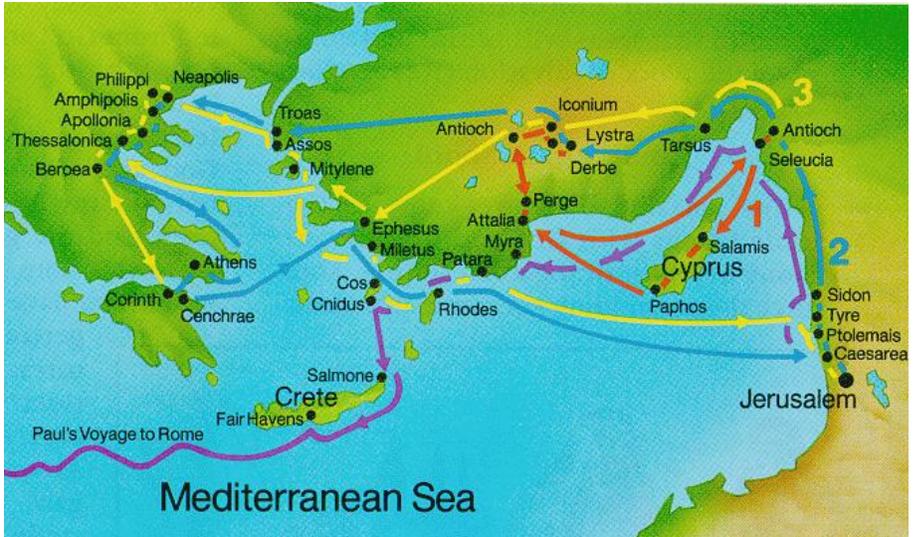


## 56 – Titus: More Instruction to a Young Church Leader

- **We don't know a lot about Titus.**

He is not mentioned in Acts, but Paul references him 13 times in his letters. Along with Timothy, he was one of Paul's closest and most trusted workers in the faith. Paul took Titus to Jerusalem, and Titus also seems to have worked with Paul at Ephesus during his 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey. He also helped in Corinth. *(NOTE: Acts is not a complete record of everything the apostles did, but only a choice of stories to be told of these early church-building activities. Acts only records bits and pieces of both Paul's and Peter's ministries.)*



- At some point Paul and Titus had apparently been together **ministering on the island of Crete**. It is obvious Paul didn't think too much of the people who lived here. He left Titus here to work with the Cretans, so Paul writes with **instruction for heading up this church**.
- Paul wrote encouraging and instructional letters to both Titus and Timothy, his **younger protégés** in the work of the Lord. These are called the "pastoral letters." Paul doesn't seem as concerned for Titus' welfare as he does Timothy's, but perhaps that is merely due to the closer relationship Paul had with Timothy, or because Timothy had certain issues that required more attention (fearfulness, timidity, etc).
- Timothy was a Jew (Gentile father, Jewish mother) who was circumcised by Paul. Titus was a Gentile, and Paul did not circumcise him, but **used him as an example of one accepted by grace, rather than the sign of circumcision**. Paul also called Titus a "true son in our common faith."
- Paul admires Titus a great deal. He apparently was a man of grace, many gifts, a fellow helper for Paul, faithful and loyal, walking in the same Spirit.
- Titus was **spreading the gospel on the island of Crete**, and working with the churches there. This letter is to instruct Titus about correcting some issues, and properly establishing this church. We don't know the exact order and time, but it was probably written near the time (perhaps right before) the 2nd letter to Timothy, from about 62-67 AD.
- This letter also warns Titus (as Paul did Timothy) about **false teachers in the church**, and provides more instructions about faith and behavior as Christians.
- Paul apparently wanted to join Titus again in Nicopolis for the winter. We don't know if this happened or not. Tradition tells us that Titus returned to Crete where he spent the rest of his life in ministry. The last mention of Titus was when Paul said he left him in Dalmatia (*former Yugoslavia, now Croatia and Serbia*).

### Highlights

Ch 1	Greetings; Titus' instructions for what he is to do; qualifications and behavior of bishops (overseers) and elders (senior members); warning about false teaching, note about the Cretans
Ch 2	Instructions for older men, older women, younger women, younger men, and slaves, Titus to be an example of a proper life; grace has brought salvation to ALL, live righteously now, looking for the "blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ;" be anxious to do good works (results of grace)
Ch 3	Be subject to rulers and authorities, ready to do good works (by grace), speak no evil of anyone, live in good works toward everyone, restating of the gospel message; avoid disputes and division; personal instructions and farewell

- *“One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.” This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.”* (1:12-14) Paul is quoting from Epimenides, a Cretan poet from the sixth century BCE. Over the years this had become a proverb about the people of Crete. If you look in a dictionary, **the word “cretan” is not considered complimentary.** It is clear this old proverb has even worked its way into modern culture. By definition, a cretan is someone with no sense, no knowledge, no truth, below everyone else in stature and class, lazy and over-indulgent. Not a very nice label, but it has stuck from before Paul’s time even into our own time. The more difficult thing here is that Paul actually acknowledges the truth of it. Paul may have seen a tendency of these people to take the truth and twist it for their own evil purposes, becoming false teachers. He is cautioning Titus to watch for this, and rebuke them strongly about it.
- *“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. They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.”* (1:15-16) These verses continue from above. Paul’s frustration is noted with the Cretans. Titus has his work cut out for him! But this describes everyone who is “defiled” or not in relationship with God. We know these people, some who call themselves “Christian,” **“by their fruit.”** If their words and deeds do not match what faith in Jesus produces, then the word “Christian” is only a label and does not describe the wearer.
- Paul seems a little **troubled that the church has grown careless about the truth**, and careless about being orderly. This may have been due to false teachers on the island (especially the “Judaizers”). Paul details the qualifications for elders and deacons, and for the shepherd of the individual flock (church).
- *“...in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”* (2:7-8) Here is a concise template for the behavior of church leaders, which would also be every believer. Our lives should have a *pattern* of good works, not just now and then, we should hold the truth, show reverence, and be and live in a way where no one can find anything bad to say about us. Can we do this on our own? Of course not. That is why Paul stresses the grace of God. We can do none of what Paul is asking of Titus or the church without His grace.
- According to Paul in this letter, **the ideal church is:** 1) orderly and organized, 2) preaches sound doctrine, 3) full of people who live pure lives and do good works. The emphasis in Timothy was more on sound doctrine and teaching. This is more about sound living, living a life true to the faith.
- **Grace is a central theme here.** The church is saved by grace, is supposed to be ordered and live by grace, and do works, demonstrating her faith, by grace. The organization of this letter in three short chapters details what the church should be and do: be orderly, teach the Word, do good works.
- Paul **discusses again the grace of God in providing us salvation through the life and death of Jesus.** He instructs regarding ungodliness, righteous and sober living, and good works. There are qualifications for elders, instructions to various age groups, our relationship with the government, and the role of grace in promoting good works among believers. The concept of “good deeds” occurs six times in this short letter. Other key words are “grace” and “faith.” Good works should not be the result of a legalistic interpretation of the gospel, but rather done through faith and with the power of God, in love for Him.
- **Other themes include** the rejection of godless living and worldly desires, call to live self-controlled and upright lives, and wait for the wonderful fulfillment of our hope in the glorious appearing of our Savior, Jesus.

The book of Titus could be summarized with three points: **love what is good, teach what is good, do what is good** – all by the grace of God.