

Titus Notes

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Introduction:

Titus was written at about the same time as 1 Timothy (62/63 AD) while or shortly after Paul was awaiting trial before Caesar Nero in Rome.

Titus is in Crete, which was one of the 3 evil “C’s” of the Roman Empire (along with Cicily and Cappodocia). Cretans were particularly ruthless, money hungry, and unscrupulous, so that even one of the Cretan prophets would say “Cretans are always liars” (Titus 1:12).

Chapter 1:

1:1 – “bondservant” – (Greek “doulos”) Lit. “slave without rights.” Bondservants were considered mere property in the Roman Empire.

- The key to being a servant depends on who your master is, not on the success of the work of the servant. Paul, in some respects, only got to see little fruit from his ministry. But because He was serving the Lord, God would use his ministry for years to come.
- Everyone is a slave to someone.
- “godliness” – This word is used 32 times in the pastoral epistles.

1:2 – “in” – (Greek “epi”) Lit. “upon.”

- “eternal” – Lit. “age-abiding.” This speaks more of quality than of duration.
- “God, who cannot lie” – This can be an encouragement or a warning. God punishes the rebellious and chastens the sons that he loves (Heb. 12:6), but He also said that he would save some to eternal life. Both these things are true of God.
- Cretans were known for being liars (1:12). This is contrary to the character of God.
- Rev. 21:8 – “...all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.”

1:4 – “Titus” – means “protected.”

- “a true son” – It seems that Titus was a convert of Paul.
- “Lord” – This is His title denoting His sovereignty
- “Jesus” – This is His name. Jesus means “Jehovah is salvation.”
- “Christ” – This is His mission. Christ is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew “messiah.”

1:5 – “I left you” – Paul seemed to function largely as the evangelist and church planter, then left other to care for the church at that location.

- “appoint” – Elders were not to be elected. The Church is arranged as an order, a theocracy, not as a democracy.
- Titus was left to recognize those God has gifted and called.
- Lightfoot’s commentary states that by the first century, there were already 3 forms of government in the Church: presbyterian (leadership of multiple elders), episcopal (bishop-pastor leadership), and congregational (congregation leads through the hiring and firing of a pastor).

- 1:6 – “blameless” – The idea is to be living above reproach in and out of the church.
- This is the first standard God lays out, even in Crete where “Cretans are always liars.” God doesn’t lower His standard to the culture. He patiently waits until a life is changed to meet the standard before bringing them into leadership.
 - “husband of one wife” – Lit. “a one wife kind of guy.”
- 1:7 – “not self-willed” – Paul set the example of a leader being a “bondservant of God” (v. 1).
- “not given to wine” – Lit. “not sitting next to the wine.”
- 1:8 – “hospitable” – This is the ability to make people comfortable.
- “sober-minded” – This is the idea of “vigilant.”
 - God doesn’t look for ability, because He adds that. But he looks for character, then gives the gifts.
 - The only skill listed in the criteria for elders are that they are “able to teach” (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9).
- 1:9 – “holding fast the faithful word” – Churches should teach the Bible. There is no other secret or trick to producing a healthy church body than to feed it the Word.
- “sound doctrine” – It is sad that so many churches have turned away from sound doctrine in favor of entertaining programs and messages.
 - “those who contradict” – (KJV “gainsayers”) The idea of this word is “troublemakers.”
- 1:10 – “idle talkers” – These are those who cannot match up to what they say. Their words are vain; they mean nothing.
- “those of the circumcision” – These are those with a religious, legalistic trip.
- 1:11 – “dishonest gain” – Their main motivation is financial gain.
- This applies to those seeking for personal financial gain (like the insurance salesman getting involved in the church to make contacts and sales) and to those seeking for corporate financial gain for the church organization (like the pastor driven to have the biggest budget of all the churches in the community).
- 1:12 – “a prophet of their own, said” – Paul is merely quoting a Cretan prophet. We are not completely sure he agrees with this evaluation.
- “lazy gluttons” – Being a lazy glutton would make one fat.
- 1:13 – “This testimony is true” – Either Paul agrees with the Cretan prophet or he is verifying that one of their prophets actually said that. It seems that Paul would not agree with this previous statement as he seems to expect some Cretans to meet the criteria for leadership laid out earlier in the chapter.
- 1:14 – “commandments of men who turn from the truth” – These would be the legalists and Judaizers.
- 1:15 – “all things are pure” – Religiously legalistic people always focus on everything you cannot do.
- 1:16 – “in works they deny Him” – Paul is saying they are to walk the talk as well as talk the walk. If their lives do not match their words, then their “mouths must be stopped” (1:11).

Chapter 2:

2:1 – “sound doctrine” – This is the healthy teaching of the Word and stands in contrast to those at the end of chapter 1.

- Verses 2-15 give us some details of what sound doctrine produces. The truest evidence of healthy teaching is a healthy lifestyle.

2:2 – “sober” – The idea is “vigilant and watchful.” They will take God’s things seriously.

- “temperate” – The idea is “patient and long-suffering.”
- “patience” – (Greek “hupomone”) Lit. “endurance or to bear up under pressure.”
 - There is nothing worse than a crabby, crotchety, cantankerous old man (except maybe a loose, immoral, vulgar old woman). But one who has walked with the Lord for years and has been filled with the peace and joy of the Lord is simply a joy to be around.

2:3 – “reverent” – (KJV “holiness”) The idea is separateness. They have created distance between themselves and the things of the world.

- Our world is placing a great pressure on older women.
- “slanderers” – (Greek “diabolos”) Lit. “devil-tongued.”

2:4 – “admonish” – (Greek “sophronizo”) Lit. “to come to one’s senses.” But the root word means “wisdom.” And this either refers to how they are to teach the younger women (with wisdom) or what they are to teach the younger women (to be wise).

- The KJV translates this to mean “teach...to be sober.” In that translation, the wisdom seems to be a trait to be taught to the women.
- Wisdom is the application of knowledge. Older women should have some wisdom to pass along. And widows, in particular, should be ones to teach the younger to enjoy their husbands and families.
- “love their husbands” – (Greek “philandros”) Lit. “to enjoy or be fond of their husbands.”
- “love their children” – (Greek “philoteknos”) Lit. “to enjoy or be fond of their children.”
 - This is the only time in the NT that these words are used.

2:5 – “chaste” – Lit. “pure.”

- “not be blasphemed” – This is the purpose for the teaching.

2:6 – “sober-minded” – Lit. “to not have a higher opinion of oneself than one should.”

- Men can typically have huge ego problems. (They won’t even stop and ask for directions.)
- Life is a vapor (James 4:14) and we are but dust (Ps. 103:14).

2:7 – “integrity” – This speaks of a life that is living above reproach and beyond accusation.

- No excuses are acceptable. Integrity is necessary for young men.

2:8 – “sound speech” – Lit. “wholesome talk.”

- Eph. 4:29 defines wholesome (or non-corrupt) speech as “what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”
- “having nothing evil to say of you” – This won’t keep people from making stuff up to speak evil of us. Jesus was perfect, and they killed Him.

2:9 – “bondservants” – (Greek “doulos”) Lit. “slaves without rights.”

- This applies literally to a master and slave relationship. But it would also apply to an employer and employee relationship, as well as to our relationship as servants of God.
- “answering back” – Lit. “talking back.”

2:10 – “pilfering” – This is what we would call “petty theft.”

2:11 – “For” – This is the reason why we are to live the way Paul described in vv. 2:1-2:10.

- “grace” – Paul uses this word over 120 times in the NT. Paul knows God’s grace well because of what he had been saved from.
- Grace is in no way a license to sin. It is grace that drew us to Christ and saved us in Christ. But it is also grace that teaches us to deny worldly lusts. It is grace that gives us hope for the future. Grace covers our past, our present, and our future.

2:13 – “looking for” – Lit. “to look expectantly.”

- “blessed hope and glorious appearing” – These are apparently two separate occasions.
- “blessed hope” – This refers to the imminent return of Christ.
 - The fact that Jesus can return at any moment is a key teaching of the NT and was a key doctrine to the early church.
 - If we truly believe Christ would come back at any time, it will affect the way we live. The possibility that he could return today should purify our lives.

2:14 – “for us” – Lit. “instead of us.” This is His substitutionary sacrifice.

- “special” – Lit. “in the center of.” The Church is the apple of His eye.

2:15 – “Speak these things” – Paul’s letters to the Thessalonians emphasize these things. Yet, He had only ministered to them for about 3 weeks before being driven out of town. He must have considered this as important doctrine, even for new believers.

- “Let no one despise you” – Lit. “let no one think around you.” We would say, “Don’t let anyone squirm out of this.”

Chapter 3:

3:1 – “remind them to be subject” – Because powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1), we are to pray for our leaders (1 Tim. 2:1-2).

- As he wrote this, Paul was in prison awaiting trial in the court of Nero for disobeying the edict of the government. When obedience to God conflicts with obeying the government, we are to obey God. (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29)

3:3 – “we ourselves were also once” – We are to constantly remember that we were once like the unbelieving people around us.

- “serving” – Lit. “bond-slave.” This is the same word as Paul used in Titus 1:1.
 - We all serve something. The thing we gave our greatest amount of time, energy, and thinking to was your god.

3:4 – “But when the kindness...appeared” – There is a change that comes upon us at salvation. (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Eph. 2:1-7)

3:4-6 – “God our Savior...Jesus Christ our Savior” – They are one and the same.

- 3:5 – “not by works” – We haven’t earned this salvation, therefore we can be gracious to others.
- “regeneration” – This is the new birth. (John 3:3)
- 3:6 – “poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ” – All God has for us is wrapped up in Jesus.
God has nothing for us apart from Jesus.
- 3:7 – “having been justified” – Past tense.
- “heirs” – We are co-heirs with Jesus Christ. He has given us the spirit of adoption. (Rom. 8:15)
- He calls us sons and daughters even though we make mistakes. His love and grace has clearly been the initiator in this relationship.
- 3:8 – “be careful to maintain good works” – We have to be conscious to do good, because it doesn’t come naturally.
- Our good works are only a proper response to grace, mercy, justification, regeneration, and being made co-heirs with Jesus Christ. As we understand His work and His person, we will respond accordingly with good works.
- 3:9 – “avoid foolish disputes” – We need to be more concerned about our walk with the Lord than about arguing stupid questions.
- In the Church, there are too many full heads with empty hearts.
- 3:10 – “divisive” – Lit. “to choose out.” (KJV “heretic”)
- Much heresy and division starts with one grain of truth and centers on it until it becomes exclusive.
- “first or second admonition” – We are to give the divisive a chance, but not perpetually.
- 3:11 – “such a person is warped” – (KJV “subverted”) There is more to that kind of person than what one can see on the surface. There is an agenda and a motivation lying under the surface that will be displayed in time.
- 3:12 – “Nicopolis” – Many scholars believe this is where Paul was arrested and taken into custody the second time.
- 3:13 – “the lawyer” – He is either a trial lawyer or he is a lawyer of Scripture. One cannot be sure.
- 3:14 – “good works” – Lit. “good works for needed business.” This is speaking of acquiring honest trade or honest employment.