Two verses into the book of Titus we are saved for eternity... But wait... There's more...

HE DID ALL THAT...

3 but has in due time manifested His word through preaching, which was committed to me according to the commandment of **God our Savior**;

- **Here is Paul's job – to preach and to share...**

4 To Titus, a true son in *our* common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and the Lord **Jesus Christ our Savior**.

FOR EXTRA CREDIT...

- Why grace before peace? Without grace there IS no peace.
 - Why mercy as well? Paul always prayed mercy for his Pastors.
 - **Notice too that Jesus Christ our Savior in V4, AND God the Father our Savior, are given the Same title. Why? Both are God.**

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ELDERS

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—

6 if a man is **blameless**, (Good reputation) the **husband of one wife**, **having faithful children** not accused of dissipation or insubordination.

7 For a bishop (Elder) must be blameless, as a steward of God, **(of God's people and God's stuff)**

not self-willed, (**Arrogant**)

not quick-tempered, (**Besides immorality, this is probably the 2nd most reason people are disqualified to serve. Tame your temper Beloved!**)

not given (**Addicted**) to wine,

not violent, **Ready to quarrel**

not greedy for money, **always looking for a way to make money.**

NOW THE POSITIVES...

8 but hospitable, **Kind to others in need**

a lover of what is good, (**What would the opposite of this be?**)

sober-minded, **Serious about the Lord**

just, **Honest, trustworthy**

holy, **Set apart for the Lord**

self-controlled, **NOT given to excess**

ABLE TO TEACH

9 holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict.

- IE, a student of the Bible.
 - Able, at least, to give a defense of the Gospel.
 - NOT a preacher... but a defender of the truth! IF you can preach, all the better!

WE HAVE ENEMIES

10 For there are many insubordinate, both idle talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, (**Jews**)

- These were enemies from within – the worst kind. They were teaching strange things and sharing strange experiences, mixed with strict rules for the Gentile believers to follow.
 - We need to be careful that we don't let man-made traditions, holidays, periods of religious ritual and works... Become a part of our salvation experience.
 - THEY ARE NOT!

- IF you want to fast, pray, give up meat for a few weeks before Easter – Fine!
 - Be quiet about it and keep it between you and God.
 - BUT... DO NOT think you are going to heaven because you got ash wiped on your forehead, or because you are giving up something in preparation for Resurrection Sunday.
 - THOSE were the kind of religious things that Paul was warning about. Here is how and why we are saved...
- **Ephesians 2:8-10** For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

THESE RELIGIOUS NUTS...

11 whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole households, teaching things which they ought not, for the sake of dishonest gain. (*IE, in it for the money*)

12 One of them, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons."

- **This was harsh, no doubt. But then the Apostle doubles down...**

13 This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, 14 not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from **the truth**.

- The truth is that **Romans 3:23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **AND Romans 6:23** For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. AND...
- **Romans 10:9,10** that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made

unto salvation. *THIS IS THE ROMANS ROAD...*

Last warning to the Cretans...

15 To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled. 16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Next week – Teach sound doctrine!