

The Book of Titus

The Life of Christians in a Congregation:

“The Knowledge of the Truth

Which Accords With Godliness”

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I. Opening Salutation (1:1–4)
II. Body (1:5–3:11)
A. Appointment and Qualifications of Elders (1:5–9)
B. Elders' Duty to Refute False Teaching in Crete (1:10–16)
C. Instructions to Various Groups regarding Christian Living (2:1–10)
D. Theological Basis for This Christian Living (2:11–15)
E. General Instructions about Living as Christians in Society (3:1–2)
F. Theological Basis for This Christian Living Grounded in Holy Baptism (3:3–8)
G. Final Instructions about Dealing with False Teaching and Teachers (3:9–11)
III. Closing (3:12–15)
A. Personal Instructions (3:12–14)
B. Greeting (3:15)



A. THE TEXT

(Titus 1:1-16) Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness, (2) in hope of eternal life, which **God, who never lies**, promised before the ages began (3) and at the proper time manifested in **his word** through the preaching with which I have been entrusted by **the command of God our Savior**;

(4) To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace **from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior**. (5) **This is why I left you in Crete**, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you-- (6) if anyone is above reproach, the husband of one wife, and his children are believers and not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination.

(7) For an overseer, as God's steward, must be above reproach. He must not be arrogant or quick-tempered or a drunkard or violent or greedy for gain, (8) but hospitable, a lover of good, self-controlled, upright, holy, and disciplined. (9) He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.

(10) For there are many who are insubordinate, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision party. (11) They must be silenced, since they are upsetting whole families by teaching for shameful gain what they ought not to teach. (12) One of the Cretans, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." (13) This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, (14) not devoting themselves to Jewish myths and the commands of people who turn away from the truth.

(15) To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. (16) They profess to know **God**, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.

B. THE STUDY NOTES

The letter is addressed to Titus, one of Paul's converts (1:4) and a considerable help to Paul in his ministry. When Paul left Antioch to discuss "his" gospel (2Ti 2:8) with the Jerusalem leaders, he took Titus with him (Gal 2:1-3); acceptance of Titus (a Gentile) as a Christian without circumcision vindicated Paul's stand there (Gal 2:3-5). Presumably Titus, who is not referred to in Acts (but is mentioned 13 times in the rest of the NT), worked with Paul at Ephesus during (the third missionary journey). From there the apostle sent him to Corinth to help that church with its work (see notes on 2Co 2:12-13; 7:5-6; 8:6).

Following Paul's release from his first Roman imprisonment (Ac 28), he and Titus worked briefly in Crete (1:5), after which he commissioned Titus to remain there as his representative and complete some needed work (1:5; 2:15; 3:12-13). Paul asked Titus to meet him at Nicopolis (on the west coast of Greece) when a replacement arrived (3:12). Later, Titus went on a mission to Dalmatia (modern Yugoslavia; see note on 2Ti 4:10); the last word we hear about him in the NT. Considering the assignments given him, he obviously was a capable and resourceful leader

Crete

The fourth largest island of the Mediterranean, Crete lies directly south of the Aegean Sea (see note on 1Sa 30:14; cf. Paul's experiences there in Ac 27:7-13). In NT times life (in Crete) had sunk to a deplorable moral level. The dishonesty, gluttony and laziness of its inhabitants were proverbial (1:12).

Occasion and Purpose

Apparently Paul introduced Christianity in Crete when he and Titus visited the island, after which he left Titus there to organize the converts. Paul sent the letter with Zenas and Apollos, who were on a journey that took them through Crete (3:13), to give Titus personal authorization and guidance in meeting opposition (1:5; 2:1,7-8,15; 3:9), instructions about faith and conduct, and warnings about false teachers. Paul also informed Titus of his future plans for him (3:12).

Place and Date of Writing

Paul possibly wrote from Corinth, for he had not yet reached Nicopolis (see 3:12). The letter was written after his release from the first Roman imprisonment (Ac 28), (probably between A.D. 63 and 65) or possibly at a later date if he wrote after his assumed trip to Spain.

AD 33	AD 57-58	c AD 64	AD 68	AD 68
Resurrection of Jesus	Paul lands on Crete on the way to Rome	Paul assigns Titus to Crete	Titus written	Martyrdom of Peter and Paul

Challenges for Readers

Paul's Authorship. Because Paul's other Letters do not mention a mission to Crete, and because word choices in Titus differ somewhat from those in Paul's earlier Letters, some critics have concluded that Paul did not write this Letter to Titus. However, there was time for a mission to Crete after Paul's imprisonment at Rome and before his martyrdom (see the timeline above). Also, authors often adapt their style based on the intended recipient. Paul typically worked through a scribe, which could also affect the Letter's style (see note, Rm 16:22). The Early Church unanimously received Titus as a Letter from Paul.

Titus in the New Testament:

(2 Corinthians 2:12-13) When I came to Troas to preach the gospel of Christ, even though a door was opened for me in the Lord, (13) my spirit was not at rest because I did not find **my brother Titus** there. So I took leave of them and went on to Macedonia.

(2 Corinthians 7:6-7) But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by **the coming of Titus**, (7) and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more.

(2 Corinthians 7:13-16) Therefore we are comforted. And besides our own comfort, we rejoiced still more **at the joy of Titus**, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. (14) For whatever boasts I made to him about you, I was not put to shame. But just as everything we said to you was true, so also our boasting before **Titus has proved true**. (15) And his affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. (16) I rejoice, because I have perfect confidence in you.

(2 Corinthians 8:6) Accordingly, we urged **Titus** that as he had started, so he should complete among you this act of grace.

(2 Corinthians 8:15-24) As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack." (16) But thanks be to God, who put into **the heart of Titus** the same earnest care I have for you. (17) For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. (18) With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel. (19) And not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us as we carry out this act of grace that is being ministered by us, for the glory of the Lord himself and to show our good will. (20) We take this course so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, (21) for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man. (22) And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. (23) As for **Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker for your benefit**. And as for our brothers, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. (24) So give proof before the churches of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

(2 Corinthians 12:18) I urged **Titus** to go, and sent the brother with him. Did **Titus** take advantage of you? Did we not act in the same spirit? Did we not take the same steps?

(Galatians 2:1-3) Then after fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, **taking Titus along with me**. (2) I went up because of a revelation and set before them (though privately before those who seemed influential) the gospel that I proclaim among the Gentiles, in order to make sure I was not running or had not run in vain. (3) But even **Titus, who was with me**, was not forced to be circumcised, though he was a Greek.

(2 Timothy 4:10-12) For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, **Titus to Dalmatia**. (11) Luke alone is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is very useful to me for ministry. (12) Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

C. THE PERSON OF TITUS

His relics, now consisting of only his skull, are venerated in the Church of St. Titus, Heraklion, Crete to which it was returned in 1966 after being removed to Venice during the Turkish occupation.

St. Titus is the patron saint of the United States Army Chaplain Corps. The Corps has established the Order of Titus Award. According to the Department of Defense, the "Order of Titus award is the only award presented by the Chief of Chaplains to recognize outstanding performance of ministry by chaplains and chaplain assistants. The Order of Titus is awarded for meritorious contributions to the unique and highly visible Unit Ministry Team Observer Controller Program. The award recognizes the great importance of realistic, doctrinally guided combat ministry training in ensuring the delivery of prevailing religious support to the American Soldier."