

ABIDE: A BIBLE READING CHALLENGE

JOURNEY THROUGH THE NEW TESTAMENT

SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT

TITUS

Do you ever feel like sometimes you are given a heavy weight to bear in life, but when it comes down to it, you're the only person for the job? I'm talking to you parents.

In all seriousness though, this was Titus when it came to ministry. If there was a hard job, if there was a sensitive job, if there is a job that needed to be handled with care, Titus was your man— he was Paul's man at least.

Titus was a Greek believer, and appeared to be a convert of Paul. The reason this seems to be the case is because of the language Paul uses in **Titus 1:4**, "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior." It appears that Paul won Titus to faith, and then came to prove himself as an extremely competent Bible teacher, with a heart to serve in any capacity asked of him.

That being the case, you can find Titus doing all kinds of things for the service of Christ. You can find him as a part of the delegation of the Jerusalem council as a test case subject for the issue of salvation. If you remember, there were those who were trying to claim that salvation only came to those who trusted in Christ and performed the works of Judaism. Titus, as a Greek, was brought in to help argue the contrary. Once he was saved, he felt no need or desire to be circumcised or follow any other teaching of Judaism, and this is still the battle cry of the Christian. Salvation comes only by faith in Christ alone. Salvation is a gift that cannot be earned, or worked for in any way.

You can find Titus in the special assignment of delivering money as a special offering for Christians who were suffering financially. The person you select for a job like this not only needs to be able to travel long distances, and be away from family and friends for long periods of time— as travel required in the ancient world— but also be incredibly trust-worthy to get the job done.

Furthermore, we can find Titus in a job like this one: Paul selected this young, ordained pastor to travel to Crete in order to help establish some churches there.

The area of Crete is actually an island off the coast of Greece and they were known for their great sailors and professional bowmen that they continually produced. However, this island was also known for a more depressing reason. They were known for their extremely immoral practices. In fact, Paul mentions how hard the mission field would be at this place. Quoting from one of the Cretians' own people, Paul says in **Titus 1:12-13**, "One of their own, said, The Cretians are always

liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true...” Ministering here was going to take a certain kind of man— a man like Titus.

How to Think About Titus

The Church Organization (Titus 1:5-Titus 1:16)— The theme that we see about the local church is that God’s people are never free to just make up what happens inside the church; there is always a set order that remains prominent. God is a God of order, and God’s people, as a part of His church, are to conduct themselves accordingly.

Correcting the Problems (Titus 1:5-9): As we have seen in some other churches, the surrounding culture proved to be a threat to the integrity of the churches that were to be established in this region. Dealing with cultural problems with care is important. Showing grace and patience is a hallmark of spiritual leadership. However, so is seeing the immense danger in other situations, and that’s what is happening here. There were problems so troubling, that they needed to be handled swiftly and decisively and no other method would do.

Naming Leaders (Titus 1:10-16): A safeguard against error is the type of leadership that a church has in place. Titus was to travel to these mission works, and organize them with the proper leadership, and then Paul lists out what he should look for in the outward and public character of an individual who would assume this role.

Also, you may have noticed the use of the word “Elder” in this passage. There are three names that are given to the same church leadership position (1) Pastor, (2) Bishop, (3) Elder. All of these names describe the same position of church leadership. The leader of the church is to be the pastor— this has to do with being an under-shepherd. This man is to lead God’s people. The leader of the church is to be a Bishop— he is to oversee the affairs of the church (everything that happens). The leader of the church is to be an elder- he is to know how to handle the Scriptures well, and then be able to teach them accordingly.

We want to mention this because many view elders as a separate office than a pastor’s office— this is untrue, biblically speaking.

The Christian Obligation (Titus 2- Titus 3)— What Paul also addresses is what a church body should look like when you take the roof off the building.

The Love We Share (Titus 2): In chapter 2 we have a beautiful explanation about the generational mix that should exist in a congregation. We see the submission of the younger to the older, and the older making it a point to teach wisdom to the younger. There should be no such thing as a generation gap in God’s churches. We share the love of Christ in this community.

The Grace We Express (Titus 3): God’s grace covers every area of our lives, and this should be expressed in our personal relationships.

What to Look for in Titus

Key Words—

Sound: This is the same word that we discussed in 1 Timothy. This is the word we get our word hygiene from and gives us the picture that the church should be about the business of giving people healthy teaching. (1:9, 13; 2:1-2, 8)

Godliness: This has to do with God’s people molding themselves after God’s character. (1:1; 2:12)

Grace: Grace is what makes the Christian life possible, and what makes the Christian life work. God’s grace is

what saved us, and God's grace is what makes it possible to perform the Christian life. (1:4; 2:11; 3:7, 15)

Key Phrase—

Good Works: This is the outflow of the Christian's life. The inflow is the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ. But what results should be good works. This means that good works are an evidence of salvation and not the reason.

What to Gain from Titus

Grace Cannot Be Earned or Abused: When Paul writes in Titus 1:5, and says, "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting..." He meant for Titus to set some things straight.

That's what Paul means when he says, "...set in order..." It has to do with setting a broken bone. So what exactly is broken in these would-be churches? The issue of grace. As we have seen before, there were some that thought too little of grace by trying to earn it. They thought that you could, and should do good works in order to earn extra favor with God. These people were trying to earn grace and Titus needed to reset the broken bone of a works-based salvation.

However, these weren't the only people suffering from brokenness. Others decided that because they were covered by grace, they could just do whatever they wanted. That bone also needed to be reset.

So some were trying to earn grace, and others were trying to abuse it.



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