

Following Orders

June 11, 2017 ~ Titus 1.1-5

Background on Book of Titus

- ❖ Paul wrote 13 of the epistles of the NT (*Romans to Philemon*)
 - ✧ Titus is next to last letter Paul wrote (*last - 2 Timothy prison in Rome*)
- ❖ All of book of Acts has already occurred (*released from prison*)
 - ✧ He returns to Crete (*from which trip to Rome had gone awry – Acts 27*)
 - ✧ Paul left Titus on Crete and gone on (*perhaps northwest to Nicopolis*)
- ❖ Paul is 3 years shy of 2nd Rome imprisonment and martyrdom by Nero
 - ✧ During that 3 years he's thought to have visited Spain and maybe Britain

Who is Titus?

- ❖ Paul refers to Titus in **Gal 2.1-3** (*Greek so refused to have him circumcised*)
 - ✧ This was immediately after Paul's 1st missionary journey (**49AD**)
 - ✧ A church father said Titus had served as translator for Paul
- ❖ Next hear of Titus in **2 Cor (chs 2,7,8,12)** ministered in Corinth (**57AD**)
- ❖ Next comes this letter to **Titus (63AD)**
- ❖ Last he's referenced in **2 Tim 4.10 (64AD)**
 - ✧ Paul is in Nicopolis (**Titus 3.12**) (*facing Italy to west on Adriatic Sea*)

The Island of Crete

- ❖ A large island centered south of Greece and Turkey
 - ✧ It runs lengthwise from west to east about 160 miles / avg 20 miles wide
 - ✧ 3200 sq miles / About twice the square area of Rhode Island
- ❖ Site of Minoan civilization around 2000BC
 - ✧ By 200BC was a significant base for piracy in region
 - ✧ Romans conquered around 63BC and ruled for hundreds of years
- ❖ When did the churches form there?
 - ✧ 1) Pentecost – 30 yrs earlier, 2) On way “to” Rome, 3) On way “from” Rome
- ❖ Titus was instructed to appoint elders in every city
 - ✧ It was prosperous and populated – said to house 100 cities
 - ✧ Chief cities were Knossus, Kydonia, Gortyna, and Lyctus
 - ✧ Gortyna was said to be close to 300k population

Xition: Character of the Book of Titus . . .

Character of Book of Titus

- ❖ Paul's epistles tend to have patterns (*intro, theology, application, salutations*)
 - ✧ But this applies to letters to churches (*Gal, Eph, Phi, Col*)
 - ✧ Titus was written to a person (*a friend and co-worker*)
- ❖ I began to see it had the tone of a military correspondence
 - ✧ Paul appears to be giving commands – like a general in battle
- 1. Establish communication, leadership, and discipline (**ch 1**)
- 2. Train and motivate the troops (**ch2**)
- 3. Maintain discipline and communication (**ch 3**)

7-Fold Breakdown of Book

1. Following Orders – greetings and orders with 2 goals
2. Choosing Lieutenants – details on selecting competent staff
3. Establishing Discipline – have newly appointed staff establish order
4. Training Troops – have newly appointed staff train and drill the troops
5. Honoring Heroes – remind everyone of past heroes / why it's important
6. Maintaining Morale – focus all on duties and deal with malcontents
7. Communicating Plans – Paul as commanding general in field must be updated

v1a ~ “Paul, a bondservant of God”

- ❖ “*doulos*” ~ slave devoted to master for life
 - ✧ **Read Ex 21.1-6** ~ Jesus emphasized life of service

v1b ~ “an apostle of Jesus Christ”

- ❖ “*apostolos*” ~ honored & trusted messenger
 - ✧ Think of sense of duty exhibited by trusted family servant

v1c ~ “according to the faith of God's elect”

- ❖ Commentators say this translation is too weak
 - ✧ **ESV** – “for the sake of the faith of God's elect”
 - ✧ **NIV** – “to further the faith of God's elect”
 - ✧ **Message** – “for promoting faith among God's people”

v1d ~ “and the acknowledgement of the truth which accords with godliness”

- ❖ This statement emphasizes that the “*true gospel*” leads to greater godliness
- ❖ Later on in the book we'll see why Paul makes this point this early

Xition: Verse 2 ~ Paul links godliness with the hope of eternal life . . .

v2a ~ “in the hopes of eternal life which God .. promised”

- ❖ Paul refers to “eternal life” twice – Here and in 3.7
 - ✧ He links “eternal life” with “godliness” and “good works”
 - ◇ The phrase “good work” used 6 times in this short letter
 - ◇ Paul always encourages this / But here it has significant emphasis
 - ✧ In 3.5 he warns against “works righteousness”
 - ◇ Some people want salvation “and” their sin, not “from” their sin
 - ◇ Good works are indicator “of” salvation, not prerequisite “for” salvation

v2, 3 ~ “promised before time began .. in due time manifested .. preaching”

- ❖ Not only is “eternal life” promised / It’s been promised all along
 - ✧ A physical existence beyond this earth had been debated / disputed
 - ✧ This is how Paul got Pharisees to defend him before Sadducees
- ❖ Titus labored in Corinth quite a bit / Very familiar with issues and letters
 - ✧ In letter to Corinth Paul spoke of “foolishness of preaching”
 - ✧ Blessing of eternal life has been linked with preaching
- ❖ Paul had been “entrusted” with “proclaiming” the gospel message

v4 ~ “a true son in our common faith”

- ❖ Paul refers to Titus as a son / He likely led Titus to faith many years earlier
 - ✧ Paul wants the Cretans to know how much he thinks of Titus
- ❖ Paul seemed closer with Timothy
 - ✧ Timothy was also son in faith, but perhaps more like “real” son too
 - ✧ Some theorize that Titus was older than Timothy / Perhaps why the diff

v5a ~ “For this reason I left you in Crete”

- ❖ Paul is writing to clarify / confirm what he expects of Titus
 - ✧ Having something in writing can be very helpful / avoid misunderstanding
- ❖ His reason is 2-fold
 1. “set in order the things that are lacking”
 2. “appoint elders in every city”
- ❖ Let’s look at the two tasks in order

Xition: What might Titus need to set in order?

v5b ~ “set in order the things that are lacking”

- ❖ What is the character of Crete?
 - ✧ We’ll cover this more deeply in 2 weeks but for now . . .
 - ✧ 2,000 years earlier a very advanced society existed on Crete / Minoan
 - ◇ Many palace ruins still exist all over the island from that time
- ❖ But by this time Crete had a very different reputation
 - ✧ “Their ferocity and fraud were widely attested; their falsehood proverbial; the wine of Crete was famous, and drunkenness prevailed.” – Edmond Hiebert

Examples of What Was to be “set in order”

1. **1.10** ~ Model rebuking “idle talkers and deceivers” for benefit of elders
2. **2.1-10** ~ Teach older men, older women, young men, and bondservants
3. **3.1-7** ~ Teach them good character “subjection, obedience, humility”
4. **3.8** ~ Affirm “good works” constantly
5. **3.9-10** ~ Avoid unnecessary disputes and deal with divisive people

v5c ~ “appoint elders in every city”

- ❖ Greek term for elder is “prebuteros”
- ❖ Equivalent of term for overseer “episkopos”
- ❖ What does it mean that Titus was to “appoint” elders?
 - ✧ The same phrase is used in **Acts 14.23**
 - ✧ This can be perceived as having dictatorial powers
- ❖ Another key verse related to the process is **1 Tim 3.1**
 - ✧ “If a man desires the position of bishop he desires a good work.”
 - ✧ The word “desires” strongly denotes ambition
 - ◇ But it’s an ambition to serve – not to rule - “servant leadership”
- ❖ It’s an ambition that:
 - ✧ “seeks only the glory of God and the well-being of others”
 - ✧ “seeks not position, praise, prestige, or popularity, but service to God and ministry to men”
 - ✧ “has at its center 3 important E’s defining the purpose of the Church”
 - ◇ Exaltation of God
 - ◇ Edification of the Body of Christ
 - ◇ Evangelization of the lost

Xition: How long would Paul have expected this to take?

Appointing Elders Is a Delicate Matter

- ❖ Paul warned Timothy to not move too quickly in the process
 - ✧ **Read 1 Tim 17.17-22** ~ “Let the elders .. keep yourself pure”
 - ◇ “lay hands” refers to the ordination process
 - ◇ “share in other people’s sins” ~ Be wise - don’t be deceived

But Not Appointing Elders Is a Delicate Matter Too

- ❖ But how soon is too soon? How long is too long?
 - ✧ We discussed this briefly at our last Presbytery meeting
 - ✧ One church has grown quite a bit but still has a single elder
- ❖ How long did Titus take to perform what Paul commanded?
 - ✧ We can’t be sure – but we can guess
 - ✧ Paul wrote his last letter to Timothy from prison in Rome
 - ◇ This is no more than 2 to 3 years after writing **1 Timothy** and **Titus**
 - ◇ Titus is no longer in Crete (**Read 2 Tim 4.9-12**)
 - ✧ Paul commanded Titus to come to him in Nicopolis (**Read Titus 3.12**)
- ❖ The question is, “**Had Titus finished the work Paul commanded him to do?**”
 - ✧ Had Titus completed his 2 tasks before he came to Paul in Nicopolis?
 - ◇ Perhaps that was just a strategy meeting and he returned to Crete
 - ✧ Had Titus completed his 2 tasks before he went to Dalmatia?
 - ◇ Perhaps that was an emergency . . . We don’t know for sure . . .
- ❖ But we do know to function well a church needs a plurality of elders

- We’ve started our journey into the book of Titus**
- We’ve witnessed him receiving 2-fold orders from Paul**
- He’s to “set things in order” and “appoint elders”**
- Next week we’ll explore the qualifications of elders**

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

To God our Savior, who alone is wise,

Be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever.

Amen *pause* Go in peace . . .