

Titus Ch 1

“In Hope Of Eternal Life”

Not a whole lot of historical information regarding Titus except to say that he (like Timothy) was another young protégé of the apostle Paul. Paul refers to him in much the same way as Timothy calling him a “True son” in the faith, chronologically speaking Paul wrote this epistle to Titus somewhere in between 1st and 2nd Timothy apparently between his 2 imprisonments. and Since the book of Acts doesn’t reveal Paul’s ministry with Titus on the isle of Crete we’re left with some degree of speculation as to how exactly that church got started. It seems as though what’s most probable is that after Paul was released from his 1st imprisonment he continued going about preaching the gospel, proclaiming Jesus Christ and Him crucified until arrested once again and beheaded at the hands of Caesar Nero. and During that time he apparently made his way along with Titus to the isle of Crete and as was his custom he shared the gospel, people got saved, and when the foundation was laid, he moved on, but apparently there were still some things that needed set in order and so Titus having a heart that Paul trusted, him being approved unto God, Paul left him there to establish the church order.

Now that seems most probable, however there is another very real possibility that when Paul came to Crete he already found a church but it was just in real disarray. and If that was the case then who started the church, we don’t know, however one very real possibility is found in Acts ch 2 when on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples there in Jerusalem and they all began to speak in other tongues. and If you remember right we read there that, “*Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?"*” Acts 2:7-8 and Among those in the crowd along with Arabs, those from parts of Egypt, Libya and all these various places were Cretans. and It’s quite possible that some of the Cretans were among the 3,000 souls that were added to the church that day and when they returned home they took the gospel with them, but they’d never really been disciplined and so there was complete disarray in the church. and So Paul perceiving the situation left Titus there to establish some order, either way you see it we see that the book of Acts is not a complete historical account of the early church. It deals primarily with the ministry of 2 of the apostles, Peter in the 1st ½ and Paul in the 2nd and even at that they’re very limited accounts, there was so much more going on than what we have recorded for us.

But written between 64-67A.D. this is one of the 3 of what’s known as the “Pastoral” epistles, but as to where the epistles to Timothy seem to deal primarily with teaching sound doctrine, the emphasis of Titus seems to lie on lifestyle, and making sure that our “Profession” of godliness, accords with our lifestyles “Practically.”

We want to divide Ch 1 up into 4 sub sections #1 Vs 1-4 and we'll label this section "Proclamation" Paul has been called to preach the gospel, and the promise of eternal life that's in Christ Jesus. #2 Vs 5-9a (that is the 1st ½ of vs 9) "Qualifications" the reason the Titus is in Crete is to establish order and appoint elders in the churches and in so doing he needed the necessary criteria of such men laid out before him so that he was able to use wisdom in his appointing of such men. #3 Vs 9b-14 "Expectation" what is it that's expected of these elders and how are they to deal with church order. and #4 Vs 15-16 "Identification" the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul just gives us some real practical application on how to identify those would say that they know the Lord but in reality they don't, how can we know that? He deals with it there.

Vs1-4

So in certain ways this letter begins with a typical greeting, and as to where you and I write a letter, address who it's to, compile the body of content and then sign off at the end. In Paul's day they had a much better system of identifying themselves straight out of the shoot so you didn't have to wonder who it was from, they just stated it right there in the beginning.

Paul identifies himself here in 2-fold manner, in accordance with 2 qualifying credentials notice with me here in vs 1 (read). So #1 "A bondservant of God" and #2 "An apostle of Jesus Christ", and it's according to #1 "The faith of God's elect, and #2 "The acknowledgment of the truth which accords with godliness." So see those 4 things right there where from the very beginning of this letter Paul qualifies himself for the skeptic so that they might know that he has the God ordained authority to instruct God's people concerning what it is that He desires and requires of our lives.

Now this word "Bondservant" right here, or maybe your bible simply says "servant" but this of course this Greek word "Doulos" which means a slave for life by my voluntary choice because of the love that I have for my master. He has loved me so much, and been so good to me that I want to serve him my whole life, I've just given my service entirely to him. and I think it's good every now and then just to be refreshed on where this whole idea originated from so turn with me to the book of Ex ch 21 (Vs1-6).

So Paul is saying here, "I love God so much, He has been so good to me that I wouldn't turn from Him for the world", God doesn't force us to serve Him. He in essence says, "You're free to go, lead your own life, do your own thing." (and Many of us have tried that, and it didn't work out to well, we tried to do our own thing for years and all it did was wind up getting us into more trouble, more despair, more emptiness, and deeper hurts.) and Paul had been there, and so when God made Himself real to Paul, he said, "What a loving Master, I'm never going to leave Him, I want to serve Him my whole life, forever." So "Paul a bondservant of God." and I Pray that that's your position of heart today, that you're so in love with God that there's not even an option in your heart to go "free" from Him, but rather you've committed to Him from until forever, you're His servant, and, "May He do with me as He pleases."

So a bondservant, and “An apostle of Jesus Christ” that is, one who is sent out on a specific mission from Jesus Christ one who has a divine decree to go forth and preach the gospel, to set in order those things that are lacking in the body of Christ, to open the eyes of the Gentiles in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ.

“According to the faith of God’s elect” or to understand it another way, “After the manner of the faith of God’s elect” the faith in this context again not being the trust or confidence in God on the behalf of the elect, but rather this is a referral to the body of doctrine to which the elect have been called to defend, the whole counsel of the Word of God. So that he’s saying that he’s a bondservant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ according to the standards that the Word of God would uphold for his life in order to fulfill such an office. “The elect” here simply referring to those who have come into a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ Paul isn’t seeking to establish here the doctrine of election, but simply making a reference to believers in general.

“The acknowledgement of the truth which accords with godliness” and what I want you to see here is the direct correlation between truth and godliness which means “God-like-ness.” You remember Jesus said, *“you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* John 8:32 and He also said, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”* John 14:6

So what I’m seeking to develop here with you is the intrinsic, or interwoven relationship between truth, salvation, and *sanctification*, that is; growing in godliness. and What Paul is saying here is that the truth of God, leads to godliness. and If what you believe *doesn’t* lead you into a more godly lifestyle (not legalistic religious regimens of do’s and don’ts) but into a deeper and more intimate relationship with God whereby you walk in the Spirit and crucify the lusts of the flesh than what you believe is not the truth of God. 2 Cor 13:5 says, *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.”* Make sure that what you believe lines up with the Word of God, and if it does, then it will continue to increase in godliness in your life. Because truth follows after the manner of godliness, God has said, *“Be holy, for I am holy.”* 1 Peter 1:16 Now that’s not to say that 2+2 doesn’t truly = 4 but that truth won’t save your soul from eternal destruction, but the truth of Jesus Christ will, so it absolutely matters what we believe doesn’t it? and Paul is basing his credentials not on some insignificant matter that has nothing to do with anything of eternal value. But this is basically an invitation to examine and scrutinize his life and see if how he lives doesn’t back up what he has to say. He’s saying that by the grace of God he is who he is, and he lives his life according to the standard of God’s Word and the fruit of it is there for all to behold (Vs1 read).

Vs2

and Those of you who have been here for any length of time at all know that when we run across this little 4 lettered word “Hope” in the biblical sense of the meaning it has nothing to do with wishful thinking. Like, “I *hope* this job interview works out” or “I *hope* I get a good year end bonus”, or “I *hope* I don’t get fired over this.” But when we see this word in it’s NT context we’re speaking of an assured expectation, a guaranteed certainty, and a secured or confident anticipation, in this case “of eternal life” which God, Who cannot lie *promised* before time began. What a powerful vs, Paul doesn’t do what he does with the wish that this will work out in the end, but He’s confident in God’s Word to him because God can’t lie and God has *promised* eternal life to those who believe even in the name of the Son of God. You can know that you know that you’re saved, because God has promised it to all who believe in Jesus Christ 1 John 5:13 “*These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.*” Jesus said, “*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, (referring to the cross) that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*” John 3:14-17

This is the “hope” or the “blessed assurance” that we have and we can be so certain of it because God has given us His word and God cannot lie. and The bible tells us that God magnifies His Word above all His name. Did you know that there were certain things that God cannot do? For instance God can’t learn, He’s all knowing, there’s no counsel that can be given to the Lord, what insight can we offer Him but that He’s not already too familiar with it. God can’t learn, nor is it possible that He should love you anymore than He does, God is love, and it’s impossible that God should love us more than He did even when we were against Him and wanted nothing to do with Him, yet God still loved us with an unconditional love. The bible tells us that, “*God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” Rom 5:8 God can’t love more than He does right now, there’s something that God will never see that we see everyday, His equal, who is like the Lord, perfect in all His ways, there’s no one like our God, He has no equal. and God cannot lie, “*God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did*” Rom 4:17 speaks the word and it’s a done deal. Num 23:19 says plainly, “*God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?*” Paul said in Rom 3:4 “*Let God be true but every man a liar.*”

God had a plan to redeem mankind before time began, and He's promised that redemption to as many as would call upon His name, Peter tells us concerning God's redemptive plan as it pertained to the precious blood of Jesus Christ as of a Lamb with out blemish or spot that, "*He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.*" 1 Peter 1:20-21 You see the cross was never plan B, man didn't fall to the surprise of God and then He looked at Jesus and said, "What are we going to do about this mess?" He was foreordained before the foundation of the world, how does this apply to you and me? That if we confess with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead then we enter into this incredible promise, this hope of everlasting, age abiding life that God has given from before time began.

Vs3

So though the promise of God concerning eternal life was made before *time began*, the manifestation of that word has been made know *in due time*, how? Through preaching, or the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ This phrase "In due time" carries with it the idea of "in it's proper season" which is to say God has an order to His plan, things aren't just being shot from the hip, God has a very orderly structure through which history unfolds. and When the time was right God manifested His promise of eternal life through Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the gospel. John the Baptist upon seeing Jesus approaching him proclaimed to the crowd who was listening to him preach, "*Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*" John 1:29 Jesus said, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.*" Mark 16:15 and Paul says here that this commission was committed to him whereby he's to preach the gospel according to the commandment of God our Savior, the good news of Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the sins of the world and that by believing in Him we can have life in His name.

Vs4

Interesting that he just said, "God our Savior" and here he says, "The Lord Jesus Christ our Savior" now which is it? It's both, #1 Jesus is God and this just further solidifies that, but even as God gave His only begotten Son, Jesus willingly laid His life down on the altar of the cross for the sins of the world, there is an inseparable union between the Father and the Son in the work of Salvation. But this is a fairly typical greeting from Paul in that "Grace, mercy and peace" generally it would be "Grace and peace" but to Timothy and Titus he adds mercy. Grace, the agent through which we experience mercy and peace, apart from the grace of God you could never know the peace of God. It's by grace that you've been saved, and it's the grace of God that gives you peace every night when you lay your head down to rest knowing you were but a step away from eternal separation from God and in His grace He reached down and snatched you out of the miry pit and established your footing on the solid rock of Jesus Christ and Aren't you glad that His mercies are new every morning?

In Ps 103 the psalmist writes there, *“Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies”* Ps 103:2-4 So this is the heart of God, this is what He desires to lavish you with Grace, mercy, and peace, but it’s not from the things of this world, you can spend your whole life looking for satisfaction and contentment, and peace from the things of this world, but you’ll never find them. They’re all just ever out of your reach, and it’s a trap from the pit of hell, Grace, mercy and peace comes from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior.

Vs5-9

Now we’re not going to spend much time here in this section that we’ve labeled “Qualifications” because having just gone over 1st Timothy we discussed there in Ch 3 many of these same qualifications regarding the criteria that a man a must meet before he’s considered for an office of spiritual oversight in the church. But what we do see is that since the standards in both cases remain consistent, God’s measure for church leadership doesn’t fluctuate.

But again we see here 2 reasons that Titus was left in Crete, #1 “To set in order the things that are lacking” and #2 to “Appoint elders in every city.” God would that there would be order in His church, the bible says *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* 1 Cor 14:40 Again we serve a God of orderliness, doesn’t mean there’s not flexibility, but there’s definite structure and order. How many churches have you maybe been to and it seems as though it’s more like a *circus* than it is a *service*? People running around the building while the Pastor is seeking to teach, people shouting in tongues to disrupt the service, and all kinds of things happen in the name Christianity that have nothing to do with the bible, it’s disorderly. This phrase “To set in order” speaks of setting right that which is defective, it’s like setting a broken bone, it’s out of whack and isn’t able to function properly until it’s set back in order. and Paul was saying that these churches were functioning like a broken bone, they were just out of order and needed to be reset, how? Through the structure of godly leadership, “Appointing elders in every city” now this would obviously take some time because we know that 1 Tim 5:22 says, *“Do not lay hands on anyone hastily.”* and To examine men’s lives in the light of these clear cut conditions would take some time. But this is the way that God seeks to bring order to His Church, through godly men whom He raises up, to bring godly care, discipline and nurturing to the flock through the teaching of the Word of God. People don’t become elders through being natural born leaders, or by giving a lot of money, or by being great businessmen, or by going to bible school. The bible says, *“For exaltation comes neither from the east Nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, And exalts another.”* Ps 75:6-7 “So when do we elect elders around here?” We don’t, “What’dya mean?” We do what the bible says, and elders aren’t “Elected” they’re “appointed” and it takes time, men’s lives need to fall under careful scrutiny as you can see by this list but, the Lord does the work and all we can do is acknowledge that work. There’s no room for political maneuvering in spiritual leadership; it’s disastrous and I’m sure you’ve all felt prey at one time or another to such folly or seen it’s effects and it’s just not healthy for the body.

But the elder is to be blameless (nothing to lay hold of in his life that would bring credence to any accusations) a one woman kind of man, his family is to be in order, and he's not to be accused of being unruly, or insubordinate, not being able to submit himself to proper authority. The best leader is a man who himself is led, and the elder must be teachable, and be able to recognize and submit to proper authority.

In Vs 7 we see this word "steward" which may bring Joseph to mind who was a steward over all of Potiphar's stuff, so much so that Potiphar didn't even know what he had? He just trusted Joseph with his mini-empire and it's required of a steward (the bible says) that he be found faithful, trustworthy, able to be entrusted with the affairs of another, in this case the affairs of God. "Not self-willed" in other words, others centered not self-centered, one who's denied self, taken up his cross and followed Jesus. "Not quick tempered" one has said, "Temper is such a wonderful thing it's a shame to lose it", and that's good counsel. *Not a drinker, not a striker, not one who's greedy for money*, but rather content with what God has entrusted to him.

Vs8

These last 3 "Just" "Holy" and "Self-controlled" bring into view the fact that as a leader a man is to be right towards others (Just) right towards God (Holy) and right towards himself (Self-controlled) not feeding his flesh but rather forsaking the flesh, crucifying the flesh, (sort of tying together with "not self-willed" but rather self "controlled").

Vs9b-14

This is the "Expectation" of the elder, safeguard the flock and to maintain the spiritual integrity of the church, when something is going down that's not biblical, he's not just to lock and load, and give that guy a piece of his mind. Some people give away so many pieces of their minds that they don't have anymore left to give, but rather by sound doctrine, the faithful word that he's been taught that he's held fast to, by knowing the Word of God, "sound doctrine" he's to be able to *exhort* and *convict*, that is encourage those who are on the right track and discourage those who are on the wrong track.

Vs10-11

Now in that day often times churches would meet in the homes, and so he's saying be careful who you give the pulpit in your home because the wrong guy can overthrow the whole family, speak those great swelling words of emptiness and allure people through the lusts of their flesh all for the sake of dishonest gain. Or as he told Timothy, they suppose that "godliness is a means of gain" that is financial gain. and We're to with draw from such people and the elders of the church need to know how to set in order things that have gone awry by means of sound doctrine, they're to know how to handle the situation.

Vs15-16

“Identification” Paul says this is how you spot these guys, they profess to know God, but the way they lead their lives says anything but that. They lead lives that are no different than people who don’t know the Lord, but they know how to say all the right words when they’re around a crowd of Christians, and we all have known people like this. Saying one thing, but showing something different, but God would have you, and would have me to be the genuine article, professing to know him and in works confirming that fact. Would people know that you were a believer if you never told them verbally that you were? Or do your works deny Him? Jesus said, “*Whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*” Matt 10:32-33 and I think that confession goes beyond simple words from our mouths, but rather is affirmed in how we live our lives, you see it’s the acknowledgement of the truth which accords with or produces practical godliness. We’ll pick up on this thought with just a bit more emphasis on these last 2 vs next week.

If you’re here today and maybe you’ve never confessed with your mouth and believed in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, you’re with out hope, being with out God in the world. Then today God is giving you an opportunity to respond to His love and His grace and His mercy, to enter into the promise, which God who cannot lie promised before time began. The hope of eternal life, the guaranteed certainty of eternal life to all who believe and to all who would receive Jesus Christ to as many as received Him to *them* He gave the power to become the children of God. But you have to receive Him.