

Titus

A Challenge To Set Things in Order

Study by Jason Labonte

I. Author

- A. Paul (1:1)
- B. Like the letters to Timothy, Paul does not claim to have had help in writing the letter, nor does he end with his trademark handwritten closing. (*c.f.* 1 Co 16:21)

II. Recipient — Titus

- A. A convert of Paul (1:4) from sometime within the first 14 years of his ministry (Gal 2:1)
- B. Paul took him to Jerusalem, along with Barnabas, to report to them his version of the Gospel to the Gentiles (Gal 2:2).
- C. A Greek, uncircumcized Gentile (Gal 2:3)
- D. He worked with Paul in Corinth and was the one to start the collection for the churches in Macedonia. He was later sent there by Paul to deliver a letter to them and to finish the collection (2 Co 7 - 8).
- E. He worked with Paul again in Crete after Paul's 1st imprisonment (1:5).
- F. Later, he would travel as far as Yugoslavia (Dalmatia) (2 Tim 4:10).

III. Deliverers

- A. Likely, Zenas the "Lawyer" (3:13) (whether a Jewish expert in the Law or a Gentile lawyer is not known)...
- B. ... and Apollos (3:13; Acts 18:24-28)

IV. Date

- A. ~AD 63 - 65
- B. After his supposed 4th missionary journey, which followed his 1st imprisonment in Rome (*c.f.* Acts 28)
- C. Around the time he wrote the first letter to Timothy
- D. Before his 2nd imprisonment and death in Rome

V. Origin

- A. Possibly Philippi in northern Greece (Macedonia), since Paul had not yet reached Nicopolis in southern Greece

B. Possibly on the way from Spain (if Paul ever made it there)

VI. Destination — Crete, a Mediterranean island known for its moral depravity (1:12-13)

VII. Style & Themes

A. Shares many similarities to the other two “Pastoral Letters”, 1 & 2 Timothy

1. “God our Savior” (1:3)
2. Sound doctrine, faith, & teaching (1:9)
3. Godliness (1:1)
4. “Foolish controversies” (3:9)
5. “Trustworthy sayings” (3:8)

B. Emphasis on “Good Deeds” (1:16; 2:7, 14; etc.)

C. Summaries of Doctrine (2:11-14, etc.)

VIII. Purposes

- A.** Instructions and Encouragement to Titus, who was to organize the church (multiple congregations) in Crete (1:5)
- B.** To ask Titus to meet Paul later in Nicopolis in Greece

IX. The Text of Chapter 1

- A.** Taken together 1:5 and 1:7 indicate that the terms “elder” and “bishop” (“overseer”) were originally interchangeable.
- B.** Paul quotes from the Cretan poet Epimenides (6th century BC). (To “Cretanize” meant to lie in Greek literature.)

X. Discussion for Chapter 1

- A.** What is meant by “truth according to godliness” (1:1)?
- B.** Are any of the qualifications of an elder surprising to you? Why?
- C.** How can we know when it is our duty to “reprove severely” (1:13) or to refrain from doing so?
- D.** Are any of our beliefs actually “rebellious” (1:10) towards the truth? How are such things rebellious and toward whom or what?
- E.** Is any of our talk “empty” (1:10)? How can we fill it with truth?
- F.** How can we know whether the things we do are “pure” or “detestable” in light of Titus 1:15-16?