

Resources

"An Exposition, With Practical Observations, of the Epistle of St. Paul to Titus" by Matthew **Henry** in Volume 6 of *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible*

"Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon" in *Calvin's Commentaries* by John **Calvin** (1556)

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Titus and Philemon by D. Edmond **Hiebert** (1956)

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"The Epistle to Titus" by Wilbur **Wallis** in *The New Testament and Wycliffe Bible Commentary* (1971)

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"Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles" by William **Hendriksen** in the *New Testament Commentary* (1979)

"Titus" by A. Duane **Litfin** in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (1983)

The Pastoral Epistles by Homer **Kent** (1986)

"Focus on II Timothy and Titus" in *Biblical Viewpoint* (April 1987)

1 and 2 Timothy, Titus by Gordon **Fee** in the *New International Biblical Commentary* (1988)

Be Faithful: 1-2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon by Warren **Wiersbe** (1988)

1, 2 Timothy; Titus by Thomas Lea and Hayne **Griffin** [Titus by Griffin] in *The New American Commentary* (1992)

The Pastoral Epistles by George **Knight** in *The New International Greek Testament Commentary* (1992)

1 & 2 Timothy and Titus by R. Kent Hughes & Bryan **Chapell** [Titus by Chapell] (2000)

Pastoral Epistles by William **Mounce** in the *Word Biblical Commentary* (2000)

"The Epistle to Titus" by A. T. **Robertson** in *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (2000)

"Titus" by S. M. **Baugh** in Volume 3 of the *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary* (2002)

The Letters to Timothy and Titus by Philip **Towner** in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (2006)

Commentary on 1-2 Timothy and Titus by Andreas **Kostenberger** (2017)

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scriptural citations are from the New American Standard Bible (NASB).

Introduction to Titus

The book of Titus is found among the Epistles of the New Testament.¹ More specifically, it is one of the Pauline Epistles.² The Pauline epistles of 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus are commonly designated the “Pastoral Epistles” (a designation first given to these books in the early 18th century), having been written to two men, Timothy and Titus, who temporarily functioned as the “pastors” of the churches in the city of Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3) and on the island of Crete (Titus 1:5) respectively.³

Author

The human author of Titus is clearly the apostle Paul (1:1). Paul typically made use of an “amanuensis” (≈ secretary) to record the content of his epistles (see, for example, Romans 16:22). In the case of the pastoral epistles, the most likely amanuensis was Luke.⁴

Recipient(s)

The primary recipient of Titus was clearly Titus (1:4; cf. the first “you” in 3:15, which is a second person singular). The secondary recipients were the believers in the churches on the island of Crete to whom Titus ministered (see the end of 3:15,

¹The New Testament can be subdivided as follows: Gospels (Matthew-John), History (Acts), Epistles (Romans-Jude), and Prophecy (Revelation).

²The Epistles can be subdivided as follows: Pauline Epistles (Romans-Philemon) and General Epistles (Hebrews-Jude). D. Edmond Hiebert (Volume 2 of *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 23) subdivides the Pauline Epistles as follows: Soteriological [doctrine of salvation] Group (Romans-Galatians), Christological [doctrine of Christ] Group (Ephesians-Colossians and Philemon), Eschatological [doctrine of last things] Group (1 & 2 Thessalonians), and Ecclesiological [doctrine of the church] Group (1 Timothy-Titus).

³Technically, Timothy and Titus were not the pastors of these churches, but were Paul’s “apostolic representatives,” Paul having given them the temporary assignment of overseeing the congregations in these areas. In the case of Titus, the assignment was to oversee the churches on the island of Crete until he was able to appoint pastors over them (Titus 1:5; cf. Acts 14:23). Fee (p. 21) states in this regard: “It is a mistaken notion to view Timothy or Titus as model pastors for a local church. The letters simply have no such intent. Although it is true that Timothy and Titus carry full apostolic authority, in both cases they are itinerants on special assignment, there as Paul’s apostolic delegates, not as permanent resident pastors.” Hendriksen (p. 4) calls Timothy and Titus “vicars apostolic.” Henry (p. 852) similarly calls them “vice-apostles.” House (p. 46) calls Timothy “a legate to care for the church at Ephesus.” Hiebert (*In Paul’s Shadow*, p. 112) calls Titus “a temporary apostolic legate” and states that “Titus’s position might more nearly be compared to that of a modern missionary superintendent appointed to exercise supervision over a number of national churches in a given area.”

⁴Many have pointed out the similarities in vocabulary between the pastoral epistles and the books of Luke and Acts (see, for example, Mounce, pp. cxxvii-cxxviii; Fee, p. 26; and especially Knight, pp. 48-51).

where the “you” is a second person plural and is followed by an “all”).⁵

Who was Titus?⁶ Apparently, he was a convert of Paul (see 1:4's “child”; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:17, Philippians 2:22, 1 Timothy 1:2, 18, 2 Timothy 1:2, and 2:1, as well as 1 Corinthians 4:15 and Philemon 10), most likely in Syrian Antioch. From Galatians 2:1-3 it can be inferred that Titus accompanied Paul to the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15 as proof positive that Gentiles (such as Titus) could become believers without being circumcised.⁷ Titus accompanied Paul on his third (Acts 18:23f) and fourth⁸ missionary journeys. During the third journey, Paul sent Titus to Corinth several times (according to Hiebert, as many as three)(see 2 Corinthians 7:6-7, 13-14, 8:6, 16-17, 23, and 12:17-18).⁹ While on the fourth journey, Paul and Titus ministered for a time on the island of Crete, where Paul left Titus to “set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city” (Titus 1:5). Titus was also with Paul during Paul's second Roman imprisonment (2 Timothy 4:10). According to tradition, Titus died a natural death on the island of Crete.

The island of Crete was a Roman province located southeast of Greece in the Mediterranean Sea. It is approximately 150 miles long and 30-35 miles wide (at its widest point). The inhabitants of Crete (Cretans) in Paul's day were infamous for their corrupt character.¹⁰ Paul alludes to this very fact in Titus 1:12-13 (cf. 3:3).

⁵“This was not so much a private epistle of Paul to Titus, as it was a public epistle to the Cretans” (Calvin, p. 277). Mounce (p. lx) calls the epistle of Titus “private in form, but public in intent.”

⁶For an excellent biographical sketch of Titus, see pages 105-113 of *In Paul's Shadow* by Hiebert.

⁷William LaSor (quoted in Hiebert, *In Paul's Shadow*, p. 107) states in this regard: “Titus was ‘Exhibit A’—evidence that could be examined; living proof that a Gentile who had not come under the Law of Moses could still demonstrate the fruits of the Spirit that were the sign of a regenerate man in Christ.”

⁸For one reconstruction of the fourth journey, see pages 1762-1763 of *The Zondervan NASB Study Bible*.

⁹Griffin (n.p.) says that “Paul seems to have used Titus as an effective troubleshooter in delicate situations. His performance under such pressure appears to have been superlative.”

¹⁰“The expression ‘to Cretize’ [the Greek verb, *kretizo*] was synonymous with ‘to lie,’ and ‘to play the Cretan with a Cretan’ meant ‘to out-trick a trickster.’ Their morals were low. The wine of Crete was famous, and drunkenness prevailed. They were known as a turbulent people.” (Hiebert, Volume 2 of *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 342). “They were naturally belligerent, argumentative people, uncontrolled, resentful of authority and partial to the bottle!” (*Zondervan Handbook to the Bible*, p. 737). Towner (p. 40) speaks of “Crete's reputation (including its religious deceitfulness), going back centuries, as a self-indulgent, belligerent, wild, immoral society. Sexual promiscuity, gluttony at feasts (where immoral activities frequently took place), and lying (‘cretanizing’ meant ‘lying’) characterized what was widely held to be the way of life on Crete: to speak of a ‘Cretan point of view’ was to speak of deception.”

Cretans were present in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). It is reasonable to assume that some of the three thousand saved on that Day (Acts 2:41) were Cretans and that some, if not all, of these Cretans returned to their home island and established churches. When Paul and Titus ministered on Crete during the fourth missionary journey, they likely started more churches, as well as strengthened those that already existed. This was not the first time Paul had been to Crete, as he had spent a brief time at the Cretan harbor of Fair Havens (Acts 27:8) while on his voyage to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:1-28:14).

Date

It is surmised by most that Paul was released from his first Roman imprisonment, went on a fourth missionary journey, wrote the epistles of 1 Timothy and Titus while on the fourth journey, was rearrested and re-imprisoned, wrote the epistle of 2 Timothy during his second Roman imprisonment, and was executed by beheading shortly thereafter (by Nero, Rome's emperor from 54-68 A.D.). Most place the date of writing for Titus in the early to middle 60s A.D.¹¹ Of the thirteen biblical books penned by Paul, Titus was likely number twelve.¹²

Place

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, Paul wrote the epistle of Titus sometime during his fourth missionary journey. Because the itinerary of the fourth journey is a matter of conjecture (there is no explicit biblical record of it), suggestions as to place of composition for Titus must be held tenuously. Suggestions include Corinth (so Hiebert and *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts*), Nicopolis¹³ (so House, Barnes, Robertson, and Gromacki), as well as Macedonia and Ephesus (so also Gromacki).

Occasion¹⁴

¹¹Wallis (61-63); House (62); Gromacki (62); Fee & Stuart and Kent (62-63); MacArthur (62-64); Wemp, Hiebert, and the *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts* (63); *Zondervan NASB Study Bible* and Kostenberger (63-65); Litfin and Griffin (63-66); Hendriksen (63-67); Thiessen (65); Baugh (66); Knight (early to mid-60s); Carson & Moo and Carson, Moo, and Morris (mid-60s); Robertson (66-67).

¹²The order was most likely: Galatians (late 40s); 1 Thessalonians and 2 Thessalonians (early 50s); 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians (mid 50s); Romans (mid to late 50s); Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, and 1 Timothy (early 60s); Titus (early to mid 60s); and 2 Timothy (mid to late 60s).

¹³Nicopolis was located on the western shore of Greece. Paul mentions this locale at the end of the epistle (in 3:12).

¹⁴“Any exegetical analysis of an Epistle presupposes that it is an *ad hoc* document, that is, that it is a piece of correspondence occasioned by a set of specific historical circumstances, either from the recipient's or the author's side—or both” (Fee, pp. 5-6).

What prompted Paul to write what he wrote in Titus when he wrote it? Based on 3:13, it is evident that Zenas and Apollos would be passing through Crete. Paul took advantage of this opportunity, writing to Titus and sending the epistle with these two men. Based upon the time he recently spent in Crete (1:5), Paul had firsthand knowledge of the conditions there and wrote what he wrote based on such knowledge.

Purpose

Why did Paul write the epistle of Titus? Several answers to this question may be given.

First, Paul wrote to keep the Cretans from showing contempt for Titus by strengthening the hand of Titus, giving apostolic authorization to his ministry in Crete (so Hiebert, Fee, and Calvin; see 2:15; also compare 1:1's "apostle" and 1:4's "my true child"; see also the emphatic "I" of 1:5, literally: "as I you I directed").

Second, Paul wrote to encourage Titus to complete the congregations in Crete, instructing Titus how to do so (see, for example, 1:5-9) (so Litfin, Calvin, Hiebert, and Hendriksen).

Third, Paul wrote to ask Titus to come to him in Nicopolis, once a replacement (Artemas or Tychicus) had arrived (so Hiebert and Hendriksen; see 3:12).

Fourth, Paul wrote to encourage Titus and the Cretan believers to take care of the couriers of the letter by assisting Zenas and Apollos as they journeyed through Crete (so Hiebert and Hendriksen; see 3:13).

Theme

The theme of Titus is the need for correct conduct based on correct creed.

The need for correct conduct is a recurring emphasis throughout the epistle. The very first verse of the book emphasizes this (1:1's "godliness"). In keeping with this, the qualifications for the elder laid down in 1:6-9 primarily have to do with character/conduct. The first chapter ends with this emphasis: "They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed" (1:16). In 2:1-10, various groups (older men, older women, young women, young men, Titus, and slaves) are called upon to live godly lives (notice especially Paul's words to Titus in 2:7: "in all things show yourself to be an example of good deeds"). Chapter two ends with this emphasis, as Paul states that God's grace instructs the believer to "live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age" (2:12) and that Christ "gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds" (2:14). Chapter three begins with this emphasis, as Paul instructs Titus to remind his readers to "be ready for every good deed" (3:1). This emphasis is seen in what may be the key verse of the book, 3:8, which says: "This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who

have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men.” The emphasis on good works is seen a final time in the book’s conclusion, as Paul writes in 3:14: “Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful.”

In light of the corrupt character of the Cretans (discussed above under “Recipient(s)”), this emphasis on correct conduct was all the more crucial. As Hendriksen (pp. 41-42; emphasis his) writes: “The reputation of the Cretans was none too good. The need of thorough-going *sanctification* in congregational, individual, family, and public life had to be stressed here even more than elsewhere.”

Such correct conduct only comes about, however, through correct creed. Thus, there is an underlying emphasis in Titus, especially in the first half of the book, on sound doctrine (see 1:9, 13, 2:1, and 8). In conjunction with godliness, 1:1 speaks of “the knowledge of the truth.” The qualifications for the elder laid down in 1:6-9 end with the elder’s ability to “[hold] fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (1:9). Chapter 1 ends with a warning about false teachers, whose bad beliefs beget bad behavior (1:10-16). In 2:1, Paul exhorts Titus to “speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine” (which produces “sound” deeds, 2:2). In 2:7, Paul exhorts Titus not only unto good deeds, but also unto “purity in doctrine.” In 2:9-10, Paul exhorts Titus to exhort slaves to “adorn the doctrine of God our Savior” (2:10) with good behavior. Thus, the book of Titus shows the invariable connection between right belief (orthodoxy) and right behavior (orthopraxy). Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 424) states in this regard: “Nowhere else does Paul more forcefully urge the essential connection between evangelical truth and the purest morality than in this brief letter.” Gromacki (p. 311) gives as the theme of Titus: “apprehension of spiritual truth should issue in godly living.”

Structure

As with any letter/epistle, Titus has an introduction (1:1-4), a body (1:5-3:11), and a conclusion (3:12-15).¹⁵

The introduction (1:1-4) consists of a typical salutation, identifying the writer (verses 1-3) and the recipient (verse 4a), along with a greeting (verse 4b).

The body (1:5-3:11) consists of qualifications for the elders Titus was to appoint (1:5-9); the need for such elders due to the presence of false teachers (1:10-16);

¹⁵Fee (p. 210) sees a chiastic structure to most of the body of the letter, with 1:10-16 consisting of “warnings against the false teachers, with their ‘false works’; 2:1-14 consisting of “specific ‘good works’ for specific believers, with the outsider in view, plus their theological basis”; 3:1-8 consisting of “once again, ‘good works’ for outsiders, this time directed toward them, and again with their theological basis”; and 3:9-11 consisting of “final warning against the false teachers and their ‘false works.’”

ethical instructions for various groups (older men, older women, young women, young men, Titus, and slaves) within the Cretan congregations (2:1-10); the theological underpinning for such ethical behavior (2:11-14); a charge to Titus to teach such ethical and theological truths (2:15); more ethical instructions (3:1-2) and their theological underpinnings (3:3-7), along with another charge to Titus to teach such ethical and theological truths (3:8); and exhortations to avoid false teachings (3:9) and to reject false teachers (3:10-11).

The conclusion to the epistle (3:12-15) is a somewhat typical one, consisting of various requests: for Titus to meet Paul at Nicopolis (verse 12) and for Titus and the Cretans to assist Zenas and Apollos (verses 13-14); some greetings (verse 15a); and a benediction (verse 15b).

Outstanding Characteristics

1. Its similarity to 1 Timothy. “Probably the feature about Titus most noticed by one who has first worked closely with 1 Timothy is how much it resembles that letter. Apart from the salutation (1:1-4) and final greetings (3:12-15), only the two semicreedal passages in 2:11-14 and 3:3-7 present material that has no points of correspondence with 1 Timothy” (Fee, pp. 10-11). Believing, as most do, that 1 Timothy and Titus were written around the same time, it is not surprising to find their contents quite similar. Fee (p. 11) calls Titus “a miniature 1 Timothy.” Wiersbe (p. 92) calls Titus “a condensed version of Paul’s letter to Timothy.” The relationship of Titus to 1 Timothy is much like that between Galatians and Romans, Colossians and Ephesians, and Jude and 2 Peter.

Other Sources¹⁶ Consulted for This Lesson

An Introduction to the New Testament: Volume 2: The Pauline Epistles by D. Edmond Hiebert

An Introduction to the New Testament by D. A. Carson, Douglas Moo, and Leon Morris

New Testament Survey by Robert Gromacki

Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament by H. Wayne House

Nelson’s Complete Book of Bible Maps & Charts (revised and updated edition)

In Paul’s Shadow: Friends & Foes of the Great Apostle by D. Edmond Hiebert

¹⁶Besides the resources listed at the start of this study.

The Zondervan NASB Study Bible

The New Open Bible, Study Edition

A Concise New Testament Theology by I. Howard Marshall

Introduction to the New Testament by Henry Thiessen

Introducing the New Testament by D.A. Carson and Douglas Moo

How to Read the Bible Book by Book by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stuart

The Zondervan Handbook to the Bible

The MacArthur Bible Handbook by John MacArthur

Introduction to Titus Teaching Outline

- I. The Book of Titus
 - A. An epistle
 1. Introduction (1:1-4)
 2. Body (1:5-3:11)
 3. Conclusion (3:12-15)
 - B. A Pauline epistle (ecclesiology)

- C. A “Pastoral Epistle”
- II. The Human Author of Titus: Paul (1:1)
- III. The Recipients of Titus
 - A. The primary recipient: Titus (1:4)
 - 1. His salvation
 - a. Evangelized by Paul (Paul’s “child”—1:4; cf. 1 Corinthians 4:15, 17, and 2 Timothy 2:1, as well as Philemon 10)
 - b. Evidence that Gentiles could be saved without being circumcised (Galatians 2:1-3)
 - 2. His service
 - a. Part of 3rd Pauline missionary journey
 - b. (Part of 4th Pauline missionary journey)
 - (1) “Pastor” of churches on Crete (1:5)
 - B. The secondary recipients: Cretan churches (3:15; cf. Acts 2:11)
- IV. The Occasion of Titus: visit of Zenas and Apollos (3:13)
- V. The Purposes of Titus
 - A. Complete the congregations in Crete (1:5)
 - B. Don’t show contempt for Titus (2:15)
 - C. Come to Nicopolis (3:12)
 - D. Take care of the couriers (3:13)
- VI. The Theme of Titus: Correct conduct (1:16, 2:3, 7, 12, 14, 3:1, 8, and 14)
 - A. Contra the corrupt conduct of the Cretan culture (1:12-13; cf. 3:3)
 - B. Conditioned upon a correct creed (1:1, 2:1, and 10; cf. 1 Timothy 6:3)

Titus 1:1-9

As pointed out in the introductory lesson to Titus (under “Structure”), the first four verses of the book are its introduction, consisting of a salutation in which Paul identifies himself as the writer of the epistle (verses 1-3) and Titus as his primary recipient (verse 4a), as well as gives his typical greeting (verse 4b). These three items were typical of ancient letters (see Ezra 7:12, Daniel 4:1, Acts 15:23, and 23:26). The noticeable feature of the salutation is the expansion of the identification of the writer, comprising three verses (cf. a similar phenomenon in the salutation of Romans).

Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, (1:1)

Paul begins the salutation by identifying himself as the writer of Titus and by giving himself two common designations (“**Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ**”). Paul calls himself a “**bond-servant**” elsewhere in Romans 1:1 (“bond-servant of Christ Jesus”), Galatians 1:10 (“bond-servant of Christ”), and Philippians 1:1 (along with Timothy, “bond-servants of Christ Jesus”). Others do the same (James in James 1:1, Peter in 2 Peter 1:1, and Jude in Jude 1). Moses is also called such in Revelation 15:3. While there is a general sense in which all believers are bond-servants of God/Christ (Romans 6:22, 1 Corinthians 7:22, Ephesians 6:6, Colossians 3:24, and 1 Peter 2:16), salvation being a change of slave masters (Romans 6:16-22), Paul is most likely using this designation in a more restricted sense, identifying himself as a minister of the gospel.

Paul gets even more specific by identifying himself as “**an apostle**¹⁷,” as he typically does in his other salutations (“apostle” in Romans 1:1 and Galatians 1:1; “apostle of Jesus Christ/Christ Jesus” in 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Ephesians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, 1 Timothy 1:1, and 2 Timothy 1:1; cf. Peter calling himself the same in 1 Peter 1:1 and 2 Peter 1:1). The only epistles in which Paul does not call himself an apostle (Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon) are those in which he joins one or more other non-apostles with him as senders of the epistle. An “apostle,” as Knight (p. 58) puts it, “designates one who is sent with the authority of and on behalf of the one sending” (cf. John 13:16, where the first “sent” is the Greek noun, *apostolos*). Paul’s purpose in identifying himself with the designation, “apostle” here in Titus may have been to strengthen the hand of Titus in the carrying out of his commission in Crete (see the first purpose for the writing of Titus under “Purpose” in the introductory lesson).¹⁸

¹⁷There seems to be two categories of apostle in the New Testament. Paul and the Twelve were apostles in an official sense, others (such as Barnabas in Acts 14:14 and James in Galatians 1:19) in a secondary sense. According to Robert Thomas (*Understanding Spiritual Gifts*, p. 77), to be an apostle in the official sense, one had to meet three criteria: personal contact with Christ while on earth, a witness of Christ’s resurrection (see Acts 1:22), and direct appointment by Christ. “Secondary apostles” (such as James) did not meet the third requirement. For Paul, all three requirements were met at the same time on the road to Damascus in Acts 9.

¹⁸Along these lines, Calvin (pp. 279-280) writes: “This extended and laborious commendation of his apostleship [verses 1-3] shows that Paul had in view the whole Church, and not Titus alone; for his apostleship was not disputed by Titus, and Paul is in the habit of proclaiming the titles of his calling, in order to maintain his authority. Accordingly, just as he perceives those to whom

At the end of verse one, Paul gives two purposes for his apostleship. One, Paul was an apostle **“for the faith of those chosen of God”** (cf. Romans 1:5). Notice that the elect/“those chosen of God” (God ultimately does the choosing, the prerogative of the One who is sovereign) must exercise saving faith in order to be saved (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Paul gives a second purpose for his apostleship. Not only was he an apostle for “the faith of those chosen of God,” but also (“**and**”) for **“the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness.”** Just as those chosen of God cannot be saved apart from exercising (God-given, John 6:65, Acts 14:27, Ephesians 2:8, and Philippians 1:29) saving faith, so such saving faith cannot be exercised apart from “the knowledge of the truth” (cf. 1 Timothy 2:4, 2 Timothy 2:25, 3:7, and Hebrews 10:26), that is, knowing the truth of God’s Word (Romans 10:17 and 1 Peter 1:23), God’s Word being truth (John 17:17b). As Paul will emphasize so often in the epistle of Titus (see under “Theme” in the introductory lesson), salvation (conversion) demands sanctification, as one cannot acknowledge the Truth without also acting according to It, since it is **“the truth which is according to godliness”** (NIV: “the truth that leads to godliness”; cf. 1 Timothy 6:3’s “doctrine conforming to godliness,” as well as Colossians 1:9-10).

in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, (1:2)

With the words, **“in the hope of eternal life”** (cf. Titus 3:7, as well as Romans 5:2’s “hope of the glory of God,” Colossians 1:5’s “the hope laid up for you in heaven,” and Colossians 1:27’s “hope of glory”), Paul is identifying the motivation for the believer to pursue the godliness spoken of at the end of verse one (cf. Colossians 1:4-5 and 1 John 3:2-3), with future hope being the motivation for present holiness. **“Hope”** in Scripture is not a “hope so,” but a “know so”; it is a confident expectation. The **“eternal life”** of which Paul speaks in this verse is eternal life in its full and final sense, eternal existence in heaven (cf. Luke 18:30, Romans 2:7, 6:22, James 1:12, and Revelation 2:10), the believer’s “blessed hope” (Titus 2:13).

The eternal life of which Paul speaks in this verse is one **“which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago”** (cf. 1 John 2:25). God is truth (Psalm 31:5, John 3:33, Romans 3:4; cf. John 14:17, 15:26, 16:13, and 1 John 5:6); He does not lie,

he writes to be disposed, he deals largely or sparingly in those ornaments. Here his design was, to bring into subjection those who had haughtily rebelled; and for this reason he extols his apostleship in lofty terms. He therefore writes this Epistle, not that it may be read in solitude by Titus in his closet, but that it may be openly published.”

nor can He (cf. Numbers 23:19, 1 Samuel 15:29, and Hebrews 6:18). Eternal life is the believer's hope/confident expectation because none other than the God of truth has promised it. The divine attribute of truth is magnified all the more in light of the character of the Cretans (see 1:12's "Cretans are always liars").¹⁹

There is some divergence of opinion as to the precise identification of "**long ages ago.**" Some (such as Calvin; so NASB text) see it as referring to the Old Testament era (cf. Romans 1:2). Most (such as Fee, Mounce, Hiebert, Towner, and Knight; so NIV and NASB margin), however, see it as referring to eternity past (cf. especially 2 Timothy 1:9, as well as 1 Corinthians 2:7, Ephesians 1:4, and Revelation 13:8).

but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior, (1:3)

Though eternal life was "promised" in eternity past (verse 2), it was manifested within time, and not an arbitrary time, but at just the right time ("**but at the proper time manifested**"; cf. Galatians 4:4, 1 Timothy 2:6, and 2 Timothy 1:10). This manifestation took place by God's Word ("**even His word**"; cf. 2 Timothy 1:10's "through the gospel"), as it is in God's Word (and only in God's Word) that we discover that we are great sinners in great need of a savior and that Jesus Christ is our great God and Savior (Titus 2:13).

Being an apostle (verse 1), Paul had been given the most sacred of trusts, preaching the gospel ("**in the proclamation with which I was entrusted**"). The Greek word translated "**proclamation**" is the noun form of the verb translated "preach" in 2 Timothy 4:2. The Greek verb translated "**entrusted**" conveys the idea of stewardship of the Truth (see 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 9:17, Galatians 2:7, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, 1 Timothy 1:11, 6:20, 2 Timothy 1:14, and 2:2). The Greek pronoun translated "**I**" is emphatic²⁰, the significance of which is captured by Knight (p. 285), who states that Paul adds this "I" for emphasis, "since he always remains amazed that he, who had been the gospel's arch-opponent, should be entrusted by God's wondrous grace with the proclamation of the gospel" (cf. Ephesians 3:8). I, of all people, is the idea.

Paul's commission to preach the gospel came through "orders from headquarters" ("**according to the commandment of God our Savior**"; cf. 1 Timothy 1:1, as well as "by the will of God" in 1 Corinthians 1:1, 2 Corinthians 1:1,

¹⁹Towner (p. 671) says that at this point Paul is using "loaded language."

²⁰The Greek literally reads: "in a proclamation which I was entrusted I," the "I" being repeated, for emphasis.

Ephesians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, and 2 Timothy 1:1). This command was given to Paul in conjunction with his conversion on the road to Damascus in Acts 9 (see Acts 22:14-15, 21, and 26:16-18 in this regard).

To Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. (1:4)

Paul identifies Titus as the primary recipient of the epistle and alludes to the spiritual bond between Titus and him ("**To Titus, my true child in a common faith**"). By calling Titus his "**true child**" (cf. his designation of Timothy as his "true child" in 1 Timothy 1:2 and as his "beloved son" in 2 Timothy 1:2), Paul is putting his stamp of approval on him. Titus has the backing of none other than Paul the apostle (see comments on verse 1). It was suggested in the introductory lesson to Titus (under "Recipient(s)") that Paul's calling Titus his "child" is most likely indicative of the fact that Paul was the one who had led Titus to the Lord. Titus was Paul's "**true**" child, in contrast to the false teachers in Crete, who were not.

The bond that united Paul and Titus was a spiritual one ("**in a common faith**"; cf. 1 Timothy 1:2's "in *the* faith"; cf. also Jude 3's "common salvation"). The significance of this fact is magnified all the more when one realizes that Paul was a Jew, while Titus was a Gentile (Galatians 2:3). Thus, this may very well be a subtle jab at the false teachers in Crete, some of whom were Judaizers, those who insisted that one had to keep the Old Testament Law, including the rite of circumcision, in order to be saved (see 1:10's "those of the circumcision").

Paul ends the salutation of Titus, as he ends each of his salutations, with a greeting ("**Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior**"). Paul's typical greeting is, as here, a wish of grace and peace (cf. Numbers 6:24-26) from both God the Father and God the Son (cf. Romans 1:7, 1 Corinthians 1:3, 2 Corinthians 1:2, Galatians 1:3, Ephesians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:2, and Philemon 3; cf. also Peter's greeting in 2 Peter 1:2 and John's greeting in Revelation 1:4-5). Similar Pauline greetings are found in Colossians 1:2 ("grace to you and peace from God our Father") and 1 Thessalonians 1:1 ("grace to you and peace"; cf. Peter's greeting in 1 Peter 1:2). Paul's greetings in 1 Timothy 1:2 and 2 Timothy 1:2 add mercy to the mix (cf. John's greeting in 2 John 3). If there is an interrelationship between grace and peace (as many believe), grace is the root, peace the fruit.²¹ Since Paul is writing to those who are already believers, sanctifying grace (1 Corinthians 15:10; as opposed to saving grace, Ephesians 2:8) and the peace of God (Philippians 4:7; as opposed to peace with God, Romans 5:1) are in view.

²¹"Grace is the fountain, and peace is the stream which issues from this fountain" (Hendriksen, p. 343).

Notice that in verse three Paul calls God “**our Savior**” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:1, 2:3, 4:10, Titus 2:10, and 3:4, as well as Luke 1:47 and Jude 25), while here in verse four he calls Jesus Christ the same (cf. 2 Timothy 1:10, Titus 2:13, and 3:6), indicative of the deity of Christ.²² Saviorhood can be rightfully attributed to both since salvation is from the Father and through the Son²³ (it is by the Spirit, as well). Speaking of the Son, Mounce (p. 383) points out and suggests a possible significance behind the prominence of the Son in the salutation of Titus: “Throughout the salutation Paul’s high view of Christ and his relationship to God are apparent. Paul is God’s slave and Christ’s apostle [v. 1]. Both God [v. 3] and Christ [v. 4] are the savior, and both God and Christ together grant grace and peace [v. 4]. Although this theology is common in salutations, it will be shown that it addresses specific issues in Crete, where Titus was dealing with a Jewish influence that most likely downplayed Christ (cf. 1:10).”

Introduction of Titus (1:1-4) Teaching Outline

Introduction: While the introductions to most of Paul’s epistles contain both a salutation and a supplication, the introduction to the epistle of Titus contains only a salutation, recognizing the writer and the primary recipient, as well as giving a greeting (cf. Daniel 4:1 and Acts 23:26). The most notable aspect of the salutation is the lengthy elaboration of the recognition of the writer (cf. Romans 1:1-6 for a similar phenomenon).

I. Writer (1:1-3)

A. A servant (verse 1; cf. Romans 1:1, Galatians 1:10, Philippians 1:1)

²²Towner (p. 676) suggests another implication behind Paul’s high Christology at this point: “At this point in time, the emperor freely took the title ‘savior’ to himself. A Savior Christology, such as Paul constructs powerfully in this letter, would surely also level a subversive blow at this claim.”

²³Calvin (p. 287) writes in this regard: “He applies the same epithet to the Father and to Christ, so that each of them is our Saviour, but for a different reason; for the Father is called our Saviour, because he redeemed us by the death of his Son, that he might make us heirs of eternal life; and the Son, because he shed his blood as the pledge and the price of our salvation. Thus the Son hath brought salvation to us from the Father, and the Father hath bestowed it through the Son.”

- B. A sent one (verses 1-3)
 - 1. The Person who sent him: Jesus Christ (verse 1; cf. Matthew 28:19 and John 20:21)
 - 2. The purpose for his sending: salvation of God's elect (verse 1; cf. Romans 1:5)
 - a. Salvation's source: God's promise (verse 2)
 - b. Salvation's means
 - (1) Making the Truth one's own (verse 1; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13)
 - (2) Making the Truth known (verse 3; cf. Romans 10:14 and 17)
 - c. Salvation's ends
 - (1) Godliness (verse 1; cf. 2:11-12)
 - (2) Glorification (verse 2)
- II. Recipient (1:4a)
- III. Greeting (1:4b)

For this reason I left you in Crete, that you would set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city as I directed you, (1:5)

Paul begins the body of the epistle (1:5-3:11) by reiterating²⁴ the commission he had previously given Titus: to finish the establishment of the churches established

²⁴Knight (p. 287; cf. Griffin, n.p., Henry, p. 856, and *Biblical Viewpoint*, p. 47) is of the opinion that Paul reiterates this commission, not for the sake of Titus, but for the sake of the Cretans: "He writes this not because Titus needs the urging but to provide for him apostolic authority and direction in writing." Giving further credence to this idea is the fact that the "I" in "as I directed you" in verse five is emphatic. The Greek literally reads: "as I you I directed," the "I" being repeated, for emphasis. The idea is that none other than I, the apostle Paul, have given this directive.

in Crete, the most crucial aspect²⁵ of which was the installation of elders²⁶ in each of them. This was no small task, as Crete was known for its many cities (it has been suggested that the number was in the neighborhood of 100). Titus's general task in Crete was to "**set in order**²⁷ **what remains**²⁸." What all this entailed we simply do not know.

One thing it did entail and Titus's specific task in Crete was to "**appoint elders in every city**" (cf. Acts 14:23). "Elder" (cf. Acts 14:23, 20:17, 1 Timothy 5:17, 19, James 5:14, and 1 Peter 5:1) is one of several biblical terms for the office of pastor. While, at first glance, it may appear that Paul is commissioning Titus to act unilaterally in installing pastors in each of the churches in Crete, this is likely not the case. Hiebert ("Titus," p. 430) states in this regard: "The verb ['appoint'] ... does not fix the method of selection. Probably the congregation chose the elders with the encouragement of Titus who had the responsibility of formally appointing them to office." Kent (p. 212) likewise writes: "This verb does not tell how the selection was to be made. The method of such choices is shown in such passages as Acts 14:23²⁹ and 2 Corinthians 8:19 to be by congregational election."³⁰ Hendriksen (p. 345) says essentially the same, pointing out that the

²⁵"It is a point which ought to be carefully observed, that churches cannot safely remain without the ministry of pastors, and that consequently, wherever there is a considerable body of people, a pastor should be appointed over it" (Calvin, p. 290).

²⁶While some interpreters take the position that Paul's words here (and elsewhere in the New Testament) demand a plurality of elders in each congregation, in the opinion of this writer this practice is not mandated by this text, nor by the New Testament.

²⁷According to Wiersbe (p. 94; cf. Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, p. 30), the Greek verb translated "set in order" is a medical term for the setting of a crooked limb. If so, this is perhaps one of many instances of the influence of Dr. Luke upon the composition of the pastoral epistles.

²⁸According to some (such as Towner, p. 679), Paul may be making a word play in verse five, as the Greek verb translated "left" is *kataleipo*, while the Greek participle translated "remains" is *leipo*. Thus, Paul left Titus in Crete to finish what was left to do.

²⁹According to *The New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* (p. 668), the Greek verb translated "appointed" by the NASB in Acts 14:23 can mean "to vote by stretching out the hand" or "to create or appoint by vote."

³⁰"He [Paul] does not give permission to Titus, that he alone may do everything in this matter, and may place over the churches those whom he thinks fit to appoint to be bishops; but only bids him preside, as moderator, at the elections, which is quite necessary. This mode of expression is very common. In the same manner, a consul, or regent, or dictator is said to have created consuls, on account of having presided over the public assembly in electing them. Thus also Luke relates that Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every church. (Acts xiv. 23.) Not that

Greek verb translated “appoint” here in Titus 1:5 is the same one used in Acts 6:3 (translated “put in charge”), a verse that clearly shows congregational involvement in the selection of local church leadership.³¹

namely, if any man is above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion. (1:6)

Having commissioned Titus (and, by implication, the believers in Crete) to install pastors in each of the Cretan churches, Paul now tells Titus and the Cretans what to look for in a potential pastor, giving them a list of fifteen (mostly character³²) qualifications in verses 6-9 (a similar, more well-known pastoral qualification list is found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7; taking these two lists together, along with a third one in 2 Timothy 2:24, there are over twenty qualifications in all; none of the three lists are exhaustive).

The first qualification, and the overarching one³³, is being above reproach (“**if any man is above reproach**”; cf. Titus 1:7; cf. also 1 Timothy 3:2, which uses a different Greek word to convey the same concept). To be above reproach is to be “of unblemished reputation” (Calvin, p. 291), to be “not chargeable with some offense” (Chapell, p. 293), to be “unaccused” (Kent, p. 212 and Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, p. 31)³⁴, to be “unassailable” (Hendriksen, p. 120), to be

they alone, in an authoritative manner, appointed pastors which the churches had neither approved nor known; but that they ordained fit men, who had been chosen or desired by the people” (Calvin, pp. 290-291).

³¹“It would appear that both Paul, addressing Titus, and Luke in Acts 14 [v. 23] are compressing what takes place by speaking only of the last act, i.e., appointment or laying on of hands, and do not feel it necessary to relate the steps that lead up to that act (which are related in Acts 6). Moreover, Paul has not written the list of qualifications that follows in vv. 6ff. for Titus’s benefit but more probably as a guide for the Christians on Crete, just as a brief list of qualifications was given to the Christians in Jerusalem to follow in their selection of the Seven (Acts 6:3). This similarity would suggest that the Acts 6 (and 14) pattern was operative here, and that would be a further indication for understanding [the Greek verb translated “appoint” in Titus 1:5] as referring to the final act in the process” (Knight, p. 288).

³²It must be remembered that these are character qualities, that is, virtues that characterize a man’s life, not ones that appear on a single or rare occasion. Thus, they are the rule, rather than the exception.

³³What Hendriksen (p. 119; commenting on the synonymous Greek word in the 1 Timothy 3 qualification list) calls “a kind of caption or heading for all the items” (in the 1 Timothy 3 list). Commenting on the same word in the same list, Mounce (p. 170) states: “It stands as the leading concern, and all that follows spells out in more detail what it means.”

³⁴Kent (p. 213) gives the etymology of the underlying Greek word: “The adjective ‘unaccused’

“irreproachable” (Knight, p. 155). A man above reproach is a man in whom there is “nothing to take hold upon” (Wiersbe, p. 38). It is a man whose character cannot clearly be called into question. Notice that the NASB translates “**any man**,” consistent with the fact that elders are to be male (cf. “husband of one wife,” the next qualification).³⁵

In the remainder of verse six, Paul deals with two domestic qualifications.³⁶ First, the pastor is to be “**the husband of one wife**” (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2). Mounce (p. 170) calls this “one of the most difficult phrases in the PE [Pastoral Epistles].” Throughout church history, this qualification has been interpreted in a number of ways.³⁷ Some have (wrongly, in this writer’s opinion; as Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, p. 31 points out, the text says “one” wife, not “a” wife) interpreted it as a demand that pastors be married. Some have (wrongly, in this writer’s opinion) interpreted it to forbid remarriage following the death of a spouse. Calvin views it as a prohibition against polygamy (so also Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 916-917). Many have interpreted it as disqualifying divorcees from pastoral office (so Wiersbe).³⁸ In the opinion of this writer, “husband of one wife” is a broad qualification encompassing any form of marital malfunction (so Knight, Kent, and Fee), which would include polygamy, divorce (in the opinion of this writer, regardless of cause), adultery, etc. The qualification is literally “a one-woman man.” A pastor is to be “faithful to his one wife” (Fee, p. 173). Anything a married man does to call his marital fidelity into question (thus, rendering him no longer above reproach) is grounds for disqualifying him from pastoral office.³⁹ Admittedly, what is included in this is ultimately a subjective

(*anegkletos*) is derived from *kaleo* (call), *en* (in), and the alpha privative (not), and means one who is not called in question or called to account.”

³⁵“The gender of the terms in this passage is masculine, showing that the overseer must be a male” (Kent, p. 213).

³⁶“The home is regarded as the training ground for Christian leaders” (Donald Guthrie, quoted in Mounce, p. 388).

³⁷Kent (pp. 122-126), Fee (pp. 80-81), Mounce (pp. 170-173), and Knight (p. 157) lay out the various options.

³⁸An ancillary issue is the timing of the divorce in relation to the man’s conversion. In other words, does it make a difference whether the divorce happened pre- or post-conversion? Knight is one who does not see pre-conversion divorce as disqualifying a man from pastoral office, while Kent is one who does. Perhaps leading credence to the first option is the fact that Paul’s pre-Christian conduct did not disqualify him from vocational ministry.

³⁹“Paul’s precise wording in the Greek is *not* simply that an elder must be ‘the husband of one wife’ as we translate it in terms familiar to us. The literal statement of the apostle is that an elder

judgment call. In the final analysis, it is up to each and every autonomous local congregation to make such a call.

The second domestic qualification for a pastor is that he be one **“having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.”** As with the previous qualification (husband of one wife), which is not to be interpreted to mean that a pastor must be married, this qualification is not to be interpreted to mean that a pastor must have children. If he does have children (children living at home⁴⁰), however, such children are to **“believe.”** Does this mean that the pastor’s children (if they are of age) must be saved?⁴¹ The answer to this question, in part, depends upon the exact meaning of the Greek adjective translated **“who believe.”** The adjective can also be translated “faithful” (so KJV; cf. the NIV’s “trustworthy”). Knight (p. 290) understands it to mean faithful in the sense of submissive or obedient. In the opinion of this writer, the parallel passage of 1 Timothy 3:4 tilts the scales in favor of this idea. Chapell (p. 297) states in this regard: “Paul’s terminology is not so much requiring us to examine a child’s professed testimony as [it is requiring us] to evaluate whether the child—in a manner appropriate for his age—is exhibiting evidence of consistent Biblical discipline and spiritual nurture.”

The negative counterpart to the positive “believe” is **“not accused of dissipation or rebellion.”** The Greek noun translated **“dissipation”** is used elsewhere in the New Testament in Luke 15:13 (where it is used of the Prodigal Son’s “loose living”), Ephesians 5:18 (where it is descriptive of drunkenness), and 1 Peter 4:4

must be ‘a one-woman man.’ The literal phrasing seems less concerned with one’s marital history and more focused on whether the man being considered for office is perceived as living in honesty, faithfulness, and devotion to his spouse. Taking these concepts of blamelessness and fidelity together as they are presented in the text, we should understand that they require those in the church to determine if the community perceives that an elder candidate is consistently living in faithful commitment to one woman” (Chapell, p. 295; emphasis his). Griffin (n.p.) adds: “... [A] man under consideration to become an elder ... and who has been divorced and remarried should evaluate his own personal situation and the public perception of his circumstances before taking such a position.”

⁴⁰The parallel passage of 1 Timothy 3:4 clearly limits this qualification to encompass only those children still living at home, those still under their father’s control.

⁴¹Mounce (p. 389) identifies the tension: “It can be objected that a father has no direct control over his children’s salvation, favoring the more neutral translation ‘faithful.’ However, if Paul is saying that elders must have believing children, this does not necessarily require fathers to have some control over their salvation. It may simply mean that a Christian leader should have Christian children.... This would be a requirement for eldership that stands outside of the father’s direct control. A decision is not easy.”

(where it is descriptive of verse 3's "sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries"). Mounce (p. 389) says it is descriptive of "a wild, uncontrolled type of lifestyle in which a love of liquor is at home."

For the overseer must be above reproach as God's steward, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain, (1:7)

Paul reiterates (cf. verse 6) the requirement that a pastor be above reproach, this time giving a reason why ("**For the overseer⁴² must be above reproach as God's steward**"). The reason a pastor must be above reproach is because he is a steward of a sacred trust: God's household, the local church (1 Timothy 3:15; cf. 1 Timothy 3:4-5⁴³).

In rapid succession, Paul gives five vices that are not to characterize a pastor: "not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not addicted to wine, not pugnacious, not fond of sordid gain." First, a pastor is **not** to be **self-willed** (cf. 2 Peter 2:10; cf. also 2 Timothy 3:2's "lovers of self"). The Greek word is *authades*. Kent (p. 214) gives its etymology: "This adjective is derived from *hedomai* [from which we get our English word, "hedonism"], enjoy oneself, take pleasure, and *autos*, self. Thus comes the meaning of self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant. Here is the headstrong, stubborn man who demands his own way without regard for others." Mounce (p. 390) defines this vice as "stubborn, arrogant, arbitrary."

Second, a pastor is **not** to be **quick-tempered** (cf. James 1:19). Wiersbe (p. 41) poignantly states: "Short tempers do not make for long ministries."

Third, a pastor is **not** to be **addicted to wine** (cf. 1 Timothy 3:3). The Greek word literally means "alongside wine" (*paroinos*, the Greek preposition, *para*, "beside" + the Greek noun, *oinos*, "wine"). The significance of this qualification is magnified in light of the Cretans' reputation for drunkenness (see footnote 10). While some apply this qualification today solely as a prohibition against

⁴²Notice that Paul uses the words, "elder" (verse 5) and "overseer" (verse 7) interchangeably (cf. Paul's use of "overseer" in the 1 Timothy 3 qualification list), indicative of the fact that they describe one and the same office, not two distinct offices (as in episcopalian forms of church government). See also other passages in Scripture where both (whether in title and/or in function) are used interchangeably, such as Acts 20:17 and 28, as well as 1 Peter 5:1-2).

⁴³Notice how 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and Titus 1:6-7 follow a similar path, with the pastor's domestic responsibility (1 Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6) being followed by and analogous to his ecclesiastical responsibility (1 Timothy 3:5 and Titus 1:7).

drunkenness (not as a call for total abstinence⁴⁴), Kent (p. 133; commenting on the same qualification, demanded of deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8) rightly refutes such a limited view: “The fact that deacons were not told to become total abstainers, but rather to be temperate, does not mean that Christians today can use liquor in moderate amounts. The wine employed for the common beverage was very largely water. The social stigma and the tremendous social evils that accompany drinking today did not attach themselves to the use of wine as the common beverage in the homes of Paul’s day. Nevertheless, as the church grew and the Christian consciousness and conscience developed, the dangers of drinking came to be more clearly seen. The principle laid down elsewhere by Paul that Christians should not do anything to cause a brother to stumble came to be applied to the use of wine ... Certainly in present-day America, the use of wine by a Christian would abet a recognized social evil, and would set a most dangerous example for the young and the weak. To us, Paul would undoubtedly say, ‘No wine at all.’”

Fourth, a pastor is **not** to be **pugnacious** (cf. 1 Timothy 3:3 and 2 Timothy 2:24; cf. also Titus 3:9); he is not to be a brawler or a bully (Mounce, p. 176); he is not to be “quick with his fists” (Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, p. 33). Griffin (n.p.) extends this to include verbal aggression, saying: “It should be noted that words often strike harder than fists.”

Fifth, a pastor is **not** to be **fond of sordid gain** (NIV: “not pursuing dishonest gain”; cf. 1 Timothy 3:3 and 1 Peter 5:2; cf. also 1 Timothy 3:8, 6:5, 2 Timothy 3:2’s “lovers of money,” and Titus 1:11). Hendriksen (p. 126) describes this vice as “trying to enrich [oneself] by dishonest means.” Mounce (p. 390) describes it as “the desire to be rich beyond one’s needs.”

but hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled, (1:8)

⁴⁴Bear in mind that Paul could not have called for total abstinence, as he had elsewhere given permission for consumption of the “wine” of that day for medicinal use (in 1 Timothy 5:23).

In contrast to (“**but**”) the five vices enumerated in verse seven, a pastor is to be characterized by the six virtues enumerated here in verse eight: “hospitable, loving what is good, sensible, just, devout, self-controlled.” First, a pastor is to be **hospitable** (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2; cf. also Romans 12:13, Hebrews 13:2, and 1 Peter 4:9). The Greek word literally means “friend of strangers” (*philoxenos*, the Greek noun, *philos*, “friend” + the Greek noun, *xenos*, “stranger”). This virtue was especially needed in the day in which Paul lived, when inns were notoriously iniquitous (and on an island with the sullied reputation that Crete had, undoubtedly more so).

Second, a pastor is to be **loving what is good** (cf. 2 Timothy 3:3’s “haters of good”); he is to be “an ally and zealous supporter of the good” (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 431). The Greek word is *philagathos*, the Greek noun, *philos*, “friend” + the Greek adjective, *agathos*, “good.” Knight (p. 292) correlates this virtue (loving what is good) with the previous one (hospitable): “An overseer’s love for people is always to be correlated with a love for what God wants people to be.”

Third, a pastor is to be **sensible** (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2’s “prudent,” same underlying Greek word; cf. also 1 Timothy 2:9’s “discreetly,” 1 Timothy 2:15’s “self-restraint,” 2 Timothy 1:7’s “discipline,” Titus 2:2, 4, 5, 6, and 12, all of which use the same Greek word or one of its cognates). Kent (p. 126) describes this virtue as “a quality of mind which is serious, earnest, sound.” Fee (p. 175) describes it as “having [one’s] wits about him,” Ward (p. 241) as “in his right mind” (cf. Mark 5:15//Luke 8:35) or “level-headed.”

Fourth and fifth, a pastor is to be **just** and **devout**. These two virtues are often found in tandem (see also Luke 1:75, Ephesians 4:24, and 1 Thessalonians 2:10). According to many, “**just**” has a horizontal/manward orientation, while “**devout**” has a vertical/Godward one.

Sixth, a pastor is to be **self-controlled** (cf. Galatians 5:23 and 2 Peter 1:6). The Greek word is *egkrates*. Kent (p. 215) gives its etymology: “The root of *egkrate* is *krateo*, to hold, seize, and *en*, in. The adjective means that which is held in check, restrained. It was the usual Greek term for self-control, particularly regarding sensual appetites.” Rightly does Henry (p. 857) remark that those unable to govern themselves should not be governing others.

holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. (1:9)

The fifteenth and final qualification for the office of pastor given by Paul in this section is **“holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching.”** The Greek participle translated **“holding fast”** here in Titus 1:9 is translated “devoted to” in both Matthew 6:24 and its parallel passage, Luke 16:13 (in both passages, the corresponding verb is “love”). A pastor is one who is devoted to/loves God’s Word.

The Word must be properly interpreted. Thus, what a pastor teaches from the Word must be **“in accordance with the teaching,”** that is, in accordance with the recognized body of Christian truth/apostolic teaching (Romans 6:17’s “that form of teaching to which you were committed,” 16:17’s “the teaching which you learned,” 1 Corinthians 11:2’s and 2 Thessalonians 2:15’s “traditions,” 2 Thessalonians 3:6’s “tradition,” 1 Timothy 6:20’s “what has been entrusted to you”, 2 Timothy 1:14’s “the treasure which has been entrusted to you,” and 2 Timothy 2:2’s “the things which you have heard”).

By holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, a pastor would thereby be able to teach truth and refute error (**“so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute⁴⁵ those who contradict⁴⁶”**; cf. 2 Timothy 3:16 and 4:2, as well as Titus 2:15). Commenting on this dual role of teaching truth and refuting error, Calvin (p. 296) writes: “The pastor ought to have two voices: one, for gathering the sheep; and another, for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves. The Scripture supplies him with the means of doing both; for he who is deeply skilled in it will be able both to govern those who are teachable, and to refute the enemies of the truth.” As Titus 1:13 (cf. 2 Timothy 2:24-26) makes clear, the goal of refuting error is to bring those in error to the truth. In the verses to follow (1:10-16), Paul will show the need for such error-refuting elders in Crete. The qualification laid down here in Titus 1:9 is an expansion of the one laid down in 1 Timothy 3:2 and 2 Timothy 2:24 (“able to teach”). The qualifications for the pastorate not only include personal ones/character, but also professional ones/competence.

Titus 1:10-16

⁴⁵Knight (p. 294) makes the case that “refute” here is better translated “rebuke” (as this Greek verb is translated by the NASB in 1 Timothy 5:20). See also Titus 1:13.

⁴⁶“Those who contradict” is literally those who speak against. The participle is *antilego* (the Greek preposition, *anti*, “against” + the Greek verb, *lego*, “to speak”). The description of false teachers as those who contradict/speak against/oppose the truth is found often in the pastorals (see also 1 Timothy 6:20, 2 Timothy 2:25, 3:8, and Titus 2:8).

For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, (1:10)

Paul now gives the reason why elders competent enough to “refute those who contradict” (verse 9) are needed in Crete. It is because (“for”) **“there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision.”** Like many of the churches in the first century A.D., the churches in Crete were being threatened by false teachers.⁴⁷ The significance of the threat is seen by the fact that there were **“many”** false teachers in Crete. Paul calls these false teachers “rebellious men,” **“rebellious”** connoting more than just simply disobedient. Underlying their actions was an attitude of insubordination. They refused to place themselves under the authority of God and His Word.

Paul also calls them **“empty talkers”** (cf. the “fruitless discussion” of 1 Timothy 1:6 and the “empty chatter” of 1 Timothy 6:20 and 2 Timothy 2:16). Mounce (p. 394) calls them “senseless babblers.” They had much to say, but none of it was spiritually substantive (cf. Titus 3:9 and 2 Peter 2:18).

Paul also calls them **“deceivers,”** a common characteristic/designation of false teachers in the New Testament (see Matthew 7:15, 24:11, 24//Mark 13:22, Galatians 2:4, 2 Timothy 3:6, 3:13, 2 Peter 2:1, Jude 4, and Revelation 19:20).

Paul gets more specific when he calls the false teachers **“of the circumcision.”** This designation clearly identifies them as Jews, perhaps Judaizers (see footnote 47). There is some debate over the precise meaning of the Greek adverb translated **“especially”** in “especially those of the circumcision.” The rendering, “especially” implies that these Jews comprised only part of the contingent of false teachers in Crete. Fee (p. 178; cf. Towner, p. 695), however, makes the case that they comprised the entire contingent, translating the adverb: “in other words.”

who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain. (1:11)

Paul gives Titus an unequivocal charge regarding the false teachers in Crete:

⁴⁷Who were these false teachers? According to 1:10, 14, and 3:9, it is evident that they were Jewish (the same group was likely at work in Ephesus, 1 Timothy 1:7). Perhaps they, like the Judaizers, taught that one had to keep the Law (particularly the rite of circumcision) in order to be saved (see 1:10's “of the circumcision”; cf. Acts 15:1 and Galatians 2:12). According to 1:14-15 (see comments on), they apparently were ascetics, teaching abstinence from certain foods, etc. (the same group was likely at work in Ephesus, 1 Timothy 4:1-5). A similar Jewish-ascetic group was likely at work in Colossae (see Colossians 2:16-23).

the false teachers are those **“who must be silenced”** (cf. Romans 3:19). The Greek verb translated **“silenced”** has the idea of “to close the mouth by means of a muzzle or gag” (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 432; cf. Hendriksen, p. 351). Mounce (p. 394) translates it “muzzle.” Titus is to silence the false teachers by not remaining silent⁴⁸, but by speaking out against them (see 1:9’s “refute,” 1:13’s “reprove them severely,” and 3:10’s “warning”). While freedom of speech may be a civil right, “freedom of *misleading* speech” (Hendriksen, p. 351; emphasis his) is not, at least not in the church.

The reason why Paul charges Titus (and the elders he appoints, 1:5) to silence the false teachers in Crete was because of the havoc their false teaching was wreaking (**“because they are upsetting whole families”**; cf. 2 Timothy 2:18). The Greek verb translated **“upsetting”** is a strong one. Knight (p. 297) translates it “overturning, destroying, or ruining.” It is the same verb used of Christ’s overturning of the tables of the money changers in John 2:15. Heresy is not something to mess around with. The Greek noun translated **“families”** can also be translated “houses” (so KJV). If so, Paul could be referring to house-churches (so Griffin) on the island of Crete (cf. 1 Timothy 3:15, where “household” in “household of God,” a reference to the local church, is a translation of the same Greek word translated “families” here). If so, Titus is not to allow these false teachers access to the churches in Crete (cf. 2 John 10).

The means by which the false teachers in Crete were “upsetting whole families” was their false teaching (**“teaching things they should not teach for the sake of sordid gain”**). The **“things”** the false teachers in Crete were teaching is further specified in 1:14 (“Jewish myths and commandments of men”). By its very nature, false teaching is something that should not be taught. The motive of the false teachers in Crete was clearly a mercenary one (Knight, p. 295), as they taught **“for the sake of sordid gain”**⁴⁹ (the false teachers in Ephesus were apparently motivated by the same vice, 1 Timothy 6:5; cf. 2 Peter 2:3; many of today’s “faith movement” televangelists fit this bill). This vice is the antithesis of the virtue required of pastors (see 1:7’s “not fond of sordid gain” and comments on, as well as 1 Timothy 3:3 and 1 Peter 5:2). Adding significance to this vice is the fact that one of the many vices for which the Cretans were known (see footnote 10) was their greed (see quotes to this effect cited on p. 354 of Hendriksen, p. 183 of Fee, p. 299 of Knight, and p. 397 of Mounce). The Greek

⁴⁸What Calvin (p. 298) calls “silent permission.”

⁴⁹The KJV translators, following Tyndale, translate “for filthy lucre’s sake,” the deficiency of which is pointed out by Mounce (p. 397): “Tyndale’s famous translation ‘filthy lucre’ wrongly suggests to modern ears that it was the money itself that was wrong whereas it was their motives.”

adjective translated "**sordid**" is translated "disgraceful" elsewhere in the New Testament (in 1 Corinthians 11:6 and Ephesians 5:12).

One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." (1:12)

In support of his point that the false teachers in Crete were corrupt (verses 10-11), Paul quotes from a famous Cretan ("**One of themselves, a prophet of their own**"), a sixth century B.C. writer by the name of Epimenides.⁵⁰ In calling Epimenides a "**prophet**," Paul is simply reflecting the popular opinion of the Cretans, not claiming inspiration for Epimenides.⁵¹

Epimenides' words ("**Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons**") have been poetically rendered by J. D. Quinn (quoted in Mounce, pp. 397-398):

"Liars ever, men of Crete,
Nasty brutes that live to eat"

The Cretan propensity for lying ("**Cretans are always liars**") has already been highlighted (or should we say, "lowlighted") by Hiebert in footnote 10 (cf. 1:10's "deceivers"). The Cretans were bestial/savage in nature ("**evil beasts**"). The island of Crete was known for not having wild beasts. Therefore, the Cretan people filled the void.⁵²

Paul's words in this verse and the start of the next ("This testimony is true") seem quite callous to modern sensibilities. As Chapell (p. 316) states: "Such a

⁵⁰As best we know, Epimenides was an unbeliever. Inspiration, however, does not preclude the citing of secular writers. Not only did Paul quote from Epimenides here in Titus 1:12, but also from Aratus in Acts 17:28 and Menander in 1 Corinthians 15:33. Such citations do not imply that God was affirming what these men said, nor endorsing anything or everything else they said. Inspiration guarantees that what was written was exactly what God wanted written without necessarily implying that what was written was divinely sanctioned (e.g., Satan's lie in Genesis 3:4).

⁵¹At the start of verse 13, Paul says regarding Epimenides' words: "This testimony is true." Rightly does Knight (p. 298) point out that these words of Paul (having to verify the veracity of Epimenides) are "a judgment that NT writers do not find it necessary to make of statements by prophets of God."

⁵²"Epimenides also stated that the absence of wild beasts from Crete was supplied by its human inhabitants" (Kent, p. 218). "[J. D.] Quinn says that Crete was famous for not having any wild animals This creates a powerful twist in the saying. While most countries had to deal with wild beasts, in Crete the same problem was posed by people who, in the absence of wild animals, assumed the role themselves" (Mounce, p. 398).

characterization of an entire nation of people ... definitely would not pass the politically correct speech requirements of our day." However, Paul is simply making a generalization⁵³, the accuracy of which could scarcely be denied, as seen by the testimony of one of the most revered Cretan writers himself.⁵⁴

This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, (1:13)

Paul verifies the words of Epimenides cited in verse twelve ("**This testimony is true**"). Having spent some time on the island of Crete (1:5), Paul knew firsthand about the corrupt character of the Cretans.

Because the corrupt character of the false teachers in Crete was a fact ("**For this reason**"), Paul exhorts Titus to "**reprove them severely.**" Based on the context (cf. 1:9 and comments on and 1:11 and comments on; cf. also 3:9-11), the "**them**" is most likely referring to the false teachers, not to their followers.

"**Reprove them severely**" are strong words, but "only such a rebuke will get through to those who are described in v. 12" (Knight, p. 299).⁵⁵ The goal of the severe rebuking called for by Paul is the spiritual well-being of the false teachers, as well as that of their followers⁵⁶ ("**so that they may be sound in the faith**"). For a similar goal, see 2 Timothy 2:25-26. To be "**sound in the faith**" (cf. 2:2) is to be

⁵³"Paul obviously is not applying this saying to all Cretans; otherwise all Cretan Christians would fall under its condemnation, and Epimenides himself would also be a liar and therefore his saying false. Sweeping generalizations by nature do not always claim to be true in every situation; they are generally true. Paul is just trying to make a point" (Mounce, p. 398).

⁵⁴"Paul is not making an ethnic slur, but is merely accurately observing, as the Cretans themselves and others did, how the sin that affects the whole human race comes to particular expression in this group" (Knight, p. 299).

⁵⁵"He does not here have recourse to exhortation. For as he who treats with harshness the meek and ingenious, may destroy them; so he who flatters one that requires severity, causes him to perish, and does not suffer him to be reclaimed" (Chrysostom, quoted in Mounce, p. 400). The severe rebuke called for is not only for the sake of the spiritual well-being of the false teachers, but also for that of their followers.

⁵⁶There is some question as to the precise referent of the "they" in "so that they may be sound in the faith." Is Paul referring to the false teachers, their followers, or both? Tower sees the "they" as referring solely to the false teachers. Fee is probably correct in seeing the "they" as referring primarily to the false teachers and secondarily to their followers. Hiebert and Kent take the "they" as referring primarily to the followers and secondarily to the false teachers. Knight takes it as referring solely to the followers.

doctrinally sound, “**sound**” connoting healthy (Mounce translates: “healthy in the faith”; cf. 1 Timothy 1:10, 6:3, 2 Timothy 1:13, 4:3, and Titus 1:9).

not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. (1:14)

In order to be “sound in the faith” (verse 13), the false teachers in Crete (and their followers) would have to sever their devotion to falsehood. The Greek participle translated “**paying attention to**” has the idea of being devoted to or obsessed with (the same verbal is translated “addicted to” in 1 Timothy 3:8; cf. also comments on the synonymous verbal, translated “holding fast,” in 1:9). Rather than paying attention to/being devoted to falsehood (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4 and 4:1), they were to pay attention to/be devoted to the Truth (1 Timothy 4:13).

The falsehood to which the Cretans were to sever their devotion consisted of “**Jewish myths**” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7’s “fables,” same Greek word; 2 Timothy 4:4; and 2 Peter 1:16’s “tales,” same Greek word). What were these “**myths**”? Based on Paul’s words in 3:9 (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4, where myths and genealogies are conjoined), most believe they involved Jewish genealogical records. Wiersbe (p. 99) calls these myths “fanciful interpretations of the genealogies in the Old Testament.” Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 433) calls them “speculative and fanciful inventions drawn from the OT records.” Hendriksen (p. 355) calls them “fanciful stories about ancestors.” Mounce (p. 400) calls them “stories ... created around minor OT characters, stories that contained their secret knowledge⁵⁷.” Knight (p. 300) calls them “concocted stories related to the ‘genealogies’ spun out from those given in the OT.” Towner (p. 705) calls them “speculative doctrines based on stories of ancient OT heroes.”

The falsehood to which the Cretans were to sever their devotion also consisted of (“**and**”) “**commandments of men who turn away from the truth.**” What were these “**commandments of men**”? According to Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 433), they were “Jewish-Gnostic ritual observances.” According to Mounce (p. 402), they were “Pharisaic oral tradition as it reinterpreted the Hebrew Scriptures.” Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for adhering to such commandments of men (Matthew 15:9//Mark 7:7, citing Isaiah 29:13; cf. “tradition(s) of the elders” in Mark 7:3 and 5

⁵⁷With the words, “secret knowledge” Mounce is referring to his belief (as well as the belief of many other interpreters) that the Cretan heresy had a Gnostic flavor to it. Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 432) calls the false teachers in Crete “gnosticizing Judaists.” Gnosticism (from the Greek word for knowledge, *gnosis*) taught that one had to possess a special, secret knowledge in order to be saved. Full-blown Gnosticism did not appear until the second century A.D. An incipient form of it, however, did plague the first century church (especially in Colossae).

and “tradition of men” in Mark 7:8). The Colossian heresy apparently included, at least in principle, the same error (see Colossian 2:22’s “commandments and teachings of men”). Assuming the error in Crete was the same as or quite similar to the ones in Colossae and Ephesus, these commandments included dietary regulations (see Colossians 2:16 and 1 Timothy 4:3, as well as comments below on Titus 1:15).

The reason the Cretans were to sever their devotion to these commandments of men is because the men who were commanding them were men **“who turn away from the truth”** (cf. 2 Timothy 4:4, as well as 1 Timothy 1:6, 4:1, and 5:15). If Paul had a particular truth in mind, it may be the truth that one is saved by grace through faith, not by merit through works.

To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. (1:15)

On the surface, this verse appears somewhat mysterious. However, in light of the immediately preceding context (“commandments of men” in verse 14), especially if Paul has Christ’s teaching in Matthew 15//Mark 7 in view, it appears that the false teachers in Crete were insisting that, among other things, the observance of Jewish dietary laws was essential to salvation (as did the Pharisees in Matthew 15//Mark 7) and that Paul is refuting this teaching here in Titus 1:15 (as he also does in 1 Timothy 4:1-5).

To those who are saved (**“to the pure,”** i.e., those whose hearts have been cleansed by faith, Acts 15:9; cf. Matthew 5:8, John 13:10, and 15:3), dietary regulations are passé. All foods (**“all things”**; cf. 1 Timothy 4:4’s “everything”) **“are pure”** (cf. Acts 10:15 and 1 Timothy 4:3-5).⁵⁸ Thus, the Cretan believers were not to allow the false teachers to impose legalistic dietary restrictions upon them, nor were they to allow the false teachers to convince them that they were morally unclean/unsaved simply because (in the opinion of the false teachers) they were ceremonially unclean.

In contrast to the pure/believers (**“but”**), to whom all things are pure, are the impure/unbelievers (**“to those who are defiled and unbelieving”**), to whom **“nothing is pure.”** Though the unbelieving false teachers in Crete thought they could attain moral purity through ceremonial purity, in reality it was just the opposite. Their pursuit of moral purity through ceremonial purity showed that they were unbelievers.⁵⁹ Consequently, their unbelief/moral impurity (**“to those**

⁵⁸This liberty should not be abused, however, as Romans 14:20 makes clear. Paul presents this truth in its unaffected form here in Titus 1:15 in order to make the sharpest contrast possible between it and the falsehood of the Cretan heretics.

⁵⁹“... [T]heir commandments regarding purity demonstrate that they have not trusted Christ alone

who are defiled and unbelieving") actually made them, contrary to what they thought, ceremonially impure ("**nothing is pure**"). Unbelievers are tainted by sin; therefore, everything they touch/everything they do is tainted. See Proverbs 15:8, Isaiah 64:6, and Haggai 2:11-14 in this regard.

The impure nature ("**defiled**") of the false teachers in Crete is further explained at the end of verse fifteen ("**but both their mind and their conscience are defiled**"). The unbelieving mind is a defiled/depraved mind (cf. Romans 1:28, Ephesians 4:17-19, 1 Timothy 6:5, and 2 Timothy 3:8), one incapable of reasoning properly/biblically. God must regenerate/enlighten, through the Holy Spirit's work of illumination, the sin-darkened (Ephesians 4:18)/blind (2 Corinthians 4:4) mind of the unbeliever in order for the unbeliever to reason properly/biblically and thereby come to faith in Christ. The unbelieving conscience, like the unbelieving mind, is also defiled/depraved, incapable of making proper moral evaluations and susceptible to ultimately becoming seared (1 Timothy 4:2). In contrast to the defiled mind and conscience of the unbeliever is the pure heart (1 Timothy 1:5 and 2 Timothy 2:22) and good (1 Timothy 1:5 and 19)/clear (1 Timothy 3:9 and 2 Timothy 1:3) conscience of the believer.

Mounce (p. 404) nicely summarizes Paul's point here in verse fifteen: "To the morally pure, all things are ritually pure; nothing from the outside can defile a person. But those who are morally defiled, who are impure inside, whose minds and consciences are defiled, defile everything they touch; no amount of ritual asceticism can make them acceptable to God."

They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. (1:16)

Mounce (p. 395) calls this verse "the hinge verse of the entire epistle." Whereas the focus of the previous verse (verse 15) was on the character of the false teachers in Crete (impure/defiled/unbelieving), the focus of this verse (verse 16) is on their resultant conduct (Hiebert, "Titus," p. 434). Though the false teachers in Crete professed salvation ("**They profess to know God**⁶⁰"), they did not possess salvation, a fact attested to by their works ("**but by *their* deeds they deny *Him***"). In this regard, see 2 Timothy 3:5, as well as Luke 6:46, 1 John 1:6, and 2:4. Paul's words here are consistent with what Christ taught in Matthew 7:15-23, namely, that false teachers show their true colors by what they do ("you will know them by their fruits," Matthew 7:16 and 20). It may very well be that the false teachers

as the one who can cleanse their lives and make them pure" (Knight, p. 302).

⁶⁰Their claim was a strong one, as the Greek word for "God" is first in the Greek sentence, for emphasis. The Greek literally reads: "God they profess to know."

taught that one could be saved (in the sense of converted) without also being sanctified (if so, this would account for the stress on post-conversion good works found throughout the epistle), an unbiblical concept (see James 2:14-17), for conversion is confirmed by conduct.

Paul concludes this section of the epistle with a stinging indictment of the false teachers ("**being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed**"). The Greek adjective translated "**detestable**" is a strong one. Mounce translates it "abominable" (so also KJV). Hendriksen translates it "despicable." The cognate verb is translated "abhor" in Romans 2:22. The false teachers in Crete were "**disobedient**" to God and His Word (cf. verse 10's "rebellious" and comments on), yet they obeyed the commandments of men (verse 14). Finally, the false teachers in Crete were "**worthless for any good deed.**" The Greek adjective translated "**worthless**" is translated "rejected" in 2 Timothy 3:8 (its antonym is translated "approved" in 2 Timothy 2:15).

Titus 1:5-16

Teaching Outline

Introduction: In this section of the epistle, which begins the body (1:5-3:11) of the book, Paul reminds Titus of his commission to complete the congregations in Crete (verse 5a), particularly placing pastors over the Cretan congregations (verse 5b) who would have the character (verses 6-8) and competence (verse 9b) to call the corrupt teachers in Crete on the carpet (verses 10-16).

- I. Accomplish the Mission in Crete (verse 5a)
- II. Appoint Ministers in Crete (verse 5b; cf. Acts 14:23)
 - A. Ministers who have character (verses 6-8; cf. 1 Timothy 3:2f and 2 Timothy 2:24)
 - "Above reproach" (verses 6 and 7)
 - "The husband of one wife" (verse 6)
 - "Having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion" (verse 6)
 - "Not self-willed" (verse 7)
 - "Not quick-tempered" (verse 7)
 - "Not addicted to wine" (verse 7)

- “Not pugnacious” (verse 7)
- “Not fond of sordid gain” (verse 7; cf. 1 Peter 5:2)
- “Hospitable” (verse 8)
- “Loving what is good” (verse 8)
- “Sensible” (verse 8)
- “Just” (verse 8)
- “Devout” (verse 8)
- “Self-controlled” (verse 8)

B. Ministers who are committed to the Word (verse 9a; cf. 1 Timothy 4:13)

C. Ministers who are competent in the Word (verse 9b)

1. Able to teach truth (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2's and 2 Timothy 2:24's “able to teach”)
2. Able to fight falsehood by calling corrupt teachers on the carpet/ stepping on the toes of those who oppose (verses 10-16)
 - a. Their corruption (cf. verses 12-13a)
 - (1) Disobedient (verse 10's “rebellious” and verse 16's “disobedient”)
 - (2) Devoid of substance (verse 10's “empty talkers”)
 - (3) Deceptive (verse 10's “deceivers”; cf. verse 12's “liars”)
 - (4) Devoted to doctrinal deviancy (verse 11's “teaching things they should not teach” and verse 14's “paying attention to ...”; cf. 1 Timothy 1:4 and 4:1)
 - (a) Circumcision (verse 10)
 - (b) Jewish fables (verse 14)
 - (c) Commandments of men (verse 14)
 - (5) Destructive (verse 11's “upsetting”)

- (6) Driven by greed (verse 11's "for the sake of sordid gain")
 - (7) Defiled (verse 15)
 - (8) Disbelieving (verse 15)
 - (9) Denying God in their deeds (verse 16a; cf. 1 John 2:4)
 - (10) Detestable (verse 16)
 - (11) Disapproved (verse 16's "worthless")
- b. Their correction (verses 11a and 13b; cf. verse 9b's "refute those who contradict")

Titus 2:1-8

In 2:1-10, Paul exhorts Titus to teach various groups within the Cretan congregations to behave in a manner befitting their Christian beliefs (2:1). The various groups include: older men (2:2); older women (2:3-4a); young women, through the older women (2:4b-5); young men (2:6-8), of whom Titus was one (2:7-8); and slaves (2:9-10).⁶¹

But as for you, speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine. (2:1)

In contrast to ("**But**") the false teachers and their unhealthy beliefs and behaviors (1:10-16; cf. 1 Timothy 1:10), Titus ("**as for you**⁶²") was to continue teaching⁶³ the Cretan believers healthy beliefs (cf. 1:9's "exhort in sound doctrine") and the healthy behaviors that befit them ("**speak the things which**

⁶¹Cf. 1 Timothy 5:1-2, where Paul instructs Timothy how to treat older men, younger men, older women, and younger women. Verses 3-5 form the basis of Martha Peace's book, *Becoming a Titus 2 Woman*.

⁶²The contrast is brought out with a double emphasis in the original. The Greek literally reads: "You but you speak" The emphasis is seen in two ways: 1) The Greek second person personal pronoun ("you") is the first word in the sentence, for emphasis, and 2) This Greek second person personal pronoun is used, normally unnecessary since the person (second person) is already inherent in the Greek verb translated "you speak"; the result is a repetition of the "you," for emphasis.

⁶³The Greek verb translated "speak" is in the present tense. As such, it "stresses continuing action, and hence encourages Titus to maintain the course on which he has embarked" (Kent, p. 220).

are fitting for sound doctrine"; cf. 1 Timothy 6:3). The "**things**" of which Paul speaks are delineated in the following verses (verses 2-10). The Greek participle translated "**sound**" connotes healthy (cf. 2 Timothy 1:13).

Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, in perseverance. (2:2)

The first group in the Cretan congregations Titus was to teach how to behave according to sound doctrine was "**older men**" (cf. 1 Timothy 5:1a). At what age one went from being a younger man (verse 6) to an older man (verse 2) is a matter of speculation. According to Fee (p. 185), Hippocrates understood the Greek noun translated "older men" to refer to those between the ages of fifty and fifty-six, while Philo understood it to refer to those over the age of sixty.

The behaviors Titus was to teach the older men are given in the form of six virtues. First, older men "**are to be temperate**" (cf. the same virtue required of pastors in 1 Timothy 3:2), which Hiebert ("Titus," p. 436) describes as "self-mastery in thought and judgment" and Knight (p. 306) describes as "the prudent, thoughtful aspect of self-control."

Second, older men are to be "**dignified**" (cf. the same virtue required of deacons in 1 Timothy 3:8), which Hiebert ("Titus," p. 436) describes as "seriousness of purpose that invite[s] honor and respect." Litfin (p. 764) puts it in "layman's terms" when he says that older men are not to be clowns.

Third, older men are to be "**sensible**" (cf. 1 Timothy 3:2's "prudent," 2 Timothy 1:7's "discipline," and Titus 1:8's "sensible" and comments on), which Wiersbe (p. 104) describes as "an attitude of mind that leads to prudence and self-control in life," Ward (p. 250) as level-headed, and Hiebert ("Titus," p. 436) as "'clear-headed,' manifesting self-possession under all circumstances" and (*Titus and Philemon*, p. 48) "a well-balanced, properly regulated mind."

The fourth, fifth, and sixth virtues form a triad. Older men are to be "**sound in faith, in love, in perseverance**." "**Sound**" connotes healthy (cf. 2 Timothy 1:13). Healthy belief (verse 1's "sound doctrine") is to produce healthy behavior (verse 2's "sound in faith, in love, in perseverance"). Specifically, it is to produce healthy faith, love, and perseverance, what Fee (p. 186) further explicates as "faith toward God, love toward all, endurance to the End." Because love and endurance are subjective virtues, "**faith**" should be understood as the same (by contrast, "faith" in 1:13's "sound in the faith" should be understood in an objective sense, with "the faith" being the doctrine comprising the Christian faith); thus, faithfulness is the idea.

With "faith" and "love" one would normally expect "hope" (see 1 Corinthians 13:13, Colossians 1:4-5, 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 5:8, and Hebrews 10:22-24), rather

than “**perseverance**” (cf. 1 Timothy 6:11 and 2 Timothy 3:10). But, as seen by 1 Thessalonians 1:3’s “steadfastness of hope” (i.e., “endurance inspired by hope,” NIV), there is a close connection between hope and perseverance (cf. Romans 8:25). Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 436) describes perseverance as “steadfast persistence that bravely bears the trials and afflictions of life” (cf. the same verb used in 2 Timothy 2:10), which is “very needful in old age with its increasing infirmities, disappointed aspirations, and growing loneliness” (Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, pp. 48-49).

Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, teaching what is good, (2:3)

Just as Titus was to teach the older men in the Cretan congregations how to behave according to sound doctrine (verse 2), so also (“**likewise**”) was he to teach the “**older women**” (verses 3-4a; cf. 1 Timothy 5:2a). At what age one went from being a younger woman (verse 4) to an older woman (verse 3) is also a matter of speculation, though one would assume it would be the same age at which one went from being a younger man to an older man. According to Fee (p. 186), Philo understood the Greek noun translated “older women” to refer to those over sixty years of age. In light of what is said in verse 4 (“to love their children”), perhaps it can be assumed that older women (and men) are those who are done raising their children, while younger women (and men) are those who still are.

The behaviors Titus was to teach the older women are given in the form of a virtue, two vices, and a virtue. First, older women “**are to be reverent in their behavior.**” According to Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 436), “reverent” behavior is behavior that is “suitable to a sacred person.” See also 1 Timothy 2:10.

Second, older women are “**not [to be] malicious gossips**” (cf. 1 Timothy 3:11 and 2 Timothy 3:3). The Greek word translated “malicious gossips” is *diabolos*, from which we get our English word, “diabolic.”⁶⁴ In words that perhaps would not pass the politically correct muster of our day, Calvin (p. 311) states: “Talkativeness is a disease of women, and it is increased by old age.” Knight (p. 306) provides a nice counterbalance: “Concern for people can degenerate into this vice. Those usually considered most in danger of falling into it, because of their positive inclination, are hereby warned.”

⁶⁴“So much, and so directly, do these do the devil’s work, that for it the devil’s name is given” (Henry, p. 862).

Third, older women are not to be **“enslaved to much wine”** (cf. 1 Timothy 3:3, as well as Titus 1:7 and comments on). As mentioned by Hiebert in footnote 10, Crete, like many first century cultures, was infamous for drunkenness.⁶⁵

Fourth, older women are to be **“teaching what is good”** (the Greek word is *kalodidaskalos*, from *kalos*, “good” + *didaskalos*, “teacher”). Their students (“the young women,” verse 4) and the **“good”** they were to be teaching them (love their husbands and children, etc., verses 4b-5) is specified in the following verses. Based on the content of the teaching specified in these verses, the manner of the teaching is likely private and informal (as opposed to public and formal, though there is nothing wrong with it being public and formal, if it is limited to teaching other women) and its milieu the home (as opposed to the church). Fee (p. 186) calls it “informal teaching by word and example.” Mounce (p. 416) likewise states: “This is not a formal function of the church but a personal, one-to-one teaching, a task that cannot properly be accomplished by men.”⁶⁶

so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, (2:4)

Before the older women could teach the younger women (cf. 1 Timothy 5:2b) to be what they (the younger women) needed to be, they (the older women) first needed to be what they (the older women) needed to be. The older women needed to be behaving in a manner befitting their beliefs (verse 3) so that they could teach the younger women to do the same (verse 4: **“so that they may encourage the young women”**; verse 4 in the NIV begins: **“Then** they can train the younger women ...”). See also Ezra 7:10. The Greek verb translated **“encourage”** is a verbal cognate of the Greek adjective translated “sensible” in verse two. According to Kent (p. 222), the older women were to make the younger women sound-minded.

What the older women were to teach the younger women consisted primarily of domestic responsibilities. First, they were to teach the younger women **“to love their husbands.”** The Greek adjective translated “love their husbands” is

⁶⁵Fee (p. 186) calls this prohibition “a negative reflection on first-century culture itself, which often admired heavy drinkers.”

⁶⁶Because Titus was a man, and a younger man at that, this private, informal teaching of the younger women was delegated to the older women. Titus, however, undoubtedly instructed the younger women in the public, formal context of the church. Kent (p. 222) states in this regard: “Of course, the pastor will also deal with these matters, but propriety will keep a young minister from becoming too specific and personal in his dealings with young women.”

philandros, from the Greek verb, *phileo*, “to love” + the Greek noun *andros*, “husband.” We who are married are to love our spouse regardless of our spouse’s demerit, just as Christ loved us in spite of our demerit (Matthew 5:43-48, John 15:12, Ephesians 5:1-2, 25, 1 John 4:11, and 19).

Second, the older women were to teach the younger women “**to love their children.**” The Greek adjective translated “love their children” is *philoteknos*, from the Greek verb *phileo*, “to love” + the Greek noun, *teknon*, “child.” Loving one’s child includes disciplining him or her (Proverbs 3:11-12, Hebrews 12:5-6, and Revelation 3:19a), discipline that includes corporal discipline (Proverbs 13:24). A good, biblical definition of love is doing what is best for another, and administering corporal discipline to a child, when necessary, is doing what is best for him or her (according to God’s perspective as revealed in His Word, the only infallible, insusceptible-to-finitude-and-fallenness perspective in the universe). Thus, see what God has to say in Proverbs 13:24, 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15, 17, and Ephesians 6:4 (“discipline”) about this matter. The fact that Paul mentions love of husband prior to love of child may be indicative of the fact that a woman’s responsibility to her husband takes priority over her responsibility to her children.

to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored. (2:5)

In addition to the previous two given in verse four, here in verse five Paul gives five more virtues (numbers three through seven) the older women were to teach the younger women. Third, the older women were to teach the younger women “**to be sensible**” (same Greek adjective as in verse 2—see comments on).

Fourth, the older women were to teach the younger women to be “**pure**” (cf. 1 Timothy 5:2b, as well as 1 Peter 3:2’s “chaste,” same Greek adjective). This would include sexual purity, as well as spiritual purity (pure in body and spirit).

Fifth, the older women were to teach the younger women to be “**workers at home**” (cf. Proverbs 7:11 and 1 Timothy 5:13-14). The Greek adjective is *oikourgos*, the Greek noun *oikos*, “home” + the Greek noun, *ergon*, “work.” Young women are to “do their homework.” Wiersbe (p. 106) describes this virtue as “caring for the home.” The NIV translates it: “busy at home.” According to Knight (p. 308), it means that women should be diligent homemakers. According to Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 436) it encompasses “the many domestic activities of the housewife that she must willingly accept as part of her position as queen of the home.” According to Mounce (p. 411), “It does not require a woman to work only at home (cf. Proverbs 31), but it does state that she does have duties at home.” With these words, Paul seems to be laying down the

principle that anything a woman does (employment⁶⁷, hobby, etc.) that hinders her ability to fulfill her responsibilities at home (to her husband and children) are to be avoided.⁶⁸ The same principle applies to a man who allows employment, hobbies, etc. to hinder his ability to fulfill his responsibilities at home (to his wife and children).

Sixth, the older women are to teach the younger women to be “**kind**” (cf. Proverbs 31:26b).

Seventh, the older women are to teach the younger women to be “**subject to their own husbands**” (cf. Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, 1 Timothy 2:11, 1 Peter 3:1, and 5-6).⁶⁹ The Greek verb translated “**subject**” is *hupotasso*, which literally means to put or place oneself under (the Greek preposition, *hupo*, “under” + the Greek verb, *tasso*, “to put or place”). Adding to this idea is the fact that the verb is in the middle voice (“subjecting themselves”), indicative of

⁶⁷Should a mother (especially a mother of young children) work outside the home? Some have used the Proverbs 31 woman as justification for a mother working outside the home. However, a careful reading of this text seems to indicate that her work is home-based. Other issues to consider, besides biblical ones, include potential psychological impact upon the children (According to John MacArthur, *The Family*, p. 34, “Psychological tests have shown that children who grow up in homes where the mother works are much more insecure than children whose mother is home”) and financial benefit (by “financial benefit,” it is not meant the mother working simply to allow for a higher level of living, i.e., nicer car, nicer home, etc., which is most often the case, as MacArthur, *The Family*, p. 37 implies: “If a family is not able to live on the husband’s salary, they may be living beyond their God-intended means”). The financial benefit of the mother working outside the home is usually far less than one might think, as Martha Peace (*The Excellent Wife*, p. 73) points out: “Many times, if a couple did an honest appraisal of the wife’s income, and looked at how much they spent on transportation, child care, taxes, clothing, lunches out, dinners out, and increased grocery bills due to buying prepared foods, the couple would likely see that they are actually losing money.” Before deciding to have a mother work outside the home, several questions must be asked and answered: Is it biblically permissible? Is it necessary? Is it worth it (financially, psychologically, spiritually, etc.)? See pages 32-38 of MacArthur’s *The Family* for a more in-depth discussion of this issue.

⁶⁸“Any woman who makes career status or financial advantage a higher priority in her life than the welfare of her marriage, children, or home transgresses Scripture” (Chapell, pp. 330-331).

⁶⁹Knight (p. 309) makes a good point: “... Paul does not regard submission as problematic and needing explanation or qualification.” Fee (p. 188), however, gives a qualification: “As with the list of virtues, this [the directive to submit to one’s husband], too, assumes the cultural norm of what a good wife was expected to be like Thus, ... Paul sets a standard, conditioned in part by the cultural norm of what was expected of a good wife” Knight (pp. 309-310) rightly rebuffs Fee’s contention that Paul’s command is culturally conditioned (cf. Mounce, p. 418).

the fact that a woman must choose to submit of her own volition.⁷⁰ Submission involves both action (submitting) and attitude (sweetly so). While the Bible teaches an equality of essence between husband and wife (Galatians 3:28 and 1 Peter 3:7), it also teaches an inequality of function. As a general rule, wives are to respectfully submit to their husbands “in everything” (Ephesians 5:24), even though their husbands often fail to earn such respect.⁷¹ If a husband commands his wife to violate Scripture, however, a wife must respectfully refuse to comply (Acts 5:29).

Paul concludes verse five by giving a reason why the younger women are to behave in a way befitting their beliefs: “**so that the word of God will not be dishonored**” (cf. Romans 2:24 and 1 Timothy 6:1, as well as 1 Timothy 5:14 and Titus 2:8).⁷² Interpreters such as Hendriksen, Hiebert, and Knight are probably correct in viewing these words in relation to all seven of the virtues mentioned in verses four and five, not just to the seventh one, submission to one’s husband. Younger women are to be and do all that verses four and five stipulate so that God will be honored/glorified (cf. Matthew 5:16, Philippians 1:11, and 1 Peter 2:12), rather than dishonored (cf. 2 Samuel 12:14). “Therefore, for a wife to fail to be submissive to her husband or to be unloving or impure, etc., would allow non-Christians to say that Christianity makes people worse rather than better and therefore that its message is not only useless but bad” (Knight, p. 309).

Likewise urge the young men to be sensible; (2:6)

Just as Titus was to teach the older men (verse 2), the older women (verses 3-4a), and (indirectly) the younger women (verses 4b-5) in the Cretan congregations how to behave according to sound doctrine, so also (“**likewise**”) was he to teach (“**urge**”) “**the young men**” (cf. 1 Timothy 5:1b) to do the same. The Greek verb translated “**urge**” (the Greek verb, *parakaleo*, literally “to call alongside,” the Greek verb, *kaleo*, to call + the Greek preposition, *para*, beside) is parallel to verse one’s “speak,” but has a stronger connotation (cf. the same Greek verb, translated “appeal” in 1 Timothy 5:1, and “exhort” in Titus 1:9 and 2:15), perhaps in keeping with the disposition of young men.

⁷⁰“Paul does not allow [the husband] to demand submission but instructs [the wife] to give it. This is a significant distinction” (Mounce, p. 412).

⁷¹The Greek adjective translated “own” in “subject to their own husbands” is *idios*, from which we get our English word In all seriousness, we really do not get that English word from the Greek word, *idios*. Please forgive me, I could not resist ☺ .

⁷²“The world usually judges religion, not by its doctrines, but by its effects on its adherents” (Kent, p. 223).

Titus was to teach the younger men **“to be sensible.”** This is the verbal form of the adjective used in verses two (see comments on) and five (cf. verse 4's “encourage,” a verbal cognate). Well does Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 437) comment: “Since young men are inclined to be somewhat impetuous and unrestrained in conduct, their basic need is to be ‘self-controlled,’ cultivating balance and self-restraint in daily practice.”

in all things⁷³ show yourself to be an example of good deeds, with purity in doctrine, dignified, (2:7)

Mounce (p. 407) makes the connection between verse six and verses seven and eight: “Titus himself may have been young, and the mention of younger men [verse 6] reminds Paul that he has a few things to say directly to Titus [verses 7-8].”

Being a young man, Titus was also to behave according to sound doctrine, thus providing a pattern to follow, not only for the Cretan young men, but also for all the Cretan believers (**“show yourself to be an example of good deeds⁷⁴”**; cf. 1 Timothy 4:12, as well as 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, Philippians 3:17, 4:9, 1 Thessalonians 1:6-7, 2 Thessalonians 3:7, 9, 2 Timothy 3:10, and 1 Peter 5:3). The Greek noun translated **“example”** (the word used in Philippians 3:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:7, 2 Thessalonians 3:9, 1 Timothy 4:12, and 1 Peter 5:3) is defined by C. E. B. Cranfield (quoted in Mounce, p. 259) as “a mark made by striking, ... an impression made by something, such an impression used in its turn as a mould to shape something else.” Titus was to make an impression upon the Cretan believers. He was “to be a mold into which others [could] be impressed and therefore bear a likeness to him” (Mounce, p. 413).

Not only did Titus's deeds have to be right (verse 7a), but so also his doctrine (verse 7b-8). By having the right doctrine and the right deeds, Titus would stand in sharp contrast to the false teachers in Crete, whose doctrine (1:11 and 14) and deeds (1:16) were anything but right. Titus's doctrine was to be

⁷³There is some question as to whether the words, “in all things” should go with the end of verse six (young men are to be sensible in all things; so Mounce, Hendriksen, Towner, Griffin, and Fee) or with the start of verse seven (remember, there were no verse divisions in the original). Knight (p. 311) concludes: “The arguments are rather evenly balanced, and with whichever direction the phrase is taken the significance of vv. 6-8 as a whole is about the same.”

⁷⁴Once again (cf. comments at the start of verse 4), one must exemplify right behavior before effectively exhorting others to behave right. While Titus was to exhort other young men to behave right (verse 6), he was also to exemplify such behavior (verse 7a). Likewise, not only did Titus's talk have to be right (verses 7b-8), but also his walk (verse 7a). We must “practice what we preach.” Both example and exhortation (Wiersbe, p. 107), work and word are necessary.

characterized by four marks, the first two of which pertained to *how* Titus was to teach, the last two with *what* he was to teach.

The first two are found here at the end of verse seven (“**with purity in doctrine, dignified**”). First, in contrast to the false teachers in Crete (1:10’s “deceivers”), Titus’s teaching was to be characterized by “**purity**” of motive (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 437). Second, Titus’s teaching was to be “**dignified**.” This is the noun form of the Greek adjective used in verse two. Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 438) describes it as “the high moral tone and serious manner appropriate to his sacred task.”

sound in speech which is beyond reproach, so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us. (2:8)

Paul gives two more marks (numbers three and four) that were to characterize Titus’s doctrine, both pertaining to the content of his teaching. Third, what Titus taught (“**speech**”) was to be “**sound**,” i.e., healthy (cf. 2 Timothy 1:13). Fourth, what Titus taught was to be “**beyond reproach**.” The Greek adjective is *akatagnostos*, which literally means “not known against” (the Greek alpha privative, *a*, “not” + the Greek preposition, *kata*, “against” + the Greek adjective, *gnostos*, “known”). Just as a pastor is to live a life beyond reproach (see 1:6 and comments on), so what a pastor teaches is to be beyond reproach. Commenting on this mark, Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 438) states: “Every faithful teacher must at times declare doctrine to which some rebellious hearer may object, but such objection must prove unjustified upon faithful examination.” Likewise, Mounce (p. 414; emphasis mine) describes “beyond reproach” teaching as teaching against which no charges can justifiably be brought.

As he did at the end of verse five, so here at the end of verse eight Paul gives a reason why Titus’s teaching was to be what verses seven and eight prescribe: “**so that the opponent will be put to shame, having nothing bad to say about us**” (cf. 1 Timothy 5:14, as well as Titus 2:5 and comments on). Thus, one way Titus could silence the false teachers in Crete (1:11) was by “walking the walk and talking the talk.” In general, “**the opponent**” (cf. 1 Timothy 5:14’s “the enemy” and 2 Timothy 2:25’s “those who are in opposition”) could be any unbeliever. Specifically, Paul likely has the false teachers in Crete in mind (cf. 1:9’s “those who contradict,” as well as footnote 46). By saying “**us**” instead of “you” (Titus), Paul is implying that the repercussions of Titus’s actions would go far beyond Titus himself. As Knight (p. 313) states: “The misconduct of any Christian, and especially of a leader in the church will have consequences for the entire Christian community.”

Titus 2:9-15

Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, (2:9)

The final group in the Cretan congregations Titus was to teach how to behave according to sound doctrine (2:1) was slaves ("**Urge bondslaves**"). The institution of slavery⁷⁵ was firmly entwined in the fabric of Ancient Near Eastern society. Accordingly, the master-slave relationship is addressed often in the New Testament (besides here in Titus 2:9-10, see also Ephesians 6:5-9, Colossians 3:22-4:1, 1 Timothy 6:1-2, the book of Philemon, and 1 Peter 2:18-20).

The behaviors Titus was to teach slaves are given in the form of two virtues, two vices, and a virtue. First, slaves were "**to be subject to their own masters in everything**" (cf. Ephesians 6:5, Colossians 3:22, and 1 Peter 2:18). As in 2:5, the voice (middle, i.e., "subject themselves") and meaning (literally "to put or place under") of the Greek verb translated "**be subject to**" convey the idea of voluntary submission⁷⁶ (cf. comments on this verb in 2:5). As with husbands and wives (cf. comments on 2:5), so masters and slaves were equal in essence (Galatians 3:28), yet unequal in function. Slaves were to obey their masters "**in everything**" (cf. Colossians 3:22), except when their masters commanded them to violate Scripture (Acts 5:29).

⁷⁵One must not equate the slavery of the Ancient Near East with the slavery of more recent centuries in the west. Mounce (p. 331) writes in this regard: "Although slavery in any form is heinous, the slavery of Paul's day had many startling differences from that practiced in America. In Paul's day it was not racially based but resulted from war, poverty, and other social circumstances. It was not unusual to find people voluntarily submitting to slavery in exchange for economic security." In like manner, Chapell (p. 333) states: "For the moment Paul does not deal with the legitimacy of slavery. While this is difficult for those of us who only think of slavery in the context of the despicable practices of chattel slavery in early America and in other nations even today, our context does not necessarily parallel Paul's." One might say that the master-slave relationship of the Ancient Near East bore more similarities to the employer-employee relationship of today than to the master-slave relationship of modern western societies.

⁷⁶"Since subjection to masters was understood as part of the legal system of the day, Paul's command to be 'subject to masters' must refer to voluntary submissiveness by those already slaves" (Kent, p. 225).

True submission always includes the right attitude (cf. comments on 2:5). Accordingly, Paul exhorts Titus to teach slaves **“to be well-pleasing,”** i.e., to seek to please their masters (cf. the right attitudes of Ephesians 6:5's “in the sincerity of your heart,” Ephesians 6:6's “from the heart,” Ephesians 6:7's “with good will,” Colossians 3:22's “with sincerity of heart,” and Colossians 3:23's “heartily”).

Third, slaves were **“not [to be] argumentative.”** Knight (p. 315) sees this vice as corresponding to the previous virtue (“well-pleasing”). The participle translated **“argumentative”** is literally “to speak against” (*antilego*, the Greek preposition, *anti*, “against” + the Greek verb, *lego*, “to speak”). Such “speaking against” could take a more direct form (NASB's and ESV's “argumentative”; NIV's “talk back”), a more indirect form (talking bad about the master in the hearing of fellow slaves), or both.

not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect. (2:10)

Fourth, slaves were **“not [to be] pilfering.”** The Greek verb translated **“pilfering”** is *nosphizo*, which, according to Kent (p. 225), comes from the root, *nosphi*, meaning apart or aside. Hence, the idea is “keeping a portion apart for oneself” (Kent, p. 225). The same verb is used of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5 (translated “kept back for himself” in verse 2 and “keep back” in verse 3). Kent (p. 224) translates it “embezzling” here in Titus 2:10. Ancient Near Eastern slaves, who were often trusted with the finances of their masters, were notorious for stealing (an implication made by Paul in Philemon 18).

Rather than pilfering (**“but”**), slaves were to be **“showing all good faith.”** As with “well-pleasing” and “not argumentative” in verse nine, Knight (p. 315) sees this virtue as corresponding to the previous vice (“not pilfering”). The NIV translates this virtue: “to show that they can be fully trusted.”

As he did at the end of 2:5 regarding the behavior of younger women and at the end of 2:8 regarding the teaching of Titus, so here at the end of verse ten Paul gives a reason why the behavior of slaves in the Cretan churches was to be what verse nine and the first half of verse ten prescribe: **“so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect”** (cf. the same concern expressed in negative terms in 1 Timothy 6:1). Kent (p. 226) describes this clause in a “picturesque” way: “As a beautiful picture may be enhanced by an appropriate frame, so we ... make Christian teaching attractive if we exhibit its power and truth in our lives.” Wiersbe (p. 108) describes it as “beautify[ing] the Bible,” Hiebert (*Titus and Philemon*, p. 55) as “ornamenting” the doctrine of God.

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, (2:11)⁷⁷

In 2:11-14, Paul gives the theological underpinning for the exhortations in 2:2-10. In 2:1, Paul commanded Titus to “speak the things which are fitting for sound doctrine.” The “things” are found in 2:2-10. The “doctrine” (cf. 2:10’s “the doctrine of God our Savior”) is found in 2:11-14. As Paul often does in his writings, so here he undergirds the imperatives of Christian living (2:2-10) with the indicatives of the Christian life (2:11-14). Doctrine determines behavior; creed leads to deed; facts to acts.

These verses, 2:11-14, have been called “one of the great summaries of Christian truth” (Kent, p. 226); “one of the greatest statements about salvation found in the New Testament” (Wiersbe, p. 107); “one of the richest passages of Holy Writ” (Hendriksen, p. 370); and “one of the most exquisite doctrinal passages in the Bible” (*Biblical Viewpoint*, p. 56).

The reason why the Cretan believers would be able to do what Titus was to exhort them to do in 2:2-10 is because (“**For**”) the grace of God that saved them (2:11) would also sanctify them (2:12 and 14). Saving grace (“**the grace of God**”) made its appearance (“**has appeared**”) with the first epiphany (appearance) of Christ in that it was the work of Christ during His first epiphany that made salvation by grace possible (cf. 2 Timothy 1:10, Titus 1:3 and comments on, and Titus 3:4). Mounce (p. 422) calls “**grace**” here in Titus 2:11 “a one-word summary of God’s saving act in Christ.” Commenting on the Greek verb translated “**has appeared**” (*epiphaino*), Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 439) writes: “The verb ... means ‘to become visible, make an appearance,’ and conveys the image of grace suddenly breaking in on our moral darkness, like the rising sun. (It is used of the sun in Acts 27:20.)” Chapell (p. 338) adds: “In Greek literature this word can function as a technical term to describe a hero (or a god) breaking into a helpless situation to rescue someone from danger. Paul typically uses this terminology to refer to the past or future coming of Christ to rescue his people (cf. v. 13).” The verb was also used in that day to describe the appearance of an earthly potentate. Paul uses the term for the One (and only

⁷⁷Based upon an inferior rendering of this verse (reflected in the KJV and NIV), Arminian theologians see in it support for the extrabiblical doctrine of “prevenient grace,” an alleged endowment given by God to every sinner, neutralizing the sinner’s anti-God predisposition and making the sinner capable of coming to Christ of his own volition apart from any special work of God’s Spirit.

one) to whom it rightfully refers. Commenting on the noun form (*epiphaneia*), translated “appearing” in 1 Timothy 6:14, Mounce (p. 360) states: “Paul’s use of [*epiphaneia*] with all its divine associations in speaking of Jesus Christ is an assault on the use of the word in emperor worship.”

Paul describes the grace of God that appeared with the appearing/epiphany of Christ as “**bringing salvation to all men.**” With these words, Paul is not teaching universalism, the belief that all men will eventually be saved. He may be teaching that salvation is available (potentially) to all men without exception. Most likely, based on the context, he is teaching that God saves all types of men without distinction (so Calvin, Chapell, Hendriksen, Knight, Henry, and Kostenberger), whether young or old (2:2-8), male or female (2:2-8), slave or free (2:9-10), etc. (cf. Galatians 3:28). That Paul has in mind those who actually get saved is seen by his following words at the start of verse 12, “instructing us,” “us” meaning Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers.

instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, (2:12)

Paul continues his focus on God’s grace, personifying it as an instructor that continually⁷⁸ teaches the believer (“**instructing us**”) to be sanctified. God’s grace includes not only saving grace (verse 11), but also sanctifying grace (verse 12). The two cannot be separated.⁷⁹

Sanctification includes the rejection of vice. Sanctifying grace teaches the believer “**to deny ungodliness and worldly desires.**” Commenting on the Greek participle translated “**deny**,” Chrysostom (quoted in Mounce, p. 424) states: “He [Paul] has not said ‘avoiding,’ but ‘denying.’ Denying implies the greatest difference, the greatest hatred and aversion.” Believers are to deny “**ungodliness.**” Ungodliness includes anything that is not godly/like God. Sin, in

⁷⁸“The present tense indicates that this is a continuing process. No one ever graduates from the school of God’s grace in this life” (Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, p. 58).

⁷⁹“The verse [Titus 2:12] deals a death blow to any theology that separates salvation from the demands of obedience to the Lordship of Christ” (Mounce, p. 423). “A popular debate today centers on the phrase ‘Lordship Salvation.’ While not everything that has been taught in connection with this concept has merit, its basic premise is proven true by Titus 2-3. Salvation never stops with redemption but always moves to sanctification. There is no salvation apart from discipleship. Paul is not teaching the annulment of grace; he is teaching the full measure of grace and the purpose of God, to cleanse for himself a *special* people, a *zealot* for good works [Titus 2:14], so that believers may ‘learn to be intent on good deeds’ (2 Tim 3:14). Any teaching that removes obedience from the scope of salvation comes under the same condemnation as did the Cretan and Ephesian opponents” (Mounce, p. 434; emphasis his).

all its forms, can be characterized as ungodly. Accordingly, a good definition of sin is the failure to be, think, act, or feel like God in the moral realm. Believers are also to deny **“worldly desires.”** Worldly desires, as John categorizes them in 1 John 2:16, would include such things as “the lust of the flesh” (the desire for pleasure/hedonism), “the lust of the eyes” (the desire for possessions/materialism), and “the boastful pride of life” (the desire for prestige, power, popularity/humanism). Fee (p. 195) defines worldly desires as “desires that reflect the values of the present age with its antigodly mind-set.”⁸⁰ As in our day, so in New Testament days there were those who distorted doctrine (2 Peter 3:16). One such doctrinal distortion was turning the doctrine of God’s grace into a license to sin (Jude 4). Verses such as this one (as well as Romans 6:15) soundly (Titus 2:1) silence (Titus 1:11) such distortion.

Not only does sanctification include the rejection of vice, but it also includes (“**and**”) the reception of virtue. Sanctifying grace not only teaches the believer to deny ungodliness and worldly desires, but it also teaches the believer **“to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age.”** Many interpreters (so Hiebert, Wiersbe, Chapell, Hendriksen, Knight, Ward, Barnes, Maclaren, Henry, and *Biblical Viewpoint*) view the three adverbs Paul uses with inward/towards oneself (“**sensibly**”), outward/towards one’s fellow man (“**righteously**”), and upward/towards God (“**godly**”) orientations respectively. “**Sensibly**” is the adverbial form of the Greek adjective translated “sensible” in 1:8, 2:2, and 5 (see comments on this word in those verses). To live sensibly is to live “in a self-controlled and thoughtful manner” (Knight, p. 320). Godliness (“**godly**”) is the virtue that is the antithesis of the vice spoken of in the first half of this verse (see comments on “ungodliness” above). The “**present age**” (cf. 1 Timothy 6:17’s “this present world” and 2 Timothy 4:10’s “this present world”) is the Satanic (see John 12:31’s “the ruler of this world” and 2 Corinthians 4:4’s “the god of this world”; cf. 1 John 5:19) and sinful (see Galatians 1:4’s “this present evil age”) era of today, an era that will give way to the “age to come” (Hebrews 6:5) when Christ returns (verse 13). Jesus speaks of these two eras in Mark 10:30. Paul speaks of them in Ephesians 1:21. “Christians live ‘in the present age’ (NIV), but they do not live *like* it or *for* it” (Wiersbe, p. 110; emphasis his). Christians are in (John 17:15 and 18) the world, but not of (John 17:14 and 16) the world.

looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, (2:13)

Paul gives a prime motivation for the godly living called for in verse twelve, the return of Christ and the blessedness that accompanies it (cf. Colossians 1:4-5

⁸⁰See Chapell (pp. 342-348) for a hard-hitting homily regarding the worldliness of today’s believers, particularly in regards to entertainment choices.

and 1 John 3:2-3; cf. also comments on Titus 1:2), as prospective hope promotes present holiness.

Believers are those who are “**looking for the blessed hope.**” The Greek participle translated “**looking for**” is defined by Knight (p. 321) as “expectantly waiting” or “looking forward to” (cf. the same Greek verb, translated “waiting for” in Acts 23:21; cf. also a related Greek verb, translated “waits eagerly for” in Romans 8:19, “waiting eagerly for” in Romans 8:23, “wait eagerly for” in Romans 8:25, “awaiting eagerly” in 1 Corinthians 1:7, “waiting for” in Galatians 5:5, and “eagerly wait for” in Philippians 3:20, a verb whose object in each of these verses is the return of Christ and the blessedness that accompanies it; cf. 2 Timothy 4:8’s “longed for” in the NIV). What Christians are so eagerly looking forward to is “**the blessed hope.**” Paul calls it a “**hope**” because it speaks of “the return of the one who brings all that Christians hope for” (Knight, p. 321). Paul calls this hope “**blessed**” because it brings such blessing (Fee, p. 195).

The “**hope**” of which Paul speaks is the believer’s confident expectation of the appearing of Christ in all His glory, spoken of in the last half of the verse (“**and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus**”). Per the “Granville Sharp rule⁸¹,” one may equate the blessed hope with the appearing. Thus, we could translate: “the blessed hope, even the appearing” (so NIV: “the blessed hope—the glorious appearing”). For the significance of the Greek noun translated “appearing,” see comments on verse eleven.

The appearing of which Paul speaks is the appearing of the glory of Christ, i.e., of Christ in all His glory (cf. Matthew 16:27, 24:30, 25:31, Mark 8:38, 13:26, Luke 9:26, 21:27, 2 Thessalonians 1:10, 2:8, and 1 Peter 4:13). Whereas Christ’s first appearance was primarily marked by grace⁸² (verse 11), His second appearance will be marked by glory (verse 13). According to Knight (p. 322), “**glory**” indicates “the splendor that will accompany and be manifested in [Christ’s] appearing.” The believer eagerly looks forward to the appearing of this glory because “therein ‘the Lord of glory’ (1 Cor. 2:8) himself is finally and openly glorified before mankind” (Knight, p. 322).⁸³

⁸¹Named after the eighteenth century Greek scholar, Granville Sharp, this rule states that whenever two or more singular, non-proper, personal nouns are joined by the Greek conjunction *kai* (“and”) and the definite article precedes the first noun, but not the second, both nouns refer to the same thing.

⁸²It was also marked by glory (John 1:14, 2:11, and 11:40).

⁸³“Now unrecognized and disregarded by the world, his glory at his return will be manifested in all its splendor” (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 441).

In what Chapell (p. 341) calls “one of the most powerful New Testament proofs of Christ’s divine nature,” Paul calls Jesus “our great God and Savior” (cf. 2 Peter 1:1; cf. also 2 Peter 1:11). This is another instance of the “Granville Sharp rule” (see footnote 81); thus, Paul is equating “**great God**” with “**Savior**.” The designations, “great god” and “savior” were used of pagan deities and earthly potentates in that day.⁸⁴ Thus, as with “appeared” in verse eleven and “appearing” in verse thirteen (see comments on “appeared” in verse 11), Paul appears to be consciously using these designations to identify Jesus as the true “**great God and Savior**,” in contrast to such pagan deities and earthly potentates, who were not.

who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (2:14)

Paul continues his focus on Christ begun in verse thirteen. Whereas in verse thirteen, Paul focused on Christ’s second appearance/epiphany (cf. 2 Timothy 4:1 and 8), here in verse fourteen he once again (cf. verse 11) focuses on Christ’s first appearance/epiphany. As in verse twelve, so here in verse fourteen Paul emphasizes sanctification with its rejection of vice and its reception of virtue.

The Christ whose glorious second appearing we, as believers, eagerly await (verse 13) is the Christ “**who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed**” at His first appearing. Christ gave Himself for the believer on the Cross (cf. Luke 22:19, John 6:51, 10:11, Galatians 1:4, 2:20, Ephesians 5:2, 25, 1 Timothy 2:6, and 1 John 3:16). Jesus died in the believer’s place; His atonement was substitutionary/vicarious (“**for us**”; cf. Isaiah 53:5a, 53:6b, Luke 22:19, John 10:11, Romans 4:25, 5:8, 8:32, 1 Corinthians 15:3b, 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 21, Galatians 1:4, 2:20, 3:13, Ephesians 5:2, 25, 1 Thessalonians 5:10, 1 Peter 2:24a, 3:18a, and 1 John 3:16).

Christ’s death was not without purpose. He died in order to redeem believers from sin (cf. Psalm 130:8, Galatians 1:4, and 1 Peter 2:24). To be redeemed is to be set free by the payment of a ransom. The believer’s redemption from sin comes by the death of Christ (Matthew 20:28//Mark 10:45, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Timothy 2:6, 1 Peter 1:18-19, and Revelation 5:9). While Christ’s death redeemed believers from sin’s penalty, death (Galatians 3:13), here Paul is speaking of Christ’s death as that which redeems believers from sin’s power. By His death, Christ bought believers out of the slave market of sin, releasing them from sin’s bondage (John 8:34 and 36, Romans 6:16-22, and Titus 3:3). See

⁸⁴In Acts 19:27, 28, and 34, the Ephesian pagan deity, Artemis, is called “great.” According to Mounce (p. 428), the Roman emperor, Caesar, was called both “god” and “savior.”

especially 1 Peter 2:24 in this regard. The Cretan believers had been emancipated from sin's shackles and, therefore, could shun the vices mentioned throughout 2:2-10 (cf. 2:12a). These vices were part of "**every lawless deed**" (cf. Romans 4:7, Hebrews 10:17, and 1 John 3:4) from which Christ had redeemed them.

As in verse twelve, so here in verse fourteen sanctification includes not only the rejection of vice, but also the reception of virtue. The Christ who gave Himself to redeem believers from every lawless deed is the Christ who also ("**and**") gave Himself "**to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.**" Christ died, not only so that believers might, as 1 Peter 2:24 says, "die to sin" ("to redeem us from every lawless deed," verse 14a), but also so that they might, as 1 Peter 2:24 also says, "live to righteousness" ("to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds"). Paul's words here at the end of verse fourteen are likely taken from such Old Testament passages as Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 7:6, 14:2, 26:18, and Ezekiel 37:23. Other New Testament passages, such as Ephesians 1:14 and 1 Peter 2:9, say much the same.

Believers belong to God ("**a people for His own possession**"), having been bought with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, and 7:22-23).

Believers are those who are "**zealous for good deeds.**" The Greek noun translated "**zealous**" is *zelotes*, from which we get our English word, "zealot." Accordingly, Kent (p. 228) translates: "zealots of good works" (cf. Knight, p. 329 and Mounce, p. 420). Hendriksen (p. 370) translates: "with a zest for noble deeds." The Cretan believers had been purified by the death of Christ (cf. Ephesians 5:25-27) and, therefore, could do the virtues mentioned throughout 2:2-10 (cf. 2:12b). These virtues were part of the "**good deeds**" for which they were to be zealous.

These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you. (2:15)

Paul ends the second chapter of Titus the same way he started it, by reiterating the command he gave to Titus at the start of the chapter in verse one ("**These things speak and exhort and reprove with all authority**"). Thus, these verses (verses 1 and 15) serve as "bookends," delineating the parameters of the chapter. Accordingly, the "**these things**" are all the things Paul has said in 2:2-14, the ethical injunctions for various groups in the Cretan congregations (2:2-10) and the theological foundation that underlies them (2:11-14).⁸⁵ Paul commands

⁸⁵Mounce (p. 432) interprets the "these things" in 2:15 as referring to everything Paul says in the entire epistle.

Titus to “**speak**” (cf. the same verb in verse 1) these things by way of exhortation (“**exhort**”; cf. 2:6’s “urge,” same Greek verb) and reproof (“**reprove**”; cf. 1:13’s “reprove,” same Greek verb). The same dual tasks are called for in 2 Timothy 4:2 and Titus 1:9 (see comments on). All three verbs (speak, exhort, and reprove) are in the present tense; thus, Titus is to continually be about these tasks (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 442 and Knight, p. 329). Paul commands Titus to speak, exhort, and reprove “**with all authority**.” According to Mounce (p. 432), the Greek noun translated “**authority**” “denotes kingly or divine authority.” Because Paul is an apostle (1:1), and Titus is Paul’s apostolic representative (1:4), Titus is to speak with full, albeit delegated, apostolic authority.

As he commanded Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:12, so Paul commands Titus here in Titus 2:15 not to allow anyone to treat him contemptuously (Mounce, p. 433) (“**Let no one disregard you**”). Many interpreters are of the opinion that these words are written, not so much with Titus in mind, but with the Cretans in mind. As Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 442) states: “Since this letter would be read in the churches, the remark was apparently intended as much for the Cretans as for Titus himself” (cf. Calvin, p. 323; Hendriksen, p. 377; Knight, p. 330; Mounce, p. 432; and Kostenberger, n.p.).

Titus 2:1-15

Teaching Outline

Introduction: In this section of the epistle, Paul commands Titus to have a talk (verse 1; cf. verse 15) and a walk (verses 7-8) that is correct, in contrast to (“But,” verse 1) the teachers in Crete (1:10-

16), whose talk and walk were corrupt. Such talk from Titus was to include exhortations to various groups within the Cretan congregations (verses 2-10): older men (verse 2); older women (verses 3-4a); younger women (verses 4b-5); younger men (verse 6), of whom Titus was one (verses 7-8); and slaves (verses 9-10), along with the theological truths upon which such exhortations are based (verses 11-14).

- I. Behavior—the “things” of verse 1 (verses 2-10)
 - A. Of older men (verse 2)
 1. Sober minded (“temperate”) and self-controlled (“sensible”)
 2. Serious (“dignified”)
 3. Sound
 - a. In faithfulness
 - b. In love
 - c. In endurance
 - B. Of older women (verses 3-4a)
 1. Sacred (“reverent in their behavior”)
 2. Not slanderers (“not malicious gossips”; cf. 1 Timothy 3:11)
 3. Sober (“nor enslaved to much wine”)
 4. Disciplers (“teaching what is good”)
 - C. Of younger women (verses 4b-5)
 1. Responsibilities (verses 4b-5a)
 - a. Domestic
 - (1) Love their husbands
 - (2) Love their children
 - (3) Labor at home (cf. 1 Timothy 5:14)

- (4) Listen to their husbands (cf. Ephesians 5:22-24, Colossians 3:18, 1 Peter 3:1, and 5-6)
 - b. Other
 - 2. Reason (verse 5b; cf. Romans 2:24 and 1 Timothy 6:1)
 - D. Of younger men (verses 6-8)
 - 1. Titus' exhortation to them (verse 6)
 - 2. Titus' example to them (verses 7-8)
 - a. Deeds (verse 7a)
 - b. Doctrine (verses 7b-8a)
 - (1) How to teach (verse 7b)
 - (2) What to teach (verse 8a)
 - c. Defense (verse 8b)
 - E. Of slaves (verses 9-10)
 - 1. Responsibilities (verses 9-10a)
 - a. Obeying their masters (verse 9; cf. Ephesians 6:5, Colossians 3:22, and 1 Peter 2:18)
 - b. Not embezzling their money (verse 10a)
 - 2. Reason (verse 10b)
- II. The Beliefs Upon Which the Behavior is Based—the “sound doctrine” of verse 1 (verses 11-14)
 - A. The behavior
 - 1. Rejection of vice (verses 12a and 14a)
 - 2. Reception of virtue (verses 12b and 14b)
 - B. The beliefs

1. The saving work of the first appearance of Christ (verse 11; cf. 2 Timothy 1:9-10)
2. The sanctifying work of the first appearance of Christ (verse 14)
3. The sanctifying work of the second appearance of Christ (verse 13; cf. 1 John 3:2-3)

Titus 3:1-7

As implied in the introductory lesson to Titus (under "Structure"), Titus 2:1-15 and 3:1-8 are very similar in structure. First, ethical injunctions are given (2:1-10; 3:1-2). Second, the underlying theological basis for such injunctions is given (2:11-14;

3:3-7).⁸⁶ And third, Titus is commanded to teach such ethical and theological truths (2:15; 3:8).⁸⁷

Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, (3:1)

In the first part of this verse, Paul commands Titus to remind the Cretan believers (“**them**”) to submit to/obey governmental rulers/authorities (“**Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient**”). According to Mounce (p. 444) and Kent (p. 231), the Cretans were notorious for, among other things, their rebellious spirits, a rebelliousness that apparently manifested itself in their lack of submission/obedience to the government. Thus, Titus was to “**remind**” (cf. 2 Timothy 2:14, 2 Peter 1:12-15, and 3:1) the Cretan believers of this responsibility, implying that they had already been challenged about it, most likely by Paul and Titus during their joint ministry in Crete (1:5).⁸⁸ The Greek verb translated “**remind**” is in the present tense, indicative of the fact that Titus was to give the Cretans continual reminders (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 442; cf. Knight, p. 332 and Griffin, n.p.).

Submitting to/obeying governmental authorities/rulers is called for elsewhere in the New Testament in Romans 13:1f and in 1 Peter 2:13-14. As in Titus 2:5 and 9, the voice (middle, i.e., “to be subjecting themselves”) and meaning (literally “to put or place under”) of the Greek verb translated “**to be subject to**” convey the idea of voluntary submission (cf. comments on this verb in 2:5). As with the submission of wives to husbands (see comments on 2:5) and slaves to masters (see comments on 2:9), so the submission of citizens to government must be qualified. Civil disobedience is proper whenever government commands the believer to violate Scripture (see Acts 4:18-19 and 5:28-29). “In such instances

⁸⁶For example, believers are to be kind to unbelievers (3:2), an ethical injunction/an imperative of Christian living, because God has been kind to believers (3:4), an underlying theological basis for the ethical injunction/an indicative of the Christian life. See Matthew 5:44-48 for a similar phenomenon (being kind to unbelievers because God is kind to unbelievers).

⁸⁷“Titus 3:1-11 is a repetition of 2:1-14. It is a call to obedience (3:1-2, 8b-11; 2:1-10) based on a theological understanding of the full purpose of salvation (3:3-8a; 2:11-14)” (Mounce, p. 443).

⁸⁸Mounce (p. 444) suggests another reason (besides the Cretans’ bad reputation in this area) why Paul brought up this issue, particularly at this point in the epistle: “In light of the anti-emperor use of terminology in 2:11-14 [see comments on “appeared” in 2:11 and on “great God and Savior” in 2:13], Paul may have listed this obligation first to stem any possible misconception While it was true that the true God and savior, the true epiphany [appearance], was not the emperor but was Jesus Christ, this did not mean that the Cretans could ignore the civil authorities.”

Christians should quietly disobey and be obedient to the consequences” (Kent, p. 230). Whereas the Greek verbs translated **“to be subject to”** and **“to be obedient”** are roughly synonymous, the first has more to do with inner attitude, the second with outer action. As Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 443) states: “‘To be obedient’ states the result and visible demonstration of their attitude of submission.” Based on the context, and perhaps also on the etymology of the Greek verb translated **“to be obedient”⁸⁹**, the particular object of the obedience Paul calls for is most likely governmental rulers/authorities.

In the second part of this verse, Paul’s focus moves⁹⁰ from the more particular responsibility of submitting to/obeying governmental rulers/authorities to the more general responsibility of **“to be ready for every good deed”** (cf. 2 Timothy 2:21, where “prepared” is a verbal cognate of the Greek adjective translated **“ready”** here). Of course, such good deeds would include submitting to/obeying governmental rulers/authorities. Whereas the false teachers in Crete were “worthless for any good deed” (1:16), the Cretan believers were to be **“ready for every good deed,”** good works being the recurring theme of the epistle (see under “Theme” in the introductory lesson to Titus).

to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men. (3:2)

Paul continues his general admonitions. Titus is to remind the Cretan believers **“to malign no one”** (cf. Ephesians 4:31). The Greek verb translated **“malign”** is *blasphemo*, from which we get our English word, “blaspheme.” To malign is to speak ill or evil of another (Knight, p. 333), to slander. As Barnes (p. 281; emphasis his) says: “We are not to say any thing to anyone, or of anyone, which will do him injury.” Mounce (p. 445) gives a proper caveat to this command: “A refusal to blaspheme a person does not negate the need to confront sin and error.” As Knight (p. 333) points out, Paul himself does just this in 1:10-16.

Titus is also to remind the Cretan believers **“to be peaceable.”** This virtue is found in the pastoral qualification list in 1 Timothy 3:3. The Greek adjective translated **“peaceable”** is *amachos*, which literally means “nonfighting” (Kent, p. 230): the Greek alpha privative/a-, meaning “not” + the Greek noun, *mache*, meaning “fighting.” Believers are to be peaceable (cf. Romans 12:18, James 3:17, and

⁸⁹The Greek verb is *peitharcho*, from the Greek verb, *peitho*, “to obey” + the Greek noun, *arche*, “ruler.”

⁹⁰I am following Mounce, who sees Paul shifting from the particular to the general within verse one. Knight, however, views all of verse one in terms of the believer’s relationship to government and, therefore, does not see the shift taking place until the start of verse two.

Hebrews 12:14, all of which speak of the same concept, but with a different Greek word than the one used here); they are not to be contentious, combative, or quarrelsome in attitude or action (cf. 2 Timothy 2:24).

Titus is also to remind the Cretan believers to be “**gentle**.” This virtue is also found in the pastoral qualification list in 1 Timothy 3:3. Wiersbe (p. 111) describes this trait as “sweet reasonableness,” a willingness “to compromise where no moral issue is at stake.” Believers are to be gentle (cf. Philippians 4:5 and James 3:17), as is Christ (2 Corinthians 10:1).

Not only were the Cretan believers to be peaceable and gentle, but they were also to be “**showing every consideration for all men**”; cf. Galatians 5:23’s “gentleness,” same Greek word, Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:12, and 1 Timothy 6:11), as did Christ (Matthew 11:29, 21:5, and 2 Corinthians 10:1), what Hiebert (*Titus and Philemon*, p. 67) describes as “that unassuming inner spirit of mildness and gentleness, which is the opposite of haughtiness, harshness, and self-assertiveness.” While Paul wants the Cretan believers to be considerate of “**all men**,” believers and unbelievers alike, based on the succeeding context of verse three, his particular concern is the second. Hendriksen (p. 387; emphasis his), commenting on the unexceptional (without exception) nature of Paul’s words here (“**every**” and “**all**”), writes: “Showing some mildness toward some people might not be so difficult. Nor showing *all* (that is *complete, thorough-going*) mildness to some people, or some mildness to *all* people. But to show *all* mildness to *all* people, even to all those Cretan ‘liars, evil brutes, and lazy bellies,’ was an assignment impossible of fulfillment apart from God’s special grace” (cf. Knight, p. 334)!

For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. (3:3)

As will be pointed out in the comments on these verses, Titus 3:3f bear many similarities to Paul’s words in Ephesians 2:1f. As in 2:11-14, where Paul gives the underlying theological basis for the ethical commands in 2:1-10, so here in 3:3-7 he gives the underlying theological basis for the ethical commands in 3:1-2. Accordingly, as he did in 2:11, so here in 3:3 he begins with the Greek conjunction, “**For**.” According to Knight (p. 334), “the theological basis for such action [the ethical commands in 3:1-2, particularly those at the end of verse 2] [is] God’s own action [in saving the Cretan believers (vs. 4-7), though they were once like the unbelieving Cretans around them currently are (v. 3)].” The God kind enough to save the Cretan believers (verses 4-7) wants to save the Cretan unbelievers (verse 3) through the kindness of the Cretan believers (verse 2) (see

footnote 86).⁹¹

Paul reminds Titus and the Cretan believers that they, along with himself, were once what the unbelieving Cretans are: difficult to love ("**we also once were foolish ourselves ...**"; cf. the start of Ephesians 2:3). Easily overlooked by the English reader is the fact that the subject of this sentence ("**we**") is emphatic⁹², an emphasis reflected in the NASB's "**we ... ourselves.**" Paul is fond of speaking of the believer's "B.C." (Before Christ, i.e., pre-conversion) days with such words as "**once**" (so here; so elsewhere in Romans 11:30 and Colossians 3:7) or "formerly" (so elsewhere in Ephesians 2:2, 3, 11, 13, 5:8, and Colossians 1:21). Praise God, though we, as believers, are not what we should be, nor what we one day will be (1 John 3:2), we are not what we once were! "**Foolish**" (cf. Romans 1:21 and 1 Corinthians 2:14; cf. also Ephesians 4:18) means to be without spiritual understanding (Knight, p. 336). To the Jewish mind it had more of a moral connotation than a mental one.

Not only were Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers "foolish" in their pre-conversion days, but also "**disobedient**" (cf. Ephesians 2:2, 5:6, Colossians 3:6, and Titus 1:16). The object of their disobedience was undoubtedly God (cf. Romans 11:30). This disobedience at its foundation was disobedience to the command to obey the gospel (see John 3:36, Romans 2:8, 2 Thessalonians 1:8, and 1 Peter 4:17).

In their pre-conversion days, Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers were also "**deceived**" (cf. 1 Peter 2:25, same Greek word). The Greek participle translated "**deceived**" is likely passive in voice, indicative of the fact that someone else deceives unbelievers. According to such passages as 2 Corinthians 4:4, 1 Timothy 4:1 (cf. 2 Timothy 3:13), and Revelation 12:9, that someone is Satan.

In their pre-conversion days, Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers were also "**enslaved to various lusts and pleasures**" (cf. Ephesians 2:3). That unbelievers are slaves of sin and Satan is taught elsewhere in the New Testament in such passages as John 8:34, Romans 6:6, 16-22, Galatians 4:8-9, and 2 Peter 2:19. Praise God, though we, as believers, were once slaves of sin and Satan, we have been set free from such shackles and have become slaves of God and righteousness (Romans 6:16-22)!

⁹¹"What God has done in mercy for the Cretan believers he wants to do for others, and their own behavior as Christians will help serve that end" (Fee, p. 200).

⁹²The Greek literally reads: "We were for once also we foolish", the "we" being repeated, for emphasis.

Two other vices that characterized the pre-conversion days of Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers were malice and envy (“**spending our life in malice and envy**”), which Towner (p. 777) calls poisons that begin their work within the person. Malice is “an attitude of ill-will toward others” (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 444). F. F. Bruce (quoted in Knight, p. 337) has defined envy as “the grudging spirit that cannot bear to contemplate someone else’s prosperity.” Whereas malice is rejoicing when another is hurt, envy is not rejoicing when another is helped.

Two final vices that characterized the pre-conversion days of Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers were “**hateful, hating one another.**” According to several interpreters (e.g., Fee and Mounce), the Greek adjective translated in a more active sense by the NASB (“**hating**”) should probably be translated in a more passive sense (so NIV: “being hated”; so ESV: “hated by others”). Hiebert (“Titus,” p. 444) says that this adjective “denotes being odious, repulsive, and disgusting to others.” Mounce (p. 435) translates it “detestable.” There is a mutual malevolence among unbelievers.

Like other vice lists descriptive of unbelievers elsewhere in Scripture (such as in Romans 1:29-31, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and Galatians 5:19-21), the vice list here in Titus 3:3 is less than flattering. As Fee (p. 202) puts it: “It is not a pretty picture, but as always, such lists unerringly diagnose the human condition.”

But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, (3:4)

Verses 4-7 are one sentence in the original. Fee (p. 203) calls this sentence “an early creedal formulation that presents Pauline soteriology (the doctrine of salvation) in a highly condensed form.”

As he does in so many other places (Romans 6:17, 22, 1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 2:4, 13, 5:8, and Colossians 1:21), so in Titus 3:4 Paul marks a decisive soteriological turning point with the Greek conjunction, “**But.**”⁹³ In contrast to the unkindness and hatefulness of our pre-conversion days (verse 3) is the kindness (cf. Luke 6:35, Romans 2:4, 11:22, Ephesians 2:7, and 1 Peter 2:3) and love (cf. John 3:16, Romans 5:8, Ephesians 2:4, and 1 John 4:9-10) of God that moved Him to save us from such degradation (verses 4-7). In the words of Romans 5:8, while we were yet sinners (verse 3), Christ died for us (verse 4). Since God acted so kindly and lovingly (verses 4-7) towards those who were unkind and unloving (the Cretan believers) (verse 3), the Cretan believers can act kindly and lovingly (verse 2) towards those who are unkind and unloving (the Cretan unbelievers) (verse 3).

⁹³“‘But’ introduces the familiar Pauline contrast between what we once were and now are” (Hiebert, “Titus,” p. 444).

For Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers, the decisive turning point came “**when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind⁹⁴ appeared.**” While some interpreters (such as Calvin) believe that Paul is speaking of the application of redemption at this point, i.e., the point of conversion, certainly a decisive turning point (see Ephesians 2:4f), most interpreters (such as Knight) believe that Paul is speaking of the accomplishment of redemption, i.e., the atoning work of Christ during His first epiphany/appearing (cf. 2 Timothy 1:10, as well as Titus 2:11 and comments on⁹⁵). He will speak of the application of redemption in the following verses. On the significance of the Greek verb translated “**appeared,**” see comments on Titus 2:11.

He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, (3:5)

Beginning here in verse five, with words reminiscent of 2 Timothy 1:9, Paul speaks of the particular application of redemption to himself, Titus, and the Cretan believers. The atoning work of Christ alluded to in verse four was applied to Paul, Titus, and the Cretan believers at the point of their conversion (“**He saved us**”).

While one is saved “for good works” (Ephesians 2:10), the primary concern of the book of Titus (see under “Theme” in the introductory lesson to Titus), one is not saved “as a result of works” (Ephesians 2:9; cf. Romans 3:20a, 28, Galatians 2:16, and 2 Timothy 1:9). Salvation is not based on works (“**not on the basis of deeds which we⁹⁶ have done in righteousness**”). Salvation could not possibly be based on human works, since there is no such thing as meritorious human works. Being

⁹⁴The Greek noun translated “love for mankind” is *philanthropia*, from which we get our English word, “philanthropy.” The word literally means love for man (the Greek verb, *phileo*, “love” + the Greek noun, *anthropos*, “man”). Mounce (p. 435) translates it literally: “But when the goodness and philanthropy of God our savior appeared.”

⁹⁵Just as the first epiphany/appearing of Christ was an embodiment of the grace of God (2 Timothy 1:10 and Titus 2:11), so it was also an embodiment of the kindness and love of God (Titus 3:4). In regards to the second, Mounce (p. 447), commenting on the Greek verb translated “appeared” in Titus 3:4, states: “[It] is always used in the NT of Jesus’ appearing (cf. 2:11), so Paul probably sees Jesus as the embodiment of God the Father’s goodness and philanthropy.”

⁹⁶Unknown to the English reader is the fact that the “we” in this verse is emphatic. The original literally reads: “not by works the ones in righteousness which we have done we,” the “we” being repeated, for emphasis.

sinners, everything unconverted human beings do is tainted by sin.⁹⁷ Even when unbelievers do cultural or civic good (Luke 6:32-34 and Acts 28:2), their motive is always wrong (it is never to glorify God, the only right motive). Therefore, such “good” works are sinful in God’s sight (Proverbs 15:8a//21:27 and Isaiah 64:6).

Rather than being saved by merit, one is saved by God’s mercy (“**but according to⁹⁸ His mercy**”; cf. Ephesians 2:4 and 1 Peter 1:3).⁹⁹ Paul testifies to this truth when speaking of his own salvation in 1 Timothy 1:13 and 16. As with the “we” in “not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness,” so the “**His**” in “but according to His mercy” is emphatic, thus making the contrast between human works and God’s mercy even more conspicuous. As Charles Wesley put it in the second stanza of his beloved hymn, “And Can It Be”: “‘Tis mercy all!” The means whereby (“**by**”) God applies redemption is “**the washing of regeneration¹⁰⁰ and renewing by the Holy Spirit.**” While there are some who view the “**washing**” here as referring to water baptism and, thus, see this verse as a proof text for baptismal regeneration (the belief that baptism is the mechanism whereby one is regenerated/converted/saved, which would seem to run counter to the point of the first part of this verse), most interpreters

⁹⁷“For when he [Paul] says, —‘Not by works which we have done,’ he means, that we can do nothing but sin till we have been renewed by God. This negative statement depends on the former affirmation, by which he said that they were foolish and disobedient, and led away by various desires, till they were created anew in Christ; and indeed, what good work could proceed from so corrupt a mass? It is madness, therefore, to allege that a man approaches to God by his own ‘preparations,’ as they call them. During the whole period of life they depart further and further from him, until he puts forth his hand, and brings them back into that path from which they had gone astray. In short, that we, rather than others, have been admitted to enjoy the salvation of Christ, is altogether ascribed by Paul to the mercy of God, because there were no works of righteousness in us. This argument would have no weight, if he did not take for granted, that everything that we attempt to do before we believe, is unrighteous and hateful to God” (Calvin, p. 331).

⁹⁸Knight (p. 341; cf. NIV) prefers the rendering, “because of His mercy,” rather than the NASB’s “according to His mercy.”

⁹⁹Since mercy and grace are corresponding attributes (mercy is not getting the bad we deserve, while grace is getting the good we do not deserve), the Scriptures also speak of being saved by God’s grace (Romans 3:24, Galatians 1:6, 15, Ephesians 1:7, 2:5, 7, 8, 2 Timothy 1:9, and Titus 3:7).

¹⁰⁰Regeneration is the act of God the Holy Spirit by which He makes the spiritually dead sinner spiritually alive. The Greek word Paul uses is *palingenesia*, from the Greek adverb, *palin*, “again” + the Greek noun, *genesis*, “birth.” As such, regeneration is the new birth/being born again.

rightfully do not.¹⁰¹ While the Greek noun translated “**washing**” is often used in Scripture of a physical washing (Matthew 6:17, 15:2, 27:24, Mark 7:3-4, Luke 5:2, 11:38, Acts 9:37, 16:33, 1 Timothy 5:10, and 2 Peter 2:22), here it is metaphorical/symbolic for the spiritual washing of regeneration, water being symbolic for the Spirit’s regenerating work (cf. Isaiah 44:3, Ezekiel 36:25-26, John 3:5, 13:10, Acts 15:9, and 1 Corinthians 6:11). Mounce (pp. 448-449) calls it “a metaphor of the cleansing power of conversion.” This spiritual washing is, of course, pictured in the rite of water baptism. As Mounce (p. 439) writes: “If [water] baptism is in the author’s mind at all ..., then it is merely the event signifying what happens in conversion.”

“**Renewing**” is a translation of the Greek noun *anakainosis*, from the Greek preposition, *ana*, “again” + the Greek adjective, *kainos*, “new.” According to Kent (p. 234), what is renewed (the pre-conversion nature of the sinner) is made new in kind (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15); thus, Paul is not speaking of a mere reformation, but a total transformation. This renewal is effected “**by the Holy Spirit.**” (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13).¹⁰² Some interpreters (so Hiebert and Hendriksen) view “**regeneration**” and “**renewing**” as corresponding to conversion and (progressive) sanctification respectively.¹⁰³ However, based on the context (verses 4-7, which seem to have only conversion in view), the two are more likely two different ways of describing the one act of conversion (so Fee¹⁰⁴, Knight, and Mounce¹⁰⁵).

whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, (3:6)

¹⁰¹Mounce (p. 439) does a good job refuting the baptismal regeneration interpretation of this verse.

¹⁰²While, grammatically, Titus 3:5 attributes only the “renewing” to the agency of the Holy Spirit, theologically (i.e., based on the teaching of other passages of Scripture) the “regeneration” can also be attributed to the agency of the Holy Spirit.

¹⁰³Strengthening Hiebert’s and Hendriksen’s case is the fact that the verbal cognate of the Greek noun translated “renewing” in Titus 3:5 is used to describe sanctification in 2 Corinthians 4:16 (“is being renewed”) and in Colossians 3:10 (“being renewed”). Furthermore, Ephesians 5:26, arguably speaking of sanctification, uses the imagery of cleansing by the washing of water, the same imagery used in Titus 3:5.

¹⁰⁴“The two words [”regeneration” and “renewing”] are twin metaphors for the same spiritual reality—the re-creating work of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life” (Fee, p. 205).

¹⁰⁵“... [R]egeneration and renewal describe the same event (conversion) from two different points of view (or the two halves of the one event)” (Mounce, p. 443).

The agent of the regeneration and renewing at the moment of conversion spoken of in verse five, the Holy Spirit, is also the One “**whom**¹⁰⁶” God the Father (“**He**”) “**poured out upon us richly**” at the moment of conversion. The provision of the Father in this regard is abundant (“**richly**”; cf. Romans 10:12, Ephesians 1:7, 2:4, 7, and 1 Timothy 6:17).

The pouring out of God the Spirit by God the Father is done “**through Jesus Christ our Savior**” (cf. John 14:26, 15:26, 16:7, and Acts 2:33). Specifically, it is based on Christ’s atoning work. As with everything else the Godhead does, so with this all three Persons of the Godhead play a role: the Father is the source (from the Father), the Son the means (through the Son), and the Spirit the active agent (by the Spirit).¹⁰⁷ See 1 Corinthians 8:6 and Ephesians 2:18 (in the NIV) in this regard. Thus, within the scope of this one brief verse, the doctrine of the triunity of God is implicitly affirmed: “**whom**” (the Spirit), “**He**” (the Father), and “**through Jesus Christ our Savior**” (the Son). After having called God the Father “**our Savior**” in verse four, Paul calls God the Son the same here in verse six (cf. comments on 1:4 and 2:13), a phenomenon that, according to Mounce (p. 447), has “powerful Christological implications.” In other words, Paul is giving implicit testimony to the deity of Christ.

so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (3:7)

With the words, “**being justified by His grace**,” Paul seems to be summarizing what he has said in verses five and six, before proceeding forward to the ultimate end of the believer’s conversion spoken of in verses five and six: “**so that ... we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**” Because¹⁰⁸ the believer has been saved (verse 5)/justified (verse 7a), he is an heir awaiting an inheritance, eternal life in its full and final sense (verse 7b).

¹⁰⁶While Calvin views the referent of the Greek relative pronoun translated “whom” in verse six as being the “washing” in verse five, most interpreters (so Litfin, Wiersbe, Hendriksen, Knight, and Mounce) view the referent as being the “Spirit” in verse five. Though the pronoun is neuter in gender (agreeing with the Greek word for “spirit,” which is also neuter in gender), the NASB (so also NIV and ESV; contra KJV) rightly translates the pronoun in personal terms (“whom,” not “which”).

¹⁰⁷“Throughout this process there is a threefold presentation of the Godhead, God the Father initiating the process, made possible through the work of the Son and actuated by the Holy Spirit” (Mounce, p. 455). “God thought it, Christ bought it, and the Spirit wrought it” (Wemp, p. 637).

¹⁰⁸Taking the Greek participle translated “being justified” as causal.

The believer is justified by grace, not by works (“**being justified by His grace**”; cf. Romans 3:24, as well as comments on Titus 3:5). To be justified is to be declared righteous by God due to the imputation of Christ’s righteousness (His perfect, sinless life) to one’s account at the moment of conversion. Salvation is based on the work of Christ/the righteousness of Christ (verse 7), not “on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness” (verse 5). Accordingly, the Greek participle translated “**being justified**” is in the passive voice, indicative of the fact that Someone else is doing the justifying. Furthermore, the participle is in the aorist tense, indicative of the fact that justification is a punctiliar (or point in time) act (contra Catholicism, which views justification as an ongoing thing), occurring at the moment of conversion.

The ultimate end of the believer’s conversion is the receiving of an inheritance (“**so that ... we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life**”). Believers are “**heirs**” (cf. Romans 8:17, Galatians 4:7, Ephesians 3:6, and James 2:5) and, as such, are in line to one day receive an inheritance (Ephesians 1:14, Colossians 3:24, and 1 Peter 1:4), the inheritance being “**eternal life**” in its full and final sense (cf. Matthew 19:29): everlasting (quantity), glorified (quality) existence in heaven. This inheritance is the believer’s “**hope**” (cf. 1:2 and comments on), meaning his confident expectation.

Titus 3:8-15

This is a trustworthy statement; and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently, so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds. These things are good and profitable for men. (3:8)

In what Litfin (p. 767) calls Paul's "final reiteration [however, see 3:14 and comments on] of what is probably the central thrust of the entire epistle [the necessity of good works]" and in what may be the key verse of the book, Paul concludes the section of 3:1-8 (cf. 2:1-15) by calling on Titus here in 3:8 (cf. 2:15) to teach the Cretans the ethical (verses 1-2; cf. 2:1-10) and theological (verses 3-7; cf. 2:11-14) truths he has laid down in 3:1-7.

For the first time in Titus, but the fifth time in the Pastoral Epistles (cf. 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:1, 4:9, and 2 Timothy 2:11), Paul identifies something he writes/cites¹⁰⁹ as a "trustworthy statement" ("**This is a trustworthy statement**"). What is the trustworthy statement? Most interpreters believe it to be the sentence of 3:4-7 (so Hiebert, Kent, Fee, Griffin, Hendriksen, Knight, and *Biblical Viewpoint*).¹¹⁰

Paul urges Titus to confidently declare to the Cretan believers what he (Paul) has just written ("**and concerning these things I want you to speak confidently**"; cf. 2:15). This manner of speaking ("**speak confidently**"), which Maclaren (p. 191) describes as "a forcible and continually repeated enunciation," was perhaps the only way in which Titus was to imitate false teachers (cf. 1 Timothy 1:7). Whenever a proclaimer of God's Word proclaims God's Word, he can do so with confidence because it is God's Word he is proclaiming.

To what are the "**these things**" in "concerning these things" referring? While Hiebert and Hendriksen say 3:4-7, Fee, Knight, Towner, Kostenberger, and Griffin say 3:1-7. The second is a slightly better option, as it is difficult to separate 3:4-7 from 3:1-3.

The reason why Paul wants Titus to teach the Cretans what he (Paul) has

¹⁰⁹With each of these "trustworthy statements," interpreters debate whether they are from an early Christian hymn, creed, or confession cited by Paul (whether in entirety or modified by Paul to fit the particular context in which they appear) or if they are original compositions of Paul. Most likely, they are cited by Paul, but molded and shaped by him to fit the particular context.

¹¹⁰Mounce (p. 451) says 3:5-7, but does so "with some reservations."

just written is **“so that those who have believed God will be careful to engage in good deeds.”** Christians are **“those who have believed God.”** The Greek verb translated **“have believed”** is in the perfect tense, indicative of the fact that a true believer is one who perseveres in the faith, one who believed at a point in time in the past (conversion) and continues to believe in the present. A true believer not only perseveres in the faith, but also in good works. Those who believe in God will have behavior that is good. Accordingly, Titus’ teaching in Crete would be a tool God would use to cause the Cretan believers to **“be careful to engage in good deeds”** (cf. 3:1’s “every good deed” and 3:14’s “engage in good deeds”). According to Towner (p. 792), to **“be careful”** means to set one’s mind on, be intent on, while **“engage”** means to be devoted to, apply oneself to.

Paul concludes this verse by pointing out the benefit of the beliefs and behaviors discussed in 3:1-7 (**“These things are good and profitable for men”**). Most interpreters (so Hiebert, Calvin, Hendriksen, Knight, and Mounce) are of the opinion that the second **“these things”** in this verse refer to the same thing that the first “these things” does. Thus, if the first “these things” refers to what Paul says in 3:1-7, then so does the second. While the heeding of Paul’s words by the Cretan believers would certainly benefit all men, whether believing or unbelieving, based on the overall context (see comments on “all men” in 3:2), Paul likely has the benefit of unbelievers primarily in mind. In other words, as the Cretan believers heeded Paul’s words through Titus’s teaching, their considerate conduct (3:2) would be a blessing to the unbelieving Cretans around them, perhaps being the very thing God would use to bring such unbelieving Cretans to Christ (cf. 1 Peter 3:1-2, where the conduct of believing wives can be used of God to bring about the conversion of unbelieving husbands).

But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. (3:9)

As he did in 1:10-16, so in 3:9-11 Paul turns his attention to the false teachers in Crete. In contrast to (**“But”**¹¹¹) the good beliefs (3:4-8) and behaviors (3:1-2, and 8) called for in the previous section, Titus and the

¹¹¹Not only is the contrast marked by the Greek conjunction translated “but” at the start of verse nine, but also by the Greek adjective translated “profitable” (*ophelimos*) in verse eight and its antonym, the Greek adjective translated “unprofitable” (*anopheles*), in verse nine. Paul may also be highlighting the contrast by a possible wordplay between the Greek verb translated “to engage in” (*proistemi*) in verse eight and the Greek verb translated “avoid” (*periistemi*) in verse nine.

Cretan believers were to steer clear of¹¹² (“**avoid**”; cf. the same Greek verb used in 2 Timothy 2:16) the bad beliefs and behaviors of the false teachers in Crete (verse 9; cf. 1 Timothy 4:7, 6:20, and 2 Timothy 2:23).

Paul identifies these bad beliefs and behaviors as “**foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law.**” “**Foolish controversies and genealogies**” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:4, 6:4, and 2 Timothy 2:23) should likely be viewed as one, as should “**strife and disputes about the Law**” (cf. 1 Timothy 6:4, 2 Timothy 2:14, and 23).¹¹³

Kent (p. 237) describes the first (“**foolish controversies and genealogies**”) as “the genealogical tables of the Pentateuch expanded and interwoven with fanciful tales.” Hendriksen (p. 394) describes them as “investigations into genealogical lore.” Knight (p. 353) describes them as “speculation about the origins and descendants of persons, which are erroneously thought to have religious significance.”

Mounce (p. 453) describes the second (“**strife and disputes about the Law**”) as “the opponents’ interpretation of the Jewish law ..., their use of it to regulate daily life.” Such misuse of the Law produced pugnacity (“**strife and disputes**”), rather than peace (see comments on “peaceable” in 3:2). This false teaching in Crete was apparently much the same as that in Ephesus, as seen by passages such as 1 Timothy 1:4, 6:4, 2 Timothy 2:14, and 23.

Paul concludes this verse by giving a reason why Titus and the Cretan believers were to avoid the bad beliefs and behaviors of the false teachers in Crete: “**for they are unprofitable and worthless**” (cf. 1 Timothy 1:6’s “fruitless,” 1 Timothy 6:20’s “empty,” 2 Timothy 2:14’s “useless,” 2 Timothy 2:16’s “empty,” Titus 1:10’s “empty,” Titus 1:16’s “worthless,” and 2 Peter 2:18’s “vanity”). Not only are they negatively hallow, but also positively harmful. They lead “to the ruin of the hearers” (2 Timothy 2:14). They do not further “the administration of God which is by faith” (1 Timothy 1:4).

Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, knowing that such

¹¹²According to BAGD (the leading Greek lexicon/dictionary, produced by men named Bauer, Arndt, Gingrich, and Danker), the Greek verb translated “avoid” here in verse nine has as one of its meanings “go around so as to avoid” (p. 647).

¹¹³Knight (p. 354) draws all four together: “The substantive elements here are ‘genealogies’ and a misuse of the law. The atmosphere is one of strife and contention.”

a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned. (3:10-11)

Paul brings the body of the epistle (1:5-3:11) to a close by calling on Titus and the Cretan believers to not only reject the bad beliefs and behaviors of the Cretan false teachers (verse 9), but also the false teachers themselves (“**Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,**” verse 10). The Greek adjective translated “**factious**” by the NASB (*hairetikos*, from which we get our English word, “heretic”; this is the way Kent and the KJV translate the word; cf. the cognate noun, translated “factions” in 1 Corinthians 11:19 and Galatians 5:20 and “heresies” in 2 Peter 2:1) denotes one who causes division, usually by doctrinal deviation.¹¹⁴ The false teachers in Crete were apparently doing this very thing (see 1:11). One who tries to create such a separation is to be separated from (cf. Romans 16:17).

The Greek verb translated “**reject**” is translated elsewhere in the pastorals as “have nothing to do with” (1 Timothy 4:7) and “refuse” (1 Timothy 5:11 and 2 Timothy 2:23). See also 2 Timothy 3:5. Since this verse is written within a local church milieu (see 1:5’s “elders” and 1:7’s “overseer”), this likely means excommunication from the local assembly.¹¹⁵ Before such a step is taken, however, an attempt must be made to reclaim the offender through a first and, if necessary, second “**warning**”¹¹⁶. Other passages that speak of reclaiming one living in sin through loving confrontation include Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1, 2 Timothy 2:25-26, and James 5:19-20.

In verse eleven, Paul gives a reason for the command given in verse ten. After failed attempts to reclaim “a factious man”, Titus and the Cretans were to reject such a man (verse 10), because¹¹⁷ they would then know (“**knowing**”) “**that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-**

¹¹⁴The hymn, “The Church’s One Foundation” by Samuel Stone includes the words: “by schisms rent asunder, by heresies distressed.”

¹¹⁵Titus 3:10’s “3 strikes (initial offense, rejection of first warning, rejection of second warning), you’re out” policy is similar to Matthew 18:15-17’s “4 strikes (initial offense, rejection of one-on-one warning, rejection of small group warning, rejection of church wide warning), you’re out” policy.

¹¹⁶The Greek noun translated “warning” is *nouthesia*, from which comes the concept known as “nouthetic” counseling. See Jay Adams’ *Competent to Counsel* (especially chapter 4) for an explanation of the nouthetic approach to counseling, which may be summarized as caring confrontation.

¹¹⁷Taking the Greek participle translated “knowing” as causal.

condemned" (verse 11). Any false teachers in Crete that refused to repent when confronted about their falsehood would thereby show themselves to be "**perverted**," or twisted (NIV and ESV: "warped"). According to Wemp (p. 637), this word was a medical term, used of a sprained ankle. The verb is in the perfect tense, indicative of a settled position (Knight, p. 355; Mounce, p. 455; and Kostenberger, n.p.). It is also passive in voice, the significance of which is suggested by Hiebert ("Titus," p. 448): "The passive voice seems to point to the satanic agency behind his condition" (cf. Kent, p. 238). By persisting in his sin ("**is sinning**," present tense verb), even after being confronted on several occasions about it, such an individual thereby condemns himself ("**being self-condemned**").

Titus 3:1-11 Teaching Outline

Introduction: In this section of the epistle, Paul concludes the body (1:5-3:11) of the book by exhorting Titus and the Cretan believers to keep affirming the right (3:1-8) and to keep away from the wrong (3:9-11).

- I. Keep Affirming the Right (verses 1-8)
 - A. Be compliant (verse 1a; cf. Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-14)
 - B. Don't be contentious (verse 2a)
 1. With your lips
 2. With your fists
 - C. Do be kind (verses 2b-7)
 1. Responsibility (verse 2b)
 2. Reason: the kindness of God towards us (verses 3-7)
 - a. Our condition (verse 3; cf. Ephesians 2:1-3)
 - (1) Dense
 - (2) Disobedient
 - (3) Deceived
 - (4) Dominated
 - (5) Detestable
 - b. God's kindness (verses 4-7; cf. Ephesians 2:4-7)
 - (1) Shown in the accomplishment of redemption (verse 4; cf. 2:11)
 - (2) Shown in the application of redemption (verses 5-7; cf. Ephesians 2:8-9 and 2 Timothy 1:9)
 - (a) Not by merit (verse 5a)
 - (b) But by mercy (verses 5b-7; cf. 1 Peter 1:3)

- II. Keep Away from the Wrong (verses 9-11)
 - A. Wrong teaching (verse 9)
 - 1. Reject (verse 9a; cf. 1 Timothy 4:7a, 2 Timothy 2:16, and 23)
 - 2. Reason (verse 9b; cf. 1 Timothy 1:4)
 - B. Wrong teachers (verses 10-11)
 - 1. Reject (verse 10; cf. Romans 16:17)
 - 2. Reason (verse 11)

When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. (3:12)

Paul now brings the epistle to a close (3:12-15). The conclusion is a typical one for Paul, including some concluding commands (3:12-14), greetings

(3:15a), and a benediction (3:15b).

As was the case in 2 Timothy, where Paul sent Tychicus to replace Timothy in Ephesus (2 Timothy 4:12), thereby allowing Timothy to come to Paul in Rome (2 Timothy 4:9), so here in Titus Paul sends either Artemas or Tychicus¹¹⁸ to replace Titus in Crete, thereby allowing Titus to meet Paul in Nicopolis (“**When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis**”).¹¹⁹ This is the only mention of Artemas in Scripture; thus, nothing is known about him other than the fact that he was a co-laborer of Paul. Tychicus (cf. Acts 20:4) was the “mailman” for the letters of Ephesians (see Ephesians 6:21), Colossians (see Colossians 4:7), and Philemon.

The Greek verb translated “**make every effort**” is translated the same in 2 Timothy 4:9 and 21, as well as “eager” (in Galatians 2:10 and 1 Thessalonians 2:17) and “diligent” (in Ephesians 4:3).

The city of Nicopolis was located on the west coast of Greece on the shores of the Adriatic Sea. This was one of the westernmost points in Paul's itineraries, perhaps indicating Paul's intent (articulated at the end of Romans 15) to begin evangelizing the western half of the Roman Empire.¹²⁰

The reason why Paul wants Titus to meet him in Nicopolis is because (“**for**”) that is where Paul would be spending the winter (“**I have decided to spend the winter there**”). Paul's decision to “drop anchor” in Nicopolis was undoubtedly due, at least in part, to the inability to travel by sea during the winter months (cf. 2 Timothy 4:21).

Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them. (3:13)

¹¹⁸It is more likely that Artemas was the one Paul eventually sent. As Fee (p. 214) argues: “On the basis of Paul's eventually having sent Tychicus to Ephesus (2 Tim. 4:12) and of Titus' departure for Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4:10), up the coast from Nicopolis, we may safely conjecture that the plan eventually materialized with the sending of Artemas.”

¹¹⁹Hiebert (*Titus and Philemon*, p. 78) describes this as “Paul as a great spiritual general moving his workers into strategic positions.” In like manner, Towner (p. 799) calls this a “re-deployment” of Titus.

¹²⁰Accordingly, Knight (p. 357) makes the observation: “... [Paul] sought to spend his winters with Christians in strategic locations for gospel ministry.” Perhaps there is a lesson here for “snowbirds”?

Paul gives Titus (verse 13) another exhortation: **“Diligently help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way so that nothing is lacking for them.”** This is the only mention of **Zenas** in Scripture; thus, nothing more is known about him. Whether Zenas was a Jewish lawyer (an expert in the Old Testament Law; see Matthew 22:35//Luke 10:25 and Luke 7:30) or a Roman one is a matter of conjecture.

Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria, Egypt (Acts 18:24). We first meet him in Acts 18:24-28, ministering the Word in Ephesus and having his biblical understanding refined by Aquila & Priscilla. From Ephesus, Apollos moved on to minister in Corinth (see Acts 19:1 and 1 Corinthians 3:6). Some (Martin Luther, et. al.) believe that Apollos was the author of the epistle of Hebrews.¹²¹

Zenas and Apollos were apparently passing through Crete on their way from where Paul was to a destination further west, thus affording an opportunity for Paul to write the epistle to Titus and send it with these two men (see under “Occasion” in the introductory lesson to Titus). Paul calls upon Titus to diligently help these two men on their way. The Greek verb translated **“help ... on their way”** connotes “to receive and entertain travellers in preparation for the next stage of their journey” (John Stott, *The Letters of John*, p. 226), a common practice in the early church (cf. the same verb in Acts 15:3, Romans 15:24, 1 Corinthians 16:6, 11, 2 Corinthians 1:16, and 3 John 6). Such reception and entertainment of these two men was especially crucial in a place like Crete, which was not known for being a hospitable place (see comments on “hospitable” in 1:8).

It is likely that Paul is making a wordplay between the adverb translated “diligently” (*spoudaios*; also found in 2 Timothy 1:17) and its cognate verb translated “make every effort” in verse twelve (*spoudazo*).

Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful. (3:14)

Paul begins this verse by reiterating the theme of the epistle (the necessity of good works) one final time¹²² (**“Our people must also learn to engage in**

¹²¹For a biographical sketch on Apollos, see pages 11-21 of *In Paul’s Shadow* by Hiebert.

¹²²Fee (p. 213) calls these words of Paul “a ‘parting shot’ repeating the concern of the letter.”

good deeds"; cf. verse 8). The Greek verb translated "**must ... learn**" has the idea of learning by doing (cf. 1 Timothy 5:4). Accordingly, Paul calls on the Cretan believers to apply/"put shoe leather to" the stress on good works found throughout the epistle by joining Titus in meeting the needs of Zenas and Apollos (verse 13).¹²³ In context, the "pressing needs" in "**to meet pressing needs**" are the needs of these two men. As the Cretan believers did so, they would be producing the fruit of good works that are an invariable outgrowth of those who possess the root of salvation ("**so that they will not be unfruitful**"; by way of contrast, see "the unfruitful deeds of darkness" in Ephesians 5:11).

All who are with me greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. Grace be with you all. (3:15)

The final verse of Titus begins with Paul sending greetings to Titus (the "**you**" is singular) from those with him ("**All who are with me greet you**"). Who these individuals were is not stated; Zenas and Apollos, however, would presumably let Titus know (Hiebert, "Titus," p. 449).

Next, Paul calls upon Titus to greet the believers in Crete on Paul's behalf ("**Greet those who love us in the faith**"). True believers love one another ("**who love us**"; cf. 1 John 2:9-11, 3:14-15, 4:7-8, and 20) and share a common bond of faith ("**in the faith**"; cf. comments on 1:4's "in a common faith").

Finally, Paul, as he does in every one of his epistles, closes the epistle of Titus with a benediction ("**Grace be with you all**"). The typical benediction in an ancient letter was "farewell" (Acts 15:29). Paul, however, "Christianizes" (Fee, p. 162) it, wishing (God's) grace to be with Titus and the Cretans. I say Titus and the Cretans because the second personal pronoun translated "**you**" is a plural.¹²⁴

In every one of Paul's benedictions, he wishes God's grace to be with his recipients (so also the benedictions in Hebrews and Revelation). As he usually does in his epistles¹²⁵, so Paul does here in Titus, beginning (in the

¹²³"This is an obvious attempt to drive the general lesson home with this concrete case" (Knight, pp. 358-359).

¹²⁴As pointed out in the lesson on the introduction to Titus (under "Recipient(s)"), this fact implies that the believers in Crete were a secondary recipient of the epistle (Titus being the primary recipient).

¹²⁵According to Knight (p. 360), grace is mentioned in the first and last chapters of each and every one of Paul's epistles.

salutation, 1:4) and ending (in the benediction, 3:15) the epistle with God's grace. By God's grace and for His glory, may this study of the epistle of Titus enrich the soul of every one who studies it, as it has enriched mine. Sola Deo Gloria (to God alone be the glory)!

Conclusion of Titus (3:12-15) Teaching Outline

Paul concludes the epistle of Titus in typical fashion with some final instructions (verses 12-14), some greetings (verse 15a), and a benediction (verse 15b).

- I. Final Instructions (verses 12-14)
 - A. Come to Nicopolis (verse 12)
 - B. Take care of the couriers (verses 13-14)

- II. Greetings (verse 15a)
 - A. To Titus
 - B. To the Cretans through Titus
- III. Benediction (verse 15b)