

THE BIG READ (17)

Jesus in Titus

A. Introduction

1. Every book of the Bible has one dominating theme – Jesus is the Christ.

“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, ‘This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”
(Luke 24:45-47)

Jesus is the Christ who will suffer and die.

Jesus is the Christ who will rise from the dead on the third day.

Jesus is the Christ who will forgive the sins of all who repent.

Jesus is the Christ who will be preached to the nations.

2. After the four Gospels that tell the story of Jesus’ earthly life, and Acts which traces the spread of the gospel from Jerusalem to Rome, the remainder of the New Testament is made up of epistles or letters that were sent to individual Christians or churches.

These letters address specific situations in the lives of believers and through them we are taught how to live as God’s people.

3. Titus is the third of three letters that the apostle Paul wrote, which are known as the Pastoral Epistles – these are letters addressed to individuals who were church leaders.

Titus was written to another one of Paul’s co-workers, around AD62, the same time as 1 Timothy was.

Titus first makes an appearance in Galatians – He was a Greek convert and uncircumcised showing that Gentiles could be genuine Christians without having to become Jews first.

“Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain. Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek.” (Galatians 2:1-3)

4. Titus was Paul’s problem solver.

He had been given the task of persuading the Corinthian Christians to support Paul’s collection for the poorer Jewish churches in Judea.

“So we urged Titus, since he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part.” (2 Corinthians 8:6)

“I thank God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative.” (2 Corinthians 8:16-17)

“As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honour to Christ. Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.” (2 Corinthians 8:23-24)

Now he has a new problem to solve, and this is why Paul wrote this letter.

1. The two problems that Titus was left on Crete to solve give shape to the letter.

Chapter 1: Appoint qualified elders

Chapters 2-3: Teach the church

2. In chapter 1, Paul instructs Titus to appoint qualified elders.

What kind of elders is Titus to appoint?

"An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless – not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it." (Titus 1:6-9)

Why does Titus need to appoint elders?

"For there are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach – and that for the sake of dishonest gain... Therefore, rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth." (Titus 1:10-11, 13-14)

3. In chapters 2 and 3, Paul instructs Titus to teach the church.

Who is Titus to teach?

"Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance." (Titus 2:2)

"Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no-one will malign the word of God." (Titus 2:3-5)

"Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled." (Titus 2:6)

"Teach slaves, to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted." (Titus 2:9-10)

"Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no-one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility towards all men." (Titus 3:1-2)

How is Titus to teach?

"In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us." (Titus 2:7-8)

Why is Titus to teach?

"So that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth." (Titus 1:14)

"So that no-one will malign the word of God." (Titus 2:5)

"So that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive." (Titus 2:10)

"And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good." (Titus 3:8)

What is Titus to teach?

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." (Titus 2:11-14)

"At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things." (Titus 3:3-8)

D. Jesus in Titus

1. Jesus is our great Saviour.

"...by the command of God our Saviour." (Titus 1:3)

"Grace and peace from God our Father and Christ Jesus our Saviour." (Titus 1:4)

"...so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive." (Titus 2:10)

"the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:13)

"But when the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared." (Titus 3:4)

2. Jesus is our gracious Saviour.

He brings grace that saves.

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." (Titus 2:11)

"He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy." (Titus 3:5)

He brings grace that changes.

"It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in the present age." (Titus 2:12)

3. Jesus is our generous Saviour.

"...who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good." (Titus 2:14)

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Saviour, so that, having been justified by grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:5-7)