

The Book of Titus:  
A Pastoral letter

- I. Introduction, 1:1-4
- II. The Instructions for the Appointment of Elders for the Churches, 1:5-16
- III. The Instructions for People in the Churches, 2:1-15
- IV. The Instructions for the Public Witness of the Churches, 3:1-11
  - A. Duties in a secular culture, vv. 1-2
    - 1. In relationship to the state, v. 1a

“Remind” is a present, active command meaning constancy of action (“keep reminding”). The essence of the injunction is to “be subject,” submissive to governmental or civil authorities (it is a military term respective of a chain of command).

Remember: Cretans had a reputation, centuries old, for being an unruly, rebellious, self-consumed people (1:10-13a).

Parenthesis: When a government demands what is contrary to the clear commands of Scripture, what is the believer to do? There are two general answers: *active disobedience* that entails public refusal and rebellion and *passive disobedience* that entails refusal to comply with silence, perhaps evasive action, and a willingness to accept the punishment for disobedience.

- 2. In relationship to citizenry, vv. 1-2

The “all men” seems to expand the command to embrace more than state officials, but the citizenry of the state. Also, these terms seem to refer at times to the state as well as the citizenry in Paul’s letters. Six moral virtues follow:

      - Be obedient.
      - Be willing to serve the community.
      - Be uncontentious, demanding, argumentative.
      - Malign no one: do not attack another’s character falsely.
      - Be gentle: To the Greeks this was a sign of weakness.
      - Show common courtesy.
  - B. Motivation to duties in a secular culture, vv. 3-8

Verses 3-7 is one of Paul’s long sentences.

    - 1. Our past condition, v. 3

“For” gives the reason for the duties stated in the previous verses. Before our redemption, we acted in conformity to those who know not God; we were as them (“also,” “ourselves”), but we have a new master who loves us; no longer are we at the tyranny of selfish individualism. We now live for others in a broken world! The past of us is described in seven characteristics (seven suggests completeness of dereliction).

      - Foolish: inappropriate, unwise thoughts.
      - Disobedient:
      - Deceived: the term literally means seduced.

Enslaved: “lusts” suggest an improper passion for something, “pleasures” is the English term for hedonism.

Life expressive of malice and envy:

Hateful:

Hating one another:

2. The fact of God’s mercy, v. 4  
The contrastive word, “but,” tell us that things have changed. The kindness of God has been revealed to us!! The past tense “appeared” tell us what happened one day in each of our lives that brought a sudden change and progressive growth in that change.
3. The agent of God’s mercy, vv. 5-6  
Here is the main verb of the sentence, “He ‘saved’ us.” Revealed are the mercies of our triune God expressed in one verb. The tense of the verb suggests a past event with continuing consequences.
  - a. The mercies of God the Father, v. 5a  
The phrase (“not on the basis...”) comes first in the verse suggesting the emphasis (how could it based on our pre-conversion character [v. 3]). Salvation is a work of God, not of human merit. No one, saved or lost, can merit divine mercies through self-righteousness. Salvation is a function of mercy, not necessity.
  - b. The application of that work by the Holy Spirit, v. 5b  
It is the work of the Holy Spirit that cleanses in a figurative “bath” begetting life, the regenerative work of the Spirit, and continued by the Spirit’s renewing, guiding, preserving, and restricting mercies.
  - c. The foundation of that by Jesus Christ, v. 6  
The lavish riches of Christ’s accomplishments have been poured out (what a metaphor!) “through Jesus Christ our Savior.”
4. The goal of God’s triune mercies v. 7  
The “that” suggests the purpose of God in through His divine redemption. In having been justified, declared righteous by the Father, through the accomplishments of the Son, and applied by the Spirit, we have become heirs (as daughters and sons in God’s family) and, thus, filled with hope of eternal life.
5. A reminder: instructions for Titus, v. 8
  - a. The confirmation, v. 8a  
What Paul has written above is true!
  - b. The desire, v. 8b  
Paul instructs Titus is to speak clearly and forcefully of these things.
  - c. The purpose, v. 8c  
“So that” suggests the reason for the injunction; that we would be filled with the fruits of redemption (vv. 1-2). The motivation is gratitude for the undeserved, unmerited grace of God; the effect is Christlikeness; and the goal is witness as His proxies on earth, a clearer witness than the beauty of nature.
  - d. The re-affirmation, v. 8d
- C. Duties regarding the errant, vv. 9-11  
The subject of the influence and danger of false teaching is a major theme; it is found in 1:10-16 related to the duties of elders. Here the instruction is to be addressed to the believers in the churches, not exclusively the elders.

1. The instruction, v. 9
    - a. Stated, v. 9a
 

There are things that we must avoid, shun. The four occurrences of “and” suggest that they define different aspects of a single general topic. All four have to do with the Mosaic Code so it boils down to a major first century, reoccurring issue: the Law, the Old Covenant and in the life of the New Covenant believer.

Foolish controversies: while we cannot be definitive as to the meaning, the point is to avoid the fruitless and trivial. Don’t get sidetrack from what is essential.

Genealogies: mostly likely it refers Jewish speculations relative to the Messiah (I Tim. 1:4).

Strife.

Disputes.
    - b. Reasoned, v. 9b
 

Theological hairsplitting is harmful in the body of the Savior.
  2. The procedure in such cases, v. 10
 

In such disputes with factious people, those seeking to divide and triumph, we must be clear and non-concessive.

Confront the errant (the word is “heretic”) with their error.

After warnings, dispel the factitious.
  3. The reason for such action, v. 11
 

The factious are wrong (the term suggests habitual behavior), destroying themselves by their teaching, and stand self-condemned for it.
- V. Conclusion, 3:12-15
- A. The instruction for Titus, vv. 12-13
    1. To reconnect, v. 12
      - a. The sending of replacements, v. 12a
 

Paul was not only an evangelist; he was an administrator caring for the spiritual health of the churches that had been planted.

Artemas: We know nothing of this fellow. He was obviously a trusted worker for Paul to have sent him to Crete.

Tychicus: This man was a companion of Paul’s on the third missionary journey; he later carried letters to the Ephesians and Colossians from Rome during Paul’s first imprisonment. He is described as his “beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant (Col. 4:7-8, Eph. 6:21-22).”
      - b. The instruction to come to Nicopolis, v. 12b
 

With the restricts of winter travel by sea and land, Paul chose to spend the time there and be joined by Titus. The city was built by Augustus Caesar after the Battle of Actium in 31 BC to commemorate his ascension as Caesar, ending the republic (“City of Victory”), a city of over 100,000 in population. It was located in western Greece on the Adriatic Coast.
    2. To assist Zenas and Apollos, v. 13
 

When two of Paul’s companions were about to launch upon a missionary journey, he asked Titus and the Cretan churches to provide financial support for the undertaking. We have no knowledge of their destination.

Zenas: Other than this cryptic note the lawyer is unknown.

Apollos: This man, an Alexandrian, was an effective preacher, defender, and missionary of the Faith. Helped by Aquilla and Priscilla (Acts 18:23-26), who had come to Ephesus from Rome, knowing then only the baptism of John, he later had significant ministry in Corinth.

B. The passion for the churches, v. 14

1. Stated, v. 14a

The churches on Crete are commanded to be actively involved good deeds (evangelism, missions).

2. Reasoned, v. 14b

That way the churches would prove to be productive, fruitful.

C. The greetings, v. 15a

Writing likely from Ephesus, Paul sends greetings from the missionary team, the letter delivered by Artemas and Tychius.

D. The benediction, v. 15b

The prayer is that the churches would experience the provisions of God for effective witness.

Applications:

1. Though there are many things in our lives that we have not conquered, many things have been changed in the wonder of redemption. We should never cease to be grateful for the changes that God has wrought and continues to do. That fact is, while some things might need changing still, we have been changed!!
2. Unmerited, immense privilege, privilege beyond imagination, such as that of forgiveness, heirship in Christ, and the gift of hope, brings with it the obligation of appreciation expressed in thankful obedience to the triune God who was willing to reach down to bring us up!
3. Paul expresses the form of expressed gratitude several ways in this chapter: a personal and public conduct that witnesses to our creditor for His mercies, a desire to bear witness for Christ to those who ask, and to support the missionary task through those God sends out beyond the confines of the local assemblies.
4. The wonder of a divine, triune salvation should fill us with joy, delight, and praise. Think of what the Father has condescended to do for us in acquitting us of all our injustices toward Him forever. Think of how divine justice could be forgiven only through a payment to divine justice which only God, the Son, could have accomplished. Think of the Holy Spirit bringing those benefits that Christ procured through regenerating and indwelling us, giving us eternal life in Himself. Such wonder should fill us with joy that should overcome every dark shadow of yesterday, today, and tomorrow!