

THE BIG READ – TITUS

He is the generous Saviour

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

Jesus is not lacking in grace to give.

“He saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit. He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:5-7)

How then shall we live?

As we recognise that Jesus is the great and generous Saviour, how should we respond?

Choose leaders for the church who are godly in their conduct, character, and convictions

“The reason I left you in Crete was to set right what was left undone and, as I directed you, to appoint elders in every town. An elder must be blameless...” (Titus 1:5-6)

Choose leaders who will teach the church what to believe and how to behave

“...holding to the faithful message as taught, so that he will be able both to encourage with sound teaching and to refute those who contradict it.”
(Titus 1:9)

“But you are to proclaim things consistent with sound teaching.” (Titus 2:1)

Introduction

The New Testament begins with the four Gospels which 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 addressed specific situations in the lives of believers and local churches, and through them we are taught how to live as God’s people in response to what Christ has done for us.

Titus is the third of three letters that the apostle Paul wrote which are known as the Pastoral Epistles. The Pastoral Epistles (Titus along with 1 & 2 Timothy) are the only letters addressed to individuals in positions of church leadership.

This letter 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 (see Galatians 2:1-3). He was a Greek convert and uncircumcised, showing that Gentiles could be genuine Christians without having to become Jews first.

Titus was Paul’s problem solver. He was given the task of persuading the Corinthian Christians to support Paul’s collection for the poorer Jewish churches in Judea (see 2 Corinthians 8:6, 16-17, 23-24).

Now here in this letter, we see that he has a new problem to solve, and that is why Paul wrote to him.

The purpose of Titus

During a period of missionary activity after his release from prison in Rome, Paul had visited the island of Crete with Titus and churches had been planted there.

When Paul wrote this letter he was no longer on Crete, but had moved on to Nicopolis (see Titus 3:12), leaving Titus behind on the island for an important reason, which was to “*set right what was left undone*” (see Titus 1:5).

Crete was an island famous for inhabitants that were lazy, compulsive liars, and talented at nothing but eating (see Titus 1:12-13). This kind of behaviour was not appropriate for the Christians living in Crete but was being encouraged by false teachers who were active in the churches on the island (see Titus 1:10-11).

What the churches needed were leaders who would establish right beliefs and right behaviour among them.

So, Paul writes to Titus to solve two problems. First, he needed to appoint qualified elders (see Titus 1:5), and second, he needed to teach the church (see Titus 2:1).

The story of Titus

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

Chapter 1: Appoint qualified elders

Titus is instructed to ensure that each local church had a group of men to lead them. He is to appoint men who are godly in their conduct, their character, and their convictions, to serve as elders.

These elders are needed because of the many false teachers who were deceiving the members of the churches. These false teachers needed to be confronted and silenced, and the church members who had been deceived needed to be corrected (see Titus 1:10-16)

Chapters 2-3: Teach the church

Titus is to teach everyone in the church what a godly life is and show them by his example (see Titus 2:1-10).

He is to do this so that the members of the church would no longer dishonour God’s Word by the way they were living and give those outside the church reasons to criticise and speak badly about the Lord Jesus (see Titus 2:5, 8, 10).

Titus is reminded that the only way the Cretan Christians will be able to live godly lives is because of the grace of God. Without grace saving them, they could never and would never live the godly lives they are being instructed to live (see Titus 2:11-15; 3:3-8).

Jesus in Titus

Jesus is revealed in Titus as the great and generous Saviour.

He is the great Saviour

“...while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2:13)

“But when the kindness of God our Saviour and his love for mankind appeared.” (Titus 3:4)

Jesus brings grace that saves.

“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.” (Titus 2:11)

Jesus brings grace that changes.

“...instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age.” (Titus 2:12)

“He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works.” (Titus 2:14)