

**TITUS:**

1. **Author:** As with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy, Paul is accepted as the author of this Pastoral Epistle. There have been challenges to Pauline authorship, but there is no credible alternative to Paul. Paul was well known to have had the relational intimacy to speak authoritatively to these churches and their leaders; the manner of writing and theology are clearly Pauline.
2. **Background and Purpose of Titus:**
  - a. Titus is mentioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:9-18. Titus was known to have accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey, especially with his ministry to the Corinthians. Corinth and Crete were renown in the Ancient Near East as critical ports uniting the east and west of the Greco-Roman world. Titus was also known as the courier for the “sorrowful letter” to the Corinthians and ministered there as the letter had fulfilled its objective to convicting the Corinthians of their wayward behavior. This success no doubt gave Paul confidence that Titus could handle the challenge of the Cretan community.
  - b. Titus was obviously part of a small contingent of leaders Paul had been grooming to minister to church plants that Paul was now unable to minister directly to. Titus is previously mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy 2:10 when Titus was ministering in Dalmatia while Paul is awaiting his sentencing in Rome.
  - c. Titus was a Gentile believer who had also been mentioned in Galatians 2:3. Titus was likely a critical part of Paul’s argument to the church in Jerusalem in support of his doctrine of “Salvation as being apart from the Law” and thereby excluding the necessity of imposing Jewish circumcision and food restrictions upon non-Jews – see Acts chapter 15.
  - d. It is believed that Titus also accompanied Paul on his third and final missionary voyage, and that Paul left Titus in Crete to minister while Paul returned to Rome for his final appeal and sentencing.
  - e. Zondervan’s **New International Bible Dictionary** provides the following insights from two excellent articles “The History of Crete” and “The Further Background and Purpose of Titus” that provide support on the reason Titus was sent to Crete:
    - i. In Greek mythology, Mount Ida on Crete was said to be the legendary birthplace of Zeus, who was the head of the Greek Pantheon. King Minos was a half-historical and half-mythological character as an alleged “demi-god” [half-human & half-god] of Zeus. Minos was an early ruler of Crete.
    - ii. Around 140 BC the Jews established a large enough colony on this island to be able to appeal successfully to the protection of Rome. The importance of Crete as a port-city undoubtedly factored into the equation.
    - iii. In the Old Testament, the Kerethites (1 Samuel 30:14; Ezekiel 25:16), were held to be a group of Philistines, and are identified as Cretans. In the New Testament, a number of Cretans are represented as being present on the Day of Pentecost.
    - iv. Paul visited Crete and left his assistant Titus in charge. In the opinion of the apostle Paul, even the Christians in Crete were not of high moral character:
      1. Paul wrote “Cretans are always liars....” (Titus 1:12). This line is a quotation from the first words that are to be found in the “Hymn to Zeus” by Callimachus. This is

something that would have been known and accepted as true by knowledgeable Greeks and Romans, which is undoubtedly why Paul used it.

2. One particular lie for which the Cretans were well known for being guilty of, was that they claimed the Tomb of Zeus [non-existent], was located on their island. This was done falsely for personal and cultural gain.
3. Cretans were also known in the New Testament times for their laziness and gluttony... “pigs” as an animal group were the epitome of this characteristic, and the name was invoked as a common slur.
4. Titus was charged by Paul to sharply rebuke the Cretans (1:13). Obviously, their actions had become so egregious that they required strong reproof.
  - v. A storm on his journey to Rome forced Paul’s ship into the port of Cnidus (Acts 27:17).
  - vi. Since the general reputation of the Cretans was known to be very poor, a better understanding of what constituted “True sanctification” was needed (2:11-14; 3:10).
  - vii. Paul challenged the Cretans to provide for Gospel workers such as Zenas and Apollos, whose itinerary included Crete and who probably carried with them Paul’s letter. Paul’s emissaries were expected to receive every assistance from the Cretan church.
  - viii. As to Paul himself, having recently met Timothy, and the situation in Crete being so critical, it is natural that he wished to have a face-to-face conference with Titus also.
  - ix. The purpose of Paul’s letter to Titus was in helping him succeed in his appointed pastorate:
    1. To stress the need of thorough sanctification.
    2. To speed on their way Zenas [the law-expert] and Apollos [the evangelist] (3:13).
    3. To urge Titus to meet Paul at Nicopolis (3:12).
- f. **Paul had ministered in Crete and was well aware of the difficult nature of the Cretan society. Thus, the central theme of this letter is promoting the example of “good works” [or godly living] as the consistent by-product of sound doctrine. Paul is instructing Titus on issues relating to the establishment of orderliness and godliness in the Cretan church.**
- g. **Crete was an important port city where wealth from the east was funneled to the west. It was a prime Mediterranean seaport along with Corinth, and probably also had many things in common with the Corinthians including cultural, religious and political aspects.**
- h. **Timothy was known to be rather timid and Paul encouraged him to be more forceful – knowing that the Ephesian church was a more appropriate assignment for him. Titus on the other-hand, must have been a stronger, more resourceful and formidable leader than Timothy to earn the Cretan church as a pastoral assignment.**
- i. **In general, there are many church leadership content similarities between Paul’s writings to Timothy and Titus.**

### 3. Structural Outline #1 – Dr Tuck

- a. 1:1-4 – Salutation
- b. 1:5-16 – Promoting Order in the Cretan Churches
  - i. Vs 5-9 – Appointment of Elders
  - ii. Vs 10-16 – Confronting False Teaching
- c. 2:1-3:11 – Promoting Godliness in the Cretan Churches

- i. Vs 1-14 – Godly Behavior in Various Groups
  - 1. Vs 1 – Command to Speak
  - 2. Vs 2-10 – Behavioral Commands
  - 3. Vs 11-14 – The Theological Foundation
- ii. 2:15-3:7 – Submissive and Gentle Behavior by All
  - 1. Vs 15 – Command to Speak
  - 2. Vs 3:1-2 – Behavioral Commands
  - 3. Vs 3:3-7 – The Theological Foundation
- iii. 3:8-11 – Eliminate Controversial and Divisive Behavior
  - 1. Vs 8a – Command to Speak
  - 2. Vs 8b – Positive Works
  - 3. Vs 9-11 – Negative Works
- d. 3:12-15 – Closing Thoughts
  - i. Vs 12-14 – Promoting Fellowship with Missionaries
  - ii. Vs 15a – Greetings
  - iii. Vs 15b – Benediction

4. **Structural Outline #2 – Zondervan’s Archaeological Study Bible**

- a. 1:1-4 – Greeting
- b. 1:5-9 – Concerning Elders
  - i. Vs 5 – Where to Appoint Elders
  - ii. Vs 6-9 – Qualifications of Elders
- c. 1:10-16 – Concerning False Teachers
- d. 2:1-15 – Concerning Various Groups in the Congregations
  - i. Vs 1-10 – Teaching for Different Groups
  - ii. Vs 11-14 – Grace as the Foundation for Christian Living
  - iii. Vs 15 – Charge to Titus
- e. 3:1-8 – Concerning Believers in General
  - i. Vs 1-2 – Believers as Citizens
  - ii. Vs 3-8 – Doing What is Good
- f. 3:9-11 – Concerning Response to Spiritual Error
- g. 3:12-15 – Conclusion

5. **Exposition – The Message of Titus** – Roughly following the Outline & Argument of Dr Tuck

- a. 1:1-3 – In this brief passage such weighty concepts are touched upon. Salvation is a result of faith in the elected [those who have responded to God’s invitation], where Truth and Godliness converge and the expected reality of eternal life await. Zondervan’s **Expository Bible Commentary** beautifully develops this passage:

- i. The length of this salutation is due to the expansion of the first part, where Paul emphasizes his authoritative message. While this solemn self-identification was not needed by Titus, it effectively stressed the authoritative commission and message of the one for whom Titus

acted in Crete. This letter was written to preserve and further that message which was closely linked with godliness in daily life.

- ii. To his name, Paul added two credentials:
    - 1. "A servant of God" – occurs only here in Paul; elsewhere it is "servant of Jesus Christ" (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1). "Servant" is the common term for "slave" and its use implies Paul's acknowledged ownership by God and his complete dependence on Him, and service dedicated to Him. "Servant of God" was used of Moses (Joshua 1:2) and the prophets (Jeremiah 7:25; Amos 3:7) to denote their use by God to accomplish his will. [It is important to understand that this is a volitional role these servants have accepted, to be God's ambassadors on earth.] Paul is nothing less than God's agent.
    - 2. "Apostle" – Paul is Jesus Christ's Apostle having been called, equipped, and sent forth as His authoritative messenger.
  - iii. "For the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth" describes his apostolic office. "For" as used in the New International Version of the Bible denotes purpose; Paul's mission was to promote Christian faith and knowledge. It can also be translated "according to," so that Paul's apostleship is in full accord with the faith and knowledge that God's elect have received. His apostleship is not regulated by their faith (cf. Galatians 1:11-17) but is wholly in accord with it. The Cretan Christians needed to evaluate their faith by that fact.
  - iv. "God's elect" are those who have responded to God's call through the Gospel [Call usually references an invitation initiated by God and a choice/decision made by the believer]. The expression embodies a true balance between the divine initiative and the human response. Although surrounded with mystery, the Biblical teaching on election is for the benefit of believers and is intended as a practical truth. It assures faithful, struggling Christians that their salvation is all of God from beginning to end [in other words, they are "secure" in their salvation.
  - v. Christian faith is linked with the full apprehension of truth, and the inner realization of divine reality as revealed in the Gospel. Faith is a heart response to the truth of the Gospel, but it must also possess the mind. God never intended his people to remain intellectually ignorant of the truth of the Gospel [or unbalanced in terms of mind and heart].
  - vi. Christian truth has a moral/ethical aspect... it "leads to godliness." Conduct must be evaluated by the demands of godliness, that reverential attitude that leads to conduct pleasing to God. Those gripped by God's truth walk in harmony with such demands. There is an intimate connection between a vital possession of truth and genuine godliness... a lesson the Cretan church needed to learn.
- b. 1:4 – Paul refers to both Timothy (1 Timothy 1:2) and Titus as “my true son” in reference to their faith. Paul is their spiritual father and they are his children in faith. By their faith, they are united into a common purpose and a common hope; and they are all disciples of Jesus.**
- c. 1:5-9 – Paul stresses the importance of “order” [Vs 1:5 in the NASB] in chapter 1, and focuses on Godliness in chapters 2 & 3.**
- i. Vs 5 – The word translated as “Order” is ἐπιδιορθόω, a verb meaning “to straighten out or correct what is deficient.” Paul asserts that proper leadership is the means of

- correcting the faith and character deficiencies of the Cretans, and in establishing both order and Godliness in the church. Zondervan's NIV Bible Commentary explains:**  
"Organization was lacking (1:5), false teachers were unchecked (1:10-11; 3:10-11), and instruction in doctrine and conduct was needed (2:1-10; 3:1-2). Paul had observed and had begun to correct these matters; Titus must now complete the work."
- ii. **Vs 6-9 – Deal with the identification and appointment of qualified leaders – cross reference 1 Timothy 3:2-4. These qualifications are expected for leadership because they are to be the example [pattern] of what all believers should emulate.**
- d. **1:10-16 – Paul deals with how to identify and confront false teaching, which was rampant in this church:**
- i. **Vs 10-11 – Being rebellious against God is the foremost of the "sin nature" exhibited by Satan and all who promote deception and rebellion against God and His Messiah Jesus. False teachers should be identified and silenced. It is important to understand that in this statement to be silenced is not to be killed, but rather to be ashamed by exposing their ignorance and duplicity. These were self-serving scoundrels and rebels rather than well-intentioned but misaligned teachers.**
  - ii. **Vs 12-14 – Paul recounts the writing of a Cretan prophet who characterized Cretans as "liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons." Zondervan's NIV Bible Commentary helps to explain this passage with this background:**
    - 1. These Cretan false teachers were all the more dangerous because of the known nature of the people on whom they preyed. As evidence, Paul quotes a line from Epimenides (a 6th-5th century B.C. Cretan poet and religious reformer). This man had intimate knowledge of his own people and was esteemed by them as a "prophet." Paul was willing to accept this evaluation in order to underline the authority of his own judgment.
    - 2. The quotation establishes the picture [of the problem] without exposing Paul to the charge of being anti-Cretan. It put the Cretans on the horns of a dilemma. They must either admit the truthfulness of his verdict concerning them or deny the charge and brand their own prophet a liar.
    - 3. The triple charge that "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons" is supported by other writers. So notorious was their reputation for falsehood that the Greek word *kretizo* ("to Crete-ize") meant "to lie." "Evil brutes" stigmatizes them as having sunk to the level of beasts, unrestrained in their brutality. "Lazy gluttons" underlines their greed as idle sensualists who desired to be filled without exerting personal effort to earn an honest living.
  - iii. **Vs 15-16 – The notion that false teaching quenches good deeds, is not in support of a "works based" identity, but rather supports a "character realignment" of a person's identity, meaning the manner in which one lives out their life should bear witness to the faith they hold.**
    - 1. **The idea that our life should prove out our faith is what Saint Francis of Assisi meant in his statement, "Preach always, and when necessary use words." Faith**

transforms character which should be demonstrated in how we live our lives. This character focus should serve as a goal for all believers.

2. What Paul is calling their attention to is their character or “inner-man” (Romans 7:22; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 3:16), the transformation of which is a demonstration of authentic faith as the Spirit works out Christ’s Character and nature in His followers.
3. Zondervan’s Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible provides the following explanation in an article by G.B. Funderburk:
  - a. The inner man is the true ego, whereas the outer man may or may not be a genuine portrayal of the inner man. Jesus castigated the scribes and Pharisees for their religious hypocrisy, comparing them to “whitewashed tombs” (Matthew 23:27 f.); and, He warned against “false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves” (7:15).
  - b. In the period of the Judges when Israel was clamoring for a king, Samuel, under divine guidance, had to make a distinction between the inner and outer man of Jesse’s sons. Seven were rejected, but David, the youngest, was selected for king; for “man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).
  - c. The inner man is the real and dominant self [i.e. where character and integrity reside]. Paul was a living example of this distinction in the better way he lived, and he consequently prayed that God would grant God’s people “to be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16).
- e. 2:1-10 – Paul provides the behavioral standards for each of the five classes of people in the Cretan congregation in the promotion of godliness:
  - i. Vs 1-6 – Paul advises teaching “sound doctrine” according with the needs of the age group – specifically older men, older women, young women and young men.
  - ii. Vs 7-8 – The example of Titus’ life should provide adequate support for truth behind his authority and teaching.
  - iii. Vs 9-10 – Paul resumes his teaching advice for slaves and servants.
- f. 2:11-14 – The grace that brings salvation is qualified, with dignity and goodness throughout being seen [evidenced] as “sensible.”
- g. 2:15 – Paul reaffirms that these are the things to be taught, and Titus must encourage and rebuke with authority in shepherding this wayward congregation.
- h. 3:1-2 – Submissiveness and gentleness underlie the behavioral standards for all Christians. Zondervan’s New International Encyclopedia of Bible Words explains the meaning of obedience and submissiveness... words that most people struggle with:
  - i. The words “obey,” “obedient,” “submit,” “subject,” and “submission” mean that one willfully subjects or subordinates himself or herself to someone or something else. These words imply a “voluntary responsive obedience” to whoever or whatever one is subject to. Thus, citizens were subject to governing authorities, and slaves to masters. This voluntary

submission of believers involves existing social structures, including that of Christian interpersonal relationships.

- ii. What is important for us to realize is that however we understand “obey” and “submission” in such passages, it does not imply an inferiority of the person. Submission is not a confession of inferiority but a demonstration of the fact that personal significance does not depend on one's role in society. The Christian is responsive to God, fulfilling his or her highest destiny in choosing to obey the Lord in the matter of submission [as appropriate].
- iii. The fact that submission is no admission of inferiority should be established for us by Luke 2:51. Here Luke states that after Jesus' visit to the temple at age twelve, He returned with His parents to Nazareth and was “obedient” to them; He Himself willingly chose to submit to a parental authority that was appropriate to His condition as a child. Did submission make Him inferior? Hardly, for He always remained who He was--God. Nor can submission make us inferior as persons, for we too remain who we are, children of God now... not just later, being deeply loved and accepted by the Lord.
- i. **3:3 – For Paul, the theological foundation of this passage focuses upon salvation by Grace resulting in faith in action and one’s volitional submission to God’s will and purpose.**
- j. **3:4-7 – Through this realignment, God’s work of kindness, love and mercy produce justification and hope. This provides a model for all believers – as we have gained hope purely by the love and mercy of God in spite of our sinfulness, so we should be patient, loving, and merciful toward others.**
- k. **3:8-11 – This is the practical application of sound doctrine and the exhibition of godliness. It also recognizes that some will not respond to God’s Grace and His humble correction. When that results allow them to go their way and wait upon God to transform them from the inside out. This affirms that it is not our responsibility of how someone responds to preaching and teaching, only that we faithfully present God’s Truth and trust that He will convict and transform people.**
- l. **3:12-14 – This is about promoting healthy fellowship with God’s missionaries and doing what is right and good in living out productive Kingdom of God oriented lives.**
- m. **3:15 – Closing and benediction.**