

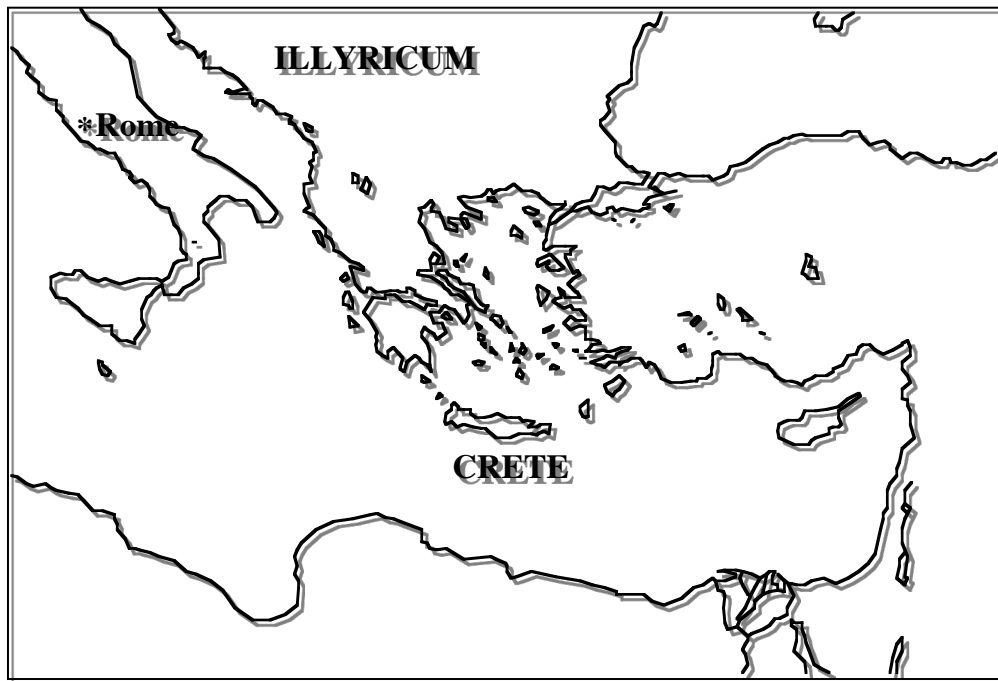
Notes on Titus

2023 Edition
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Introduction

DATE

Paul may have visited Crete more than once. It seems unlikely that he would have had time to plant a church in Crete on his way to Rome as a prisoner (Acts 27:7-13, 21). One may have already been in existence then (cf. Acts 2:11). Perhaps Paul returned to Crete following his release from his first Roman imprisonment. In any case he had been there and had instructed Titus to remain there when he departed (Titus 1:5).



Evidently Paul wrote the Epistle to Titus after he wrote 1 Timothy and before he wrote 2 Timothy. Titus 3:12 seems to indicate that his plans were more settled at this point than when he wrote 1 Timothy 3:14.¹

¹Philip H. Towner, *1-2 Timothy & Titus*, p. 19.

Another view is that Paul wrote the Epistle to Titus before either 1 Timothy or 2 Timothy.¹

RECIPIENT

Titus was a Greek Gentile (Gal. 2:3). He had probably become a Christian under the influence of Paul, and he subsequently became one of the apostle's protégés (Titus 1:4). Titus had been with Paul since the apostle's early ministry. He accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their mission of mercy to the Jerusalem church, when Paul was laboring in Antioch of Syria, which was Titus' home. That happened before Paul's first missionary journey (Gal. 2:1; Acts 11:27-30).

Titus also served as Paul's special representative to the Corinthian church during Paul's third missionary journey. He carried the "severe letter" from Ephesus (2 Cor. 12:18; cf. 2 Cor. 2:3-4; 7:8-12) and, returning to Ephesus through Macedonia, he met Paul in Macedonia (2 Cor. 7:6-16). He was, in addition, the leader of the group of men whom Paul sent to the churches in Macedonia and Achaia in order to pick up the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8:6, 16, 23).

"Tradition has it that Titus, having become first bishop of Crete, died there in advanced years. His successor, Andreas Cretensis, eulogized him in the following terms: 'The first foundation-stone of the Cretan church; the pillar of the truth; the stay of the faith; the never silent trumpet of the evangelical message; the exalted echo of Paul's own voice'."²

PURPOSE

Paul left Titus in Crete to set the church there in order (Titus 1:5). However he planned to send Artemas or Tychicus to relieve Titus so that Titus could join Paul in Nicapolis for the winter (3:12). There were several towns with the name Nicapolis in Paul's arena of ministry. This one was probably the one in Illyricum, which consisted of what are now parts of modern Croatia,

¹Walter Lock, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 122.

²Philip E. Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 76. See also Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphilus*, 3.4.

Bosnia-Herzegovina, and northern Albania. Illyricum lay east of northern Italy across the Adriatic Sea from it. When Paul wrote 2 Timothy, Titus was with him (2 Tim. 4:10, Dalmatia being another name for Illyricum). Perhaps Paul also wrote this letter from Nicapolis, or from Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3), or from some other place. A date between A.D. 62 and 66 seems a safe estimate for the time of its composition.¹ Zenas and Apollos may have delivered this letter to Titus on Crete (Titus 3:13).

The churches on the island of Crete were unorganized, though there appear to have been Christians in many of its cities (1:5). Titus' task of setting the churches in order included dealing with false teachers (1:10-11). The Cretans had a reputation for being idle and dishonest (1:12). These traits apparently characterized even some of the Christians and the false teachers (3:14). Part of Titus' task consisted of motivating the Cretan Christians to change.

EMPHASES

"Nowhere else does Paul more forcefully urge the essential connection between evangelical truth and the purest morality than in this brief letter."²

"The dominant theme in Titus, therefore, is *good works* (1:8, 16; 2:7, 14; 3:1, 8, 14), that is, exemplary Christian behavior and that *for the sake of outsiders* (2:5, 7, 8, 10, 11; 3:1, 8)."³

OUTLINE

- I. Salutation 1:1-4
- II. Instructions for setting the church in order 1:5—3:11
 - A. The appointment of elders 1:5-9
 - B. The correction of false teachers 1:10-16

¹See Donald A. Carson and Douglas J. Moo, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 583.

²D. Edmond Hiebert, "Titus," in *Ephesians-Philemon*, vol. 11 of *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, p. 424.

³Gordon D. Fee, *1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, p. 12. See Ron J. Bigalke, Jr., "The Church & Social Responsibility," in *Dispensationalism Tomorrow & Beyond*, pp. 437-58.

C. The conduct of the saints 2:1—3:11

1. The behavior of various groups in the church 2:1-15
2. The behavior of all in the church 3:1-11

III. Conclusion 3:12-15

MESSAGE

In 1 Timothy Paul wrote that the purpose of the local church is to be the supporting pedestal of God's truth. In order to fulfill this function each church needs proper organization. In Titus Paul emphasized the importance of church organization. In 2 Timothy he emphasized the importance of church leadership.

It is significant that Paul's epistle to Titus deals with a church in a very difficult place: Crete (1:12-13a). Paul revealed that Christians in this difficult place could adorn the doctrine of God (2:9-10). Even those Christians who were in the most trying of circumstances (i.e., slaves) in that difficult place could adorn the doctrine of God. In order to show the true spiritual power of the church, God selected the most difficult soil in which He planted it. In this way the Holy Spirit teaches us that the church can fulfill its purpose in the most dark, desolate, and difficult places on earth. God can do so even through people whose situations in life are the most trying.

The subject of revelation in this epistle is the true church of Jesus Christ. What Paul said about the church is that it must be orderly. We could write, "all things must be done properly and in an orderly way" (1 Cor. 14:40) over this book.¹

First, Paul revealed the motive of church order: why the church must be orderly. It must be orderly because people must come to the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness (1:1). Godliness is the intended end product of the gospel. The "mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16, i.e., the message about Jesus Christ) is what the church supports and displays to the world. The business of the church is to correct and convict those who

¹Quotations from the English Bible in these notes are from the *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), 2020 edition, unless otherwise indicated.

speak against godliness (1:9). It does this by revealing God's truth. Its business is to counteract the influence of evil people (2:12).

The Cretans were liars (1:12). Christians are to live sensibly (2:12). Cretans were evil beasts (1:12). Christians are to live righteously. Cretans were lazy gluttons (1:12). Christians are to be godly. Negatively, Christians do this by denying ungodliness and worldly desires (2:12). By the way, the word Cretans should not be confused with the word cretins. Cretins are people who suffer from cretinism, which is a congenital deficiency of thyroid secretion with resulting deformity and idiocy.

Second, Paul revealed the method of church order: how the church can be orderly. It is by the oversight of competent overseers (1:7). An overseer (elder) is, by definition, one who sees clearly what is going on. An overseer in the church needs to see three things clearly:

He must see God's truth clearly (1:9). He must know the Word of God. He must also see the conditions in which the people under his care live. An elder who does not know what is going on in the lives of the Christians in his church cannot exercise oversight effectively (1:9). He must also see clearly the method of oversight that God has prescribed. His duties include enunciating the truth (speaking), applying the truth (exhorting), and urging obedience to the truth (rebuking; 2:15).

Third, Paul revealed the might of church order: what the church has that enables it to be orderly (2:11-14). The power of an orderly church lies in two appearances. The first is the appearing of grace that came at the first advent of Jesus Christ. The second is the appearing of glory that will come at His second advent. The revelation of the grace of God in the Cross of Christ should motivate the church. The revelation of the glory of God, when Christ returns, should also motivate the church. We gain motivation as we look backward and forward at our Lord's two appearances. Christians do this whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper. We look back on the Cross, but we also remember that we will only celebrate this memorial until He comes.

The appeal of Paul in this epistle is that the church must be loyal to Jesus Christ. The church as a whole, individual Christians, and the church overseers, all have a responsibility to this end:

First, the responsibility of the church as a whole (all of the Christians in a local church) is to adorn the doctrine of God (2:10). Paul commanded this of slaves. If they could do it, all others can. The word adorn is a translation of the Greek word *kosmeo*. The noun form of this word, *kosmos*, means order and beauty. The verb also occurs in Matthew 25:7 where some translators have rendered it "trimmed." When we remove the burned-off part of a wick, the flame burns brighter. Just so, when we trim a life, or a church, of sin and encumbrances, it bears a brighter witness to Christ. This process of trimming is what it means to adorn the doctrine. To adorn means to set forth attractively—like a musician does when he or she plays a piece of music beautifully. This is a corporate as well as an individual responsibility.

Second, the responsibility of the individual Christian is to engage in good deeds (3:8). This does not refer just to practicing charity or philanthropy. It refers to doing truly noble and beautiful works from the best of motives (cf. Eph. 2:10).

Third, the duty of the church overseer is to speak confidently (3:8). Church leaders should preach their convictions, not their questions.

"We do not help men and women to adorn the doctrine when we debate our doubts in their presence."¹

Here are a few applications of the central revelations of this epistle:

First, the church will be powerful in the world to the extent that it reveals God's truth. Its influence does not lie primarily in its ability to lobby for political change but in its ability to proclaim and demonstrate God's truth to the world. This is much needed in the world today.

Second, Titus teaches that church leaders must be people who live under the authority of God's truth. They should not be selected primarily because of their business experience, social influence, or wealth. It is the spiritual life of a person who is mastered by the truth of God that qualifies him or her for church leadership.

Third, this epistle teaches that the power of an overseer is that of God's truth, not that of his office. No real power comes because a person fills an

¹G. Campbell Morgan, *Living Messages of the Books of the Bible*, 2:2:86.

office. Real power comes as a result of a person's works and words. A church's elders should be its most spiritually influential people.

Fourth, Titus teaches that the measure of the success of a church's overseers is the extent to which the church members fulfill their function in the world. Its measure of success is not the number of people attending services. It is the number and effectiveness of people proclaiming God's truth in the world by their godly lives and verbal witness. How much ministry are the saints carrying on during the week (personal evangelism, Bible studies, etc.)? The answer to that question will indicate the measure of any church's success.

The church then must be orderly so that it can fulfill its function, namely, to proclaim God's truth in the world (cf. 1 Cor. 14:40). This is a summary statement of the message of the book, what it is all about.¹

¹Adapted from *ibid.*, 2:2:77-88.

Exposition

I. SALUTATION 1:1-4

As usual, Paul began this letter with comments that not only introduced himself and greeted his reader but also set the tone for his emphasis in what followed. The emphasis in this section is on Paul's duty and the nature of his message, rather than on his authority. This salutation is remarkably long and heavy for such a short epistle. Only Paul's salutation in Romans is longer. This fact reflects the seriousness of the matters that Paul addressed in this letter.

"Ultimately what Paul has done in this introduction is to place his own apostolate at the center of God's story; his authority and message are essential to it and derive their meaning from it. Thus, Paul is authenticating the ministry of his coworker Titus by establishing his own authority to instruct Titus."¹

1:1 Paul introduced himself as a bond-servant (Greek *doulos*, lit. slave) of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. Then he explained the ministries that each of these titles represented. Paul usually commented on the source of his apostleship, but here he wrote of its purpose.

"Undoubtedly the background for the concept of being the Lord's slave or servant is to be found in the Old Testament scriptures. For a Jew this concept did not connote drudgery, but honor and privilege. It was used of national Israel at times (Isa 43:10), but was especially associated with famous OT personalities, including such great men as Moses (Joshua 14:7), David (Ps 89:3; cf. 2 Sam 7:5, 8) and Elijah (2 Kings 10:10); all these man were 'servants (or slaves) of the Lord'"²

"'Servant' ['bond-servant'] is *doulos*, the most abject, servile term in use among the Greeks for a

¹Philip H. Towner, *The Letters to Timothy and Titus*, p. 665.

² *The NET2 Bible* note on 1:1. *The NET2 Bible* refers to *The NET2 (New English Translation) Bible*, 2019 ed.

slave. This abject, servile attitude on the part of a pagan slave finds its expression in true Christian humility on the part of the Christian who regards himself as a slave of Jesus Christ. ... The word refers to one whose will is swallowed up in the will of another."¹

God's bond-servant brings God's chosen ones to saving faith in Christ. Christ's apostle brings the saints into the knowledge of God's truth that He has designed to produce godly living.

"The doctrine of divine election firmly establishes the believer's eternal security. God has not left the believer's assurance of salvation captive to changing feelings or faltering faith. Rather, the faithfulness of God demonstrated in his divine election secures the believer's salvation in the will and purposes of God himself."²

"Although surrounded with mystery, the biblical teaching on election is for believers and is intended as a practical truth. It assures faithful, struggling believers that their salvation is all of God from beginning to end."³

"Godliness" was Paul's major concern in this letter, especially as this manifests itself in good works.

1:2 God intended both prongs of Paul's ministry, evangelism and edification, to bring individuals into the fullness of eternal life.

"'Resting on' [NIV] is from the single Greek word *epi*. But it is better to understand this word as 'with a view to,' as in Ephesians 2:10. Thus Paul's

¹Kenneth S. Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, 2:3:181.

²Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin Jr., *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, p. 265. Griffin wrote the commentary on Titus in this volume.

³Hiebert, p. 427.

thought is that all of his ministry is 'with a view to' eternal life."¹

Eternal life was something that God had promised from eternity past.² Believers hope for eternal life in the sense that we look forward to it. God had long since proved Himself to be consistently faithful to His promises. The unusual epithet "who cannot lie" (*apseudes*, free from falsehood) brings out the absolute trustworthiness of the hope just mentioned. It also contrasts God, who is to be the Christian's model, with the characteristic deceitfulness of the Cretans, which undoubtedly marked some of the believers (cf. vv. 10, 12-13).

There is ancient evidence that Cretans considered lying culturally acceptable.³

"But a more specific pagan theology may be at the root. Paul's reference to 'the God who does not lie' could well lampoon the character of the Zeus of Cretan tales, who in fact did lie to have sexual relations with a human woman (taking the human form of her husband). This same Zeus was also held to be the epitome of virtue (defined by his possession of the cardinal virtues), a dimension of his character that will come more into focus later in the letter."⁴

1:3 In recent times, however, God had revealed new information (His word, Gr. *logos*) to His apostles concerning the hope of eternal life that God had promised long ago. Paul was referring to the gospel.⁵ God had commanded Paul to pass it on to others (Acts 26:16-18; cf. 1 Cor. 9:16), and He has commanded all Christians to do the same (Matt. 28:19-20).

¹A. Duane Litfin, "Titus," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, pp. 761-72. NIV refers to *The Holy Bible: New International Version*.

²George W. Knight III, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 284.

³See Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*, pp. 149-50.

⁴Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 670.

⁵Knight, p. 285; Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 672.

Paul's reference to God as "our Savior" introduces the thought of salvation, which is a key theme in this epistle (cf. v. 4; 2:10-11, 13; 3:4-6).¹ Salvation is a present reality in the life of the church.

1:4 There is not enough information in the New Testament to clarify the sense in which Titus, like Timothy, was Paul's true child (Gr. *gnesio tekno*) in the faith. Perhaps Paul had led him to Christ.² But the apostle had definitely taken him under his wing as a protégé. Paul made it clear to all readers of this letter that he regarded Titus, who was an uncircumcised Gentile, and himself, a Jew, as sharing the same faith.

Note the testimony to the deity of Christ that Paul gave by referring to both Christ Jesus and God the Father as our Savior (vv. 3-4).

"Here alone he [Paul] calls Christ *soter*, 'Savior,' rather than *kurios*, 'Lord.' It is as if he anticipates the two crucial theological arguments that undergird his ethical exhortations in chapters 2 and 3, in both of which Christ as Savior is at the center (2:13; 3:6) as the one through whom God's grace has come to save us and to instruct and enable us in living godly (2:11 ff.) and peaceful (3:1 ff.) lives."³

"But both colliding and resonating with this story line was the religious-political discourse of Imperial Rome. 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 (cf. on 1 Tim 6:14)."⁴

"This theologically rich introduction to the Epistle to Titus moves in scope from Paul's reflections on the sovereignty of

¹See the note on the Imperial Cult in A. T. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles*, pp. 186-88.

²William Barclay, *The Letters of Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, p. 265.

³Knight, p. 286.

⁴Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 676.

God in human salvation to Paul's role in achieving God's purposes."¹

"Although this theology is common in salutations ... it addresses specific issues in Crete, where Titus was dealing with a Jewish influence that most likely downplayed Christ (cf. 1:10)."²

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SETTING THE CHURCH IN ORDER 1:5—3:11

As in 1 Timothy, Paul plunged into the business of his letter immediately since he was writing to a trusted colleague. This partially explains the absence of a thanksgiving section in these two epistles. The serious threat of false teaching may be another reason. By contrast 2 Timothy is more personal, and it contains a thanksgiving.

A. THE APPOINTMENT OF ELDERS 1:5-9

Paul began his instructions with directions in order to emphasize the priority of setting qualified leaders over the affairs of the local churches (cf. Acts 6:3).³

1:5 Titus, like Timothy, served as the agent of an apostle with apostolic authority. He was in a position of authority over the other local Christians, including the elders.

"Timothy was not the pastor of the church at Ephesus in the modern sense of that term; nor was Titus the bishop of the Cretan churches, as is sometimes thought. Both men are addressed as the personal representatives of the apostle Paul and had been left at their stations to carry out the work assigned to them by the apostle."⁴

¹Griffin, p. 274.

²William D. Mounce, *Pastoral Epistles*, p. 383.

³See Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership*, pp. 75-89.

⁴D. Edmond Hiebert, *Titus and Philemon*, p. 7.

"Titus may have been older, more mature and therefore less prone to depression and the need for encouragement than was Timothy. The Cretan situation was also less serious, and Titus was in less danger."¹

The public reading of this epistle would have helped the Christians recognize Titus' authority and submit to Paul's instructions.

The churches in Crete needed organization. The ones in Ephesus, where Timothy was when Paul wrote 1 Timothy, had been in existence longer and seem to have been better organized. An evidence of this may be that in 1 Timothy Paul wrote about removing bad elders (1 Tim. 5:19-25), but in Titus we see no need for this. Paul prescribed an organizational structure but left it flexible. He did not dictate the details but left these open for the local leaders to determine. Consequently the quality of the church's leaders was very important.

"It is ... impossible to determine how many elders would have been selected *in every town* (meaning 'in the house church of each town'); but the general rule would probably have been a plurality of leaders."²

"... while the New Testament speaks of appointment to specific tasks or positions, the original Greek words (*poieo*, *tithemi*, *kathistemi*, *cheirotoneo*) do not express or imply a modern ordination rite or special ceremony. In fact, as difficult as it may be to accept, there is simply no way to use the word *ordination* without inferring ideas that are contrary to the New Testament teaching and language."³

¹Mounce, p. 385.

²Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 224. Cf. Phil. 1:1.

³Strauch, p. 337.

We do not know how many churches there were on Crete, but Homer, who lived in the ninth century B.C., referred to the island as "Crete of the hundred cities."¹ It was heavily populated. Neither do we know exactly when the gospel first took root in Crete, though at least one church existed there before Paul's and Titus' visit.²

1:6-9 Paul listed 17 qualifications for an elder here. First Timothy 3 contains 15, but they are very similar and in some cases identical.³

"Since the office of bishop is one of authority and power, the vices named are those to which persons in such positions are tempted."⁴

Social and domestic qualifications

1. Beyond reproach (v. 6) is the translation of the Greek word in 1 Timothy 3:10 (*anegkletos*) that Paul used there to describe deacons. Paul used a synonym as the first qualification of elders in 1 Timothy 3:2 (*anepilempton*) translated there "above reproach." The words are virtually the same and mean that the elder must have no obvious flaw in his character or conduct that would bring justifiable criticism on him or the church. Paul gave the reason for this qualification in verse 7a: his is God's steward (manager).

"... the purpose of this code is identical to that of 1 Timothy 3 in that it is meant to test the candidate's 'blamelessness.' The broad standard appears twice at the head of the list (vv. 6, 7; compare 1 Tim 3:2). Then the remainder of the verses place 'blamelessness' into a concrete framework, treating the domestic, personal and

¹Cited by Barclay, p. 268.

²See W. J. Conybeare, in *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, p. 758.

³See also Gene A. Getz, *The Measure of a Man*.

⁴F. D. Gealy, *The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus*, in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 11:528.

ecclesiastical aspects of the candidate's life."¹

2. Husband of one wife (Gr. *mias gunaikos aner*, v. 6; 1 Tim. 3:2) means he must presently be a moral husband at least.²
3. Having children who believe (Gr. *tekna echon pista*, v. 6; 1 Tim. 3:4) adds a factor not present in 1 Timothy. While the churches in Crete appear to have been young, the fathers in them were old enough to have believing children. The elder must have his children under control.³ The context seems to limit the children to those who are still living at home and are not yet adults, assuming the elder had children.⁴

"One view understands Paul to be limiting membership in the office to those whose family members all believe; *pista* can certainly bear this meaning.⁵ Another view is that the term means, more generally, 'faithful' or 'trustworthy' (1:9; 3:8; 1 Tim. 3:11; compare 1 Tim 1:15; 3:1), which quality is then delineated in the phrase that follows. While the first view is possible, it seems to place more stringent requirements on the elder than does 1 Timothy 3:4. Moreover, in view of this parallel, Paul probably means that the elder's children are to be faithful in obeying the head of the house. In fact, the rest of the verse contrasts 'faithful' with *the charge of being wild and disobedient*, which

¹Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 224.

²See my discussion of this qualification in the 1 Timothy notes. See also Patrick Fairbairn, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, Appendix B.

³Knight, p. 290.

⁴Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 255.

⁵Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 2:261; and J. Vernon McGee, *Through the Bible with J. Vernon McGee*, 5:486, held this view.

suggests a more general kind of faithfulness."¹

This second view also seems correct since the decision to believe in Christ is the child's, and even the best Christian parent cannot guarantee it.

"Too often, new Christians feel a call to the ministry and want to be ordained before they have had a chance to establish their families in the faith. If the children are small, the problem is not too great; but mature children go through a tremendous shock when all of a sudden their household becomes 'religious'! A wise father first wins his own family to Christ and gives them a chance to grow before he pulls up stakes and moves to Bible school. We would have fewer casualties in the ministry if this policy were followed more often."²

Personal qualifications

Paul next listed five vices of which the elder must not be guilty (v. 7) and then seven virtues that should characterize him (vv. 8-9). He introduced these by repeating the "beyond reproach" qualification for emphasis plus a reminder that the elder is God's steward (manager).

4. Not self-willed (*me authade*; v. 7) means that he is not arrogant or overbearing. He is not "... obstinate in his own opinion, arrogant, refusing to listen to others ..." ³ He does not insist on having his own way. Such a person will usually consider other people's criticisms and suggestions. Much damage has been done in churches

¹Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 255.

²Wiersbe, 2:261. On the subject of a special "call" to "the ministry," see Edward L. Hayes, "The Call to Ministry," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 157:625 (January-March 2000):88-98.

³Lock, p. 130.

by elders who force their own wills on the other elders and the congregation.

"God's household manager must be a servant, not stubbornly self-willed, since it is God's household, not his own (cf. Mark 10:41-45; 1 Cor. 3:5-9; 4:1-2)."¹

5. Not quick-tempered (Gr. *me orgilon*, v. 7) is also a negative trait described elsewhere as being "not contentious" (1 Tim. 3:3).
6. Not overindulging in wine (Gr. *me paroinon*, v. 7) also appears in 1 Timothy 3:3.
7. Not a bully (Gr. *me plekten*, v. 7) or violent, or a striker, is also in 1 Timothy 3:3.
8. Not greedy for money (Gr. *me aischrokerde*, v. 7) means to be free from the love of money (1 Tim. 3:3) with emphasis on "making [spiritual] profit out of Christian service, rather than dishonest gain ..."²

"Complete honesty in financial matters and an attitude of detachment toward wealth (compare 1 Tim 6:7-8, 17-19) that leads to generosity are the signs of a leader who will be able to model faithfulness in these things before the congregation."³

9. Hospitable (Gr. *philoxenon*, v. 8) also occurs in 1 Timothy 3:2.
10. Loving what is good (Gr. *philagathon*, v. 8) is obvious in meaning. Paul did not mention this qualification in 1 Timothy.

¹Fee, p. 174.

²C. K. Barrett, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 129. See René A. López, "A Study of Pauline Passages with Vice Lists," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168:671 (July-September 2011):301-16.

³Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, pp. 226-27.

11. Self-controlled (Gr. *sophrona*; v. 8) means sober, sober-minded, sensible, prudent (cf. 1 Tim. 3:2).
12. Righteous (Gr. *dikaion*; v. 8) means upright, fair, equitable, just.
13. Holy (Gr. *hosion*; v. 8) means devout, set apart to God.
14. Disciplined (Gr. *egkrate*; v. 8) means temperate, moderate.

Doctrinal qualifications

15. Holding firmly to the faithful word (v. 9; 1 Tim. 3:2) means that he remains committed to God's truth and does not depart from it. He conserves it and preserves it from dilution, deletion, and distortion.

"... there is more stress laid here than in I Ti[mothy] on the teaching test."¹

16. Able ... to exhort in sound doctrine (v. 9; 1 Tim. 3:2) means that he can encourage and challenge others with the Scriptures.
17. Able ... to refute those who contradict sound doctrine (v. 9; 1 Tim. 3:2) means that he can point out the error of false teaching and explain why it is wrong.

"Collectively, then, the force of this ideal profile of leadership, constructed of stereotypical faults to be avoided and positive virtues to be cultivated, is to project an image of public respectability and good reputation for which Paul co-opts [adopts] the model of the Hellenistic ideals."²

"In admitting a man to the ministry [of an elder] the primary consideration must ever be the integrity of his character rather than his spectacular gifts."³

¹Lock, p. 131.

²Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 690.

³Hiebert, *Titus and ...*, p. 37.

Modern elder boards would do well to study these qualifications, and those for deacons (1 Tim. 3:8-13), in order to construct a list on which all members of the board agree. I suggest that they should also agree on an official interpretation of the qualifications for their church. This will prevent others in the church from causing division by pitting one elder's personal interpretation against that of another elder.

In contrast to 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1 contains no mention of deacons. This may reflect a less advanced stage of church organization in Crete than what existed in Ephesus, since deacons were the assistants of the elders.¹ Another possibility is that the churches in Crete were smaller and so did not need formally recognized deacons.

B. THE CORRECTION OF FALSE TEACHERS 1:10-16

Paul emphasized the need to guard the church against false teaching in order to inform Titus how to deal with the problems that false teachers create. The instructions in this pericope (section of text) naturally grew out of Paul's emphasis on the elder's responsibility to handle the Scriptures accurately and to correct those who misrepresent them (v. 9).

1:10-11 Paul characterized the false teachers as rebellious (against God's truth) and empty talkers. Their words were only human opinion rather than God's Word. He also said that they were deceivers. Their listeners expected that what they were teaching was the truth, but it was not. Such men existed especially among the Jews ("those of the circumcision"), perhaps orthodox Jews, but mainly among Jewish Christians.

"Paul uses 'the circumcision' simply to mean Jewish Christians without any particular emphasis on the fact of their being circumcised; see Rom. 15:8 (where it just means 'the Jewish people'); Gal. 2:7-9, 12."²

¹J. N. D. Kelly, *A Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*, p. 230. Cf. 1:5.

²Hanson, p. 175.

Many Jews lived on the island of Crete.¹ Titus had to silence them because they were causing great upheaval in the church.

"There are forms of evil which demand the surgeon's knife."²

The motive of these Jews, Paul revealed, was money obtained illegitimately ("dishonest gain"), probably by teaching falsehood under the guise of truth. According to Polybius, the Cretans had a reputation for loving money.³

"When a teacher or a preacher looks on his teaching or preaching as a career designed for personal advancement and personal profit and gain, he is in a perilous condition."⁴

"The term 'households' may refer specifically to actual family units; however, the term probably refers to house-churches where most Christian instruction was conducted."⁵

I prefer the normal meaning of the word, which is family units.

"The whole family would be upset by the perversion of one member of it."⁶

1:12-13a The Cretan poet that Paul quoted was Epimenides, who lived in the sixth century B.C., and was regarded by his contemporaries as a prophet, a great religious reformer, and a predictor, as well as a poet.⁷ Another Cretan poet, Callimachus (305-240 B.C.), also called the Cretans liars.⁸ Other Pauline citations of pagan writers appear in Acts 17:28 (Aratus) and

¹Flavius Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 17:12:1.

²G. Campbell Morgan, *An Exposition of the Whole Bible*, p. 510.

³Quoted by Mounce, p. 397. See also Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 699, footnote 90.

⁴Barclay, p. 276. Cf. 1 Tim. 3:15.

⁵Griffin, p. 289.

⁶Newport J. D. White, "The First and Second Epistles to Timothy and the Epistle to Titus," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 4:189.

⁷Lock, p. 134. See also Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Practical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, p. 1386.

⁸See Hanson, p. 176.

1 Corinthians 15:33 (Menander). This line, "Cretans are always liars, evil beast, lazy gluttons," from one of Epimenides' writings, had received wide acceptance in the Greek world as being true.

Paul agreed with Epimenides by writing verse 13a: "This testimony is true." The Cretans generally tended to be liars (cf. v. 2), beastly, lazy, and gluttonous. Their reputation as liars may have been due to a Cretan legend that Zeus was buried on Crete, which he was not, of course, since Zeus was a mythical god and not a human being.¹

"So notorious were the Cretans that the Greeks actually formed a verb *kretizein*, to *Cretize*, which meant *to lie and to cheat* ..." ²

"When Paul wrote to Timothy he bade him instruct with meekness; but now, when he writes to Titus, he bids him rebuke them sharply. Timothy had a more polite people to deal with, and therefore he must rebuke them with meekness; and Titus had to do with those who were more rough and uncultivated." ³

1:13b-14 Paul evidently believed that these bad qualities marked the false teachers especially. Therefore he charged Titus to reprimand them severely.

"Failure to confront problems within the church, whether theologically or practically based, may be indicative of a basic indifference with regard to God's truth or the nurturing of truly Christian relationships. The fear of giving offense and a highly individualized view of personal faith may discourage church leaders from following the biblical mandate to rebuke. The restoration that is possible both in fellowship and in sound doctrine is compromised by this reluctance to confront.

¹Lock, p. 134.

²Barclay, p. 277.

³Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, p. 1901.

Loving, sensitive, yet firm confrontation can result in stronger relationships and restored unity or perhaps a needed purging of those who deny the truth."¹

Apparently Jewish myths and unbiblical commandments that were made up by people, which were laid down by those who rejected God's truth, fascinated these false teachers (cf. Matt. 15:9; Mark 7:7; 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:3-7; 6:3-4; 2 Tim. 4:4; Col. 2:21-22).

The context does not clarify whether those who turn away from the truth were believers or unbelievers (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3). They could have been Christians (cf. Luke 8:13; 1 Tim. 4:1; Heb. 3:12),² or non-Christians (cf. Luke 13:27; 2 Thess. 2:11), or both.

1:15 These humanly devised commandments (v. 14) involved abstaining from certain foods (asceticism; cf. 1 Tim. 4:1-4; Col. 2:20-22). Paul reminded his readers that to the pure in heart all things, including foods, are pure (ceremonially pure, clean as opposed to unclean; cf. Matt. 15:11; Mark 7:15, 19-20; Luke 11:39-41).

"Fire can kindle only on combustible material, and to the truly chaste soul impure suggestions convey no taint of allurements."³

Wuest took this statement about purity to refer to ceremonial rather than moral defilement:

"That is, the person who does not subscribe to the Pharasaical regulations is not impure or defiled, nor is the food he eats affected in that way. We must be careful in explaining our Titus passage to make clear that the purity here spoken of is not moral, but ceremonial purity, lest we by

¹Griffin, p. 290.

²Knight, p. 295.

³E. K. Simpson, *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 101.

our interpretation open the flood gates to license."¹

However the impure in heart (the "defiled and unbelieving") spread impurity wherever they go through their words and deeds (cf. Hag. 2:13-14). I take it that Paul meant pure and impure in their broadest sense: both moral and ceremonial.

1:16 Verse 15 looks at the attitudes of the false teachers whereas verse 16 views their actions. The divisive and destructive influence of the false teachers deeds betrayed their inner attitude of impurity regarding God's truth. They were really detestable and disobedient to God as well as disapproved by Him. They could do no deeds that He would approve.

"Of all bad men religious bad men are the worse."²

"Just as old or bleary-eyed men and those with weak vision, if you thrust before them a most beautiful volume, even if they recognize it to be some sort of writing, yet can scarcely construe two words, but with the aid of spectacles will begin to read distinctly; so Scripture, gathering up the otherwise confused knowledge of God in our minds, having dispersed our dullness, clearly shows us the true God."³

Whenever a person's talk and walk conflict, it is usually his walk, rather than his talk, that reveals what he really is (1 John 1:6).

"... v 16 is the hinge verse of the epistle. Paul has addressed the initial issues of the necessity of godly leadership and has called attention to the seriousness of the Cretan problem. In this verse he identifies a key issue: the opponents are teaching that what a person believes and how a person behaves are not related, and that godly

¹Wuest, 2:3:188.

²C. S. Lewis, *Reflections on the Psalms*, p. 32.

³John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 1:6:1.

living is not a necessary corollary to God's salvific plan and work. Then in the next two chapters, after giving instructions for different groups within the church, Paul will give Titus two creedal statements that show that obedience comes out of salvation and must come out of salvation, for it is a purpose for which salvation was provided."¹

"These verses [10-16] are the only real discussion of Paul's Cretan opponents (cf. 3:10-11). The situation in Crete appears to be similar to that in Ephesus, with a few important differences. The problem was real since their teaching was already upsetting whole households, and yet the Cretan opponents receive less attention, suggesting that the problem was not as developed as in Ephesus. The opponents were unqualified, rebellious, and inappropriate for positions of leadership in the church. In fact, vv 10-16 have the purpose of explaining why Titus must appoint only qualified people to church leadership (vv 5-9). The opponents were teaching senseless babble, words without meaning, myths. This passage clearly shows that the teaching was primarily Jewish and taught asceticism and guidelines for ritual purity and defilement. The opponents were part of the church but had left the truth of the gospel, and therefore they must be rebuked so that they and the church may become healthy in their faith."²

C. THE CONDUCT OF THE SAINTS 2:1—3:11

Having specified the type of men that are qualified to lead the church, and having pointed out the deficiencies of certain unqualified leaders, Paul turned to discuss the conduct of individual Christians in the churches. He dealt with these instructions by dividing them up among various groups in the church and then reemphasizing what proper behavior for all the saints looks like.

¹Mounce, p. 402.

²Ibid., p. 395.

1. The behavior of various groups in the church 2:1-15

In order to establish order in the church Paul gave Titus instructions concerning the behavior of various groups of Christians that was appropriate for them (cf. 1 Tim. 5:1-2). This involves pastoral oversight.

"Paul here stresses the importance of building up the inner life of believers as the best antidote against error."¹

"No condition and no period of life is to remain unaffected by the sanctifying influence of the gospel."²

"Notice the strong sense of divine and human purpose throughout the section (*hina* ["that"] six times)."³

Introductory charge 2:1

This verse introduces the instructions that follow concerning individual conduct. In contrast to the false teachers, Titus was to teach the believers conduct that was in harmony with sound (i.e., healthy) doctrine (cf. 1 Tim. 1:10; 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:3; Titus 1:9, 13, 2:2). Paul wanted Christians to behave consistently with what they profess to believe. The primary motivation Paul used in the following advice is that these exhortations come from and agree with sound doctrine. A secondary motive that he also stressed is that the behavior he advocated would make a positive impact on unbelievers who would observe the believers.

Older men 2:2

Titus was to remind older men to be temperate (Gr. *nephalious*; sober, vigilant, level-headed; 1 Tim. 3:2), dignified (Gr. *semnous*; worthy of respect, serious-minded rather than clowns), and self-controlled (Gr. *sophronas*; sensible; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:8; 2:5). These characteristics are all marks of maturity (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13; 1 Thess. 1:3).

"Maturity is not determined simply by age or even by how much a person knows; it is determined by how skilled a person

¹Hiebert, "Titus," p. 435.

²J. J. Van Oosterzee, "The Epistle of Paul to Titus," in Lange's *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, 11:15.

³Lock, p. 138.

is in applying the truth to life and in distinguishing good from evil (see Heb. 5:13, 14)."¹

"We might imagine that the exhortation to be **be** [*sic*] **temperate** was otiose [having no practical purpose], but we must remember that contemporary pagan society often admired heavy drinkers ..."²

The older men should also be godly. That means being sound in faith (Gr. *hygiainontas te pistei*; sound in trust in God rather than correct in doctrine here), in love (Gr. *agape*; committed to the welfare of other people), and in perseverance (Gr. *hypomone*; steadfastness, patiently enduring in view of their hope as believers).

"A seriousness of purpose particularly suits the dignity of seniors, yet gravity must never be confused with gloominess."³

"... the years ought to bring, not an increasing intolerance, but an increasing tolerance and sympathy for the views and with the mistakes of others."⁴

Older women 2:3

The older women in the churches were also to give evidence of their reverence for God in their behavior. Negatively they should avoid malicious gossip (Gr. *me diabolous*; slandering others; 1 Tim. 3:11; 5:13-14) and addiction to enslaving substances such as wine (Gr. *mede oino pollo dedoulomenas*; 1 Tim. 3:8). Positively they should teach what is good (Gr. *kalodidaskalous*), by their deeds as well as by their word, and encourage the young women to fulfill their responsibilities (v. 4a).

"We have bought into the notion that older people have had their day of usefulness and ought to make way for the young. But the principle here is quite the opposite. With age and experience come wisdom, and many older women have discovered secrets of godly living in relation to their husbands,

¹ *The Nelson Study Bible*, p. 2067.

² Hanson, p. 179.

³ Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles: An Introduction and Commentary*, p. 191.

⁴ Barclay, p. 283.

children and neighbors and in the workplace that could save younger women a lot of unnecessary grief. And when the unavoidable trials come to the young woman, who better to guide her through than an older sister who has been through it before? Somehow the church must see that younger women have contact with older women."¹

Young women 2:4-5

Paul listed seven responsibilities of the young women in the churches. They are: (1) to love their husbands (to put their husband's welfare before their own self-interests), (2) to love their children, and (3) to be sensible (Gr. *sophronas*, self-controlled). They were also: (4) to be pure (Gr. *hagnas*) and (5) to be workers at home (Gr. *oikourgous*, producers of orderliness in the home, 1 Tim. 5:14; not necessarily occupied exclusively with household chores). Finally they were: (6) to be kind (Gr. *agthas*) and (7) to be subject to their own husbands (Gr. *hypotassomenas tois idiois andrasin*), because he is God's ordained authority in their family (Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; 1 Pet. 3:1).² Such behavior would guard the Word of God from dishonor by those who would otherwise observe the inconsistency between the teaching of Scripture and the conduct of these women.

"The world usually judges religion, not by its doctrines, but by its effects on its adherents."³

"Here we have the first of several clear articulations of the need for good works for the sake of nonbelievers ... [cf. 2:1, 10, 11, 14; 3:2, 8, 14])."⁴

"The training of the younger women is the duty, not of Titus, but the older women, qualified to do so by position and character. 'Train' ["encourage"] means to school in the lessons of sobriety and self-control (cf. vv. 2, 5). 'Younger' is a

¹Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 237. See Vickie Kraft, *Women Mentoring Women: Ways to Start, Maintain, and Expand a Biblical Women's Ministry*, for an excellent resource in this regard.

²See Strauch, p. 58.

³Homer A. Kent Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, p. 230.

⁴Fee, p. 188.

positive adjective literally meaning 'new' or 'fresh' and probably suggests a reference to the newly married."¹

The word subject (Gr. *hypotasso*, v. 5), in the phrase subject to their own husbands, is not the exact equivalent of the word obedient.

"The *hypotassisthai* [subjection] which Paul here [in Rom. 13:1] and elsewhere [e.g., Titus 2:5] enjoins is to be understood in terms of God's *taxis* or 'order.' It is the responsible acceptance of a relationship in which God has placed one and the resulting honest attempt to fulfill the duties which it imposes on one [cf. Eph. 5:24]."²

Paul was addressing himself to the typical young married woman who has children. Other young women would need to make adjustments in view of their situations that are in harmony with the principles underlying these directions.

Loving in the way that Paul meant involves unconditional acceptance. Wives need to accept their husbands as they are, namely, as imperfect sinners like themselves. This acceptance should not depend on the husband's performance but on his worth as a good gift that God has given to the wife. The wife needs to accept her husband's thoughts, feelings, decisions, and failures. Love is active, not passive. It is something people do. Love involves listening because listening says: I love you and I care about you. Loving a husband means the wife must adjust her own life's activities to fit into her husband's schedule. It involves protecting him from criticism in public as his ally, rather than criticizing him before others. Love involves committing to a mutually fulfilling sexual relationship and sometimes taking the initiative for his pleasure. The best thing a couple can do for their children is to love each other unconditionally.

"The values of the 'new woman' [style of conduct in Crete] had little to do with traditional commitments to the household; the new morality they emphasized endorsed the freedom to pursue extramarital sexual liaisons and liberties normally open only to men, which would place marital fidelity and household

¹Hiebert, "Titus," p. 436.

²C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 2:662.

management at risk. Thus the household was the chief theater of Paul's campaign."¹

God wants wives to make homemaking a priority. A woman's home is the primary arena of her ministry. It also makes a statement about her values. Normally homemaking includes nurturing children (cf. Prov. 1:8; 1 Thess. 2:7). Supplementing the family income may be a possible option (cf. Prov. 31:16, 24). However a mother should take a job outside the home only if both her husband and she agree that this would be best for the family.

"A wife's first responsibility is in her home."²

"The wise husband allows his wife to manage the affairs of the household, for this is her ministry."³

I assume Wiersbe meant that the home is her primary ministry, not necessarily her only ministry.

"But the 'worker at home' is under a temptation to be as unsparing of her household as of herself; and so St. Paul adds *agathas, benignas, kind* (R.V.), rather than *good* (A.V.)."⁴

The World's View	God's View
Home is a boring drudgery.	Home is a haven to come to from the world.
Homemaking and children are a burden.	They are God's good gifts.
Value material success and self-gratification now.	Value character and godliness, and invest in the future.

¹Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 726.

²McGee, 5:489. See also Barclay, pp. 286-87; and Guthrie, p. 194.

³Wiersbe, 2:265.

⁴White, 4:192. RV refer to *The Revised Version, 1885 ed.*; and AV refers to *The Holy Bible: Authorized King James Version*.

Place children in childcare rather than caring for them yourself.	Parents should teach and fulfill their responsibilities to train their children.
Children, homemaking, and often marriage get in the way of self-achievement.	Raising godly children is one of the ways to fulfill God's purposes and is one of the highest callings in life.
Demand your rights to fulfillment.	Give up your rights and become a servant to attain true happiness. ¹

"Any marriage relationship that is conceived and maintained only on the basis of each member adhering to certain prescribed legal requirements is probably doomed from the beginning. In considering the New Testament teaching on marriage, especially in Paul's letters, the emphasis appears to be on the maintenance of a mutual or reciprocal commitment of the husband and the wife to an exclusive, intimate, loving, and caring partnership. When these prescribed biblical attitudes between husband and wife prevail, there will be little (if any) need for resorting to God's intended order for establishing authority within the home."²

Young men 2:6-8

The same principles apply to the behavior of the young men in the churches. The age range for the older men and women would have been about 40 and up in that culture, and that of the younger people would have been between about 20 and 40.³ Since Titus was one of the young men, Paul addressed him personally. They should also be sensible (Gr. *sophronein*, self-controlled, vv. 2, 5, 6) and an example of good deeds (1 Tim. 4:15-16).

"Since young men are inclined to be somewhat impetuous and unrestrained in conduct, their basic need is to be 'self-

¹This chart has been adapted from *Family Life Conference*, p. 108.

²Griffin, p. 302.

³Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 730.

controlled,' cultivating balance and self-restraint in daily practice."¹

"Young men demand heroes to follow. The minister should be a worthy object for their imitation (see I Cor. 4:16; 11:1)."²

The young men would provide a good example by maintaining purity in the teaching of God's truth, as teachers or simply practitioners, by being dignified (serious, cf. v. 2), and by sound speech that others cannot legitimately criticize. Obedience to these particulars would rob the enemies of the church of any reasonable grounds for criticism (cf. 1:16). These enemies would be put to shame because they would have no factual basis for their opposition.

Bond-slaves 2:9-10

Slaves were known for their readiness to embrace new religions.³ For this reason Paul may have given instructions for those of them that had become Christians in Crete. Paul's words regarding slaves begin with a general request followed by four principles arranged chiastically (positive, negative, negative, positive) the first two of which address attitude and the last two fidelity.⁴

Believing slaves were: (1) to be subject to their own masters in everything and (2) to try to please their masters. They were: (3) to refrain from talking back (not argumentative) when given instructions, (4) not to steal from their masters (not pilfering), and (5) to prove completely trustworthy (showing all good faith).

"Cicero complains that the Cretans do not consider it immoral to steal."⁵

Again, the reason for this kind of behavior follows: It is that such behavior is in harmony with, and therefore adorns (contributes to the enhancement of by providing a complementary setting for) the teaching concerning God our Savior.

¹Hiebert, "Titus," p. 437.

²Kent, p. 231.

³Towner, *The Letters ...*, p. 735.

⁴Knight, p. 315.

⁵Hanson, p. 176.

"Since slaves were part of the Hellenistic household, it is quite possible that the false teachers' disruption of Cretan households (1:11) accounts for the kind of disrespectful behavior among slaves implied by this set of instructions. Something similar had occurred in Ephesus (see 1 Tim 6:1-2)."¹

"It was natural for the slave who had become a Christian, to forget his place and put himself on a *social* level with his master. Hence the charge for each to abide in the sphere in which he was when converted (1 Cor. 7:20-24)."²

"Where all around there is disrespect or indifference to those in authority, a Christian's respectful attitude and speech, backed up by good performance, will demonstrate that God's message of salvation produces positive, visible results. This is an opportunity for witness that we must not miss."³

"There are no slaves in our [United States] society today, but there are employees. Christian workers must obey orders and not talk back. They must not steal from their employers. Millions of dollars are lost each year by employers whose workers steal from them, everything from paper clips and pencils to office machines and vehicles. 'They owe it to me!' is no excuse. Neither is, 'Well, I've earned it!'"⁴

Rationale for such behavior 2:11-14

"The previous paragraph [2:1-10] has been a challenge to the several groups in the Cretan churches to accept the specifically Christian pattern of behavior. Its presuppositions may at first sight seem prosaically humdrum and conventional, but Paul now eloquently reminds Titus that they have their basis in the gospel itself. It was precisely in order to raise men

¹Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 241.

²Jamieson, et al., p. 1387.

³Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 243.

⁴Wiersbe, 2:266.

to a higher quality of life that God intervened in history in the incarnation."¹

"There are few passages in the New Testament which so vividly set out the moral power of the Incarnation as this passage does."²

This is another of the "liturgical passages" in the Pastorals that summarize essential features of salvation (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15; 2:5-6; 3:16; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; 2:8-13; Titus 3:3-7).³

2:11 "For" introduces Paul's full theological reason for requiring the conduct above—why such conduct harmonizes with sound doctrine (v. 1). In short, it is the proper response to God's grace. God has manifested His grace (unmerited favor) in Christ and the gospel. This has resulted in two things: the possibility of salvation for all people, and the actual salvation of all who believe in Christ (1 Tim. 2:4, 6; 4:10).⁴

"In the Greek, 'has appeared' stand emphatically at the beginning, stressing the manifestation of grace as a historical reality. The reference is to Christ's entire earthly life—his birth, life, death, and resurrection. The verb *epephane*, from which we derive our word 'epiphany,' 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.) Men could never have formed an adequate conception of that grace apart from its

¹Kelly, p. 244.

²Barclay, p. 293.

³For a brief discussion of these passages, see Mark L. Bailey, "A Biblical Theology of Paul's Pastoral Epistles," in *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, pp. 349-54; or for a more detailed explanation, see Philip H. Towner, *The Goal of Our Instruction*, pp. 75-119.

⁴See A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 771.

personal manifestation in Christ, in his incarnation and atonement."¹

Some advocates of limited or particular atonement deny that God's grace has been manifested to all people. One such advocate understood the grace in view to refer only to eternal salvation or the preaching of the gospel.² Obviously neither of these manifestations of God's grace has appeared to all people. Paul was referring here to God's grace in its broadest sense. God's undeserved favor has indeed been manifested to all people in that everyone has benefited in one way or another from God's grace that resulted in His sending His Son to provide eternal salvation.

2:12 When the Christian appreciates this grace it teaches him or her. It instructs us negatively to deny ungodliness, which is the root problem, and worldly desires, which are the manifestations of the root problem. These passions are the desires that unbelievers find so appealing but which are not in harmony with God's character and will, though they are typical of the world system. God's grace instructs us positively to live sensibly (Gr. *sophronos*; self-controlled inwardly, cf. vv. 2, 5, 6), righteously (Gr. *dikaios*; morally upright outwardly), and godly (Gr. *eusebos*; reverently upwardly) in this present age. These qualities are the opposites of those that generally marked Cretan culture.

2:13 The blessed hope of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ's appearing in glory, at the Rapture, also motivates the sensitive Christian to honor God by his or her behavior now.³ The Greek verb *prosdechomenoi* ("looking for") is in the present tense indicating that this waiting should be our characteristic attitude. We should always be ready to welcome the returning Lord. We do not want to be ashamed when we meet Him face

¹Hiebert, "Titus," p. 439. For a helpful discussion of how Paul's theology in this section contradicted prevalent Cretan pagan mythical theology, see Towner, *The Letters ...*, pp. 740-66.

²William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Pastoral Epistles*, p. 93.

³See Gary L. Nebeker, "The Theme of Hope in Dispensationalism," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158:629 (January-March 2001):30-20.

to face (1 John 2:28; 3:3). In the Greek text a single article, translated "the," introduces both blessed hope and glorious appearing. This suggests that Paul was viewing one event as having two aspects.¹ The blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our Savior.

"In the New Testament *hope* does not indicate merely what is wished for but what is assured."²

"In light of the concept of the imminent coming of Christ and the fact that the New Testament does teach His imminent coming, we can conclude that the Pretribulation Rapture view is the only view of the Rapture of the church that comfortably fits the New Testament teaching of the imminent coming of Christ. It is the only view that can honestly say that Christ could return at any moment, because it alone teaches that Christ will come to rapture the church before the 70th week of Daniel 9 or the Tribulation period begins and that nothing else must happen before His return."³

"Paul ... does not ask us to look for the Tribulation, or the Antichrist, or for persecution and martyrdom, or for death, but for the return of Christ. If any of these events must precede the Rapture, then how can we help looking for them rather than the Lord's coming? Such a view of the coming of the Lord can at best only induce a very general interest in the 'blessed hope.'"⁴

¹See Wuest, 2:3:195.

²Guthrie, p. 199.

³Renald E. Showers, *Maranatha: Our Lord, Come! A Definitive Study of the Rapture of the Church*, p. 149. See also Gerald B. Stanton, *Kept from the Hour*, ch. 6: "The Imminency of the Coming of Christ for the Church," pp. 108-37; and Wayne A. Brindle, "Biblical Evidence for the Imminence of the Rapture," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158:630 (April-June 2001):148-49.

⁴Henry C. Thiessen, "Will the Church Pass through the Tribulation?" *Bibliotheca Sacra* 92 (July-September 1935):307.

"The unusual phrase 'the great God,' found only here in the New Testament, is best accounted for as a Christological application of an Old Testament description of God."¹

In other words, Paul described the appearing and glory of one Person: our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.² This is another of the passages that clearly states that Jesus Christ is God (cf. John 1:1, 18 [according to some manuscripts]; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:8-13; 2 Pet. 1:1; and possibly 1 John 5:20).³

"This is one of the strongest statements of the deity of Christ in the New Testament."⁴

2:14 Christ's intent in providing salvation for us was to buy our freedom (to redeem us) from slavery to sin and wickedness.

"... the main thought is rescue from the power, *not* from the guilt of sin."⁵

"First, the verb *gave* (and indeed the entire saying—*who gave himself for us*) portrays Christ's death as a ritual offering made specifically to atone for sins (Rom 4:25; 8:32; compare Gal 1:4). ... Second, the note of willingness is emphasized, for it is said that he *gave himself*. ... Third, the phrase *for us* reveals that this offering was both representative and substitutionary."⁶

¹Griffin, p. 313.

²See Hendriksen, pp. 373-75.

³See Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 3:2:419-21; Robert M. Bowman Jr., "Jesus Christ, God Manifest: Titus 2:13 Revisited," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51:4 (December 2008):733-52.

⁴*The Nelson ...*, p. 2068.

⁵Lock, p. 146.

⁶Towner, *1-2 Timothy ...*, p. 248. Paragraph divisions omitted. See Simpson, pp. 110-12, for discussion of the Greek preposition *hyper* ("who gave Himself *for us*") and its meaning: "for the sake of."

Christ's purpose was also to purify a people for Himself as His own possession, who are eager to do what is right and good (cf. Eph. 2:10; 1 Pet. 3:13).

"When a royal visit is expected, everything is cleansed and decorated, and made fit for the royal eye to see."¹

"The highest and purest motivation for Christian behavior is not based on what we can do for God but rather upon what God has done for us and yet will do."²

To summarize this section (vv. 11-14), the grace of God should result in the Christian's present commitment to deny what He detests and to pursue what He values. We see God's grace both in His past provision of salvation in Christ and in the prospect of Christ's future return to take us to be with Himself forever. The fact that so few Christians make this commitment is disappointing, but it is true to life, and Jesus Christ anticipated it (Luke 17:11-19).

"Verses 11-14 are notable for their perfect balance of doctrine with living. Beginning with the incarnation ('the grace of God hath appeared,' v. 11), they relate this doctrine to a life that denies evil and practices good here and now (v. 12); that sees in the return of Christ the incentive for godly conduct ('looking for that blessed hope ...' v. 13); and that realizes, in personal holiness and good works, the purpose of the atonement (v. 14). The passage is one of the most concise summations in the entire N.T. of the relation of Gospel truth to life."³

Concluding charge 2:15

This last verse concludes the section of instructions to various groups in the church (ch. 2). Paul urged Titus to speak, exhort, and rebuke in accord with what the apostle had just revealed with all authority, since it was divine

¹Barclay, p. 294.

²Griffin, p. 316.

³*The New Scofield Reference Bible*, p. 1307.

revelation. He should let no one disregard him, because the truth was at stake (cf. 1 Tim. 4:12).

"... Be consistent. See I Tim. iv. 12."¹

"The minister's authority rests in the nature of his message; he is not raised above the truth but the truth above him."²

"Ministers must not be cold and lifeless in delivering heavenly doctrine and precepts, as if they were indifferent things; but they must urge them with earnestness."³

2. The behavior of all in the church 3:1-11

Paul broadened the focus of his instructions in order to clarify the responsibilities of all Christians in view of God's grace.

"The keystone of the chapter is usefulness."⁴

Individual responsibility 3:1-8

"After a brief exhortation to Titus (2:15) to 'teach these things' (at least 2:1-14), Paul returns in this section to the major concern of the letter—'good works' (i.e., genuinely Christian behavior) for the sake of the outsider (3:1-8) and in contrast to the false teachers (3:9-11)."⁵

Instructions 3:1-2

"So far Paul has been concerned with the internal arrangements of the Cretan churches and the duties of their members to one another. Now he comments briefly on their relationship to the civil power and their pagan environment generally. The point he makes is that they should be models of good citizenship precisely because the new, supernatural life

¹White, 4:197.

²Hiebert, "Titus," p. 442.

³Henry, p. 1904.

⁴Lock, p. 150.

⁵Fee, p. 200.

of the Spirit bestowed by [Spirit] baptism finds expression in such an attitude."¹

Several duties of all Christians follow. We should (1) be subject to governmental rulers and other authorities by being obedient to them, and (2) be ready to do whatever is good. We should (3) slander (malign) no one, and (4) not be contentious (Gr. *amachous*, lit. non-fighting, peaceable), gentle, and considerate of everyone (cf. 1 Tim. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:23).

"The Christian must not adopt the arts of the agitator."²

"People who are ever fighting are wretched citizens and neighbors; people who are willing to yield in gentleness are admirable, especially when they follow the gentle spirit of Jesus."³

Rationale 3:3-8

3:3 In order to motivate his readers to obey these commands Paul encouraged them by reminding them of the way they used to be. They had already come a long way in their Christian development. Each characteristic he mentioned in this verse contrasts with one that he had urged his readers to adopt earlier in this epistle. They—Paul included himself—had been: foolish, not sensible; disobedient, not submissive; deceived, not enlightened; and enslaved, not free and self-disciplined. Moreover, they had been malicious, not peaceable; envious, not considerate; and hateful, not loving. Again, Christian behavior is to be the opposite of Cretan behavior.

3:4-5 The appearance that Paul referred to here was the sending of Jesus Christ to die for us: the Incarnation. That was the greatest revelation of God's kindness and love for humankind. God took the initiative. God does not save people because they behave righteously ("on the basis of deeds") but because He is merciful (cf. Rom. 3:27-28; 4:4-5; Gal. 2:16-17; Eph. 2:5, 8;

¹Kelly, p. 249.

²Hiebert, "Titus," p. 443.

³Richard C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon*, p. 928.

2 Tim. 1:9). The salvation that He provides consists of regeneration, which Paul connected here to the washing off of sin's filth (John 3:3-8; Rom. 6:4; Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23) and renewing by God's Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 5:17). Paul did not mention human faith here because his emphasis was on God's grace in providing salvation.

"He came to tell men, not of the justice which would pursue them for ever until it caught up with them, but of the love which would never let them go."¹

In verse 5 "washing" could refer to conversion, and "renewing" to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the new believer. Another view is that "washing" could refer to water baptism, with "regeneration" and "renewing" describing what the Spirit does (saving, Spirit-baptism, filling, and sealing) in salvation.² Still others see "washing" as symbolic of the Word of God (cf. Eph. 5:26; 1 Pet. 1:23).³ Probably "washing" is a metaphor for spiritual cleansing and/or Spirit-baptism rather than for water baptism, with the emphasis in the entire phrase being on the Spirit's cleansing, regenerating work.⁴ Note the reference to the work that all three members of the Trinity accomplished in our salvation in these verses.

3:6-7 God poured out His Holy Spirit on believers richly. He did this first at Pentecost (Acts 2), but He has continued to do it since then whenever individuals experience conversion (cf. Rom. 5:5). His grace always exceeds our need. God has not only graciously declared us righteous ("justified" us), but He has also graciously made us the heirs of eternal life.⁵ Paul's whole emphasis was on the grace of God. We owe everything to God's grace (cf. Rom. 3:24; 4:16; 5:1).

¹Barclay, p. 299.

²A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 4:607. Cf. Alford, 3:2:424.

³E.g., Kent, p. 242.

⁴Fee, pp. 204-5.

⁵See René A. López, "A Study of Pauline Passages on Inheriting the Kingdom," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 168:672 (October-December 2011):452-53.

In verses 5-7 Paul explained what God did (saved, washed, regenerated, renewed, justified), the basis of His work (God's mercy), its means (the Holy Spirit), and its goal (hope of eternal life).

3:8 The trustworthy statement (1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11) that Paul referred to is probably what he had just written in verses 4-7. The first reference to "these things" in this verse are to the things that he had just described in those verses. Titus was to speak about these great truths confidently (cf. 2:15).

"The inculcation of Gospel truth requires patient repetition."¹

The expected result was that those who had trusted God for salvation would practice good works (cf. Eph. 2:8-10; James 2:14-26). The second reference to "these things" in this verse refers to these good works. This verse summarizes the point that Paul made throughout this epistle. Good works, he added, are good and beneficial (profitable) for people on the practical level.

"The best way a local church has to witness to the lost is through the sacrificial service of its members."²

"After all, we shall be known by what we have done, more than by what we have said."³

Some successors of the Protestant Reformers (e.g., Theodore Beza in Geneva, and Williams Perkins in England) argued that a true believer in Jesus Christ will inevitably persevere in faith and in good works. This appears to have been an overreaction to the Roman Catholic accusation that the doctrine of justification by faith alone leads to antinomianism. If the professing Christian does not continue to persevere in faith and good works, these reformers contended, such a person

¹Wilber B. Wallis, "The Epistle to Titus," in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, p. 1396.

²Wiersbe, 2:268.

³C. H. Spurgeon, *An All Round Ministry*, p. 54.

was never really saved in the first place.¹ Paul's strong exhortation for believers to maintain good works indicates that he believed that it was possible for genuine Christians not to maintain good works.

"The purpose of the epistle to Titus was to instruct him about what he should do and teach in the Cretan churches. A special theme of the letter is the role of grace in promoting good works among God's people (Titus 2:11—3:8)."²

Titus' responsibility 3:9-11

3:9 In contrast to engaging in good deeds that are beneficial, Titus was not to engage in what was worthless and unprofitable. In view of the context, Paul probably meant the very things that the false teachers were promoting (1:10, 14; 1 Tim. 1:3-7; 6:4; 2 Tim. 2:23). Examples of "foolish controversies," which the Jewish commentaries have preserved, are the following: Should a Jew eat an egg laid on a festival day? What sort of wick and oil should a Jew use for candles that he burns on the Sabbath? The "genealogies" in view were speculations about the origins and descendants of persons, which some people thought had spiritual significance (cf. 1 Tim. 1:4).³ Strife and disputes about the Law of Moses, which some of the false teachers were evidently arguing about, were useless and worthless.

"I have learned that professed Christians who like to argue about the Bible are usually covering up some sin in their lives, are very insecure, and are usually unhappy at work or at home."⁴

3:10-11 If a false teacher who created division rather than unity by his teaching ("a divisive person") refused to change his ways after one or two warnings, Titus was to reject him and have nothing

¹See R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649*; idem., *Once Saved ...*, pp. 207-17; and M. Charles Bell, *Calvin and Scottish Theology: The Doctrine of Assurance*.

²Litfin, p. 761. Cf. Mounce, p. 452.

³Knight, p. 353.

⁴Wiersbe, 2:268.

more to do with him (cf. Matt. 18:15-17).¹ The reason for this rejection is that the divisive person has deviated from what is right and is sinning. By his behavior he has condemned himself; he has shown that he is guilty of sinning. If such a person refuses to judge himself, God will judge him (1 Cor. 11:31-32). I believe that all the leaders of God's people should follow this instruction. Paul evidently did not intend it only for Titus. Church leaders should give ministry by such a false teacher no hearing in the church. The Greek word *hairetikos* ("divisive") is the word from which we get the English word "heretic."

"The significance of refuting false teaching in this letter is indicated by Paul's direct attack on factious [divisive] men at the beginning of the letter (1:10ff.) and now at its conclusion (3:9-11). His outstanding theological statements (1:1-4; 2:11-15; 3:3-7) provide the 'sound doctrine' that motivates believers to 'good works' and makes the gospel 'attractive' to a lost world. In contrast, the false teachers with their erroneous teaching motivate their followers to works that in essence 'deny' a true knowledge of God (1:16) and destroy the doctrinal unity of the church."²

III. CONCLUSION 3:12-15

Paul closed this epistle by sending Titus instructions concerning fellow workers, a final charge, and finally greetings. He did so in order to enable him to complete his task of setting the church in order.

3:12 Paul evidently intended to send either Artemas or Tychicus (2 Tim. 4:12) to take Titus' place in Crete. Paul wanted Titus to join him for the coming winter in Nicapolis (Victory City), probably the one in Illyricum, that lay on the Adriatic coast of western Greece opposite northern Italy.

3:13 Zenas and Apollos (cf. Acts 18:24—19:1) were apparently in Crete with Titus and planned to leave Crete for other places of

¹See Ted G. Kitchens, "Perimeters of Corrective Church Discipline," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148:590 (April-June 1991):201-13.

²Griffin, p. 328.

ministry. They may have previously carried this letter from Paul to Titus. Zenas (Gift of Zeus) was evidently a converted Jewish lawyer who was an expert in the Mosaic Law, as the word lawyer (Gr. *nomikon*) means in the Gospels.¹ Or he could have been an expert in Greek or Roman law, in view of his Greek name.² Paul urged Titus and the Cretan Christians to help these two brethren on their way by ministering to their needs. The apostle gave them a clear opportunity to put good deeds into practice.

3:14 Paul gave a final encouragement to the Cretans, through Titus, to be faithful in providing for their own regular financial responsibilities ("pressing needs"; cf. 1 Thess. 4:9-12; 2 Thess. 3:7-12). Engaging in good deeds in this verse probably refers to normal wage-earning activities. The NIV rendering, "provide for daily necessities," translates Paul's thought more clearly than the NASB. The general stereotype of Cretans (1:12) evidently applied to some in the church. Industriousness ("good deeds") would provide the Christians with what they needed. Consequently they would not be unfruitful (cf. v. 9; Luke 8:14; John 15:2).

3:15 We do not know who was with Paul when he wrote this epistle or where he was when he wrote it, but obviously he was in the company of other Christians. Paul sent greetings to the faithful in Crete ("those who love us in the faith"), and he closed his letter with a benediction for them: "Grace be with you all." The second "you" in this verse is plural in the Greek text.

"As in 1 Tim. vi. 21 and 2 Tim. iv. 22, the plural betrays that the letter was expected to be read out publicly."³

Paul opened and closed this epistle with references to faith and grace (1:4). Grace appears in the first and last chapters of every inspired letter from Paul, plus 1 and 2 Peter and Revelation.

¹Mounce, p. 458; Robertson, 4:608.

²Towner, *The Letters ...*, pp. 801-2.

³Kelly, p. 259.

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