

LETTER TO TITUS



This letter appears to be the first of the Pastoral Letters: see the introduction to the first letter to Timothy.

This was early in the year 58 A.D. and shortly before, Paul had written a letter to the Christians of Rome. Paul thinks that he does not have any more work to do in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and he prepares to go to the western part of the Empire, especially Spain. In fact, God had planned things differently: in a short time, Paul would be arrested in Jerusalem and after several years of captivity in Caesarea, he would be taken to Rome to be tried before the emperor's tribunal.

Paul said goodbye to the communities of Greece and of "Asia," the province of the empire corresponding to western Turkey (Acts 20:25). It was no doubt the day before meeting with the presbyters (elders) of the Ephesus area, a meeting that took place in Miletus (Acts 20:1), that Paul wrote this letter that precisely gives special attention to pastors of the Christian communities. The other important points of the letter deal with the duties of Christians according to their situation in society,

respect for their social obligations and submission to authorities. Here, Paul repeats or develops what he had presented in the second part of the letter to the Romans. This same letter inspires him a few shortcuts about God's plan that we find in 1:3-4; 2:11-14 and 3:4:7.

Paul was already thinking about his journey to Rome. He did not know that he was going to be arrested in Jerusalem and he planned to go to the capital of the empire by land after handing the collection he had brought over to the Jerusalem Christians (Rom 15:25-28). One of the stages was Nicopolis on the west coast of Greece, an area that Paul had evangelized (Rom 15:19) and where he had arranged to meet Titus who was in Crete.

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1 ¹From Paul, a servant of God, an apostle of Christ Jesus, at the service of God's chosen people, so that they may believe and reach the knowledge of truth and godliness.

²The eternal life we are waiting for was promised from the very beginning by God who never lies, ³and as the appointed time had come, he made it known through the message entrusted to me by a command of God, our Savior.

⁴Greetings to you, Titus, my true son in the faith we share. May grace and peace be with you from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

On the elders of the Church

⁵I left you in Crete because I wanted you to put right what was defective, and appoint elders in every town following my instructions. ⁶They must be blameless, married only once, whose children are believers, and not open to the charge of being immoral and rebellious. ⁷Since the overseer (or bishop) is the steward of God's House, he must be beyond reproach: not proud, hotheaded, over-fond of wine, quarrelsome, or greedy for gain.

⁸On the contrary, he must be hospitable, a lover of what is good, wise, upright, devout, and self-controlled. ⁹He must hold to the message of faith, just as it was taught, so that in his turn, he may teach sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.

¹⁰You know that there are many rebellious minds, talkers of nonsense, deceivers, especially the party of the circumcised. ¹¹They have to be silenced when they go around disturbing whole families, teaching, for low gain, what should not be taught. ¹²A Cretan, one of their own prophets, has said, "Cretans: always liars, wicked beasts and lazy gluttons." ¹³This is true. For this reason, rebuke them sharply if you want them to have a

sound faith ¹⁴instead of heeding Jewish fables, and practices of people who reject the truth.

¹⁵To the pure, everything is pure; to the corrupt and unbelieving, nothing is pure: their minds and consciences have been defiled. ¹⁶They pretend to know God but deny him with their deeds. They are detestable, disobedient, and unfit for doing anything good.

Live as responsible persons

2¹Let your words strengthen sound doctrine. ²Tell the older men to be sober, serious, wise, sound in faith, love, and perseverance.

³The older women, in like manner, must behave as befits holy women, not given to gossiping or drinking wine, ⁴but as good counselors, able to teach younger women to love their husbands and children, ⁵to be judicious and chaste, to take care of their households, to be kind, and submissive to their husbands, lest our faith be attacked.

⁶Encourage the young men to be self-controlled. ⁷Set them an example by your own way of doing. Let your teaching be earnest and sincere, ⁸and your preaching, beyond reproach. Then your opponents will feel ashamed and will have nothing to criticize.

⁹Teach slaves to be subject to their masters, and to give satisfaction in every respect, instead of arguing. ¹⁰They must not steal from them, but be trustworthy. In this way, they will draw everyone to admire the doctrine of God our Savior.

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, ¹²teaching us to reject an irreligious way of life, and worldly greed, and to live in this world as responsible persons, upright and serving God, ¹³while we await our blessed hope—the glorious manifestation of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus. ¹⁴He gave himself for us, to redeem us from every evil, and to purify a people he wanted to be his own, and dedicated to what is good.

¹⁵Teach these things, encourage, and reprove with all authority. Let no one despise you.

TITUS 1:1—2:15

Read: Titus has been entrusted with pastoring the Christian community on Crete. Titus has to hold himself to account as well as his fellow Christians, so their lives reflect Christ.

Reflect: Living the faith we believe has always been a challenge, what is most challenging for you?

Pray: Pray for yourself, so your life witnesses Jesus Christ. Pray for the church, who has always been made up of sinners that that they may be faithful witnesses of Jesus' message in their lives.

Act: Paul's famous words: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." Live so these words are your own.

3¹Remind the believers to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, and to be ready for every good work. ²Tell them to insult no one; they must not be quarrelsome, but gentle and understanding with everyone.

³We ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, and misled. We were slaves of our desires, seeking pleasures of every kind. We lived in malice and envy, hateful, and hating each other. ⁴But God our Savior revealed his eminent goodness and love for humankind, ⁵and saved us, not because of good deeds we may have done, but for the sake of his own mercy, to the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit ⁶poured over us through Christ Jesus our Savior, ⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we should become heirs, in hope of eternal life.

⁸This is the truth. I want you to insist on these things, for those who believe in God must excel in good deeds; that is what matters and is profitable to us. ⁹Avoid stupid arguments, discussions about genealogies, and quarrels about the law for they are useless and unimportant.

¹⁰If anyone promotes sects in the church, warn him once, and then a second time. If he still continues, break with him, ¹¹knowing that such a person is misled, and sinful, and stands self-condemned.

¹²When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, try to come to me at Nicopolis, as soon as possible, for I have decided to spend the winter there. ¹³Do your best to send Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, on their way soon, and see to it that they have everything they need. ¹⁴Our people must learn to be outstanding in good works, and to face urgent needs, instead of remaining idle and useless.

¹⁵ All who are with me send greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

TITUS 3:1-15

Read: Christians have to live in the world as good citizens, avoid those things that divide the church and be focused on the mercy of God.

Reflect: Paul exhorts to be humble and obedient. How is this manifested in your life and in the life of your community? How should the new person born by the Spirit behave today?

Pray: Ask forgiveness for the times you have given witness contrary to the Gospel and ask for strength so your deeds may show the faith that you profess.

Act: Try to live today with the awareness that your faith is manifested in everything you do, including the most habitual and ordinary tasks.