

Titus: Introduction

Author: The Apostle Paul wrote this letter (Titus 1:1).

Date: this epistle was written around AD 66 (some place the date between AD 62-65). Paul may have written Titus from Nicopolis (3:12).

Audience: Titus is one of the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus); these are letters the apostle Paul wrote towards the end of his life which discuss matters young pastors should know and understand: church organization (including appointing elders and deacons and the role of women) and discipline (opposing rebellious members or false teachers), and the importance, maintenance, and application of doctrinal truth. The recipient of Titus is Paul's trusted companion Titus (Titus 1:4). He's not mentioned in the book of Acts but he's mentioned in Paul's epistles thirteen times: 2 Corinthians 2:13; 7:6, 13, 14; 8:6, 16, 23; 12:18; Galatians 2:1, 3; 2 Timothy 4:10; Titus 1:4.

He was one of Paul's close, capable, and trusted partners in ministry (2 Corinthians 2:12-13; 8:23; Titus 3:12). Paul sent him to Corinth to see if the Corinthians had repented of their sinful behavior which he described in a previous letter he sent (2 Corinthians 7:5-16). God gave Titus a heart for the Corinthians; he traveled to Corinth as Paul's apostolic representative with the 2 Corinthians epistle and to collect the offering for the needy saints in Jerusalem (2 Corinthians 7:15; 8:6, 16-18). He was a Gentile whom Paul took with him to Jerusalem to show the Judaizers—Jewish Christians who demanded Gentiles be circumcised in order to be saved—that circumcision was not a condition to salvation (Galatians 2:3). Paul brought Titus to faith in Christ and thus saw him as his spiritual son (Titus 1:4). He was a trusted, able man of character (2 Corinthians 8:16-17, 23) whom Paul took to Crete to do ministry (Titus 1:5) and once Paul sent Artemas or Tychicus to relieve him, Titus was to join Paul in Nicopolis (Titus 3:12). Towards the end of Paul's life during his second Roman imprisonment, Titus was with him and Paul sent him to Dalmatia (later known as Yugoslavia) (2 Timothy 4:10).

Purpose: Crete is a Mediterranean island approximately 156 miles long and 30 miles wide. It is 100 miles southeast of Greece. It had a prosperous agriculture and trading economy, creating one of the best business centers of the ancient world. Its first century inhabitants were notorious for lying and immorality, 1:12-13. There were Cretans present on the Day of Pentecost when Peter preached, Acts 2:11, thus some may've believed and spread the Gospel to their countrymen. Paul evangelized in the cities of Crete after his first Roman imprisonment and left Titus to appoint elders to oversee each church and to set things in order that were lacking, 1:5.

What Titus had to set in order was the rampant immorality of the Christians in Crete. Some (especially the Judaizers of the circumcision) were misleading, divisive, and deceiving many with their erroneous teaching in order to enrich themselves (Titus was well suited to combat the erroneous teaching of the Jewish Christians of the circumcision since Titus was a Gentile who had received the Spirit without circumcision or keeping the Law and whom Paul used to make this very point to the Jewish Christians of the circumcision in Jerusalem, Galatians 2:1-9). These individuals must be rebuked and stopped so that they will be "sound in the faith" (1:10-13). Titus is to urge everyone, men and women, young and old to live out the truth they believe (2:1-10). Titus must bring God's truth to bear upon the Cretans in order to replace their foolish, divisive, and immoral behavior with righteous good works (3:1-11).