

TITUS

Lesson 1

Paul's Epistle to Titus: Part 1

This is a study of Paul's letter, or "epistle," to Titus. It is a short, but powerful, letter that tells us a lot about the qualifications of a Christian leader, the behavior expected of those of us who follow Christ, and the importance of doing good works for Christ.

It is useful to study Titus, Philemon, and both of Paul's letters to Timothy as a superset of lessons. This is because Timothy was also a young gentile convert like Titus, and he also traveled with Paul, and was assigned a ministry by Paul. Titus would become the leader of the Cretan church on the island of Crete, and Timothy would become the leader of the church at Ephesus in what is today modern Turkey.

These letters will help each of us reexamine ourselves and our walk with Christ. They will also highlight those important characteristics and behaviors we should seek in every leader within the church.

Whenever the time draws near to elect our political leaders, the issue of character and leadership ability is raised across the nation. More importantly, however, we need to have this same focus each and every day within the church. Failures in leadership among those who are recognized as filling a leadership position within the Christian community have significantly more meaning and impact than political failures in the secular world. Paul even addresses how to handle divisiveness and divisive people within the church, recognizing the destructive power of such people.

The spreading of the "Good News," "the Gospel," is severely hampered when each of us are not living a holy life, including those we place in leadership positions. Paul's letters to all three people—Timothy, Titus, and Philemon—address these key issues; specifically, what it takes to live a holy life pleasing to God—a life for which we are developing our character, our Christian behavior, and our desire to foster and grow a lasting walk with Jesus.

Titus was written in the autumn of 64 AD, between Paul's two Roman imprisonments. Paul had worked with Titus on the island of Crete to build the church there, and Titus was left to organize and train the church. The biggest challenge was the fact that false teachers had become an integral part of the Cretan church.

In Titus 3:13 we learn of Zenas and Apollos, whom Paul will use to send a letter to Titus. Like the letters he sent Timothy, they were private letters providing advice and direction to the young pastor.

In this introductory lesson, we can learn a lot about Titus by considering several biblical texts. Read the following, and for each selection of verses note what you discovered about Titus:

1. II Corinthians 7:6-7
2. II Corinthians 8:6 and 16-24
3. Galatians 2:1-3 and Acts 15:1-2

4. Titus 1:5-6

As we conclude part one of this three-part lesson in Titus, we see that Paul thought highly of young Titus and was eager to guide him as he took on the mission of building up the church at Crete. The backdrop of life in Crete and the early church offered many challenges to the success of the work there; and in the next lesson, Paul will address these challenges directly with Titus.

It should be noted as well that both in Crete and at Ephesus, Paul was working with young leaders—new gentile converts. Both of the leaders there (Titus and Timothy) were eager to spread the good news and were eager to be invested in the work of the church, both at their local level and abroad. They were fully invested, and Paul would take particular care to keep them engaged and well-trained, because the task ahead for both of them would not be easy.

Let's take time to pray this week for our leaders, both in the church and in the secular world. Today, more than ever, we need Christian leaders in every phase of our life. Let's pray for their strength and commitment, and let's pray that God will send more of these Christian leaders to us, as we see the time approaching of Jesus' second coming.

In Christ,

Wes