

# **The Book of Titus**

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## The Book Of Titus

### Introduction

As one of the so-called "pastoral letters", a designation that goes back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Book of Titus falls next to last in the Pauline corpus. We know less about this letter than the other pastorals, and in fact, less about Titus than about Timothy, though both were Paul's close friends and colleagues. The picture offered in this letter is of a newly organized Christian community in the island of Crete, where Paul left Titus on assignment. Considerable work remained to stabilize the church there. To exacerbate the situation, Cretan culture was marked by severe dissolution. Paul repeated as essentially correct the deprecating aphorism about the Cretans: *They are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons* (1:12). The letter serves as a window through which to look at the development of an infant church in an outpost.

### Titus, the Colleague and Ambassador of Paul

The reader of the New Testament encounters Titus only in the Pauline correspondence. Unlike Timothy, about whom we know some details from Luke in the Book of Acts, Titus does not appear in any narrative. Rather, he first appears in the Galatian letter as a convert who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem to serve as a test case for circumcision (Ga. 2:1-3)<sup>1</sup> Paul did not require Titus to be circumcised when he became a Christian, since he was not Jewish but Greek. That he was a convert under Paul's ministry seems certain from the description Paul offers of him as "my true son in our common faith" (Tit. 1:4). Some of the Jerusalem Christians wanted him to submit to circumcision. Paul adamantly resisted this pressure, apparently with the support of James, Peter and John.

It is in the Corinthian correspondence, however, that we glean the most information about Titus. In the crisis between Paul and the Corinthians, after Paul had been humiliated publicly during what he called his "painful visit" (cf. 2 Co. 2:1), Titus served as Paul's personal representative, traveling to Corinth when Paul could

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<sup>1</sup> There is disagreement as to whether this visit described in Galatians 2:1-3 corresponds to the relief mission trip in Acts 11:29-30 or the confrontation at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15.

not go. He worked toward a diplomatic reconciliation (12:18). Titus' mission, judging by Paul's reflections about it, was quite successful, though during his absence Paul was deeply agitated as he pondered about what might happen. He describes his own mental and emotional state in the most graphic terms as he waited for Titus to return (2 Co. 2:12-13; 7:5). However, Titus must have been an especially effective diplomat, for the Corinthians received him graciously and changed their attitudes about Paul (2 Co. 7:6-7, 13-15). After this reconciliation, Titus voluntarily offered to carry yet another letter back to the Corinthians from Paul (2 Co. 8:6, 16-17, 23).

In 2 Timothy, Titus is described as having a mission on the Balkan coast of Dalmatia (2 Ti. 4:10), but nothing further is known about this trip. If Paul was imprisoned in Rome at the time of this mission, then Titus would have been present with him there. All other information comes from the book that bears his name. Much later than the New Testament documents, a tradition cites Titus as the first bishop of Crete.

## The Situation Behind the Titus Letter

The information Luke provides in the Book of Acts does not offer anything at all concerning an evangelistic visit by Paul to Crete.<sup>2</sup> The Book of Titus indicates that Paul visited the island at some time, since he left Titus there (1:5), but when or under what circumstances can only be guessed. Those who believe Paul was exonerated and released after his hearing before Caesar anticipated at the end of the Book of Acts suggest that the visit to Crete might have been then. If so, then one would not expect to find any information about this mission in Acts. Earlier, however, Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea (Ac. 23:23ff), and some suggest that the service of Titus in Dalmatia and Crete might fit better at that time. In the end, no clear reconstruction is possible due to the paucity of evidence. The only clear statement is that Paul left Titus in Crete but hoped to relieve him soon by Artemas and Tychicus,<sup>3</sup> at which time Titus should rejoin Paul in Nicopolis for the winter on the west coast of Greece, when travel normally was suspended (3:12).

As to the letter itself, Titus was left in Crete to correct what was yet defective in the church as well as to appoint elders in each of the Cretan cities (1:5). The appointment of elders suggests that Paul understood such persons to hold recognizable positions of leadership in the churches.<sup>4</sup> Clearly, such appointments

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<sup>2</sup> Of course, Paul passed through Crete briefly while on his voyage to Rome as a prisoner (Ac. 27:7-21), but it hardly seems the circumstances for the establishing of a church there.

<sup>3</sup> Of Artemas, we know only his name as mentioned here. Tychicus, on the other hand, was used by Paul as the courier of both the Colossian and Ephesian letters (cf. Col. 4:7-9; Ep. 6:21-22).

<sup>4</sup> The title *πρεσβύτερος* (**presbyteros** = elder, an older man, a presbyter, an official) had a long history in the Jewish community, the Sanhedrin, and the Greco-Roman world, cf. *TDNT* (1968) VI.651-661. It carried a double meaning, both as a designation for old age and also as a title for an office. The fact that Paul instructed Titus to

were aimed at preserving intact the apostolic faith without distortion (1:9), since various teachers were offering versions of Christianity that Paul considered to be deceptive and misguided (1:10-11).

## Crete in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century

Crete lies southeast of the Greek mainland at the southern boundary of the Aegean Sea. It is some 156 miles long and ranges from about 8 to 35 miles wide. The Old Testament directly connects the island of Crete and the Philistines. Amos gives Crete as their place of origin and describes the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt as parallel to the migration of the Philistines from Crete (Am. 9:7; cf. Je. 47:4). Archaeology bears out this movement: the Philistines were part of the Sea Peoples' invasion of Egypt in the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC. The Sea Peoples exploited the power vacuum of a weak Egypt and a weak Hittite empire in a wave of land and sea assaults against Syria, Palestine and Egypt. After their defeat by the Egyptian Ramesses III (1198-166 BC), they settled on the south coast of Palestine, where the biblical reader meets them as the arch opponents of the Israelites in the time of Samuel, David and Saul.<sup>5</sup>

By the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, however, Crete firmly was established as part of the Roman Empire, conquered in 67 BC and organized along with part of North Africa into the Province of Cyrenaica. Jews had begun settling there as early as the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (1 Maccabees 15:23), and some from Crete attended the festival of Pentecost and were present when the Holy Spirit descended upon the 120 disciples (Ac. 2:11).

## Did Paul Write the Titus Letter?

About 80% to 90 % of contemporary biblical scholars believe that Titus, along with 1 and 2 Timothy, were composed after Paul's death.<sup>6</sup> Various reasons are given for this doubt, some of which depend upon literary and linguistic analyses in the original language<sup>7</sup> and others that are historical, theological or both.<sup>8</sup> Various solutions have been offered, including the allowance of considerable freedom to an amanuensis under Paul's tutelage, the use of genuine Pauline fragments by a disciple

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"appoint" elders suggests that he had in mind an official position, since no one "appoints" older persons.

<sup>5</sup> T. Dothan, "What We Know About the Philistines," *BAR* (Jul/Aug 1982) pp. 20-44.

<sup>6</sup> R. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 668.

<sup>7</sup> The Pastoral letters use particles, conjunctions and adverbs differently than the other Pauline letters. Also, about 1/4 of the vocabulary in the Pastorals do not occur in Paul's other letters, cf. Brown, pp. 663-664.

<sup>8</sup> Some Pauline terms, such as righteousness, faith and law, appear to have a different nuance in the Pastorals than in Paul's other letters. The development of church structure seems to be later than what can be gleaned from Paul's lifetime, cf. Brown, pp. 664-666.

after Paul's death, and outright pseudepigraphy, in which Paul neither wrote the letters nor were they addressed to Titus or Timothy. Most scholars see these letters as products of a Pauline "school", that is, Christians later than Paul who wanted to write in the spirit and authority of the great apostle.

Of course, the letters as they stand purport to be from Paul, and if they are not, one can hardly escape the impression of deception, no matter how much one pleads that pseudepigraphy was an accepted convention of the times. Against this critical position, it must be acknowledged that the Pastorals were universally accepted by the ancient church as genuinely Pauline, especially in contrast to other purported texts which ostensibly came from Paul but were rejected.<sup>9</sup> The *Letter to the Philippians* (4.1), written by Polycarp (died c. AD 155) contains a citation of 1 Timothy 6:7, 10, so some amount of time for the circulation of 1 Timothy must be allowed.<sup>10</sup> Perceived differences in vocabulary, syntax and word nuances raise valid questions, of course, but any writer with the brilliance and range of Paul was quite capable of such variations. Style is always affected by subject matter and mood.<sup>11</sup> If Paul used an amanuensis and if style and vocabulary are any indication, Luke might be a good candidate. 1 Timothy and Titus both closely resemble the Luke-Acts style, and Luke certainly was a companion of Paul. Some evangelicals make a case for a Pauline disciple, who compiled genuine notes from Paul shortly after his martyrdom, but included other material as well.<sup>12</sup> Others argue that in spite of the objections, the alternative theories are beset with so many problems of their own that they are not compelling.<sup>13</sup> The implications for rejecting Pauline authorship are significant with respect to canonicity, biblical integrity and spiritual authority. Here, we shall rest with the opinion of the post-apostolic church. Titus should be considered to have come from the mind of Paul during his own lifetime. Details about composition, the use of an amanuensis, variations in style, and so forth, must remain ambiguous due to lack of clear evidence.

## **The Spiritual Danger in Crete**

Most of Paul's letters have a decided corrective element, and often enough, the apostle takes aim at outsiders who are distorting the Christian message. Titus is no exception. Assessing the "enemy" in Crete requires a certain amount of reading

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<sup>9</sup> The works of 3 Corinthians, the Letter to Laodiceans, the Letters of Paul and Seneca and the Acts of Paul and Thecla all were universally rejected by the church.

<sup>10</sup> Other citations or allusions also can be claimed, cf. E. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 352.

<sup>11</sup> L. Johnson, *The Writings of the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), pp. 381-389.

<sup>12</sup> R. Martin, *New Testament Foundations* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), II.298-307.

<sup>13</sup> D. Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1979), pp. 584-622.

between the lines. Everything in the letter suggests that the church is a new community. Paul obviously agrees with the conventional assessment that the Cretans are lacking in honesty, morality and self-discipline (1:12). He urged that when Titus appointed elders, such behaviors would rule out any candidate (1:7). The opponents of Christianity in the island not only were among the unconverted Cretans themselves, but also, the Jewish constituency (1:10). They peddled Jewish myths (1:14), fussed about legal observances from the law of Moses (3:9), and were lacking in moral restraint (1:15-16). That these teachers were at least partly successful is evidenced by Paul's statement that they had upset entire households (1:11).

Hence, Paul urges Titus to use his diplomatic gift to nurture this unstable Christian community. The very survival of the church depended upon his leadership. Titus was to silence the opposition (1:11), rebuke sharply any false teachers (1:13), avoid descending to their level of petty argument (3:9), and follow a stern policy of "three strikes and you're out" (3:10). These were severe measures, but they were urged in an extreme situation.

## Exposition

Titus bears all the marks of a letter, since it identifies the sender and addressee at the beginning (1:1, 4) and concludes with extended greetings and a blessing at the end (3:12-13, 15). These were typical elements in the Greco-Roman letter. The central concern is pastoral, and if the primary image of the evangelist is that of a fisherman, the primary image of the one who guides and feeds those won to the faith is a shepherd (or *pastor* in Latin). The word ποιμήν (**poimēn** = pastor, shepherd), however, does not appear in this epistle. Rather, the titles for church leaders are the "elder" (or presbyter) and the "overseer" (or bishop).

### Opening (1:1-4)

The opening formula is rather lengthy by the standards of most Pauline letters. Titus himself hardly needed such an elaborate introduction, since he had known Paul for many years, but if the letter was to be read publicly (cf. Col. 4:16), then the long introduction would have served well to introduce Paul to any Christians present who may not have been so familiar with him.

Paul identifies himself as both a slave<sup>14</sup> and an apostle. The juxtaposition of these two terms sets forth both Paul's station and calling. His allegiance is above. He is the "slave of God" and the "apostle of Jesus Christ," just as elsewhere he is the "prisoner of the Lord" (Ep. 3:1; 4:1; 2 Ti. 1:8; Phlm 1, 9), not merely the prisoner of Rome. His ministerial calling was in support of Christian faith and knowledge.

In describing the faith as "the faith of God's elect", Paul borrows a common Jewish designation and transfers it over to a Christian community that was not strictly Jewish. The ancient people of Israel always considered themselves to be God's chosen people, and in the Old Testament, the dominant use of election vocabulary is applied to the nation as a whole (cf. Dt. 7:6; 10:15; 14:2; Is. 41:8-9, etc.). Here as there, the concept of election is essentially a corporate term, and it stands for the whole Christian community as God's new chosen people, regardless of ethnic descent (cf. Ga. 3:26-29; Col. 3:11).<sup>15</sup>

In the ancient world, γνῶσις (**gnōsis** = knowledge) had many connotations and orientations (1 Ti. 6:20), but what was important for Paul was knowledge of the

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<sup>14</sup> The NIV's "servant" is traditional in English translation (so KJV) but may be misleading to a modern audience. The δούλος (**doulos** = slave) is a distinction in contrast to a master, cf. *BAG* (1979), p. 205.

<sup>15</sup> W. Klein, *The New Chosen People: A Corporate View of Election* (Grand Rapids: Academie/Zondervan, 1990), pp. 28-44. Hanson is correct in saying that here the phrase means all Christians without any particular emphasis on predestination, cf. A. Hanson, *The Pastoral Epistles [NCBC]* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), p. 169.

truth leading to godliness, that is, knowledge of the true Christian message. This message rested on the promise of eternal life that God, who is himself the guarantor of truth, gave before all eternity.<sup>16</sup> To whom was this promise made? If 2 Timothy 1:9 is any indication, this was a promise "given in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time."<sup>17</sup> The promised word became known in God's own timing through the coming of Christ and Paul's commission to preach the gospel (cf. Ro. 16:25-27). That Paul describes God by the title *σωτήρ* (*sōtēr* = savior, benefactor), which he will repeat several times in the letter (1:4; 2:10, 13; 3:4, 6), may be an intentional apologetic over against the secular use of the same title to refer to secular rulers, and especially, to the Caesar in the emperor cult.<sup>18</sup>

Titus, to whom the letter was addressed, was Paul's convert, that is, "his true son" (cf. 1 Ti. 1:2). To Titus he extends the Christian greeting "grace" (*charis*) and "peace" (*eirene*), a Christianized version of the more usual Roman salutation "greeting" (*chairein*) and the Jewish *shalom*.<sup>19</sup>

### Establishing Church Structure (1:5-9)

When Paul left Crete, he asked Titus to remain and set in order the church (1:5). Apparently, Paul established no fixed structure in the early days of evangelism on the island, so now he entrusts that task to the diplomatic Titus, instructing him to appoint *πρεσβυτεροι* (**presbyteroi** = elders) in each city (1:5). It may be remembered that Paul followed the same pattern in Asia Minor, first evangelizing and later appointing elders (Ac. 14:23). Several issues hang upon this instruction. First, Paul assumes his apostolic authority to take such an initiative, and second, he implies that Titus has the authority under Paul to appoint such persons based on his own assessment of the candidates' character and ministry. Further, while the title "elders" could simply mean older members of the congregations, the act of

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<sup>16</sup> Lit., "before eternal times", but obviously referring to the beginning of things that had a beginning.

<sup>17</sup> The idea that the covenant of redemption was an eternal pact established between God, the Father, and God, the Son, before the beginning of time became a prominent theme in Reformed theology from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and later, cf. M. Osterhaven, *EDT* (1984), pp. 279-280.

<sup>18</sup> The title "savior" had a long history going back into the Hellenistic Period, when several of the Greek rulers adorned themselves with it. Later, in the Roman Period, several emperors took quite seriously the notion of their own divinity, and Nero was officially described as "lord and savior of the world". In fact, as Hanson has pointed out, Titus contains several titles that also were used in the imperial cult, such as, *epiphaneia* (the appearance [of a god]), *makaria elpis* (blessed hope), *megas theos* (great god), *philanthropia* (love for humanity) and *chrestotes* (kindness), cf. 2:12 and 3:4. Secular accolades to the emperors included phrases like "the grace of Caesar Augustus," and to Galba, "he who has lightened upon us, the benefactor (savior) for the salvation of the entire human race," Hanson, pp. 186-188. It is unlikely that Paul intended to compare Christ to Caesar, but it is quite likely that he intended to point out, as he did to the Corinthians, that while there are many gods and lords in the world, for Christians there is but one (cf. 1 Co. 8:5-6).

<sup>19</sup> W. Doty, *Letters in Primitive Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973), pp. 29-30.

appointment suggests that Paul has in mind functions not simply defined by age. (One really does not need to appoint older persons.) To be sure, there is as yet no clear demarcation between "elders" and "bishops", since Paul uses the terms interchangeably (compare 1:5 and 1:7). The later hierarchical distinctions one finds in the letters of Ignatius (early 2<sup>nd</sup> century) are absent here.

Candidates for elders must be mature Christians of godly character, and it is Christian character even more than administrative ability that dominates Paul's criteria. The qualifications he enumerates parallel very closely those he listed for Timothy (cf. 1 Ti. 3:1-7), though unlike the Timothy letter, Paul here offers no instruction about deacons. An elder must be ἀνέγκλητος (**aneklētos** = irreproachable, unimpeachable). He must be a "one wife husband" or "a man of one woman." This instruction aims at marital fidelity, not that elders must be married and single individuals are disqualified. (Paul himself was single.) Still, what is the frame of reference for this fidelity? Is it that one cannot remarry after a spouse has died or that one cannot remarry if divorced or that one cannot be a polygamist? All these options have supporters, but the ambiguity of the phrase and its possible meanings discourage such tight definitions. Instead, a more likely possibility is that Paul simply intends the broader issue of marital fidelity, that is, a church leader must not adopt the popular morality that winked at philandering. Instead, he must be a person of undisputed morality, loving only his wife and no one else.<sup>20</sup> Family discipline and a Christian household, also, were important. Leaders who allowed their children to run wild or whose children denied the faith undermined their own spiritual credibility (1:6).

Beyond his family, a church leader must demonstrate Christian character in his own behavior, since he is God's steward (1:7).<sup>21</sup> Some behaviors and attitudes must be avoided entirely, which Paul describes as:

αὐθαδης (**authadēs** = self-willed, stubborn, arrogant)

ὀργίλος (**orgilos** = inclined to anger, quick-tempered)

πάραινος (**parainos** = drunken, addicted to wine)

πλήκτης (**plēktēs** = bully, pugnacious)

αἰσχροκερδής (**aischrokerdēs** = greedy, fond of dishonest gain)

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<sup>20</sup> In some expressions of Greco-Roman culture, it was considered a Roman citizen's "right" to have casual love affairs. Apparently, some in the Corinthian church defended such behaviors as "rights", and Paul wrote to correct their behavior, cf. B. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), pp. 76-120.

<sup>21</sup> The term οἰκονόμος (**oikonomos** = steward, manager) is drawn from secular life, where it is used of one who manages property or of a city treasurer. Here, it is used figuratively for the leader who administrates the church.

Paul's instructions are not merely negative, however. He also adds as positive attributes the kinds of behaviors that should be typical of church leaders (1:8).

φιλόξενος (**philoxenos** = hospitable)

φιλάγαθος (**philagathos**= loving what is good)

σώφρων (**sōphrōn**= prudent, thoughtful, self-possessed)

δίκαιος (**dikaïos** = just, fair, righteous)

ῥοσιος (**hosios** = devout, pious, holy)

ἐγκρατής (**enkratēs** = self-controlled, disciplined)

Finally, church leaders must be deeply committed to the Christian message. Their responsibility is not to be innovative, but faithful, so that they hold firmly to the message "as it has been taught." Here Paul employs the language of passing on Christian tradition without distortion. The preservation of the Christian message intact is necessary for encouraging the members of the Christian community and defending the faith against those who oppose it (1:9).

### **The Problem of False Teachers (1:10-16)**

The final phrase in 1:9 regarding those who oppose sound doctrine introduces Paul's second goal in the letter--the correction of false teachers. Paul's description of these false teachers is no faint detraction but a strident polemic! In the first place he describes them as insubordinate (1:10a).<sup>22</sup> In their teaching they are idle talkers and charlatans, and Paul especially has in mind some from the Jewish Christian community in Crete(1:10b). Those from "the circumcision group" were teachers Paul confronted on several occasions, for they advocated that in order to become a Christian one must first of all become Jewish, submitting to circumcision (cf. Ac. 15:1-2; Ga. 2:12; Phil. 3:2). In spite of the encyclical letter from the Jerusalem apostles and elders (Ac. 15:23-31; 16:4), the issue would not die out. Possibly, these itinerant teachers had been invited into the homes of fellow Diaspora Christian Jews and had taken advantage of the situation to urge their own brand of theology. They were neither commissioned by any church nor faithful to the apostolic message.<sup>23</sup>

Circumcision, of course, was only the proverbial camel's nose under the tent, however, for it was a threshold to devaluing Christ himself and being alienated from

<sup>22</sup> The general meaning of ἀνυπότακτος (**anypotaktos**) is undisciplined, disobedient or rebellious, a term also used in the period for spoiled children, cf. *BAG* (1979) p. 76.

<sup>23</sup> J. Quinn, *The Letter to Titus [AB]* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1990), pp. 106-107.

grace (Ga. 5:2-12; 6:12-15). Such teaching simply must not be tolerated; those who hawked it must be muzzled (1:11a)! Already it was ruining entire households which, if Crete was similar to the other areas of Christian society, were the seat of the house churches (1:11b). It only added insult to injury that these teachers were being paid for their services!

In his polemic, Paul resorted to a popular line from a Cretan poet, a 6<sup>th</sup> century BC philosopher, Epimenides of Cnossus, who was considered by the Cretans to be a prophet (1:12).<sup>24</sup> The Cretans had a reputation:

*Liars ever, men of Crete  
Nasty brutes that live to eat.*<sup>25</sup>

The same reputation was cited by yet another poet, Callimachus, who also said "Cretans are always liars...", while Cicero bemoans the fact that the Cretans did not think it immoral to steal.<sup>26</sup> All in all, Paul's use of this disparaging proverb served to reinforce his own observations, and in the mouth of two witnesses -- his own and Epimenides -- he was willing to rest his case. These false teachers reflected the worst instincts of Cretan culture. Hence, Paul urges Titus to rebuke them harshly. He uses the same word here as he does in 2 Corinthians 13:10, where Paul hopes to avoid such severity. There is a time to "gently instruct" (2 Ti. 2:25) and there is a time to "severely rebuke", though the latter is a last resort. The goal is not to destroy but to restore to health (1:13). Paul can only urge such a course after already setting forth the fundamental qualities of a leader as not overbearing, quick-tempered or violent. Here, he is not contradicting what he said earlier but showing the extremity to which the church had been pressed by these false teachers.

The Jewish myths (1:14) might be related to the Jewish mysticism Paul countered in Asia (Col. 2:16-23; cf. 1 Ti. 1:4), where a type of spirituality was being urged that included the worship of angels, visions, and rigid rules for avoiding impurity. There, Paul castigated such teaching as false humility and superficial wisdom, mere "human commands". Here, it seems apparent that whatever the false teaching involved, it included Jewish *kosher* regulations about ritual defilement (1:15a). Paul may well be appealing to the words of Christ himself when he says, "To

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<sup>24</sup> Only a few lines from Epimenides survive, and this saying is not among them. We owe our knowledge of the source to Clement of Alexandria (c.AD 150-220), *Stomata* 1.xiv.1-2. However, collections of proverbial sayings were available, so whether or not Paul had personally read Epimenides, he was familiar with the line, cf. Quinn, pp. 107-108.

<sup>25</sup> Translation by Quinn.

<sup>26</sup> Hanson, p. 176.

the pure, all things are pure" (cf. Mk. 7:15-19). The legalism imposed by the Jewish-Christian advocates of *kosher* regulations, in fact, was NOT pure. It was the product of a corrupt conscience and an unbelieving mind (1:15b). Like the false teachers in Colossae, they claimed to operate at a higher spiritual level while passing judgment on anyone who dissented. In Crete, they claimed to know God, but their behavior undermined their claim. They refused to accept the teachings of Jesus on purity, and they ignored the revelation of the apostles as well (e.g., Ac. 10:9-15). They were abominable, disobedient and reprobate to every good work. Paul spares no quarter in this scathing denunciation!

### **The Household Code (2:1-10)**

Household codes (*haustafel* in Luther's German translation) were a regular feature among both Jews and Gentiles. For Jews, ethical lists concerning domestic relations went all the way back to the Torah in the Holiness Code (Lv. 19) and the Deuteronomic Code (Dt. 27). Later Jewish writings all the way up into the time of Christ also contained such codes, usually consisting of instructions for husbands, wives, children, children's spouses, in-laws and slaves. In the Greco-Roman world familial obligations were stressed by the moralists and included not only those who were blood-related but also family friends and domestic servants. The *patria potestas* gave the father absolute authority over his family, the *familia* regulated household slaves, and the *familiaris* addressed friends and acquaintances.

It is hardly to be doubted that the household codes in the New Testament were patterned, at least to some degree, after those in the culture at large with the important difference that they were shaped by Christian concerns, not merely traditional ones. Hence, one finds household codes in Paul's Ephesian and Colossian letters (Ep. 5:21--6:9; Col. 3:18--4:1) and in Peter's first letter (1 Pe. 2:13--3:7). One is included here in the letter to Titus as well.<sup>27</sup>

The Titus household code differs somewhat from the ones in Ephesians, Colossians and 1 Peter, and this difference may very well be culturally oriented.

<b>Ephesians</b>	<b>Colossians</b>	<b>1 Peter</b>	<b>Titus</b>
<i>Wives &amp; Husbands</i>	<i>Wives &amp; Husbands</i>	<i>Citizens &amp; the State</i>	<i>Older People</i>
<i>Children &amp; Parents</i>	<i>Children &amp; Parents</i>	<i>Slaves</i>	<i>Younger People</i>
<i>Slaves &amp; Masters</i>	<i>Slaves &amp; Masters</i>	<i>Wives &amp; Husbands</i>	<i>Slaves</i>

Furthermore, after an interlude in which Paul will offer a compendium of the

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<sup>27</sup> O. Seitz, *IDB* (1962) III.137-138; D. Schroeder, *IDBSup* (1976) p. 546, G. Cannon, *The Use of Traditional Material in Colossians* (Macon, GA: Mercer University, 1983), pp. 111-121.

Christian gospel (2:11-14), he will offer instructions about behavior as good citizens, an admonition that also might belong to the household code, even though it comes later.

## The Titus Code

The code addresses five classes of people, older men,<sup>28</sup> older women, younger women, younger men and slaves. The dividing line between "older" and "younger" was probably about fifty years of age.<sup>29</sup> The entire corpus of moral instruction was tied directly to "healthy teaching". In Crete, especially, healthy teaching needed a strong component of practical Christian behavior as well as abstract theological concepts. Paul will address the more abstract side of Christian theology later (cf. 2:11-14), but here he concentrates on Christian behavior that is driven by the Christian belief system.

### Admonition to Older Men

The advice to older men is relatively brief. Paul's first point is that they should be *νηφάλιος* (*nēphalios* = restrained in their use of wine). Alcoholic abuses were common and often admired in the Greco-Roman world, but drunkenness was incompatible with the Christian life. In addition, older men were to be *σεμνός* (*semnos* = respectable, dignified, serious) and *σώφρων* (*sōphrōn* = prudent, thoughtful, self-controlled). With the verb *ὑγιαίνω* (*hygiainō* = to be sound or healthy), he urges them toward a robust faith, love and capacity for steadfastness, a triad that Paul also urges elsewhere (cf. 1 Ti. 6:11-12; 2 Ti. 3:10). This triad is simply a variation of the more familiar primary Christian virtues of faith, hope and love (cf. 1 Co. 13:13). The connection between hope and endurance is clarified elsewhere in that Paul speaks of the "endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Th. 1:3).

### Admonition to Older and Younger Women

To the older women, Paul urges *καταστηματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς* (*katastēmati hieroprepeis* = holy or reverent demeanor).<sup>30</sup> They must not be devilish gossips<sup>31</sup> or

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<sup>28</sup> In addressing the older men, Paul does not seem to be referring to the "elders" that earlier he commanded Titus to appoint, since he uses somewhat different words for each. An appointed elder is a *πρεσβυτερος* (*presbyteros* = an elder, an official), while an aged man is a *πρεσβυτης* (*presbytēs* = an old man).

<sup>29</sup> Males younger than seventeen still were considered "boys" and not "men", since they were not eligible for military conscription until they were seventeen. Various Roman writers differentiate between "older" and "younger" at about the mid-40s to 50 years of age (e.g., Solon, Hippocrates, Gellius), cf. Quinn, p. 129.

<sup>30</sup> The expression is unique here in the NT, and it is used elsewhere in the literature of the times to describe the behavior of priests. As such, older women are to display the character of sacred priestliness.

slaves to wine<sup>32</sup> but teachers of the good. With the equal warning to both the older men and older women against alcoholic abuse, we should assume that Cretan culture was liable to considerable excess in this area. Instead of descending to this lower behavior, the older women should exercise their priestly demeanor by training their younger counterparts in the virtues of loving their spouses and children.<sup>33</sup> In their lives the younger women should demonstrate prudence, just as the older men,<sup>34</sup> as well as ἄγνος (**hagnos** = pure, chaste) purity. They should keep their homes well<sup>35</sup> and voluntarily submit themselves to their husbands<sup>36</sup> in order to prevent any discredit to the Christian message.

### Admonition to Younger Men

The same general advice is appropriate for the younger men. They are to be prudent in all things,<sup>37</sup> modeling good behavior. Titus is to model for them the virtues of ἀφθορία (**aphthoria** = soundness, purity), σεμνότης (**semnotēs** = reverence, dignity, gravity) and healthy speech above reproach. Such behavior would diffuse any opposition to the Christian message. As with the younger women, the behavior of Titus and the younger men is an essential part of their testimony to the Christian faith. In both cases, Paul is concerned that loose behavior will undermine the credibility of the Christian message.

### Admonition to Slaves

In the household codes of Ephesians and Colossians, Paul offers advice to both slaves and masters (Ep. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22--4:1). Here, he addresses only slaves, suggesting that the converts to Christianity in Crete may have been from the lower classes. In any case, it is likely that some of the Christian converts were slaves working in pagan households, and Paul's advice, as before, has an evangelistic

<sup>31</sup> The term δίαβολος (**diabolos** = slanderous) is the same as the word translated "devil", who is the arch slanderer.

<sup>32</sup> Lit., "having been enslaved by much wine".

<sup>33</sup> Lit., they should be "husband-lovers" and "child-lovers"

<sup>34</sup> The term σωφρων (**sōphrōn**) is the same in 2:5 as in 2:2.

<sup>35</sup> It is unclear whether the word ἀγαθός (**agathos** = good) is to be understood adjectivally as modifying the word for a domestic (so Hanson) or as a separate category urging goodness and consideration (so most English versions). If the former, older women are to be good domestics. If the latter, the term probably has the nuance of being considerate or kind.

<sup>36</sup> This participle in the middle voice carries a reflexive nuance (i.e., the wife is both the subject and object of the verb). It is not that men are to dominate their wives or that wives must submit as though they were inferior, but rather, that wives are themselves to take initiative toward deference to their husbands. It is possible to use this verb in a active voice (i.e., to instruct a husband to subject his wife), but Paul does not do so. Rather, Paul uses the middle voice, which suggest voluntary action on the part of a free subject, cf. J. Bristow, *What Paul Really Said About Women* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), pp. 38-41.

<sup>37</sup> Similar to 2:2 and 2:5, Paul uses the verbal form of the same word.

motive not far beneath the surface. Once again, as with the younger women, Paul uses a middle voice form urging voluntary submission (see footnote #36). Submission is not because slaves are inferior but because in submitting they demonstrate the attractiveness of the Christian message.<sup>38</sup> Hence, slaves always are to be on their best behavior, shunning petty theft, back-talk and opposition. While Paul's basic ethic is that in Christ the old categories of superiority and inferiority are cancelled (Ga. 3:28; Col. 3:11), at the same time he can urge the voluntary surrender of freedom-rights in the interests of the gospel (cf. 1 Co. 9:1-23), and as he says about the restriction of his own rights, "I do all this for the sake of the gospel" (1 Co. 9:23b).<sup>39</sup>

One further observation is appropriate. Exegetically, one cannot cleanly sever the issue of women's status and the issue of slavery. Submission for both wives to husbands, slaves to masters and citizens to government appear in the various New Testament household codes. Today, few Christians in the west would support the institution of slavery, since Paul clearly argues that in Christ these dominant-submissive categories have been revoked. However, it is inconsistent to argue for the abolition of slavery but the perpetuation of female inferiority, though many conservatives attempt to do so. Paul's advice urging voluntary submission for both wives and slaves is not so much a comment on their status before God, but rather, their willingness to sacrifice their rights in the interests of making the good news of Christ attractive to the outsider. The Christian ethic seems to embrace the equality of men, women, slaves and masters while at the same time advising them that in some cases it is a Christian's responsibility to surrender certain rights for the sake of the gospel. However, to demand subordination on the basis of class distinction is in serious conflict with the gospel.

### **The Epitome of the Gospel (2:11-15)**

The evangelistic nuance in Paul's household code has been clear from the beginning. His advice to women was "so that no one will malign the word of God" (2:5b). His advice to men was "so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us" (2:8b). His advice to slaves was "so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive" (2:10b). This series of *ἵνα* (**hina** = in order that) clauses sets up Paul's summary of the Christian message. If lifestyle and behavior are to be witnesses to the gospel, then Paul wants to make clear how this link exists. It begins with the bedrock fundamental of "the grace of God."

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<sup>38</sup> Lit., "that they may adorn in all things the teaching of God our Savior"

<sup>39</sup> P. Richardson, *Paul's Ethic of Freedom* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1979), pp. 40-56.

In Paul's letters, grace is God's free gift of salvation in Jesus Christ given out of his love, mercy and kindness (e.g., Ro. 2:4; 3:23-24; 5:6-8; Ep. 2:8, etc.). This grace has appeared for the sake of all humans.<sup>40</sup> It is God's grace that educates<sup>41</sup> believers in Christian behavior. Those who receive God's grace should reject godlessness and secular passions in order to live sensibly,<sup>42</sup> honestly and piously. Paul's reference to "the present age" anticipates the transition between this age and the age to come, a transition marked by the appearance of Christ. The blessed hope of the church is the epiphany of Christ, who is our great God.<sup>43</sup> Paul's term **ἐπιφάνεια** (**epiphaneia** = appearing) refers to the personal, visible appearance of Christ for his people at the end (Ac. 1:11; 1 Co. 1:7; 2 Th. 2:8; He. 9:28; Re. 1:7). His vocabulary of the second coming, which elsewhere includes the terms **παρουσία** (**parousia** = coming, presence) and **ἀποκάλυψις** (**apokalypsis** = revelation),<sup>44</sup> stands against the notion that the return of the Lord is symbolic language for the present experience of the church through the Spirit or the subjective experience of being received by Christ at death.<sup>45</sup> Rather, at the end of the present age Christ will visibly appear. Paul's language also raises significant doubt about the dispensational notion of a secret rapture before the end of the age.<sup>46</sup>

The salvation brought by God's grace to be proclaimed to all humans centers upon the self-sacrifice of Christ. He gave up his own life to buy back those who were enslaved by iniquity.<sup>47</sup> His work of redemption, however, was not simply to effect a

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<sup>40</sup> The dative expression **πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις** (**pasin anthrōpois** = to all men) can hardly mean that all persons in the world were by this time aware of the coming of Christ, else the evangelistic mission could be closed. Hence, it must point to the universal availability of this salvation for all. A few lines later, Paul again will use the expression "all men" (3:2), and he obviously means all without distinction. Some interpreters, especially in light of the household code, take it to mean all classes of humans, cf. D. Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), p. 198. Such an interpretation is more compatible with Calvinism, which bristles at the idea that God's grace is available to all, cf. W. Hendriksen, *Thessalonians, Timothy, Titus [NTC]* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), pp. 91-94, 370-371. Notwithstanding such special pleading, this passage and others like it (e.g., Jn. 3:16; 1 Jn. 2:2; 4:14) flatly contradict the conclusion of five point Calvinists that Christ died only for the elect. The grace of God that brings salvation to all men can hardly mean limited atonement that is available only to some.

<sup>41</sup> The verb **παιδεύω** (**paideuō** = to discipline, educate) can be used of punishment, such as a whipping, but here it means the discipline of education, cf. *BAG* (1979) pp. 603-604.

<sup>42</sup> This is a cognate of the same word that Paul used in 1:8; 2:2 and 2:5.

<sup>43</sup> There are only a few places in the New Testament where Christ is directly described as "God" (i.e., Jn. 1:1, 18; 20:28; Ro. 9:5; He. 1:8), but this is one of them, cf. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, trans. S. Guthrie and C. Hall, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1963), pp. 306-314.

<sup>44</sup> G. Ladd, *The Blessed Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), pp. 61-70.

<sup>45</sup> This view, called "realized eschatology," has become popular in Great Britain due to the writings of C. H. Dodd, cf. M. Erickson, *Contemporary Options in Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977), pp. 30-34.

<sup>46</sup> Dispensationalists divide the second coming of Christ into two phases separated by the tribulation period, the first a secret rapture (before the tribulation) and the second a visible appearance (at the end of the tribulation). Paul, however, does not envision the blessed hope of the church to be a secret event but a visible one, and the attempt to divide Christ's return into what, in effect, is two second comings is doubtful, cf. Ladd, pp. 71-167.

<sup>47</sup> One of Paul's favorite metaphors for salvation is the word picture of redemption, the act of setting free by buying

naked freedom, but rather, to cleanse a people that they might belong to him. Paul's phrase, "a people for himself," comes from the Torah passages about ancient Israel (cf. Ex. 19:5; Dt. 4:20; 7:6; 14:2). Here, as in 1:1, Paul transfers the Old Testament vocabulary for Israel over to the Christian church. The goal of salvation, then, is that the community of faith would be holy and dedicated to good works (cf. Ep. 2:10). Good works are not the ground of salvation, but they are certainly one of the goals of salvation!

Many scholars have noted that the description of salvation in 2:11-13, similar to passages like 1 Timothy 3:16 or Philippians 2:6-11, may be preexisting Christian liturgical or hymnic material that Paul incorporates into his letter. Related to this issue is the litany of Roman and Hellenistic titles and phrases that appear in this section as well as in 1:3 and 3:4.<sup>48</sup>

*Great God and Savior* (titles used by Hellenistic kings and Roman emperors)

*Grace* (used to describe the favor of the emperor)

*Epiphany* (used to describe the ascension of the emperor)

*Kindness and love for mankind* (used to describe the benevolence of the emperor)

*Hope* (used for the optimistic expectation of a better life under the emperor's blessing)

Most scholars doubt that such a collection of "loaded" language could be anything but deliberate, and in fact, that Paul directly intended his language to be a counterclaim for Christ against Caesar. This language might already have been resident in the worship forms of the early church, however, and Paul may have used this language precisely because he knew Titus and the Cretans would be familiar with it. Yet another speculation is that this passage, along with 3:4-7, may have had a baptismal origin, that is, these passages may have served as part of standard baptismal instruction.<sup>49</sup> Both these ideas are possible, but there is hardly sufficient evidence to make either of them necessary. It seems likely, however, that the use of Hellenistic and Roman terms serves as a deliberate foil against the imperial cult.

In the end, this gospel with its message of divine favor should be the central burden of Titus' ministry, whether by exposition or defense (2:15).

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or buying back. In the Jewish world, the idea of redemption derives from the Torah, where ransom prices were paid for the recovery of persons, animals and land. In the Roman world, the idea of redemption was more directly connected with slavery and manumission, cf. E. Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 47.

<sup>48</sup> Quinn, pp. 168-171, 308ff.; Hanson, pp. 186-188.

<sup>49</sup> Hanson, p. 183.

### **Christians in the Larger Community (3:1-2)**

The opening of chapter 3 returns to behavioral advice, this time to the Cretan Christians as citizens in the larger community. It seems likely that after the gospel passage in 2:11-14, 3:1-2 should be considered a continuation of the household code.

Titus should teach the Cretans to be loyal citizens insofar as it was possible. There is a certain tension, of course, between the counter-claims of Christ against Caesar expressed in the imperial vocabulary of the preceding interlude and the present advice to be subject to rulers and authorities. One cannot always do both. The "loaded" vocabulary in the previous verses means that only God can be the Savior. Nevertheless, while their highest allegiance must be to God, Christians also are called to be good citizens. They must not worship Caesar as God, but they should obey the laws of the land. Belonging to the kingdom of God did not exempt them from the laws of Rome. Once more, as in 2:5, 9, Paul resorts to the middle voice, calling on the Cretan Christians to voluntarily put themselves in submission and obedience to civil authorities (3:1a). His advice parallels closely the codes in two other New Testament letters (Ro. 13:1-10; 1 Pe. 2:13-17), where the same advice is offered. As good citizens, the Cretan Christians should be ready to give themselves to any kind of good activity, the implication being, of course, that for conscience sake they could not engage in activities that compromised their faith (3:1b). As good citizens and good Christians they must forego insults and argumentative antagonism,<sup>50</sup> adopting instead a disposition of gentleness and full consideration toward others (lit., "all meekness to all men").

### **Born Again by Grace (3:3-7)**

As with the interlude in 2:11-14, some scholars understand the next section to belong to a baptismal catechism, especially given the language of "washing" in 3:5. This may or may not be true, but there is little doubt that it certainly could serve as baptismal instruction with its contrast between the old life and the new life. Pagan life was characterized by senseless behavior, disobedience, deception and slavery to passion and self-gratification. In contrast to Christians, pagans lived in a world of malice and envy as they tried to gain advantage over their fellows while resenting the success of others. They both hated and were hated (3:3).

How different is the Christian life! Once more, Paul resorts to imperial language to describe the true Savior. Caesar may promise, but only God can deliver! In his goodness and love for humans, God truly saves. This salvation, far from being merited by any human righteousness, is entirely due to God's compassion (3:4-5a).

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<sup>50</sup> The NIV has translated ἀμάχους (*amachous* = not quarrelsome) as "peaceable", which while it is adequate, removes the negative nuance of the word.

The language of new birth, of course, goes back to the words of Jesus himself (Jn. 1:12-13; 3:3-8). The metaphor also was used by Peter (1 Pe. 1:3, 23) and John (1 Jn. 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18). Paul probably used the expression "to wash" to refer to Christian baptism (1 Co. 6:11) as did the author of Hebrews (He. 10:22). Ananias' instruction to Saul was to be baptized and "wash your sins away" (Ac. 22:16). Considerable discussion exploring the relationship between "washing" and "spiritual birth" has attended both this passage and the teaching of Jesus to Nicodemus in John 3. The theological question is this: do these metaphors converge to suggest that the act of baptism, in itself, is the effective agent for the cleansing of sin and the event of spiritual birth? Some have thought so, and a doctrine of baptismal regeneration can be found in various denominations (e.g., the Churches of Christ, the Roman Catholic Church, etc.). However, while there is a clear connection between baptism and regeneration, they are not precisely the same thing, nor are they directly equated in the Bible. Elsewhere, Paul assists us by his ubiquitous affirmation that salvation is by grace through faith apart from works (Ep. 2:8-9, etc.). It would be truly remarkable if Paul contradicted his theology in Romans, Galatians and Ephesians by the letter to Titus with a late shift toward baptism as the sole and sufficient means for regeneration. True rebirth is an act of the Spirit, as Paul clearly states here. It has a twofold aspect, the "washing" and the "making new". Being made new<sup>51</sup> is effected through the work of the Holy Spirit. The ritual of baptism points to this inward work; hence, baptism is the universal sign of Christian initiation. However, baptism functions as an outward act in concert with the inward work of the Spirit so that neither stand alone.<sup>52</sup> While Paul does not mention faith here (his emphasis is on grace), he surely assumes it. Furthermore, the work of salvation is fully a Trinitarian work, resulting from the kindness and love of God, the manifestation of this love in the appearance of his Son, and the regenerating work of the Spirit in salvation.

In the end, justification is by God's grace (3:7a). There is nothing in the pagan lifestyle (i.e., 3:3) that would deserve acquittal.<sup>53</sup> Rather, God in his grace takes the initiative, and because believers are justified by grace, they have the certain hope that they will live forever. They are heirs, an image that means while they do not yet possess what has been promised, the certainty of the inheritance is firm. The term ἐλπίς (**elpis** = hope, expectation) should not be taken in the sense of wishfulness, but rather, of confidence that what God has promised he will perform (3:7b).

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<sup>51</sup> The term ἀνακαινώσις (**anakainōsis**) is not attested in the Koine Period outside the New Testament, cf. *BAG* (1979) p. 55. It should be taken in the sense of "making new" rather than "renewing", at least if the latter sense is taken to mean the restoration of former powers, cf. Guthrie, *Titus*, p. 205.

<sup>52</sup> G. Bromiley, *EDT* (1984) p. 119 and D. Bloesch, *Essentials of Evangelical Theology* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979) II.11-15.

<sup>53</sup> Justification is a forensic term and evokes the picture of acquittal before a judge. In court the accused person is pardoned.

### **Closing Admonition (3:8-11)**

In the pastoral letters, Paul uses the expression "faithful saying" on four other occasions. All are directly or indirectly concerned with Gods' redemptive plan.

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for this very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life. (1 Ti. 1:15-16)

Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. (1 Ti. 3:1)<sup>54</sup>

This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe. (1 Ti. 4:9-10)

Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him,

we will also live with him;

If we endure,

we will also reign with him.

If we disown him,

he will also disown us;

If we are faithless,

he will remain faithful,

for he cannot disown himself. (2 Ti. 2:11-13)

If the "faithful saying" in Titus follows in kind (3:8a), then we should expect it also to be about the salvation God has provided, and in Titus, it specifically would refer to the summary of God's grace offered in the previous verses. As such, the "faithful saying" clause follows rather than precedes the gospel summary.<sup>55</sup> In fact, it is this gospel that Titus must emphasize in Crete so that the new believers may add to

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<sup>54</sup> This "faithful saying", of course, is not an overt description of the gospel, but it probably is to the point that the reason the calling of an elder is "noble" is because essential to his task is the proclamation and preservation of the faithful message, which is emphasized in all the pastorals.

<sup>55</sup> Some interpreters take the "faithful saying" to refer to the advice that follows in 3:8b, but in light of the use of this expression elsewhere in the pastorals, the preceding verses with their clear witness to God's saving work seem much more likely to be the last of the "faithful sayings."

their initial faith the life of good works (3:8b). The order is clear here as elsewhere, faith as initiation and good works as the consequence of faith (cf. Ep. 2:8-10). Paul's concern for the Cretans is along the same lines as James' concern for the Jerusalemites--that faith must not stand alone (Ja. 2:14-26). As has been aptly stated many times, faith alone saves, but the faith that saves is not alone!

In his commitment to the gospel, Titus must not descend to the level of those who merely wanted to fuss about the Jewish *Halakah* (3:9).<sup>56</sup> The reference to genealogies and quarrels about the law is similar to the warnings Paul gave to Timothy (1 Ti. 1:4, 7; 6:4-5). We simply do not know the specifics of this wrangling. Could the Jewish-Christians have been concerned with the genealogical issue of Christ as the final high priest, even though he was not from the levitical clan (cf. He. 7:5, 14)? Might they have assumed some sort of spiritual superiority on the basis of their own pedigrees, a prominent trend in the Jewish community in the first century?<sup>57</sup> Were they pressing for observance of *kosher* laws (cf. 1:14-15)? There seems to have been a "circumcision group" active in Crete, probably urging the superiority of the Jewish way of life (1:10). All these angles are possible, though none of them are certain. In any case, Paul urges Titus upon a course of two warnings and then dismissal (3:10). Such controversies polarize Christians against each other, and the unity of the church must not be compromised. Those who want to contend for such opinionated propaganda are themselves manifestations of distortion, sin and a condemnation that is apparent from their own willingness to create dissension in the church (3:11).

### **Conclusion (3:12-15)**

The final notation of the letter includes a series of personal asides. Either Artemas (named only here in the New Testament)<sup>58</sup> or Tychicus, Paul's Asian associate (cf. Ac. 20:4; Ep. 6:21; Col. 4:7; 2 Ti. 4:12), would soon arrive to offer Titus a respite and the chance to spend the winter with Paul at Nicopolis, Achaia (3:12).<sup>59</sup> Of Zenas the lawyer we know nothing. His profession presumably was

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<sup>56</sup> The *halakah* was the authoritative way of life expressed in the moral law and rituals of Jewish tradition. It included the entire corpus of Jewish teaching, legislation, and practices stemming from the Jewish interpretation of biblical laws. Successive generations of rabbis from Ezra onward offered explanations and adaptations in the areas of economic, domestic, political and social life so as to bring the community into full submission to the will of God, cf. I. Epstein, *IDB* (1962) 2.512.

<sup>57</sup> The issue of racial purity loomed large in the 1<sup>st</sup> century for Jews, and a clear hierarchy of status was advocated based on the genealogical record, cf. J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, trans. F. H. and C. H. Cave (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), pp. 270ff.

<sup>58</sup> Later church tradition lists Artemas as the bishop of Lystra and one of the seventy disciples, cf. *ISBE* (1979) 1.306.

<sup>59</sup> While the city name Nicopolis (= city of victory) was popular and can be attested in several Roman provinces, the most likely candidate is the Nicopolis on the western Achaian coastline, where Augustus camped just before his

connected to Roman law rather than Jewish law, at least if his Greek name has any bearing.<sup>60</sup> Apollos, of course, is well-known from the books of Acts and 1 Corinthians, and Paul wants Titus to assist them with traveling necessities as they pass through Crete (3:13).

The letter ends with one last word of admonition: the Cretan Christians must add good works to their faith (3:14a). It is not immediately clear how to take the final clause (3:14b), whether in the sense of responsibility for supporting themselves (cf. 2 Th. 3:6-13) or in the sense of generosity toward others.<sup>61</sup>

The final lines express mutual greetings and offer a special salutation to Titus from those with Paul at the time he composed the letter. Where the letter was composed, as indicated in the introductory comments, is unknown.<sup>62</sup>

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battle with Anthony at Actium in 31 BC, cf. G. Borchert, *ISBE* (1986) 3.534-535.

<sup>60</sup> W. Gloer, *ISBE* (1988) 4.1188

<sup>61</sup> The RSV renders the Greek expression as "to help cases of urgent need". Literally, the text reads *προίτασθαι εἰς τὰς ἀναγκαίας χρείας* (= to be engaged in necessary needs), which as it stands, is ambiguous. If the sense of the NIV is followed, the issue is about self-support as opposed to laziness, and the clause is defined by what follows. If the sense of the RSV is followed, the issue is about charitable actions to others, and the clause is defined by what precedes it.

<sup>62</sup> The various subscriptions in some manuscripts (e.g., that the letter was composed in Nicopolis) are generally judged to be late, cf. B. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1975), p. 656.