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Timothy
Titus
Philemon

LESSON NOTES

TITUS <> OVERVIEW

Preparation for Studying Paul's Letter to Titus

What we call Titus (see 1:4) is an epistle written to one of Paul's favorite disciples. Titus went with Paul to discuss his teachings about the law in Jerusalem (see Galatians 2:1-3). As a non-Jew, Titus was nonetheless accepted as a Christian without circumcision. He worked with Paul in the problematic Ephesus churches during Paul's third missionary journey. From there, Paul send Titus to another problematic church in Corinth. After Paul's release from his first imprisonment by Rome (see Acts 28), he and Titus worked briefly in Crete (1:5);⁹ Titus was told to stay there and represent Paul and complete some needed work. Later Paul asked him to meet him in Nicopolis (western Greece). Later, Titus served on a mission trip to Dalmatia (Serbia & Montenegro, formerly "Yugoslavia"). Given his assignments by Paul, he was probably an effective leader and worker within the church.

The letter was written after his release from the first Roman imprisonment (Acts 28), probably 63-65AD—or possibly at a later date if he wrote after his assumed trip to Spain.

BACKGROUND

It appears Paul and Titus introduced Christianity to the inhabitants of Crete. Paul sent his epistle with Zenas and Apollos who were on a journey which took them through Crete (3:13). This epistle was to give Titus authority to meet opposition (1:5; 2:1,7-8,15; 3:9), and guide him about faith and conduct issues, especially false teachers. This letter also told Titus about Paul's future plans to work with him.

Especially significant, considering the nature of the Cretan heresy, are the repeated emphases on "doing what is good" (1:16; 2:7,14; 3:1,8,14) and the classic summaries of Christian doctrine (2:11-14; 3:4-7).

⁹Crete is the 4th largest island in the Mediterranean; it lies directly south of the Aegean Sea (cf. Paul's experiences there in Acts 27:7-13). In the time of the Christ, life in Crete had sunk to a low moral level. "The dishonesty, gluttony and laziness of its inhabitants were proverbial (1:12)." Adapted and corrected from *Compton's Interactive Bible NIV*, © 1996 by D. Thomas Porter. The people were such a lying, self-indulgent, sexually promiscuous bunch that Crete became proverbial for immorality in the ancient world. To be a κρητιζω (kretizo) a Cretan, was to be a liar.

CHARACTERIZING ELDERS (TITUS 1)

Titus 1:1-9. *Elder Identification*. I am Paul, slave and apostle of Jesus the Christ to facilitate the faith of God's called out [same root as εκκλησια], knowledge of the truth that leads to being closer to God. This trust and knowledge is founded on the expectation of eternal life, a life that God—who does not lie—promised before the beginning. At His appointed time, He brought light through His word by means of the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior.

To Titus, my true child [τέκνω, not υἱός] in the trust in which we share—mercy and reconciliation from Father God and Christ Jesus our Savior.

Explanation: I left you in Crete so you could set in order [ἐπιδιορθώση, 1930] and appoint elders all across Crete, just as I directed you. Now, an elder/overseer should¹⁰ ["must" is not there] be:

1. Blameless [i.e., no debauchery; ἀσωτίας 810]
2. Husband of but one wife,
3. Has children who believe, neither wild nor disobedient,
4. Neither overbearing nor quick-tempered,
5. Not a quarrelsome drunk [3943], nor violent,
6. Not one who pursues dishonest gain.

Yes, the steward of God's [ἐπίσκοπον] work is hospitable, loves what is good. Controls self, upright, holy and disciplined. Holds to the message as it has been taught—to encourage others toward healthy [ὑγιαίνω, hoog-ee-ah'-ee-no, "healthy; reasonable, sound, pure, uncorrupted;" 5198] doctrine [διδασκαλία] and refute those who contradicting healthy doctrine.

Q For whom is Paul an apostle?

Q To what extent are these characteristics an ideal list or a check list? Which, if any, of these attributes are critical, even if the others are ideal? Or, perhaps, which one of these, if any, is a tolerable characteristic of an elder/overseer/steward?

TITUS 1:1-9

Paul, a servant [δουλος] of God and an ["an" is not there] apostle of Jesus Christ [this is the order, unlike 1 Timothy 1:1 & 2 Timothy 2:1] for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—²a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, ³and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,

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

⁵The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint [καταστήσης, "set down, bring down to a place; I set in order, appoint, make, constitute;" 2525] elders [πρεσβυτέρους] in every town, as I directed you. ⁶An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. ⁷Since an overseer [ἐπίσκοπον] is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. ⁸Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. ⁹He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

¹⁰Neither "should" nor "must" is there in the Scripture (see <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/titus/1.htm>). Paul simply told Titus to select overseers who are characterized as...

Titus 1:10-16. *Corruption with a Capital C*. As to those who “refute the truth,” they are rebellious, full of talk and deceit—especially those knuckleheads who insist such things as circumcision are critical to soteriological acceptance. They have got to be stopped—they’re ruining [ἀνατρέπω, subverting, overturning; [396](#)] whole families by teaching deceitfully, and—to make dishonest money.

Listen to what one of their own teachers claim:

*Cretans are always liars,
evil brutes and lazy gluttons.*

Yes, they said that—sharply rebuke them accordingly so they will adhere to the faith, no longer affected by Jewish myths or the teachings of those who reject the Truth.

Remember to the pure [καθαροί, cleaned, unstained, innocent; [2513](#)], all things are καθαρών. But to the corrupted [μεμιανται, polluted, stained; [3392](#)], not only is their mind corrupted, so is their conscience. Sure, they profess knowing Θεον, but their actions manifest Θεον denial. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good.



TITUS 1:10-16

For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. ¹¹They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. ¹²Even one of their own prophets has said, “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” ¹³This testimony is true. Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith ¹⁴and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth. ¹⁵To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. ¹⁶They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything **good**.

Q Why was it useful to describe Cretans as lazy, lying, evil brutes?

Q How does one ascertain whether a teaching is being promulgated for “dishonest gain?”

Q What is the difference between a corrupted “mind” and a corrupted “conscience?”

Q How would you characterize Paul’s attitudes about these false teachers? Why is he so adamant? What are false teachings currently that would be worthy of Paul’s critique?

Titus 2:1-10. Valuing Pragmatic Doctrine.

Titus, you on the other hand, you have got to speak [not “teach,” but λαλει, [2980](#)]¹¹ *healthy* teaching [διδασκαλία]. Basic guidelines include:

1. Older men are to be temperate, self-controlled, healthy in the faith, in love [αγαπη], and in endurance.
2. Similarly, older women are also to be reverent in how they live, not to be diabolical [διαβολους; [2228](#)], nor enslaved to wine. They should teach what is good [καλοδιδασκαλους; “teaching the good;” [2567](#)]. By doing that, they can train younger women to love [φιλοτέκνους, not αγαπη] their husbands and children. They need to be self-controlled, pure, busy at home [Proverbs 31:16],¹² kind, and toughest of all—submit [ύποτασσομένας, hypotassomenas: “under (hypo) arrangement (tasso)” [5293](#)] to their husbands so the λογος [of] του Θεου will not be blasphemed [[987](#)].
3. As to young men, encourage them to be self-controlled [σωφρονειν, sound mind, temperate, self-controlled; [4993](#)]. Show them how to do this; in your teaching [διδασκαλία], hold up a pattern so they can see integrity, dignity, and healthy speech [λογον], speech that stands up to scrutiny. Why? So that those you are against you will be ashamed for criticizing. They will have nothing bad to say about the church.
4. As to slaves [δουλους], do what your masters want—try to please them; no back talk. Certainly, no pilfering; show them you can be fully trusted. Why? So in every way, the teaching [διδασκαλία] about the Lord God Savior adorns all things [κοσμεω, “decorate, put in order;” [2885](#)].

Q Are wives to teach younger wives to “αγαπη” their husbands and children?

Q How do you reconcile Paul’s call for wives to be “busy at home” with Solomon’s [Lemuel’s?] praise for a woman working *outside* the home?

Q Why are young men to show integrity, seriousness, and soundness of speech?

Q Why are slaves [δουλοι] to be obedient, and especially honest & trustworthy?

TITUS 2:1-10

You must teach what is in accord with sound doctrine.

²Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

³Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. ⁴Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

⁶Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness ⁸and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

⁹Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, ¹⁰and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

¹¹In classical Greek, λαλει means talk/chatter, but in koine Greek λαλει is used more as a dignified form of speaking. Remember, always use, when possible, *koine* custom rather than “normal” (classical) Greek meanings.

¹²“She [the noble woman] considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.” or verse 24: “She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.”

Titus 2:11-15. Valuing Comprehensive Doctrine. The light [επεφανη] of the mercy gift of God has appeared to all people. This light of grace (i.e., the mercy gift) disciplines (*not* teaching; i.e., διδασκαλία) us to reject ungodliness, worldly passion, but to live a self-controlled, upright and godly life. We are disciplined to do this while we wait for the blessed hope—that glorious appearing of our great God, our Savior, Christ Jesus [Scripture does not say “Jesus Christ”]. It was the Christ who gave Himself to redeem us from our lawlessness [ανομιας, anomias; iniquity, separation from God, disobedience; [458](#)], to purify us for Him, a people who are His very own, zealous for good works [ζηλωτην καλων εργων; [2207](#), [2571](#), [2041](#)].

TITUS 2:11-15

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. ¹²It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, ¹³while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

¹⁵These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Titus, this is what you are to speak; encourage *and* rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone look down [[4065](#)] upon you!

Q Why did the Christ give Himself to redeem us from our “lawlessness?”¹³

Q Why do we teach something different than this?

Q How does our false teaching about the *reason* for Christ’s sacrifice dilute the power of the Lord God Almighty?



¹³Consider also Paul’s teaching to the Romans to understand this principal principle better: “[Father] God presented Him [the Christ] as a sacrifice of atonement, I through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice...” –Romans 3:25

Titus 3:1-11. Final Advice & Clarification.

Remind people [“the” is not there] to submit to rulers and authorities, obediently ready to do every good work [ἀγαθὸν ἔργον]. Slander no one [βλασφημεῖν]; be peaceable and considerate to all, showing true humility.

Once we were knuckleheads—foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved [δουλεύοντες] by passions and pleasures. Living in envious nastiness, hating others and being hated.

BUT: when the kind philanthropy of the Lord God Savior appeared [επεφανη], He saved us, not because of our ἀγαθὸν ἔργον, but because of His mercy gift. He saved us through a regenerated washing rebirth, resulting in Holy Spirit renewing us. Holy Spirit generously poured out His presence through Jesus the Christ, the Savior. So? We are declared righteous by His mercy gift so we becoming heirs with the expectation of ageless life.

Here is a trustworthy [πιστος, faithful, faith; [4103](#)] thought: I want you to stress these ideas so those who have trusted the Lord God may take more care to devote themselves to doing good.

Avoid needless, foolish controversies, genealogical obsession, and arguments about the Law. These quarrels are not only unprofitable, they are useless. Warn the divisive person once, then a second time. If they persist, have nothing to do with them. You can be assured such a person is warped and far from the Lord. Yes, that person has condemned themselves [αὐτοκατάκριτος, auto-kata-kritos, *self-against-critic*, occurs nowhere else in the NT, the LXX, or classic Greek, probably a term coined by Paul; [843](#)].

- Q What evidence is extant for a “generous” renewal by Holy Spirit?
- Q If we are declared as righteous by the Lord God’s mercy gift, why are we to “be careful to devote ourselves to doing good?”
- Q What are some needless and/or foolish controversies the church today enjoys?¹⁴

¹⁴Why “enjoys?” According to [Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior](#),

Human beings see, hear, remember, understand, and do what they want to see, hear, remember, understand, and do.” Porter’s First Law of Human Behavior—Simplified: People believe what is useful to them.

Accordingly, we engage in foolish controversies because we want to; they serve a function. Understanding that functionality, however bizarre or irrational, may be the first step toward avoiding said controversies.

TITUS 3:1-11

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, ²to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men.

³At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another.

⁴But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, ⁶whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our [“our” is not there, “the” (του) is] Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

⁸This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

⁹But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. ¹⁰Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. ¹¹You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

Titus 3:12-15. Letter Endings. Tychicus was definitely a mail, man.¹⁵ (Apparently, Nicopolis was a better place to spend the winter.) Paul wants Zenas the attorney and Apollos to be assisted on their way to him. Make sure they have what they need.

The people here—they need to devote themselves to doing good, so they may provide for daily needs, not living unproductively.

We all send you greetings. Say hello to those who love us who are immersed with faith. May God's mercy gift be with all of you.

TITUS 3:12-15

As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis, because I have decided to winter there. ¹³Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order that they may provide for daily necessities and not live unproductive lives.

¹⁵Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in (εν) the [του, "the" is not there] faith. Grace be with you all.

- Q Why would Paul need/want to winter in Nicopolis, meeting Titus there?¹⁶
- Q Does verse 13 support the notion that lawyers can be saved? ☺
- Q How does Paul connect "doing good" with "providing for daily necessities?" How would you explain this to new believers, and then to mature believers?
- Q Which is the correct hermeneutic for verse 15—
 - ✓ "Greet those loving us who are in the faith," or
 - ✓ "Greet those loving us who are immersed in faith."



"En" the Faith or "En" faith?

¹⁵Then, letters had no "post office." The best way was to give a letter to someone you trust. In this case, Paul used Tychicus to bring letters to Ephesus and Colosse. Tychicus also accompanied Paul on his trip to distribute gifts to the poor of Jerusalem (see Acts 20:4). Adapted from *Compton's Interactive Bible NIV*, © 1996 by D. Thomas Porter.

¹⁶*Nicopolis*. Means "city of victory." Several cities had this name, but the reference here apparently is to the city in Epirus on the western shore of Greece. Adapted from *Compton's Interactive Bible NIV*, © 1996 by D. Thomas Porter.